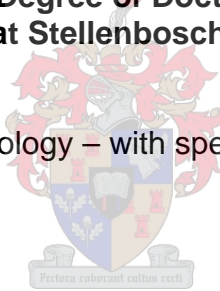# PASTORAL PARTICIPATION IN TRANSFORMATION: A NARRATIVE PERSPECTIVE

by

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Dissertation presented for the Degree of Doctor of Theology in the Faculty of Theology at Stellenbosch University

in the subject of Practical Theology – with specialisation in Pastoral Therapy

PROMOTER: PROF D J LOUW

March 2012

By submitting this dissertation electronically, I declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own, original work, that I am the sole author thereof (save to the extent explicitly otherwise stated), that reproduction and publication thereof by Stellenbosch University will not infringe any third party rights and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining any qualification..

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Acknowledgements

This dissertation is a witness to God's faithfulness. The journey reflected here is confirmation that I am a child of God's covenant, despite the guilt of my complicity with injustice and oppression and despite my painful personal experiences of marginalization and oppression. I have experienced God's faithful and loving presence through the many, many people who have participated as Good Samaritans on my journey.

Those friends, students, colleagues, clients and communities who participated with me in the development of the participatory praxis researched here have become a supportive and loving community that has rippled out far beyond what I could ever have imagined. Thank you for the many hours of conversation and participation that we have shared. May the transformative power of our connections and the values that we share continue to surprise and delight us.

Prof Daniël Louw, the way in which you made yourself available and remained present as a critical reader, a challenging conversational partner, an encouraging mentor and a compassionate witness to my - often painful - journey has been truly remarkable. I could not have given birth to this document without your exceptional midwifery skills.

Jaco, you have made enormous sacrifices to make the time, space and resources available for the completion of this dissertation. Thank you for being my loving and loyal companion through the long and lonely hours of my struggle to complete a task that often seemed insurmountable. Thanks, Hannes, for being easy, loving and understanding at times when I was preoccupied and when it would have been much nicer to have a pleasantly engaged mom around.

Jurie and Yvonne Erwee, my parents, I have felt the warmth of your loving gaze upon me throughout my life. Thanks for cheering me on to develop my gifts and fulfil my dreams. Your support and prayers have sustained me throughout this challenging project.

Thank you, Belinda Grove, for keeping my psychology and training practices alive while I was occupied with my studies. Your loyalty, support, care, hard work and keen interest in and enthusiasm for my life's work inspires me to perform beyond what I could have imagined. Sarah Moraile, I salute you for all the well-prepared meals, housework and hosting tasks that you fulfil with such grace and commitment. Without your loving presence and loyalty it would be impossible to juggle all the balls in my personal, professional and church life.

I can hardly believe my good fortune for having your services as editor of this manuscript, Dr Celene Hunter. What a blessing it has been, once again, to work with you, my friend. Thanks for all the encouragement and support which accompanied the excellent editing work.

My siblings, Dalene du Preez, Jurita Saayman and Andries Erwee, who share my faith commitments, you have played an enormous part in forming my life and have been extremely supportive of me throughout this journey. There are many friends and colleagues who have kept up a steady flow of encouraging words, gestures and prayers. Thank you! At last I am back and available for play dates…

Abstract

A critical reflection on the researcher's personal story - a white Afrikaner woman and a member of the Dutch Reformed Church - and her raised awareness regarding the devastating effects of racism, sexism and poverty in South Africa informs the development of a participatory pastoral praxis. The liberation of South Africa and the post-apartheid social reality have unmasked the confessional and kerygmatic approach of practical theology, revealing them to be supportive of dualistic thinking. This approach has frequently blinded us from understanding the ideologies of apartheid and patriarchy and the extent and complexity of their oppressive effects. This research is about doing theology in context and, as such marks a radical shift in practical theology from a confessional-kerygmatic to a public-hermeneutical approach.

From a methodological perspective the hermeneutic spiral applied in theory formation challenges the church to participate in a praxis approach that will contribute to the healing and transformation of post-apartheid society. Feminist theology and post-structuralist theory, within which Narrative Therapy is positioned, provide the critical lenses for viewing the social realities of South African society. As an interdisciplinary partner to practical theology, Narrative Therapy contributes to liberating action as expressed in a participatory praxis.

While holding the metaphor of the Shepherd as expression of God's compassion, the normative guiding metaphor for a participatory pastoral praxis is the parable of the Good Samaritan. As an embodiment of God's transformative love and care towards our neighbour, the Good Samaritan points the way to a new way of doing pastoral care. Ten characteristics of a participatory pastoral praxis are identified: the personal is the professional and political; participation with the *other;* participation *with* people; participation with *awareness;* participation in *voicing;* participation with our *bodies;* participation *together* with others; participation in social *transformation;* participation in *interrelatedness* and participation in doing *restitution*. Taken together, they make a significant contribution to the theory formation, ethics and praxis of practical theology with a transformative and healing agenda.

The empirical research includes a contextual analysis of the main social problems confronting post-apartheid South Africa: namely, racism, sexism, poverty and the ways in which the HIV/AIDS pandemic interrelates with these. The researcher uses case examples from her praxis - as therapist, community participant, teacher of Narrative Therapy and member of the leadership of the Dutch Reformed Church - to research the transformative effect of a

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participatory pastoral praxis. In this respect the prophetic dimension of a participatory praxis of care could play a decisive role within the ecclesiology of the Dutch Reformed Church.

The transformative effect of Narrative Therapy in working with survivors of childhood sexual abuse is researched in a case example where individual therapy supports the client's empowered response to poverty, racism and sexism within a rural farming community. Case examples of community participation involve inter-faith dialogue with a Muslim community where historical injustices are addressed through story and memory in a bridge-building function as well as participation with an organization caring for people infected by HIV/AIDS. The values, commitments and practices that support the raising of awareness of social injustices like racism is researched; examples from Narrative Therapy training work show how this approach encourages awareness of social injustices in participants. The transformation of oppressive practices, structures and ideologies within the Dutch Reformed Church is researched. Examples are taken from congregational participation and from women's participation within the male-dominated synodical leadership structures. The outcome of the research finding assists practical theology, pastoral care and counselling in theory formation and provides a methodology that will enable participation beyond the boundaries of individual consultation rooms to a personal commitment towards the healing and transformation of the wider church and South African society.

Key words:

Racism; sexism; poverty; participatory pastoral praxis; public-hermeneutical approach to practical theology; healing and transformation of post-apartheid society; Narrative Therapy; feminist theology; post-structuralist theory; therapy with childhood sexual abuse; community praxis; Narrative Therapy training praxis; prophetic leadership in Dutch Reformed Church.

Opsomming

'n Kritiese refleksie op die navorser se persoonlike storie as wit Afrikaner vrou en lidmaat van die Nederduits Gereformeerde kerk en haar verhoogde bewussyn van die vernietegende effekte van rassisme, seksisme en armoede binne die Suid-Afrikaanse samelewing dien as bron en inspirasie vir die ontwikkeling van 'n deelnemende pastorale praxis. Die bevryding van Suid-Afrika en die post-apartheid realiteite het die konfessionele en kerygmatiese benadering tot praktiese teologie ontmasker as ondersteunend van die dualisms wat ons verblind het vir die onderdrukkende effek van die ideologië van rassisme en patriargie. As radikale skuif vanaf 'n konfessioneel-kerygmatiese na 'n publiek-hermeneutiese benadering in praktiese teologie gaan hierdie navorsing oor die doen van teologie in konteks.

Vanuit 'n metodologiese perspektief daag die hermeneutiese spiraal wat in teorie formasie gebruik word die kerk uit om deel te neem in 'n praxis benadering wat bydrae tot die heling en transformasie van 'n post-apartheid samelewing. Feministiese teologie en post-strukturalistiese teorie waar binne NarratieweTerapie geposisioneer is, bied die lense vir 'n kritiese analise van die sosiale realtiete van die Suid-Afrikaanse samelewing. As interdissiplinere vennoot tot praktiese teologie dra Narratiewe Terapie by tot bevrydende aksie soos uitgedruk binne 'n deelnemende praxis.

Met behoud van die metafoor van die Herder as uitdrukking van God se deernis, dien die gelykenis van die Barmhartige Samaritaan as normatiewe riglyn vir die beliggaming van God se transformerende liefde en omgee vir die naaste binne 'n deelnemende pastorale praxis. Tien eienskappe van 'n deelnemende pastorale praxis word identifiseer: die persoonlike is die professionele en politieke; deelname met die *ander;* deelname *met* mense; deelname met *bewussyn;* deelname in *stemgewing;* deelname deur*beliggaming;* deelname *tesame* met ander; deelname in sosiale *transformasie;* deelname in *interafhanklikheid* en deelname in die doen van *restitusie*. Saam maak hulle 'n betekenisvolle bydrae tot die teorie-vorming, etiek en praxis van praktiese teologie met 'n transformerende en helende agenda.

Die empiriese navorsing sluit 'n konteksuele analise van die belangrikste sosiale problem: naamlik, rassisme, seksisme en armoede asook die MIV/VIGS pandemie wat hiermee verweef is. Die navorser gebruik voorbeelde vanuit haar praxis as terapeut, gemeenskapsdeelnemer, opleier van Narratiewe Terapie en lidmaat van en leier binne die Nederduits Gereformeerde Kerk om die transformerende effek van 'n deelnemende pastorale

praxis na te vors. In die geval behoort die profetiese dimensie van 'n deelnemende pastorale praxis 'n beslissende rol binne die ekklesiologie van die Nederduits Gereformeerde Kerk te speel.

Die transformerende effek van Narratiewe Terapie in die werk met persone wat as kinders seksueel molesteer is, word nagevors in 'n voorbeeld waar individuele terapie die kliënt ondersteun om met 'n bemagtigde respons te reageer op die sosiale problem geassosieer met armoede, rassisme en seksisme binne 'n plattelandse boerdery gemeenskap. Voorbeelde van gemeenskapsdeelname sluit inter-godsdienstige dialoog met 'n Moslem gemeenskap waarin historiese onregte aangespreek word deur storie en geheue by 'n Brugbou-funksie sowel as deelname met 'n organisasie betrokke by die versorging van mense met HIV/VIGS. Die waardes, verbintenisse en praktyke wat bydra tot groter bewusmaking van sosiale onregte soos rassisme word nagevors deur middel van voorbeelde uit Narratiewe Terapie opleiding waar 'n diversiteit van deelnemers aangemoedig word. Die transformasie van onderdrukkende praktyke, strukture en ideologië binne die Nederduits Gereformeerde Kerk word nagevors met voorbeelde uit gemeentelike deelname sowel as voorbeelde uit vroue se deelname binne die mans-gedomineerde sinodale leierskap strukture. Die uitkomste van die navorsings bevindinge help praktiese teologie, pastorale sorg en berading in teorie formasie en metodologie wat 'n deelname buite die grense van individuele konsultasies in spreekkamers moontlik maak en wat kan lei tot 'n persoonlike verbintenis om by te dra tot heling en transformasie van die wyer gemeenskap en kerk.

Sleutelwoorde:

Rassisme; seksisme; armoede; deelnemendepastorale praxis; publiek-hermeneutiese benadering tot praktiese teologie; heling en transformasie van post-apartheid samelewing; Narratiewe Terapie; feministiese theology; post-strukturalistiese teorie; terapie met seksuele molestering as kind; gemeenskaps praxis; Narratiewe Terapie opleidings praxis; profetiese leierskap in die Nederduits Gereformeerde Kerk.

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Chapter One

Inspiration for the study – A personal story

'A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half-dead. [31] A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. [32]So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.

(Luke 10: 30-32)

To love God and to love my neighbour was structured along definite lines of separation. My worldview was characterized by dualisms, and religion was neatly separated from political and economical practices.

(Kotzé H 2000:41)

1.1 Personal awakening

The participatory pastoral praxis that I will research has its roots in Narrative Therapy and feminist theology. My personal story will illustrate how the development of a participatory approach to pastoral theology is a personal response following my awakening to the social injustices of racism, sexism and poverty in South Africa. I agree that personal experience is the beginning of liberating acts of faith (Cochrane, de Gruchy and Petersen 1991:3) and therefore it forms a critical part of a participatory pastoral praxis:

> We should expect of all practical theologians that they become self-aware, of their prior commitments, on what these commitments are based, and how they affect one's entire approach to practical theology. To make these things explicit for oneself is to become not only self-aware, but also to allow for being self-critical, and to open oneself up to questioning by others.

(Cochrane et al 1991:16)

Feminist practical theologian Denise Ackermann (2003: xvi) reminds us how the outcries of the prophets in the Old Testament and the stories of Jesus' life and ministry as told in the New Testament revolve around the themes of justice and love as God's intentions for the world. She points out how the analysis of social reality is done through the recording and analysis of stories. Ackermann (2003: xvi) explains how we, as women doing theology, allow our experiences and stories to engage critically

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with our biblical and theological traditions. She concludes: 'Out of experience and critical questioning the search for clues for transformation emerge that can translate into actions on behalf of healing and freedom.' In this first chapter I will do what she suggests:

> Doing theology as women seeking healing and liberation will therefore, start with an analysis of our particular places in the history and present context of our society. This is a process which, for white women, will require vulnerability and will involve pain. Its goal is to state our particularities unambiguously and openly. The starting point for doing Feminist theology is the life stories of women in particular contexts. The goal is liberation and wholeness.
>
> (Ackermann 1994: 202)

The phrase 'the personal is the political'[1] represents one of feminism's key theoretical contributions (Russell & Carey 2003:71). A commitment to understand people's personal experiences as influenced by broader relations of power is implied. Pastoral theologian Pattison (1994:256) explains that:

> A key insight within the women's movement is that 'the personal is political'. This phrase has a double significance. On the one hand it is a statement that the domestication of women and their exclusion from public life dominated by men has political, structural significance and cause; it does not just happen by magic, because nature decreed it, or by luck. On the other, it is an affirmation that women's experience of their own personal lives has political significance; women can find and examine in their own lives the roots of oppression and in so doing can prepare themselves to enter into and shape human society more directly.

This also fits with what Narrative Therapy teaches about the meaning-making function of the stories that we tell ourselves about our lives (White 1995:13). The meanings derived in the process of interpretation of our stories are not neutral in their effects on our lives, but have real effects on what we do and the steps that we take. White (in Epston & White 1992; 1995) proposes that it is the story or self-narrative that determines which aspects of our lives are expressed. In this way, we live by the stories that we have about our lives: they shape and constitute our lives. Thus, when I tell my personal story it is because I believe that it has real significance in shaping my understanding of my social reality and my relationship with God as well as in shaping the practices in which I engage.

I start this personal story by **positioning myself** within the South African context.

I am a white[2] Afrikaans speaking woman who has been practising in South Africa as a counsellor and psychologist for thirty years. I am a Christian and have been an active member of the Dutch Reformed

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[1] I will discuss this phrase and its meaning in Chapter Two under the heading 'The personal is the professional is political.'

Church (DRC) all my life. I have experienced the years since the release from prison of Nelson Mandela on 11 February 1990 like living in a 'new reality'.

Together with the rest of world, I stood in awe of the remarkably peaceful transition from repression and injustice to democracy and freedom that made possible our country's first democratic election on 27 April 1994. I experienced some of the personal transformation that Desmond Tutu (1999:8) describes:

> The white person entered the voting booth burdened by the load of guilt for having enjoyed the fruits of oppression and injustice. He emerged as somebody new. He too cried out, 'The burden has been lifted from my shoulders I am free, transfigured, made into a new person.' He walked tall, with head held high and shoulders set square and straight.

I cried tears of shame and joy while watching on television the inauguration of Nelson Mandela as South Africa's first democratically elected president on 10 May 1994. The eyes of the world were on South Africa and suddenly we were the international 'flavour of the month' (Tutu 1999:9). It was great to be part of the success story, and yet…

The question that haunted me was: 'How could this have happened?' How was it possible that this great man, 'vilified as a terrorist, and who eventually became one of the moral leaders of the world' (Tutu 2004:8) had languished in jail for twenty-seven years? When the reports of the hearings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) started, the fact that 'no one in South Africa could ever again be able to say, '"I did not know" and hope to be believed' (Tutu 1999:120) became my burdensome reality. In *Country of my Skull,* the book that she dedicates 'to every victim who had an Afrikaner surname on her lips,' Afrikaner poet and journalist, Antjie Krog (1998:32) describes her experience as a reporter at the TRC:

> Week after week; voice after voice; account after account. It is like travelling on a rainy night behind a huge truck – images of devastation breaking in sheets on the windscreen. You can't see; and you can't slow down or stop because then you will never get anywhere.
> It is not so much the deaths, and the names of the dead, but the web of infinite sorrow woven around them.

As I listened to the stories told at the TRC I kept wondering: Where was I when all of this was happening to the majority of people in my country? I started asking myself: How was it possible that I

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[2] Although I reject the use of racially constructed terms as discriminatory I nevertheless have to use these insofar as they reflect the racialized nature of the oppression perpetrated by the South African state under the apartheid system. 'Black' is used as a generic term for all those who were classified as 'non-white' under the apartheid system and, as a result, were disadvantaged and oppressed. When I use 'African, it is to distinguish the group that would otherwise be called 'black' from South Africa's other major race groups, namely, 'Coloureds', 'Indians' and 'Whites'.

was living and practising as a Christian psychologist in South Africa and yet my life was untouched by 'the web of infinite sorrow' woven from the stories of millions of people (the vast majority of South Africans) around me? I was living a good Christian life, attending church twice on a Sunday, singing in the church choir, participating in Bible study groups, supporting my husband when he served as a deacon and an elder, attending and organising church seminars, volunteering my time to give talks and to do *pro bono* work as a psychologist in the (white, middle-class) community. I was also working hard on building my career and was very successful at it. Until recently life was good; my Christian beliefs made a lot of sense; I praised God that I was living in a Christian country where God was served and where my people, the Afrikaner, was living our faith with such diligence and commitment.

All of this clearly just did not make sense anymore: Where did we go wrong? This is the question that started haunting me. I shared the distress of the young, white Afrikaner theology student who told Denise Ackermann (1996b:34) that 'My parents lied to me, my school lied to me, our leaders lied to me and the church lied to me. I don't even know the truth about God.'

1.2 Making sense of my personal story: Growing in awareness and empowerment

For many years I struggled and worked hard to make sense of my own position of having lived happily unaware within a society where so much evil and trauma was happening. I have found the grid on witness positions developed by American psychologist Kaethe Weingarten[3] (2003: 28) extremely useful in making sense of my life within the South African context. Weingarten (2000, 2003 & 2010) explains that there are four witness positions that arise from the intersection of two dimensions: awareness and empowerment (Figure 1). Position 1 on the grid would occur when a person is an aware and empowered witness to violence or violation (Weingarten 2010:11). People may move around in this grid as their awareness and position of empowerment changes over time, in different contexts and in different roles:

> All of us, whichever role (victim, perpetrator, witness) we are currently in, can witness ourselves. We can become aware of what we see – witnessing ourselves as witnesses. We can become aware of what has happened to us – witnessing ourselves as victims. We can become aware of what we do to others – witnessing ourselves as perpetrators. More able to witness ourselves in each of these roles, we will be better able to witness others in each of these roles as well.

> (Weingarten 2003: 26)

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[3] Kaethe Weingarten (PhD) is a feminist and Narrative Therapist who is an Associate Professor in the Harvard Medical School Department of Psychiatry. Her most recent book, Common Shock – Witnessing Violence Every Day, won the 2004 Nautilus Award for Social Change. She has visited South Africa several times and has participated in the teaching and mentoring of colleagues locally.

I will use this grid as I witness my personal story since my birth in 1957: a white, Afrikaner woman who grew up and lived a privileged life during the apartheid era and who now tries to live accountably for this privilege in post-apartheid South Africa.

WITNESS POSITIONS

	AWARE	**UNAWARE**
EMPOWERED	1	2
DISEMPOWERED	3	4
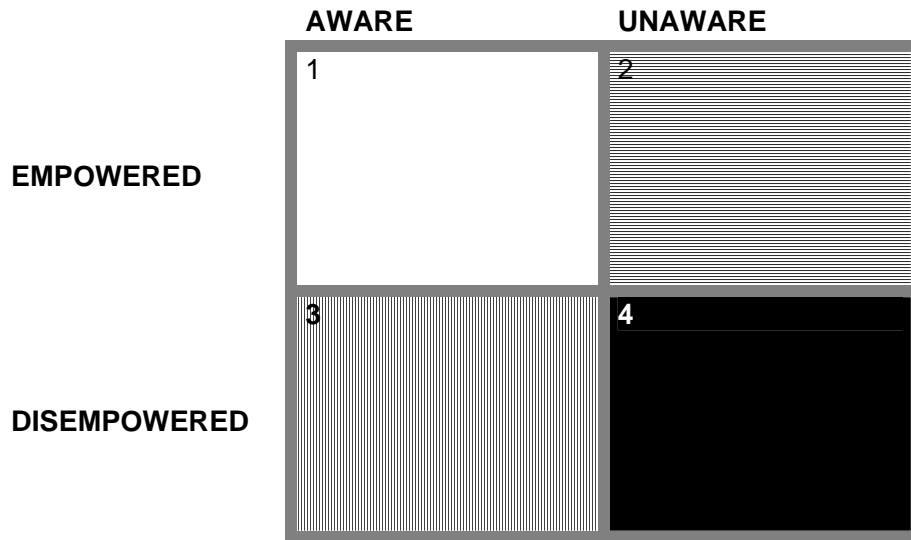
I find strong resonance with the recorded stories of Hantie and Judith Kotzé (2000) - twin sisters, twelve years younger than me - who grew up as Afrikaner women within the DRC and who completed their studies in theology in 1990, just at the time when the DRC opened the way for the ordination of women. Their stories have assisted me to find a voice in which to tell my own story and have enriched my understandings of certain experiences of my own life. 'The personal is the political' implies that 'a woman's personal experiences are not solely her own, they are linked to other women's experiences, they are linked to a broader politics' (Carey & Russell 2003: 7).

1.2.1 Privileged and protected childhood: Unaware and disempowered

The eldest child in a family of four children, I grew up on an apple farm in the Grabouw district of the Western Cape. I came to know God as the awesome Creator at a very young age through the testimonies of my parents. My father's legacy to me is a passionate love for and spiritual connection with the soil and more especially, with the piece of land where I grew up. In the early mornings I would see my father knelt in prayer in his study. In addition to caring for her family, my mother's life revolved around women's Bible study groups, Afrikaanse Christelike Vroue Vereniging, Bible study with her

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domestic workers, prayer meetings and the reading of Christian literature. We worshipped in the big Dutch Reformed Church in Grabouw every Sunday along with most other white Afrikaners in our community.

Many coloured families lived and worked on our labour-intensive farm. My siblings and I played with the children of the farm workers around the farm yard, but I never visited their homes or the farm school across the road which they attended. When we got onto the school bus to 'our school' with 'our friends' 'they' disappeared from 'our world'. I experienced what Hantie Kotzé (2000: 34) describes as 'a foreign world that existed right next to my world, but which was never viewed equally.' In our home the domestic workers were beloved care-givers, who took pride and pleasure in our achievements while we knew very little about their lives. We called them by their first names, without the respectful 'uncle' and 'aunt' we normally used for addressing white adults.

In addition to the hierarchy of class, I was also aware of the socio-economic differences between us and our farm workers, but never questioned these. My siblings and I each had our own bedroom, while the farm workers lived in crowded houses with up to four or six people sharing a bedroom. They did not have running water or toilets inside their homes. They had no electricity, no telephones and no access to transport, apart from the truck ride into town on Saturdays. Through helping out at the farm store, I knew how meagre the weekly shopping lists of the farm workers' families were compared to my mother's. We went on holidays to the Kruger National Park and Namibia while many of the coloured children had not made the sixty kilometre trip to Cape Town or to the beach a mere sixteen kilometres away. Almost every weekend I witnessed the alcohol abuse by farm workers and the violence which so frequently followed, during which serious - and sometimes fatal injuries - were sustained. It was all part of life on the farm to see women come to work with badly swollen faces and other injuries arising from domestic violence.

During the harvest season Xhosa migrant workers[4] were fetched from the Transkei. They lived in dormitories with bunk beds and outside communal cooking facilities and spent up to six months away from their families. I was taught to fear these men with their strange language, culture and appearance. This was the time of the Sharpeville Massacre[5] (21 March 1960) and protests against the carrying of passes[6] when 'trouble makers' would move around the farms to create 'unrest' amongst these men. My mother had to take her three babies to sleep on a neighbouring farm when my father

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[4] See Chapter Three for a discussion on the effect of migrant work and 'homelands' on the lives of black South Africans.
[5] More about the Sharpeville Massacre in Chapter Three.
http://africanhistory.about.com/od/apartheid/a/SharpevilleMassacrePt2.htm.
[6] In Chapter Three I describe the pass laws.

joined the commandos to patrol the farms during the time of 'unrest'. Like Judith Kotzé (2000: 49), I lived a life where '[v]ery few realities of the apartheid system and of the struggles of the oppressed ever entered my spiritual world at all.' Hantie Kotzé's (2000: 37) experience reflects my own reality:

> I have to admit that I never questioned the obvious signs of oppression and the reality of others' loss of freedom. The different races were a problem for the authorities to deal with; the rest of us just wanted to live our daily lives. Innocent and protected we lived on while others were killed.

Yet, I believed that my father 'looked after his people.' He supported the Dutch Reformed Mission Church[7] (DRMC) and took the farm workers to church. During 'pinkster' (Pentecost) I would sit with my warm coat in the cosy front cab of the truck with my father for the ride into town while the farm workers were huddled together under a draughty canopy at the back. We dropped the coloured people off at their church in the coloured township before going on to our church in the village. My mother's focus was on the spiritual welfare of her domestic staff. She expressed grave concern when these converted Christians 'fell in sin' through pregnancies out of wedlock. As white Afrikaners we believed that we were the bearers of the Gospel on the continent of Africa and that converting the 'heathens' was our main calling (Kotzé H 2000: 34).

If I could be so relatively untouched by the violence and oppression happening right on my doorstep, it is little wonder that the dualism with which my life was organized made it possible for me never to notice or question any of the oppression that was happening in the wider South African society. Today it is difficult to believe that we, as white Afrikaners, actually managed to convince ourselves - despite international anti-apartheid boycotts - that we were in the right against the whole world. Economic sanctions made the export of fruit very difficult, yet all the attempts from the outside world to bring us to our senses regarding the evil of apartheid were rationalized away:

> Eventually Christianity became a blanket which had to cover all the secret agendas, the inhuman methods and the heartless discrimination which flowed from our own hands. Every move was justified in the Bible by reading the text with specific lenses which served the bigger picture.

> (Kotzé H 2000:35)

Even if I could have questioned the ways of the adults around me, 'the complete control that authority had on our society' (Kotzé, H 2000:35) left me, as a child, in a position with little power to do anything about it.

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[7] A discussion of the DR family of churches and their relationship appears in Chapter Three.

Within our own family I knew that the birth of my brother, the third child, was of great significance. There was huge pressure on farmers' wives to produce a son and heir to carry on the 'family name' and inherit the 'family farm'. At my brother's birth my father thanked my mother with a ring. There were no special gifts at the births of his three daughters. Today my family's male lineage and their connection with the farm are confirmed with photographs of the three generations of landowners and their wives in the boardroom of the office on the farm. My scholarly brother was considering medicine as a career. However, during his military service, which took him away from home for two years at the tender age of eighteen years, he decided to study agriculture and become a farmer. I told him that it was unfair that he should give up his dream. It never crossed our minds that one of his sisters could farm! I learnt early in my life that patriarchal culture[8] can be oppressive of men too. I watched my introverted, caring, responsible and non-violent brother grow even quieter as he stoically assumed responsibility for fulfilling the role expected of him as a young South African white man and son of a farmer[9].

My mother, a gifted teacher, had to give up her career to become a farmer's wife. I was aware of her yearning to teach. She regarded herself a failure as farmer's wife as she had a preference for books and writing, a passion to care for people, a love for meetings and organizing and gifts for teaching and public speaking. I questioned the way in which this gifted woman (in my eyes) dedicated her talents, time and energy to her children and husband. I had wonderful examples in my mother's family of career women who loved their work. I was determined that when I grew up I would have both a family and a career. But from a very young age the need to attract a husband who would confirm my femininity and 'look after' me was impressed upon me as the ultimate goal of womanhood. My mother had two sisters who had never married: their 'spinsterhood' was regarded as a huge tragedy. Our bridal pictures above my parents' bed bear testimony to their daughters' success in this sphere!

I have inherited many of my mother's gifts. My talent with words, public speaking, telling stories and influencing people became evident at school. My commitment to follow Christ became a personal one. I spent much of my time studying the Bible, attending Christian camps and doing leadership training. I spent hours discussing the Bible and Church tradition with my father, who for a number of years was also my catechism teacher. Along with four friends I became the leader[10] of the youth at our church and also took up the leadership of the Afrikaans Christian Students Organization (ACSV) at our school. By that stage I had already noticed, and accepted unquestioningly, that only men filled the

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[8] For a definition and discussion of patriarchy and its influence on South African society, consult Chapter Three.
[9] I refer to Afrikaner maleness in Chapter Three.
[10] Ds Roelie Maree was our minister and the first minister to encourage my leadership within the DRC by creating opportunities for me to serve, teach and lead during my high school years.

'kerkraadbanke' (pews of the Church Council). Whereas men discussed important church matters at Council meetings, women served tea. Nevertheless, despite the fact that the leadership of the church was so male dominated, I had no doubt that God had gifted me for, and was calling me into, the full-time ordained ministry. I had long discussions with my parents about my vocation. Imagine then how rude my awakening was to the full implications of the reality that the walls of the 'konsistorie' (vestry) and 'kweekskool' (seminary) of my church - like my father's boardroom on the farm - contained only the photos of men in leadership positions. When I matriculated from school at the end of 1975, although both my parents believed in my calling, my father - who for years had been attending Synod Meetings as an elder - was nevertheless still convinced that it would be a long time before the DRC would ordain women. He was correct in this: women were excluded from ordained ministry until 1990.

I remember clearly an interview with Dr Johann Meyer, career counsellor at the University of Stellenbosch, at the end of 1975 during which I just sat and cried and cried about the disempowered position in which I found myself. To add insult to injury, the three young men who had formed part of the leadership group at church with me went on to study theology, while I settled for a degree in teaching and later specialized in psychology. I accepted the racist, patriarchal culture with its accompanying economic oppression that I was living in as a given, unaware of the meaning of the injustices that it involved. I was also disempowered as a young person on the bottom of the hierarchy of my (white) world where children were taught to respect the authority of their elders and their church.

1.2.2 Successful student and psychologist: Unaware and empowered

My student years were fairly happy and carefree. I met Jaco Morkel while we were serving on an ACSV team doing outreach work during the school holidays before I started university, and we were married in my fourth year. Student life was filled with participation in Christian activities like Bible study groups, outreach work on the farms and attending camps. During these years the Seminary was a building and theology a domain that belonged exclusively to a large group of men, many of whom were my close friends. Although I was respected as the leader of several outreach teams, Bible study groups and member of the executive of the ACSV, they were the ones who were preparing for fulltime ministry in a church where, regardless of my gifts of leadership, I was to remain a lay person. I resonate strongly with the experience of Judith Kotzé (2000: 50):

> I remember struggling to understand why God called me and yet allowed the church to be closed to women who wanted to serve as ordained ministers. I again feel the frustration of experiencing women taking responsibility for the everyday life of the church and being the backbone of the church and its activities, yet not being the ones to make decisions, or lead from the pulpit or even participate in the decision-making process.

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While I was becoming more and more educated[11] I stayed unaware of what was happening in the wider South African community. In June 1976, when black schoolchildren protested about being taught in Afrikaans in the Soweto uprisings, my life at my exclusively white university was affected only in the sense that male students came to guard our hostel and we served them tea and biscuits during the night. I had very limited understanding or interest in what it all meant[12]. Reaching out to black and coloured people meant contributing to the conversion of 'heathens' on the farms that we visited on Sundays and in the Transkei where I served on teams that spent holidays building 'church huts' at missionary stations.

When I started working, God truly blessed my work as a psychologist. After seven years of working as a psychologist in schools for children with disabilities, I started a very successful private practice with rooms at the then newly built Medi-Clinic in Somerset West. The practice soon provided work for three psychologists. I became a well-known public speaker in our community, and more especially as a Christian psychologist within various faith communities. Along with other medical practitioners, I benefited hugely from the fast-growing, affluent part of the community at a time when Somerset West was known as the place with the most millionaires per square kilometre in South Africa.

In my personal life, Jaco and I were confronted with the problem of infertility which threatened to dominate our existence with its intrusive medical investigations and treatment regime. My relationship with the God of love, mercy and prosperity became very problematic. I struggled with the negotiation of my identity as a woman. Here I was - too much a woman to be a minister in the church, but not woman enough to fall pregnant! I experienced bitterness towards a God who had gifted me and then did not seem to want my gifts in His service, a God who expected me to take up my 'proper place' in society - by getting married and keeping quiet in church - and yet when I did this, God did not fulfil our desperate yearning for biological children! I struggled to make sense of this.

Until this time I lived a life in which 'the community' meant white people. Apartheid was truly successful in separating me from people of other racial groups (Ackermann 1998:90). The people who crossed my path at school, university, church, in my practice, at my husband's work and in our neighbourhood were predominantly white. The people of colour that I knew well where farm, domestic and garden workers and, in these humble positions of serving me and my family, they were almost invisible as fellow human beings or brothers and sisters in Christ.

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[11] After graduating with a BA, I completed a teacher's diploma as well as honours and master's degrees in Psychology.
[12] I discuss the education of black children and their protest in Chapter Three.

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As a young adult I had access to a very privileged education; I had a voice in my community; I had financial means; I was young, physically capable and strong. I truly had a lot to offer, but I suffered from tunnel vision. This position in life contributed to ideas of entitlement, to a focus on financial success and the goal of actualizing my potential. As a Christian this translated into understanding my relationship with God as being a very personal and individual matter: Jesus had saved me and had made me a winner – I was someone who would prosper and succeed. During the 1980s, while our country was burning, I found myself, along with many other white Afrikaners, in a blind position of certainty and entitlement:

> We claimed to be the chosen people of God with regard to the co-existence of nations and Africa's response to God. We did not tolerate any other opinion and isolated ourselves from everybody. We were right and all others were wrong.
>
> (Kotzé H 2000:35)

Looking back, I recognise now that I was occupying Position Two on the witness position grid. Unaware and empowered, I was in an extremely dangerous position indeed:

> Position Two may be the position that is most dangerous to others. People who witness violence and violation, who are oblivious about what they are witnessing, but nonetheless respond as if they know what they are doing, will be misguided. Their actions will be ineffective at best and harmful at worst. The negative impact of witnessing from this position may be far-reaching, particularly if the person witnessing occupies a position of power or is perceived as having power.
>
> (Weingarten 2010:11)

In the white community I was the expert psychologist who operated within a one-way model of therapy where 'it is understood that the therapist possesses a therapeutic knowledge that is applied to the life of the person who consults them, and this person is defined as the "other" whose life is changed as an outcome to these therapeutic procedures' (White 1997: 128). I also gave talks from this expert position. I remember a talk on 'Die Huwelik' (Marriage) where I gave a very patriarchal (and certainly in retrospect, a very harmful!) blueprint of the roles of the husband and the wife! At this time I also started struggling with stress and with extreme feelings of isolation in my personal relationships. In consultation with a psychologist I explained my feeling of isolation from myself and others as a huge and impressive exterior to which others responded, but inside I felt small and empty. I was perceived to be so empowered and yet I was so unaware!

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1.2.3 Raised awareness and volunteering: Aware and Disempowered

My life was shaken up in the early 1990s. When the political changes started happening in the country with the release of Nelson Mandela and the un-banning of the ANC, I became aware of the millions of black South Africans and their suffering.[13] I started questioning the immense socio-economic disparity and formed some understanding of why this existed and how it was maintained. My relationships with black colleagues contributed significantly to my raised awareness. I was shaken by their accounts of painful experiences during the forced removals, their struggles for economic survival, the inferior education they had received, the violence of township life, their frightening encounters with the police as well as countless examples of humiliation and dehumanisation. Deeply ashamed, I could clearly identify my own beliefs and behaviour with the attitudes of the offending group in some of the stories of oppression and humiliation which my colleagues told me about. In the past, I had translated the media reports of 'unrest' in the townships into deaths that were mere statistics: I did not know the people, they were not 'my people', they were black people, 'other' people, and faceless, nameless people.[14] Like Hantie Kotzé (2000:36) I realised that:

> I was part of this world that my people created and I loved it all fiercely. It was my home. And only later the time came for me to face the fact that this same home of clarity and safety which I loved, was stained with blood and had given birth to an inhuman world. The bitter fruits of my created world are my heritage and I have to deal with them, one by one.

As my awareness grew, I started questioning my work as a healer and my calling as a Christian: my practice served only 10% of the community, while the 90% who could not afford my services clearly suffered such immense trauma and had such limited access to services. But when I volunteered my time and services to people from disadvantaged communities, I was struck by other realities. I was inviting chaos into my neatly organized practice where the time-equals-money principle worked so well with its one-hour sessions on-the-hour-every-hour.[15] As people who live in poverty have limited control over time, transport, work conditions, care for their children etc, they did not fit into my schedule. I soon discovered the truth contained in what Swartz and Gibson (2001:39-40) refer to as the 'mechanistic and a-contextual tradition in many psychological theories' and the fact that 'most South African psychologists were white and trained to work with middle-class patients, from similar backgrounds to their own.' These ideas were extremely limiting to the application of psychology in the

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[13] In Chapter Three I describe the history and effect of racism as well as the history of the struggle for freedom in South Africa.
[14] See Chapter Two for a discussion of 'the other' and 'othering' and de-humanization.
[15] See Chapter Two for a discussion of the Ethic of Risk vs. the Ethic of Control.

broader South African context. The sheltered and privileged life that I had led as a white South African provided a further handicap in understanding the hardship and social problems that clients from poor communities spoke about. I was completely overwhelmed and disempowered: I felt that I had nothing to offer.

As I listened to the stories that people were telling to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and as my friendships with black colleagues deepened, I became increasingly confused and overwhelmed. I recognized the many ways in which I, as a white South African, had benefited from the pain, oppression, injustice and suffering of black people in this country. I started realizing some of the extent to which my people and my church were responsible for abusing the Word of God to justify this evil system (Deist 1994; Jonker 1998). I experienced despair at the lies that I had been fed all my life and the way in which I had swallowed these, largely because it suited me so well to do so. At this time the company that my husband worked for closed down and he lost his successful corporate career. All around us colleagues and friends were leaving South Africa to seek better opportunities elsewhere in the world. While Jaco was struggling to redirect his career, I had to adjust to juggling my responsibilities: the mother of a young child and running my psychology practice, I now had to provide my little family with a sense of security for a while.

In 1997, the year of my fortieth birthday, I was diagnosed with a major depressive episode and started taking medication. I eventually decided to leave my practice and to take time out to recover, retrain and reposition my services within the wider South African context. During many sleepless nights I wondered whether I had truly lost my mind: how could I voluntarily give up what had become so important to me? My identity as a psychologist had become critical to me, especially as a woman who was excluded from her calling as an ordained minister and who was unable to have biological children. Yet these mid-life reflections also told me that I had now reached the age where my generation could no longer be passive, blame others or look to our parents to do restitution for the mistakes of the past. It was now time for us to choose either to leave the country or stay and live our lives as white South Africans in new ways. This also implied reading the Bible and being church in new ways. I experienced this period - of raised and often acute awareness and yet disempowered to do what I knew I was called to do - as extremely disheartening, uncomfortable and undermining of my confidence and hope for the future (Position Three on the grid). Weingarten (2010: 12) acknowledges that people often want to move from this position back to unawareness - a cognitively numbing strategy - but points out that the only relief comes from moving into the aware and empowered position (Position One on the grid). Although I had some vague idea what this might entail, I was open to learn from God and determined not to slip back into unawareness.

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1.2.4 New opportunities for learning and participation: Aware and empowered

During the two years of my sabbatical, I had the opportunity to attend intensive training in Narrative Therapy[16] with Michael White, an Australian family therapist, who developed this approach together with his colleague, David Epston, from New Zealand. From this therapeutic framework I learned to consider the broader socio-political context and to include consideration of power and its operations and effects on lives and relationships when seeking to participate in the healing of people (White & Epston 1990:18). Because Narrative Therapy is an approach that is more collaborative, it required a significant shift in how I viewed people and their struggles. The client is viewed as an expert on his/her own life and the therapist joins the client in the search for alternatives for his/her life (Morgan 2000:3). This shift implied not just a retraining: it required a re-positioning of my own life and views in terms of what are often the taken-for-granted views of the dominant culture (White 2007:23). I learnt about ways in which to approach communities in distress and how to combine therapy with a stance for social justice (Waldegrave, Tamasese, Tuhaka & Campbell 2003). My participation in this training brought me in contact with South African colleagues who shared my values; it also provided opportunities for heightening my awareness of the injustices of the past (and present).

Prof Dirk Kotzé and Dr Elmarie Kotzé, who were organizing Narrative Therapy training events in South Africa through their organization, The Institute for Therapeutic Development (ITD)[17], had a contract with the Department of Practical Theology at the University of South Africa (UNISA) for the training of MTh students specializing in pastoral therapy. As the focus of these students' training was Narrative Therapy, Dirk Kotzé approached me in 2000 to do the supervision of a group of their students in the Western Cape. A valuable and enriching colleagueship with the Kotzés and Dr Johann Roux developed.

In the meantime, I had started up my psychology practice again, using my house as premises. By keeping overheads down, I was able to volunteer two days a week to work outside my practice. My first contact with a community outside my own was the Strand Muslim community[18] where I worked

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[16] White and Epston have continued to contribute to the evolving of my understanding of the meaning and uses of Narrative Therapy (Epston, 1998; Freeman, Epston & Lobovits 1997; Maisel, Epston & Borden, 2004; Monk, Winslade, Crocket & Epston 1997; White, 1995; 1997; 2004; 2007; White & Morgan, 2006). Many others therapists (Bird 2000, 2004; Durrant & White 1990; Freedman & Combs 1996, 2002; Friedman 1995; Jenkins, 1990; Kotzé E 2000; Madsen, 2007; Morgan, 2000; Russell & Carey, 2004; Smith & Nylund 1997; Waldegrave, Tamasese, Tuhaka & Campbell 2003; Weingarten 2003; White & Denborough 1998; Winslade & Monk, 1999; Zimmerman & Dickerson 1996) have engaged with Narrative Therapy practices and have made significant contributions to this constantly evolving body of knowledges and ideas as they work with the relationship between theoretical ideas, clinical practice and ethics.

[17] The publications of the Institute for Therapeutic Development (Kotzé & Kotzé, 2001; Kotzé & Morkel, 2002; Kotzé, Myburg & Roux, 2002) describe the extensive application of narrative therapy by pastoral therapists within the South African context.

[18] Refer to Chapter Four for more about the collaboration with the Strand Muslim community.

with boys who were stealing. My paper (Morkel 2000) on this work was received with enthusiasm by colleagues who approached me to offer training and supervision. I developed a vision that the passing on of Narrative Therapy skills might inspire other psychologists to work in impoverished communities[19].

My involvement with my colleagues and ITD students introduced me to Liberation and Contextual theology[20]. I was furious when I discovered the degree to which I was a victim of the theology of apartheid that was biblically justified by the DRC (De Gruchy 2002: 32; De Gruchy & Villa Vicencio 1983: xviii; Villa Vicencio 1988:23):

> Sunday after Sunday, deeply faithful, mainly Afrikaans-speaking churchgoers were told that apartheid was good. Many sincere, believing people, who desperately wanted to follow God's Word, uncritically supported the policy of apartheid because it had been preached from the pulpit since their childhood.
>
> (Niehaus 1999:85-86)

I started grappling with the words - 'God is love' - that had confronted me from the pulpit every Sunday from my youth. 'God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them' reads I John 4:16. How could we claim that we abide in God if we were so clearly not abiding in love towards our neighbour? I remembered my favourite childhood Bible story - the parable of the Good Samaritan which Jesus tells to illustrate love for our neighbour (Luke 10: 25-37). Although I always wanted to hear it, this story provoked such a strong emotional reaction from me that my dry sobs could be heard from my bed after I had gone to sleep. I remember clearly that as a child I experienced distress about the man being robbed, beaten and left at the side of the road to die; but what upset me more was the hope that I experienced as the footsteps of the priest and Levite approached. I could not bear their heartlessness as they ignored the poor, injured man by crossing to the other side of the road to continue their journeys! But what distressed me now as an adult was that I could clearly see *myself* in the priest and the Levite who ignored the suffering and distress of the robbed and injured man, rushing along to church and church meetings. I started understanding that one of the ways in which I was brought up within my church was to regard the relationship with God as more important and as separate from the relationship with my neighbour.

As I worked in the Strand Muslim community I got to experience the injustices and the social problems that stemmed from apartheid in my body, and it pained me deeply. My people were responsible for stripping others of their dignity by dehumanizing and humiliating them. My people had robbed others

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[19] I discuss the ripples from the training practice in Chapter Four.
[20] In Chapter Two I reflect on how these theologies influence my understanding of a participatory pastoral approach

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of their land, their right to live together as families and communities, their right to enjoy the facilities and natural gifts of this country, their right to proper education, their right to speak their languages and their right to economic prosperity. The most painful realization was the way in which I had personally benefitted from these injustices. It suited me not to see the injustices and to turn a blind eye:

> Despite the fact that apartheid as a system was successful in separating people, despite the fact that white South Africans were subjected to a great deal of ideological indoctrination, if we did not know it was because we chose not to know. Yes, we are born innocent and we become accountable.

(Ackermann 1998:90-91)

I could no longer be passive. I could no longer ignore my responsibility to participate in restoring some of the injustices to which I contributed through being a member of the DRC and through benefiting so much from the privileges I had taken for granted all my life. I knew that I had to *be and do church* in a different way. Hantie Kotzé (2000: 40) speaks about the changes we need to undergo in the process of developing a relevant spirituality for post-apartheid South Africa: 'Spirituality needs to be a way of life that integrates the political, economical, social and religious dimensions of human existence and sustains one to keep living life to the fullest.'

I joined my UNISA students by enrolling for the MTh in pastoral therapy and completed it with a thesis which reflected on the work in the Strand Muslim community (Morkel 2002). In terms of my spirituality and identity as a Christian this formalising of my learning was a significant experience. As I continued my supervision and training practice in Narrative Therapy my group of colleagues slowly became an alternative faith community for me where I could give voice to and practise the ways in which I believe God was calling me.

My exposure to the writings of feminist theologians marked another significant shift in my awareness and empowerment. I learnt that:

> Racism and sexism use much of the same methods to justify the domination of one group over another. The Bible is used to qualify the hierarchical structuring of society, the church, the family and the world. This means that the centre of life is not the interconnectedness of all beings before God, but rather a specific order. Through the eyes of hierarchical thinking, life can only flourish if human beings are created on the basis that man was created first and then woman; and that humans should rule this world by domination.

(Kotzé H 2000:39)

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As my awareness of the oppression that I am subjected to as a woman grew, the more 'racism became visible for the evil power that it was and is' (Kotzé H 2000: 38). I experienced what Kotzé H (2000: 38) describes as: 'The oppression of the political regime became clear because of the oppression I felt from the inside.' In addition, my participation in the Dutch Reformed Church was becoming increasingly problematic. Since leaving university, Jaco and I had remained as active church members, but frequently both of us felt that we were not really able to participate fully. The hierarchical structures of the church made it almost impossible for ordinary members to fully utilize and develop their gifts. In most congregations everything was controlled by the ministers who, when we tried to initiate activities or make contributions, often responded with suspicion, or viewed us as a threat or did not give us their support.

At the beginning of 2004 we made a very painful decision to resign from the congregation where we still resided geographically and where we had been active members of a close-knit community for fifteen years. It was like leaving a beloved family. We moved our membership to the much bigger Helderberg congregation on the other side of Somerset West where we knew the ministers well. In the early 1990s, we had attended a discipleship school in Helderberg congregation in which our training had included leadership of small groups. The idea of encouraging ordinary members to participate within small groups in mutual care, worship, outreach and study - independent of direct input from the ministers - excited us immensely[21]. The leadership of Helderberg congregation had used me as trainer and facilitator of their small group leaders ('omgee groepleiers') for about five years before we became members. This was the first opportunity that I had had to use my gifts for teaching within the DRC and it was very meaningful for me. Our change of membership was motivated by two factors. Firstly, we knew that the leadership[22] respected, honoured and encouraged the active participation of ordinary members. Secondly, this congregation also had a policy of spending at least fifty percent of its income on outreach work and had a very well-established NGO, Helderberg Uitreik, attached to the congregation through which to do this work.

In 2005 I was invited to be the plenary speaker at the '*Verantwoordelike Vernuwing'* (Responsible Renewal) Seminar. The DRC had just announced the beginning of a Listening Season and I was asked to give a talk on the theme '*Hoe luister ons*? (How do we listen?) (Morkel 2005)*.* I am convinced

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[21] I was hugely encouraged by publications from within the DRC like *Poorte vir die Genade* (Burger & Simpson 1996) which assisted congregations in forming meaningful small groups.

[22] Years before we joined Helderberg congregation, Ds Pilot Loots treated me as a valued colleague in matters regarding pastoral work. Ds Okkie Brits acknowledged my gifts for teaching and was instrumental in the invitation extended to me to do the training of small group leaders for five years. This was a very meaningful experience at a time when my participation in the DRC was marginal. Dr Breda Ludik and Dr Danie O'Kennedy participated with me in this training in affirming ways while making visible the knowledge and skills that they gained. Ds Hannes Theron attended narrative therapy training that I presented and consulted me on issues of social justice.

that I was expected to speak as a psychologist and an expert on communication skills. But the organizers got more than they had bargained for as I spoke about the importance of contextual listening from the DRC as the church responsible for apartheid. After my talk a leader from the Uniting Reformed Church (URC)[23], Ds Pieter Grove, rose spontaneously and asked permission to thank me and to thank God 'for I never thought that I would see the day when such a contextual message would come from the DRC.' In the audience that day were many of the men who had attended university with me as students of theology who were now ministers in various parts of the Western and Southern Cape. As a woman who had felt discredited, excluded and marginalised for so many years, claiming a public voice from within the DRC in this way was a significant and healing event.

Although the office of deacon had been open to women since 1982 (Büchner 2007: 225) and that of elder and ordained minister since 1990 (Büchner 2007: 268), I had never served in any offices, largely because I could not identify with the leadership of the congregation in which we were members. When I was elected onto the church council of Helderberg congregation in 2006 I had reason to believe that it would be different. I was soon elected vice-chairperson and served as chairperson in 2009 and 2010. In 2008 the Moderamen of the Synod of the Western and Southern Cape decided that it was important to have another woman[24] and co-opted me to serve as member of the Executive of this regional synod. It is in middle-age that I have been given the opportunity to serve God within the leadership of the DRC. My focus has now become that of an aware and empowered witness (Position One on the grid) of my own life as Afrikaner as I struggle together with my church and people to deal with our racist and sexist past[25].

The grid has assisted me in articulating a process of raised awareness where taken-for-granted discourses and practices were challenged and social injustices became evident. Ackermann (1998:90) asserts that: 'The longing for changes that will mend the world, is born in awareness.' I illustrated how awareness created an almost desperate longing to participate in healing and change. This led the active seeking for empowered responses to the hardships and injustices that I became aware of:

> The healing we require is one which combines both a rigorous accountability to our different communities and histories with a reaching across differences to 'the other' seeking collaboration in the cause of healing, and being prepared to be vulnerable yet actively contributing and concerned citizens.

(Ackermann 1998: 91)

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[23] Refer to Chapters Two and Five for more discussion of the painful struggle to unify the split DRC and URC
[24] Ds Franziska Andrag-Meyer was already serving on the moderature.
[25] Chapter Five focuses on my participation with the DRC in transforming itself in the new South Africa.

It seems to me that what Ackermann refers to as awareness, accountability and healing could be understood as being similar to the aware and empowered responses that Weingarten refers to on her grid that I used in the telling of my personal story. Although I have told my personal story as one of progression on the grid from a position of unaware and disempowered to aware and empowered witnessing, I have to point out that the research will show that my positioning on the grid is always shifting. The shifting happens as the challenges that I face change (sometimes through change in context, but often through heightened awareness) and I am called to respond in accountable and healing (empowered) ways.

1.3 The research problem and practical theology

1.3.1 Practical theology and my personal story

My personal story reflects the realities of a white Afrikaner woman and member of the DRC growing up and being educated in South Africa in the 60s and 70s. Louw's (2011:2) description of practical theology in South Africa during this time period fits with my experience that the dominant paradigm in reformed theology was 'the formal offices of minister, elder and deacon as connected to the authority of Word, sacrament and discipline.' This made for an approach that was individualistic with the central focus on personal salvation. Ministry had an obsession with making sure that faith was correct (orthodoxy) and absolutely secure (geloofsekerheid) (Louw 2011:2). There was a far stronger emphasis on maintaining the internal and denominational well-being of the 'true church', with little reflection on God's concern for the experiences of human suffering, discrimination and stigmatization. Outreach and ministry was a soul-winning endeavour within the paradigm of ecclesial maintenance. According to Louw (2011:3), the dominant paradigm in the Society for Practical Theology in South Africa in the 1970s was the clerical paradigm with the main emphasis on the offices of the church and the proclamation of the Word. No wonder I experienced such a sense of loss, marginalization and lack of authority with my exclusion from ordained ministry at that time. I experienced huge frustration within the clerical paradigm and within a church that excluded women from the offices: I was unable to express my gifts within the congregations that we belonged to. It also explains my blindness to the human suffering around me, despite my active involvement in outreach programmes. These were all focussed on evangelism or practical assistance, with hardly any analysis of the social and economic suffering on the farms in the Boland or the mission stations in the Transkei that we visited. Yet, in my mind I was living 'close to the

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Lord' as I was being built up through Bible Study, training in evangelism and other activities which focussed on personal spiritual growth and sharing the Gospel.

Louw (2011:3) points out that within the South African Society of Practical Theology, A C Barnard emphasized the importance of small groups in ecclesiology as early as 1979, while Louw (1980) wrote a book to emphasize the office of 'lay people' in the church. He also proposed a move from the formal clerical paradigm to the informal *koinonia*-paradigm of small cell groups. But there was limited interest in these ideas as the 'evangelistic praxis of the church functioned mostly under the spell of what one can call the Constantine exploitation of power' (Louw 2011:4). An authoritative, powerful and imperialistic church praxis was established with God as the patriarch of civil society. The church functioned under the umbrella of this omnipotent God as a political enterprise that could prescribe the policy of governments. This was how the DRC - a powerful, patriarchal church - managed to motivate not only that apartheid was the solution to tension between races, but also that women were inferior to men and should therefore be kept from decision-making and official functioning (Louw 2011:4). My lack of awareness and my acceptance of the injustices that I was part of - both as oppressor and oppressed - stem from the powerful voices of authority which claimed the Gospel as the truth from where it spoke. In my formative years it was almost unthinkable to think and question beyond these parameters. But, by the 90s, once I had personally participated with great excitement in the movement towards small groups within the DRC, I experienced it as a wonderful shift towards empowering 'lay people' and challenging the clerical paradigm and power structures of the church.

In a research project on the position of practical theology in South Africa at the end of the 1980s, Burger (1991:59-62) identified three basic approaches:

- The *confessional approach* which was the central approach within the DRC family, with a strong emphasis on Scripture as only source of knowledge. A deductive method was used to reveal the truth of God's word in all dimensions of life: in the office, church, Christian life, world and society. Practical theology was focussed on the church and its services.
- A *correlative approach* where the focus shifted to an inductive method of research and where practical theology was viewed as communication and action orientated. While Scripture was respected as basic source and norm, it was used in a more indirect rather than direct manner. Space was created for making interdisciplinary links between experience, the secular human sciences and theological insights. Although the church and its work remain in the focus, there is a wider scope. The use of the theory-practice-theory

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spiral led to the conclusion that practical theology, with its involvement in praxis, may be called an empirical theology (Heyns & Pieterse 1990:48). The correlative approach was practised more at UNISA, Rhodes and Durban-Westville Universities (Burger 1991:60).

- The *contextual approach* where the context or social situation in which practical theology operates is analysed with a view to transformation and liberation. Here the focus on the world rather than on the church is even stronger and the role of Scripture and tradition varies from person to person. Louw (2011: 5) points out that this model was not in the foreground of practical theological reflection in the South African Society of Practical Theology due to a very exclusive approach to membership which involved mainly the three Afrikaans speaking Reformed churches. Members did not include people involved in the struggle for political liberation, such as the well-known reformed contextual theologian, John de Gruchy, who is mentioned by Burger (1991:61) as a proponent of this approach.

Burger's research explains some of my frustrations within the DRC until the beginning of the 1990s. My gifts as an ordinary female member, even as a well-known psychologist and public speaker, were always measured against the fact that I was not an expert on Scripture or serving in a church office. In keeping with the view that I experienced in church, our 'community' was white and part of the church (mostly DRC!), or otherwise 'they' were objects of evangelism. My church kept me far away from the influence of theologians who questioned social injustices. As an ordinary female member who was a practitioner of the social sciences, I had very limited opportunity to participate and was definitely *not* invited to share my personal experiences or theological understandings. For a long time I believed I had nothing to offer as I was so successfully indoctrinated. I was led to believe that my work - or my vocation as I regarded it - as a psychologist had nothing to do with my membership of the church.

It was only in 2000, when I joined the MTh programme in pastoral therapy as supervisor of the ITD students that I started reading some theology texts. I remember my tears of joy as I read the work of liberation, and more specifically of feminist, theologians which allowed me to integrate my vocation as an ordinary woman of God - a Christian psychologist with a passion to see and embody God's call for justice and social transformation – with my participation in the church. At last I started to understand that I was, in fact, practising theology.

1.3.2 Qualitative research in practical theology

Van der Ven (in Louw 2000:89) points out that theology, and especially practical theology, is concerned with understanding the quality of the relationship between God and humanity: 'Theology in general does not have God as its direct object, but religious praxis; this religious praxis can be observed and tested.' When I selected an empirical method of research I focused on the existential and contextual implications of faith within the God-human interaction process (Louw 2000:89). In this, I am following Schleiermacher who 'shifted the paradigms of practical theology from the hierarchical and clerical paradigm to the empirical dimension of human experience and religious experiences' (Louw 2011:8). My interest is in what practical theology deals with as 'applied' Christianity. For me this implies the 'technical' aspects of skills development and strategies for a transformative pastoral ministry (Louw 2011: 8). My concern is the empirical research of a participatory pastoral praxis which expresses 'the art of overcoming the distance between human life [as it is] and what it is meant to be' (Louw 2008:72). The central research question that I work with reflects my concern with practical theology as an *action* science which works towards connecting Christian faith to the praxis and context of our modern or postmodern society (Louw 2008:72). The central research question is:

How does a participatory pastoral praxis contribute to social transformation in a post-apartheid South African society?

I endeavour to attend adequately to the *normative requirements* of empirical research in practical theology based on the work of Habermas as described by Van der Ven (2002: 21):

- The teleological question which relates to our personal and communitarian life: I work with this when I discuss, critically, my personal story and in Chapter Three our wider South African context.
- The deontological question relating to a responsibility to others and for a just society: I will discuss my understanding of social justice in relation to my personal story further in this chapter and more extensively in Chapter Two where I discuss the characteristics of a participatory pastoral praxis.
- The question about being pragmatic, about being effective and efficient in our actions: this is exactly what my research question reflects on and will be the empirical material of my research, as reflected in Chapters Four and Five.

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Louw (2011:14) stresses the importance of the paradigm shift created by qualitative research and its implications for practical theology. According to him, praxis-thinking in theory formation for practical theology has to include the hermeneutical spiral between Biblical text and context. This praxis-thinking, arising from the methodology of hermeneutics, takes place within an interpretative paradigm dealing with the qualitative meaning of text and human actions. This makes qualitative research an important contributor to practical theological research and theory formation. The quest in qualitative research is not for objectivity and explanation (as found in natural sciences) but rather for '*meaning* and a deeper *understanding* [Swinton & Mowat's italics] of situations' (Swinton & Mowat 2006: 37).

In this interdisciplinary study I will use material from a range of academic disciplines. As my study has a focus on liberation and transformation I will draw on contextual and liberation theologies, particularly feminist theology. From the social sciences I will use post-structural theory, particularly the way in which it is used by feminists and narrative practitioners. My praxis is mainly informed by Narrative Therapy and feminist theology, while I will use the work of economists, sociologists and feminist researchers for a discussion of the social realities of the South African society.

1.3.3 Problem identification and research question within the realm of practical theology

One of the questions that I have grappled with in the research problem is: Can the participatory praxis - which is aimed at critically analysing the social realities of a post-liberation South African society and contributing towards its transformation from my position as Christian psychologist, trainer, community worker and leader within the DRC - contribute to Practical Theology praxis and theory formation?

When I look at Browning's (1983:10-17) summary of the most important paradigm shifts in Practical Theology theory formation I am encouraged in terms of my own research. He mentions the following:

- A shift away from the clerical paradigm and exclusive concentration on the internal life of the church towards a greater focus on the *life of the church in the world*.
- Emphasis on practical theology as a critical discipline that enters into *critical dialogue* with other religions and various forms of secular knowledges which make up our pluralistic society.

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- This critical dialogue should emphasise the crucial role for theological ethics and moral philosophy as disciplines and tools that will assist in making choices regarding the norms and means of *social and individual transformation*.

- An affirmation of the priority of practice over theory through *praxis,* where theory that is implicit is made explicit through critical reflection: 'The difference between practice and praxis is that in the latter the theory has been made self-conscious and reflected upon critically' (Browning 1983:13).

- An emphasis on the role of social sciences as an *interdisciplinary* partner in practical theological methodology 'to channel action possibilities.'

- Practical theology is becoming more action that is focussed on political liberation – Liberation theology - with a shift away from *saying* in the direction of *doing*.

My research reflects most of the features of the paradigm shift in Practical Theology as described by Browning. In the following section I will discuss the various features of my research problem and formulate the basic research assumptions with which I work, keeping in mind Browning's agenda for important paradigms within theory formation.

1.3.4 Lay Christians and practical theology

In her discussion on authority within the church, Julie Clague (1996: 12-13) explains that the traditional Christian understanding of authority is reliant on a hierarchical conception of reality. She points out that the powerful institutional church seldom resembles the New Testament 'authority-as-service' model. A hierarchical structure linked to male leadership dominated where men held positions of authority and have been invited and qualified to speak with authority. The resistance to women as leaders which impacted my life so significantly has been well-documented in the context of Christianity.

In my personal story I referred to the way in which my male friends who were theological students became increasingly educated in theology. I now understand that they had started speaking with the voice of authority which came with that knowledge and expertise which Clague (1996:12) calls 'being an authority':

> It has been men who, on the whole, have held positions of authority, and have been described as authorities and have been said to speak with authority. Women, on the whole, have been ruled and have obeyed, have been denied their voice, and have been denied the opportunity to become authorities in their own right.

(Clague 1996: 13)

Traditionally, theology has been seen as closer to an individual's intellect than to the heart: 'It has for centuries been developed in libraries and through the reading and re-reading of books' (Aquilar 1996: 44). Theology can also be seen as an instrument of control in a patriarchal society, in which the male clergy acted as the only interpreters of God's message and revelation with their rational answers to the mysteries of God.

The shift away from the clerical paradigm within practical theology provides me - a woman, Christian psychologist and a lay member of the DRC - with the opportunity to reflect on my praxis as a theological endeavour. As an ordinary woman of faith I take seriously the definition of practical theology offered by Cochrane et al (1991: 2) as: 'that disciplined reflective theological activity which seeks to relate the faith of the Christian community to its life, mission and social praxis':

> Christians, whether lay or clerical, are involved in ministry arising from their faith and directed towards others and the world. We assume that this ministry is global, that it is the work of the whole People of God, that every member of the Church has a 'priestly' and 'diaconal' vocation and responsibility whatever their specific walk of life.

(Cochrane et al 1991: 3)

Although I had been excluded from the ordained ministry, I have always been clear about my faith commitment as I 'acknowledge and confess Jesus of Nazareth as the Christ: redeemer, liberator and Lord' (Cochrane et al 1991: 15). Through the telling of my personal story I illustrated how my faith commitment has always been an integral part of how I view my life and vocation as Christian psychologist. I have related my story as one in which 'moments of insertion' (Cochrane et al 1991: 17) - where I was directly confronted with injustices through experiences from my context - contributed to a growing awareness of the injustices of apartheid and sexism within my church and family. This became the starting point from where I understood that my confession of Jesus of Nazareth as the Christ called for a prophetic way of doing my work and that I had to start partaking actively in the coming of God's justice and peace within my particular community and church.

The participatory pastoral praxis that developed involves much more than the internal life of the church. It is concerned with the life of the church in the world. In terms of this presupposition my research will be guided by the following basic research assumptions. They will function as undergirding indicators to systematize my thinking.

Research assumption one: As an ordinary woman of faith I can contribute to practical theology through a participatory pastoral praxis that supports the healing and transformation of the DRC and the post-apartheid South African community.

1.3.5 Critical reflection on my personal story as part of participatory pastoral praxis

I have told my own life story in order to account for the way - and to understand the extent to which - my own life has been impacted by my complicity in the oppression of black people, my privileged position as a white South African and the effect of a patriarchal culture on my personal life. I have described the significant physical response that I experienced during the time of my heightened awareness to the social injustices of our society. The desire to love myself implies the forgiving and healing of myself through making sense of the ideologies and practices that have impacted (and still impact) my life. The critical reflection on my own life serves the following purpose:

> …healing and wholeness are not possible until those of us who are white women are prepared to acknowledge our complicity in the oppression of black people. We also become vulnerable when we realize how we have co-operated in maintaining patriarchy in our society. We have to examine critically the damage suffered by internalizing oppressive images of ourselves, as well as the damage we have inflicted on others. This critical reflection, which is more productive than guilt, comes from our desire to love ourselves, our neighbour and God.

(Ackermann 1994: 207-208)

Further on in this chapter I will continue this critical reflection on my own story from the perspective of social injustices.

Research assumption two: The critical reflection on my personal story as a white Afrikaner woman assists me in understanding and dealing with the complexities of my own position within the ideologies that inform and maintain the practices and accompanying effects of racism, sexism and poverty in the South African context.

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1.3.6 The critical lenses of Feminist theology and a post-structural paradigm

I have indicated how the training in Narrative Therapy enabled my empowered response to the trauma of a wider South African society. The participatory pastoral praxis which I will research is shaped by the practices of Narrative Therapy and the poststructuralist theory[26] which informs it. When one reflects on the theorists[27] that informed the development of Narrative Therapy, one can conclude that 'Narrative Therapy can be considered to be a post-modern, post-structuralist form of therapy positioned within the social constructionist domain of social psychology' (Besley 2001: 74) Since participating in theological reflection on my praxis I have found the work of liberation and contextual theologians, more particularly feminist theologians, extremely helpful. The participatory pastoral praxis researched in this dissertation has become much more than just the application of Narrative Therapy ideas and practices. As I became more theologically educated, feminist and other liberation theologies started to inform and shape my praxis in significant ways. Ackermann (1994: 198) points out that all theology reflects on the story of human beings' relationship with God. The telling of my personal story as a point of departure for my theological reflection is in line with Ackermann's (1994: 198) suggestion that: '*women's* stories, *our* context and *our* experience give our theology its particularity.' I identify strongly with Ackermann's (1996) Feminist theology of praxis for which a strong source of reflection is the actual histories of women and other marginalized and oppressed people struggling against race, gender and class oppression. Later in this chapter I will view my personal story through various critical lenses. As an interdisciplinary researcher I will use mainly the lenses of Feminist theology and feminist-post structuralism which have become the main theological and philosophical influences in my work towards social and individual transformation.

Research assumption three: Feminist theology and Narrative Therapy (which has its roots in post-structuralist theory) provide me with critical lenses through which to view my personal story as well as the social realities of South African society and inform my work towards social and individual transformation.

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[26] Within Narrative Therapy it is particularly poststructuralist theory as expressed through the work of French philosophers Michel Foucault (White 1990; 1992:109-152; 1995: 41-59; 2004:98; 2007:25) and Jacques Derrida (Freedman & Combs 1996:29, 46; 2002: 206; White 2000: 37; 2004: 102; 2007: 210) that is of importance.

[27] Apart from Foucault and Derrida, White and Epston refer to a variety of social science theorists who have informed the development of Narrative Therapy ideas and practices: ethnographer Edward Bruner (in White & Epston1990:12; 1992; White 1995; White 2007), psychologist Jerome Bruner (in White & Epston 1990:13,77-79); social constructionist Kenneth Gergen (in White 2004:76); anthropologist Clifford Geertz (in White & Epston 1990:13; White 1992: 79; White 2004:98), sociologist Erving Goffman (in White & Epston 1990:15) and anthropologist Barbara Meyerhof (in White & Epston 1990 ; 1997: 22-5; 2007:136-139).

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1.3.7 My praxis in the light of my personal story

Ackermann (1998: 90) suggests that 'The longing for changes that will mend the world, is born in awareness.' My research problem is a concern with the kind of praxis that will make the 'changes to mend the world' a reality within the South African context. I have expressed my commitment to contribute towards the healing of the post-apartheid South African society and to do this through awareness of and participation with the people who find themselves on the margins of my privileged white world. Over the more than ten years of my raised awareness and striving for empowered responses I have developed a participatory pastoral practice which seems more in line with the prophetic calling that I now experience. When I reflect on this practice I engage in what practical theology calls 'praxis':

> Praxis involves the ongoing integration of action and reflection through which political and social processes are maintained. Praxis refers to an intentional action which is aimed at transforming patterns in society. When practical theology is engaged in praxis, it reflects on intentional action strategies which are aimed at transforming social contexts. Hence, the interest for a 'doing theology' in practical theology.

(Louw 2000: 91)

Towards the end of my personal story I made reference to some of the empowered responses that became part of my life and practice. In this dissertation I will describe these 'intentional action strategies which are aimed at transforming social context' and research their contribution to the transformation of a post-apartheid society. Later in this chapter I will introduce the main characteristics of a participatory pastoral praxis as they are reflected in my personal story.

Research assumption four: A participatory pastoral praxis is an aware and empowered response to social injustices.

1.3.8 Narrative Therapy as transformative praxis in practical theology

As described earlier, Narrative Therapy, an approach from the social sciences, provides critical lenses that are useful for social analysis in practical theology. More importantly, it provides practical theology with the *practices* that enables an interdisciplinary focus on liberating action. In terms of a participatory praxis that wants to support social transformation, I will mention briefly the main practices that I am drawn to in this work. Firstly, through a linguistic practice called 'externalization' therapists are assisted to join their clients in researching the problem(s) and its effects on their lives in ways that expose and challenge dominant cultural narratives by which people organise and live

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their lives (Morgan 2000:46-47). The impact of socio-cultural factors on the lives of individuals, families and communities can be investigated and challenged. Secondly, the idea about the social construction of identity fits with the ideas of 'ubuntu' *which* honours the connections that people have with others in a way that fundamentally challenges individualistic ideas of Western culture. There are many practices associated with Narrative Therapy which assist in inviting other people into the therapeutic endeavour in ways that re-member these people and their experiences of the client, family or community so that stories which challenge dominant problem stories become available to those encountering problems. These practices (therapeutic documents, outsider-witness teams, re-membering conversations) assist clients to feel joined by others in the challenges that they experience in life (White 2007:129; 165 & 166). Thirdly, the de-centring of the therapist through practices of collaboration and re-membering implies that the therapist offers conversational skills, but works with the local knowledges and resources of the client and of the community to which the client belongs. This makes therapeutic work more respectful to cultural differences and more effective and accessible in terms of time and finances (Morgan 2006: 60). It also opens up more possibilities to take the work beyond the limitations of a consulting room and therapeutic conversations. Lastly, the focus on resources and solution knowledges in the stories of clients, families and communities allows for respectful and culturally sensitive as well as very hopeful engagements, especially in situations that offer limited options for people's lives (White 2007:61).

Research assumption five: Narrative Therapy provides practical theology with an interdisciplinary partnership which contributes to liberating action as expressed in a participatory pastoral praxis.

1.3.9 The social problems of South African society as reflected in my personal story

In my personal story I related some of the experiences of my life as white Afrikaner Christian woman who grew up and lived in the apartheid society for the first 37 years of my life and, since 1994, in the democratic post-apartheid South Africa. I described my personal relationship with racism, sexism and poverty as I shifted my witness position from unaware/disempowered to unaware/empowered to aware/disempowered and then on to a more authentic and integrated position of aware/empowered. Ackermann (1996b:36) challenges us to incorporate the legacies of apartheid in our theological reflections. Her description of post-apartheid society and the church is still applicable today and highlights how racism, sexism and poverty remain as central issues fifteen years after the advent of democracy in South Africa:

> Violence and criminality, the direct results of poverty and displacement caused by apartheid legislation, are placing the lives of many South Africans in a straitjacket of fear and uncertainty. Forced removals and the herding of people into racially segregated areas ruptured family lives for countless people. Persistent racist and sexist attitudes, gross economic disparity which has largely benefited whites and ecologically ravaged areas particularly in the erstwhile homelands are among the legacies of the apartheid years. And, needless to say, the church still suffers from clericalism and sexism.

(Ackermann 1996b: 36)

In order to engage in action towards the liberation of a post-apartheid South Africa I need to do a contextual analysis of the social problems and their historical basis. My personal story assists me in doing this and in identifying the main problems.

Research assumption six: The main social problems that need to be transformed in post-apartheid society are problems related to racism, sexism and poverty which form part of our apartheid legacy.

1.4 Critical discussion of my personal story in the light of South Africa's main social problems

I will now apply the critical lenses offered to me by **Liberation theology, especially Feminist theology** and the **post-structuralist theory offered by Narrative Therapy and feminist theory,** to reflect on the three main themes of social injustice - namely, sexism, racism and poverty - as reflected in my personal story. Although these categories of injustice will be discussed separately, they are closely interrelated, especially in South African society (Cochrane, De Gruchy & Petersen 1991:62; Cock & Bernstein 2002: 147-148; Ramphele 2008:104). I will weave the interdisciplinary critical strands of reflection together in my reflections as this is how these are expressed in the participatory pastoral praxis that I will research in this thesis. In this way I will introduce the main interpretive lenses of this qualitative research to my own story, which serves as case study for a contextual analysis of South African society over the past five decades.

1.4.1 Sexism

I decided to start by reflecting on the sexism within South African society as my story as daughter of a farmer illustrates so vividly the concept of patriarchy which is a key category of social analysis in Feminist theology. Patriarchy also has implications for understanding racism in the South African context. Ruether[28](1996: 173) describes patriarchal societies as: 'those in which the rule of the father

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[28] I use Ruether (1996) as reference for the rest of the discussion on patriarchy in this paragraph.

is the basic principle of social organization of the family and of society as a whole.' Patriarchy originated in nomadic herding systems and continued in later more socially stratified agricultural settlements, influencing the ways in which the legal, economic and social structure developed. The male head of the family had sovereign power over dependents in the household. These included the wife, or wives, children and slaves. Property - such as buildings, land and animals - was passed through the paternal lineage to the patriarch as sole owner. Women's education was limited and their chief role was to reproduce heirs for the husband's lineage and to care for the household. Legally, women were defined as lacking citizenship. As a result of challenges to patriarchy that developed in Western Europe and North America in the late nineteenth century, by the beginning of the twentieth century many women had won citizen rights to vote, own property and be admitted to higher education and professions.

The photos in my father's office on the farm depicts the patriarchal system whereby male family members become the masters and owners of the land as passed on from father to son. Since my brother inherited the farm some ten years ago, my sisters and I have become mere visitors to the land which forms an important part of our world and identity. It is difficult not to see his position - as owner of our family farm where we all grew up, but from which we have now been marginalized and excluded - as a concrete confirmation of the superiority of sons (men) and inferiority of daughters (women). Patriarchal structure would explain why women longed to give birth to sons and why my father 'rewarded' my mother when his son, his heir and carrier of the family name, was born.

This position of power gives my brother access to sought-after resources. However we, his sisters, find it difficult to speak about our sense of sadness and loss. We dare not mention our anger about the injustice of the significant financial benefits and opportunities that my brother enjoys for fear that this will be interpreted as greed. Referring to the relationship between discourse and power as described by Michel Foucault, Burr (1995:62) explains the kind of power that silences us. For Foucault 'knowledge, the particular common-sense view of the world prevailing in a culture at any one time, is intimately bound up with power' (Burr 1995: 63). A discourse provides a frame of reference from which to interpret the world and give it meaning (Burr 1995: 57). Some discourses have greater potential for having 'common-sense' or 'truth' status, which then marginalizes other discourses in a culture at a given time. In the farming community where I grew up, the patriarchal discourse about the ownership of land is such a dominant discourse that my sisters and I are silenced or deeply frustrated when we try to raise the injustice of the social practices associated with it. Religious discourse about 'greed' as sinful could be seen as an added silencing factor. Nobody who subscribes to this patriarchal discourse (of land ownership) would call my brother 'greedy' as his wealth will be viewed as his 'God-given

birthright.' The logic of patriarchal discourse would be that my brother needs the farm in order to look after his family. My sisters and I were expected to find husbands to take care of us. In exchange for their financial care we have to produce children and take care of our husbands' homes.

Reuther (1996: 174) points out that, despite changes regarding women's rights, patriarchal culture, particularly through religion, continues to reproduce the ideal (discourse) of the dependent housewife whose main work is in the home. The idea of complementarity is partly based on obvious physiological differences between men and women, but is mainly based on traditions of biblical interpretation and on historically based Christian practice (Gelder 1996: 33). This has led to the assumption that the sexes are not whole without one another. Biblical claims that women and men were created to complement one another begin with the Genesis account of creation. The argument for rigid complementarity is that woman is made from man, for man, after man and named by man, all of which are said to indicate her inferiority (Gelder 1996: 33). New Testament texts are used to say that the submission of women to men is divinely ordained and that it is wrong for women to take leadership roles. Gelder (1996:34) explains how these texts have been used as proof-text for woman's inferiority to man and her position as a secondary or incomplete image of God. She points out that since these arguments had taken place in the context of patriarchy, a hermeneutics of suspicion to the conclusions drawn about female inferiority and rigid complementarity is justified. Dualisms, have been set up: male as mind is closer to God; female as body is closer to earth:

> Rigid complementarity is a type of apartheid. It pays lip service to a form of equality between the sexes but sees nothing valuable in women beyond their difference from men. It is inextricably linked with false claims about inferiority of women. It works to prevent both women and men from developing full humanity and more perfectly imaging God.

(Gelder 1996: 34)

During my childhood, at the height of apartheid, male domination at home was hardly questioned. Most Afrikaner women resigned themselves to patriarchal authority and a domestic role (Du Pisani 2001: 164). My mother definitely defined her 'role' and 'calling' in life as being to support and submit to my father. Her main function was a private one as mother to their children and head of the household. It was a role that denied her the opportunities to develop her many gifts (which were much better suited to public life) while she supported my father. As a very successful farmer, my father enjoyed status and power in our community, and served in many public roles and positions. The picture of my brother in the public space of the office on the farm signifies his calling as heir and master of the farm. In contrast, the bridal pictures of my sisters and me in the privacy of my parent's

bedroom signify the reaching of our destiny as women, and my mother's 'success' in the domestic sphere.

I have struggled with my identity as a woman. Weedon (1987: 3) discusses how poststructuralist theory provides us with a way of understanding the relationship between the individual and the social. She explains that the social institutions that we enter as individuals - for example, the family, school, university, the church and fashion culture - pre-exist us. We learn that the values and norms that they seek to maintain and the ways that they operate are true, natural and good. This is how we learn, from an early age, what girls and boys - and later, men and women -should be. These ways of being an individual (subject positions) might not always be compatible and we learn that we can choose between them. Although a range of subject positions exist for women, all the possibilities nevertheless involve accepting, negotiating or rejecting what is constantly being offered to us as our primary role – that of wife and mother. In my family I learnt that spinsterhood reflected failure and tragedy while marriage and motherhood spoke of fulfilment. Foucault's ideas of self-surveillance in response to what is perceived to be 'natural' in a society would offer an explanation of how women internalize and act according to these dominant discourses (Burr 1995:67). Isherwood and Mc Ewan (1993: 24) describe the effect of these stereotypes:

> Sex-role stereotypes, sweetly smiling females neatly turned out and proportioned, ever submissive, docile, helpful, as if developed according to a formula, replicate the pattern of domination and subordination: if one sex is defined as being submissive, if stress is laid on this quality, then it follows that the other sex is rightfully dominant.

Foucault regards power and resistance as two sides of the same coin (Burr 1995: 64). The power implicit in one discourse is only apparent from the resistance implicit in another. This can be illustrated by my admiration for and identification with my aunts as professional women and my determination to have a family and career, thereby resisting the patriarchal discourse of my family. My parents provided me with an alternative subject position as they both supported and celebrated my gifts and talents throughout my life. I remember my confusion at times during my school career when I realized that to achieve and beat boys at public speaking is rewarded, yet it is also dangerous as it might make me less attractive as a woman. I sensed this same tension in my parents who expressed fear that I might not get married if I was 'too career-orientated', yet they both took my call to ordained ministry seriously and shared my pain at the injustice of exclusion from this calling by the patriarchal Dutch Reformed church.

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In a patriarchal society the Christian God is male, communicates with men first, who in their turn share the message from God with the community of believers (Aguilar 1996: 43). I experienced overwhelming confirmation of this 'truth' in church and at university as my male friends became increasingly educated as theologians and, in the process, effectively marginalized my voice as a theological agent. The story of my calling to ordained ministry soon became subjugated into what Laird (in Bons-Storm 1996: 57 - 58) describes as an 'unstory' or a 'story that is not there'.   The door is shut on an 'unstory', for it contains roles for women that clash with the proper roles dictated by dominant cultural discourses. I was coerced into accepting my 'proper role' as one of following a second choice career and fitting into life as a married woman whose husband's career came first. The 'naturalness' of the career hierarchy was supported by the fact that as a female teacher I earned less than my male colleagues with similar qualifications and experience and far less than my husband who worked as a cost and management accountant. It was when I struggled to fall pregnant that I got angry and confused about my worth and identity in relation to this 'Almighty God' who had rejected my gifts for His church; moreover, he had prescribed the role of wife and mother for me, but had then deprived me of the fulfilment of motherhood.

In poststructuralist theory *language* is the common factor in the analysis of social organization, social meanings and power as well as individual consciousness (Weedon 1987: 21). Our subjectivity is constructed through language and is produced within a whole range of discursive practices, such as economic, social and political discourses. Experiencing myself as 'the infertile woman' had devastating effects for my identity as a woman:

> The prevailing assumption that motherhood and child-rearing bring women 'natural fulfilment', and by inference, that childless women are not quite what they should be, involves attributing particular social meaning and values to the physical capacity to bear children.

(Weedon 1987: 130)

Ironically, it was an experience in church that provided me with an opportunity to deconstruct the meaning of infertility. The minister, who was preaching from John 15, said: 'Wees vrugbaar' (Be fruitful) just as I was thinking about my appointment with my gynaecologist later that morning. Immediately I thought: 'No, you don't understand, *ek is onvrugbaar* (I am infertile).' I then realized that I had huge potential to bear the kinds of fruit that comes from abiding in God and loving others in the way that John 15 teaches. Referring to the work of Derrida, Sampson (1989: 7) explains: 'To deconstruct is to undo, not to destroy.' Placing a term *under erasure* means to cross the word out, but

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to print both the word and its deletion. Putting 'infertile' under erasure I am able to understand that it is both necessary to hold it in order to acknowledge a painful part of my life and identity, while at the same time it is also an inaccurate description of my life and identity. This understanding gave me many alternative ways to live my life. My act of resistance to the pain, loss and helplessness of infertility was to focus on bearing fruit through living the marginal discourse of a married woman as a public figure and in a successful career. Weedon (1987: 125) points out what Foucault's work offers feminists:

> Although the subject in poststructuralism is socially constructed in discursive practices, she none the less exists as a thinking, feeling subject and social agent, capable of resistance and innovations produced out of the clash between contradictory subject positions and practices. She is also a subject able to reflect upon the discursive relations which constitute her and the society in which she lives, and able to choose from the options available.

The process of adopting our son, Hannes, required us to consider alternative discourses besides the patriarchal discourse of biological parenting. When Jaco was retrenched shortly after we adopted Hannes I was challenged once again to deconstruct dominant beliefs about motherhood: suddenly my family leaned heavily on my career success for stability. With the help of a caring day mother, her family and loving nannies, I shared my mothering responsibilities while embracing the discourse reflected in the African proverb 'it takes a village to raise a child' (Anderson & Johnson 1994: 91). Jaco also stepped in by being an amazingly involved and caring father with whom I could share parenting responsibilities.

In Jewish and Christian traditions patriarchy has shaped religious expression. God is seen as an 'all-sovereign patriarchal male ruling over his household, the earth, and his *familia*, symbolized as sons or servants' (Reuther 1996: 174). Social systems have been structured in a hierarchy of male over female, father over sons, and master over slaves or servants. I have pointed out already how patriarchy has had a very negative impact on women; what is perhaps less widely acknowledged is the ways in which patriarchy affects everyone in society (Isherwood & McEwan 1993: 105). Morrell (2001: 17) describes the dominant discourse of being a white man during the apartheid era as: 'being a protector, a wage-earner and knowing the right thing to do.' My father lived strictly according to these prescribed principles. For the thousands of white men who, like Jaco, lost their jobs as a result of the transformation, restructuring and affirmative action that has taken place in South Africa post 1994, it has been extremely difficult to lose the central part of their identities as 'breadwinners' as prescribed by a patriarchal culture. I have indicated how my brother struggled with the conflict arising from his dream to be a medical doctor and the discourse about 'the right thing to do' , which prescribed that he took up his role as heir and farmer. I admired him for even considering that he

might have a choice. His eventual decision to succumb to the dominant patriarchal discourse came after a long struggle and at great personal cost. Similarly, when compulsory military service for all young, physically fit, white South African men was introduced during the time of militarization in the 1970s and 1980s, the discourse about 'duty' and 'the right thing to do' impacted the lives of many young men, like my brother and my husband:

> For one or two years the lives of 18-year-olds were largely controlled by corporals and sergeants, many of whom were tough and crude professional soldiers….Afrikaans schools and churches participated in pro-government indoctrination….The puritan sense of duty was invoked to mobilize and motivate young men for military service.

<div align="right">Du Pisani (2001: 165)</div>

My mother used to tell a story about my brother's angry response when she dared ask him whether he *enjoyed* the army. He made it clear that he managed and survived while 'doing the right thing.' We never learnt how bad things were for him as he was silenced by the dominant discourse that idealized and romanticized military service and the army. Du Pisani (2001: 166) explains how these discourses depicted 'soldiers as heroes who sacrifice their lives for volk en vaderland (people and fatherland)' and that military service served as initiation into manhood. My story illustrates how my brother is both a beneficiary and a victim of patriarchy while I, as a white woman, am simultaneously a victim of patriarchy, and a beneficiary of apartheid.

1.4.2 Racism

Ackermann (1994: 202) concurs that a critical analysis of the place of white women in South African society reveals that our experience is one of being both oppressors and oppressed. She points out that when black women analyze their context it would reveal multiple oppression which includes that of race, class, gender and religious elements:

> The origins of the alienation between white and black women lie in the history of colonialism, cultural and class divides and, above all, in the policy of apartheid with all its ramifications. Undeniably, white women have been advantaged in every sense at the expense of black people.

<div align="right">Ackermann (1994: 202)</div>

Segregation between black and white in South Africa was coupled with a subordination of blacks (Ericson 2001: 190). Ever since the arrival of the first white settlers, black people were compelled to

do manual labour (on the land, in the houses, in the mines etc) for the whites who owned nearly all of the land and other natural resources. This state of affairs came to be viewed as natural or even divinely ordained (Ericson 2001: 190). I have indicated how my family's experience of and contact with coloured and black people has been almost exclusively within relationships of 'master and servant' on the farm or 'madam and maid' in our home. Apart from the obvious imbalance of power in such relationships it also supports the stereotypes of inferiority of black and superiority of white people. The impact of this master-servant relationship on whites has been profound:

> Almost all white South African children have bred in the bone the experience that there is always someone cleaning, cooking, serving for them, and that this somebody is black. Before they consciously reflect on this situation, they have already absorbed the impression of standing above black people – a sense of superiority at the most profound emotional level which is reinforced daily in school and church, in economic circles and social gatherings.

> (Müller-Farenholz in Ericson 2001: 191)

The impact on blacks has been no less profound: it has stifled ambition and has negatively affected self-confidence and the inclination to take initiative. Rev Ms Elythia Nompula describes it this way:

> When you are oppressed you have no pride in what you do…because at the end of the day you still don't benefit out of it, it is not yours; it is your oppressor's.

> (Ericson 2001: 191)

As was recounted in my personal story, the 'maids' had perfect opportunities to learn about the lives of their 'madams' and their families, while there was very little interest from our side to get to know about their lives. Research done by Jacklyn Cock (in Ericson 2007: 5) in the late 1970s confirmed that very few white 'madams' expressed any deeper understanding of the life situation of their black 'maid' and other black women. Ericson (2007:5) says that this indicates the existence of mental 'dividing walls', apart from the physical ones, even in situations when white people had quite affectionate feelings towards their black servants. The chances for open and direct communication, whereby both parties could be challenged by each other's life stories, were inhibited by the fact that servants in subordinate and dependent positions developed the art of hiding their real thoughts and feelings from their 'bosses' in order to appease them (Ericson 2007: 6).

According to Weedon (1987: 109), the most powerful discourses in our society have firm institutional and legal foundations. The separation between black and white in South Africa has not only been a

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social norm or custom, but has also formed part of government policy (Ericson 2001: 185). I grew up with the following two dimensions of racism:

> [Racism is]…an ideology, a system of social, economic and political power structures that perpetuates and justifies itself by creating racist stereotypes and fostering attitudes of racial prejudice. These two dimensions of racism (power structures and personal prejudice) constantly reinforce each other, which makes racism an extremely difficult ideology to eradicate, once it has become entrenched in a society.

> (Kritzinger 2001: 237)

Apartheid was based on the idea that whites, who were regarded as the 'civilized race', should have control over the state. The state in turn was not obliged to provide equal facilities for the subordinate races (Ericson 2001: 230-231). Racial mixing was seen as degrading for whites based on the belief that blacks were physically, mentally, spiritually and morally inferior (Ericson 2001: 231). The power structures of apartheid kept the coloured children on our farm, like their parents before them, in the inferior school system for blacks, described by Tutu (1999:16) as 'a sheer travesty of education, designed to prepare black children for perpetual serfdom as the servants of their high and mighty white bosses and mistresses.' When these children struggled to make academic progress it was seen as a proof of the dominant discourse about the 'nature' of black people. It was easy to stereotype them as 'stupid', 'lazy' and 'lacking in ambition'. The farm workers' complete dependence for survival on the 'boss' - the farmer - deprived them of options for their lives, resulting in dropping out of school early to work on the farm in order to supplement the meagre family income. Very few recreational options, living conditions of poverty and very little hope for breaking the cycle of serfdom and poverty made life on the farm a fertile environment for social problems such as alcohol abuse, violence, teenage pregnancies and family conflicts. In keeping with the discourse about natural moral inferiority this resulted in stereotypes such as 'coloureds are drunks' and that they are all violent, unable to control their sexual urges and abusive. Through these stereotypes they could be made responsible for their own problems and thus it was easier for us, the white farmers and their families, to drive past the beaten-up people along the road in our nice cars on our way to church on Sundays. When my father's treatment of his workers and their working and living conditions were compared with that of other farmers, he was able to conclude that he was 'taking good care of his people.' This paternalistic view of the relationship with the farm workers fits with a patriarchal world view and obscures the fact that within such relationships the subordinate and dependent farm workers had limited power and choice for developing their own lives beyond the confines of that relationship.

When considering the impact of racism on South African society, a useful distinction can be made between personal/direct or structural/indirect violence. Structural violence is present when, 'although

no individual might do any direct harm to any other person, conditions that prevent certain people from developing their potential (e g the uneven distribution of resources) are embedded in the social structure itself' (Gultang in Ericson 2007: 7). In this regard, racism has been embedded into the social structure of the DRC itself. Ackermann (2004: 3) starts her discussion on 'otherness' and 'difference' by telling the story of the resolution of the Dutch Reformed Synod in 1857 that reads:

> The Synod considers it desirable and scriptural that our members from the Heathen be received and absorbed into our existing congregations wherever possible; but where this measure, *as a result of the weakness of some* [Ackermann's italics], impedes the furtherance of the cause of Christ among the Heathen, the congregation from the Heathen, already founded and still to be founded, shall enjoy its Christian privileges in a separate building or institution.

'*The weakness of some*' referred to the racism of some of the white settlers. In this way the structural separation of believers along racial lines began as the 'Heathen [began to] enjoy its Christian privileges in a separate building…' This separation ultimately led to the theological justification of apartheid. It also illustrates how cultural ideologies became more powerful than the demands of the gospel. According to Ackermann (2004:4), '[t]he synod's decision shows quite nakedly how the divide between "us" and "them" serves the powerful "us" at the expense of the "them" or the "other".'

In a later chapter I will deal more with the history of the development of separate churches within the Dutch Reformed family of churches. This story, combined with stories of racial segregation in other social structures - such as schools, universities, neighbourhoods etc as reflected in my personal story - confirms the 'normality' that I experienced when we dropped off the coloured 'farm workers' at 'their' church. The status of the farm workers - mere servants who were 'owned' by the farmer - 'justified' their being transported like cattle on the back of the truck while I sat with my father in the front. This status fitted perfectly with patriarchal discourse which was, in turn, confirmed and entrenched by the church.

Denise Ackermann (2004:5-6) describes four responses to difference or otherness which I recognize clearly in some of the responses to black people as related in my personal story. The first is to see 'the other' as a *tabula rasa*: someone without a story, identity or history. The response would be to *make difference into sameness*. Some missionaries responded to indigenous people in a way that implied: 'You should be like me. But, as you are not like me, remember that I am the centre, the fixed point by which you and "the rest" are defined.' Similarly, my mother's concern about the pregnancies outside of wedlock reflects some of this response. I remember that she promised several of her domestic workers a traditional white wedding dress if they managed to get married without having a 'voorkind' (child born before marriage). A second response is to see 'the other' as a *threat*. We viewed the

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migrant workers from the Transkei - with their strange language and different appearance and customs - in this way. Their enemy status was heightened when they joined the 'unrest' by handing in their passbooks by way of protest. The third is a response where 'the other' is seen as some *exotic, romantic being* who is so different that she or he either does not have to be taken seriously or is seen as a universal category of person without particularity. The 'Bantus'' from the Transkei were definitely seen in this way. I remember the strange men who all looked identical to me. I knew even less about their individual lives and circumstances than that of the coloured farm workers'. Their treatment on the farm - as a group who had to live together under bleak conditions in the compounds - is a further confirmation of their being seen and treated as a group without regard for individual differences or needs. The fourth response is when difference leads to *indifference followed by abandonment.* This is the response that I have had to acknowledge about my own life. I became so wrapped up in my own social and cultural world that I simply excluded those who were not part of it: I did not 'see' the suffering or injustices happening around me. This response is common:

> [W]e exclude the other when the boundaries or our identities are threatened, when we feel discomfort as our symbolic world is impinged upon, and we reason that we need protection from the onslaughts of difference and otherness in order to be who we are.

(Ackermann 2004: 6)

Ericson (2001: 238) refers to the way in which many white South Africans perceived black people as belonging to another species. This dehumanization of blacks was strengthened by language. Blacks were often referred to as 'skepsels' ('creatures') rather than as 'mense' ('people') and a black person was regarded as not quite a 'person' in the same way as a white was a person (Ericson 2001: 231). Similarly, the media used language that reflected the dehumanization of black people. For instance, a newspaper reported an accident in which 'one person and four natives were injured' (Ericson (2001: 231). It was little wonder then that I did not notice inhumane treatment and structures: we did not recognize the black people as humans!

The widespread use of migrant labour was yet another way in which structures dehumanized blacks. In terms of the Xhosa migrant workers on our farm, it has only been very recently that I have started to consider the devastating effect that this system had had on individuals, their relationships and families. Men were separated from their families for six months at a time while living under conditions where their dignity was assaulted on a daily basis: '… the effect of limited physical space on the psychological well-being of black people during the apartheid era was devastating' (Ramphele 2008: 228). The construction of a positive self-image and sense of themselves as agents of their own destiny

was severely impacted by restricting these men to inhuman living conditions. Self-respect and respectful relationships were not able to thrive. Maluleke (2005: 108) writes about the lives of the black women, like his mother, who 'eke[d] out a life of permanent waiting' while being confined by the apartheid system to the rural areas of South Africa. They were waiting for migrant husbands, brothers, fathers and sons to come home on brief visits and for letters or money from them. Children were raised by women, without men around them. Family life was severely impacted in a country which called itself 'Christian':

> The tragedy of this situation is that the very people who maintained the migrant system included thousands of Christians who confessed their belief in the sanctity of marriage; called God 'father' whilst depriving thousands of black children of the presence of their fathers; and engaged in sentimental orgies on Mother's Day whilst condemning mothers, wives and daughters of migrant workers to a lone struggle for survival.

(Kretzschmar 1991: 111)

In my personal story I mentioned my disbelief at how the apartheid government managed to convince us as Afrikaners that we were right while the whole world shouted the injustices of apartheid. I relate so well to the description that Morrell (2001:17) gives of the authoritarian masculinity that I encountered at home, school and church:

> The South African government was made up of men – Afrikaans speaking, white men. They espoused an establishment masculinity which was authoritarian, unforgiving and unapologetic.

The authority with which these men acted and the power granted to them as male leaders in a patriarchal society would offer some explanation for the way in which Afrikaners followed them without questioning. As Ackermann (1994:205) reminds us: 'Racism and sexism are structures of domination which create conditions for the abuse of power, a truth too evident in South African society.'

1.4.3 Poverty

Any version of feminism that sees women only as innocent victims is lacking in critical social and political awareness: 'Sadly, women are no more immune than men to the seductions of power, to the abuse of privilege, or to the distortions of racism' (Ackermann 2003: 32). I have benefitted from the cheap labour of our domestic helpers who were often separated from their own children and families in order to care for us. I remember how my childhood nanny who came from another part of our community fell pregnant. She had to leave her baby with her mother to come back to work in order to support her child and contribute to her parents' household. The many illegitimate births within the

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coloured community have made women particularly vulnerable to poverty (and they still are). They were often abandoned by the fathers of their children and had to leave school to work and tend to their children on their own. It is clear that there is a strong interconnection between racism, sexism and poverty within South African society as they support each other.

Ramphele (2008: 77) states that all white South Africans were beneficiaries of apartheid - we benefitted significantly from free education, access to cheap labour that guaranteed high profits and property acquisition at subsidized rates that ensured a firm basis for capital accumulation. 'Few white South Africans admit that their relatively high standard of living was purchased at the cost of the impoverishment of black people' (Ramphele 2008: 77).

My personal story talks of a very committed Christian life, one in which my family and I took very seriously the conversion and Biblical instruction of 'heathens' who were often represented by 'the other' in our society. How did it happen that we never really cared about or did anything about their overwhelming poverty, social problems and oppression? One explanation for this indifference would be the dualism that split the spiritual and physical worlds and the patriarchal discourse that gave overriding importance to the spiritual dimension of life. The discourse of being God's 'chosen people' entrusted with a sacred mission enhanced the Afrikaner's sense of superiority and gave justification to its focus on spiritual rather than political and social involvement with the black people of South Africa (Ericson 2001: 94).

Another explanation for this indifference of white South Africans to the hardships suffered by the black population could be as a result of the enforced segregation by the state as well as state censorship:

> Social customs, reinforced by the official radio and television and the controlled press, sheltered them from knowing how their black compatriots lived. Few Whites ever saw an African, a Coloured, or an Asian at home. Fewer still spoke an African language….Whites were conditioned to regard apartheid society as normal, its critics as communists or communist-sympathizers.

> (Thompson in Ericson 2001: 186)

This distance created a 'desensitized conscience' (Ericson 2001: 186) amongst whites. It is clear from my story that our contact with the farm labourers was superficial. We never visited their homes, never shared meals together and took only a limited interest in their home lives and the challenges that they faced. For instance, I remember a story about a meeting of the Amos Project, a Christian organization working towards reconciliation and Christian fellowship between farmers and their workers. The

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facilitator of the meeting asked each farmer to do a little case study by sitting with one of his farm workers. They had to take the income of this family and work out a budget for that family. This exercise had many of the farmers in tears as they realized that for many years their workers had been living below the bread line. They went back and gave their workers substantial raises in their wages.

In the light of the previous outline of the research problem, the research indicators and a critical reflection on my personal story as determined by social-cultural contextually I will now turn to a discussion of the implications of my research presuppositions for a praxis approach in practical theology.

1.5 Practical theology and the development of a participatory pastoral praxis

The development of a participatory pastoral praxis arose out of my experience of despair at finding my 'expert' knowledge and the years of professional training as a psychologist ineffective in addressing the seemingly overwhelming problems of people living outside of my middle-class world. This despair can be seen as:

> [A] product of living with taken-for-granted privilege and its promise – of having access to the resources, to the opportunities, and to positions in structures of power that make it possible, in at least some domains of life, for therapists to achieve sought-after ends in a specified and usually brief period of time through singular and independent action.

> (White 1997:197)

My idea of effective action was closely linked to an ethics of control which is accountable to 'global' norms and 'universal principles' rather than the feedback of the person seeking consultation. White (1997: 197) acknowledges the work of Sharon Welch, a feminist theologian and ethicist, in influencing his ideas regarding the despair in the context of taken-for-granted privilege. According to Welch (1990:14), the ethics of control implies becoming easily discouraged. It refers to the despair of the middle class who are accustomed to power and to having political and economic systems that respond to their needs. Narrative Therapy provided me with the possibility to follow an alternative ethic, one which White (1997:198) refers to as an 'ethic of collaboration.' Collaboration recasts effective action as that which is taken in partnership with others. The therapist becomes more accountable to the person seeking consultation 'in developing an understanding of the task at hand, in developing a consciousness of the context of person's lives, and in developing an appreciation of what it is that constitutes the preferred real effects of the therapeutic conversation' (White 1997: 199). It is possible

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to identify the characteristics of a participatory pastoral praxis from my personal story as related at the beginning of this chapter. I will do this in a brief reflection here, but a full discussion of these characteristics of a participatory pastoral praxis follows in Chapter Two.

In my personal story I relate how my certainties were shaken up through the drastic political changes following the release of Mandela in 1990 and all the personal implications that this had for me. Entering middle age thus marked a renewed reflection on my Christian calling in a world that suddenly looked very different to the one I had known until then. These **personal factors**[29] combined to open me up to heightened awareness of the **political** and social meanings around me and forced me to consider these in terms of my Christian faith and identity. I have explained how I struggled to re-position my **psychology practice** so that it supported my beliefs of becoming participatory beyond the middle-class paying group of my community. As a 'conscious thinking subject', I wanted to give expression to my newfound awareness so that I became an 'agent of change':

> Social meanings are produced within social institutions and practices in which individuals, who are shaped by these institutions, are agents of change, rather than its authors, change which may either serve hegemonic interests or challenge existing power relations….How we live our lives as conscious thinking subjects, and how we give meaning to the material social relations under which we live and which structure our everyday lives, depends on the range and the social power of existing discourses, our access to them and the political strength of the interests which they represent.

(Weedon 1987: 25-26)

Having experienced the isolation within the expert position as a psychologist as well as my experience of isolation, as a white person, from the majority of South Africans and the devastating effects this had on my emotional well-being as well as my body, I had no other option but to live and work differently. I relate strongly with Father Lapsley (1996: 18) who said that, as a Christian he believed that we are called to love God and our neighbour, but that apartheid had prevented him from being a neighbour to people of colour. In this way he felt robbed of his humanity and needed to recover his humanity by participating in the struggle to liberate South Africa. Although my own awareness came too late to participate in that struggle, I realized that it was not too late to participate in the healing of our broken society. Through **entering into relationships with black people,**[30] I experienced empowerment:

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[29] Characteristic of participatory praxis: The personal is the professional is political
[30] Characteristic of participatory praxis: Participating with *the other*.

> Empowerment is a process in which one's sense of personal identity is enlarged to include the quality of one's relationships with others in the world. In this way, being a 'person' means not simply being 'oneself' but being-in-relation-to-others. Empowerment relativizes our self-understandings. We are not autonomous, separate beings, but rather are persons only in relation. Our well-being is always relative – in relation – to others.

(Heyward 1996: 52)

When I speak of raised awareness to the injustices of apartheid, I have to acknowledge that at some level I was always aware of how different and bleak life looked for black people in South Africa. Like the Priest and the Levite who walked by the Samaritan in Jesus' parable, it was *empathy* that I lacked. Ericson (2001: 94) explains how in a racist society 'the other' is transformed into 'inhuman' or 'subhuman' when perceived as an inferior species through a process of dehumanization. Such dehumanization destroys empathy with 'the other'. It seems that empathy is only possible when the humanity of 'the other' is restored. Ericson (2007: 10) suggests that personal acquaintance with non-stereotypical individuals from the 'other group' and co-operation towards a mutually desired goal as types of encounter that could be healing. Fortunately at that time I was working **with coloured colleagues**[31] on a conference organizing committee. I found my conversations with these colleagues, **who were my equals**, extremely helpful in establishing the kind of relationship Ericson suggests in which I could experience true empathy for their experiences during apartheid. I also experienced acute empathy when I volunteered my services as a psychologist at the Strand Muslim School, but at the same time I went **with an awareness**[32] of my role as oppressor and beneficiary of the evil apartheid system.

Reading *Country of my Skull* (Krog 1998), an account of the TRC hearings as witnessed by a fellow Afrikaner woman, assisted me in facing my own accountability in the same way that sharing stories with Elmarie and Dirk Kotzé as Afrikaner colleagues had assisted me. Similarly, Hantie and Judith Kotzé's stories assist me in facing my own story. My understanding of the value of **collective discussions or stories of shared experiences**[33] is explained by Weedon (1987:33):

> Collective discussion of personal problems and conflicts, often previously understood as the result of personal inadequacies and neuroses, leads to recognition that what have been experienced as personal failings are socially produced conflicts and contradictions shared by many women in similar social positions.

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[31] Characteristic of participatory praxis: Participating *with* people.
[32] Characteristic of participatory praxis: Participating with *awareness.*
[33] Characteristic of participatory praxis: Participating *together* with others.

Through 'collective discussions or stories of shared experience' I also became more aware of how I had been a victim of an oppressive patriarchal system in the DRC. Tatman (1996: 214) objects to the claims to universal truths and disregard for difference such as race, sex and class within texts and dogmas of the church. The church is struggling to transform the sexist language as reflected through the exclusion of female pronouns and metaphors in prayer books, hymnals, Scripture readings and from pulpits:

> Within traditional theological text the implicit norm is that of a privileged White male: White male authors have written of the 'universal human condition' out of experiences of their own well-educated, well-paid, White male lives.

(Tatman 1996: 214)

Feminist theologians have called for an end to the dishonesty of this practice and have insisted that honest theology demands accountability to the complexities of our lives:

> Liberation theology understands itself as dialogue between scripture and tradition on the one side and the concrete daily life experiences of the people of God on the other. It encourages us to recognize that we cannot do theology as though we lived in some abstract realm or dead corner of history – we have to be involved in our world. Further, it makes us face the uncomfortable reality that injustice is not simply an act of fate; it is caused by people's actions and therefore requires people's action to redress the balance.

(Isherwood & McEwan 1993: 76-77)

The question could be asked why it is that women like me do not leave the 'patriarchal church' of my birth and conviction. It is precisely because I believe that the church 'requires people's action to redress the balance' of the injustices that I continue to participate in the DRC. Feminist Christian theologians have a new vision to offer their churches – 'an inclusive model that pervades the system from grassroots level to abstract theological concepts' (Isherwood & McEwan 1993: 131). I have indicated my struggle to **find a voic**e[34] that challenges the dominant patriarchal and oppressive discourse within the church. Gelder (1996: 32) discusses the option of finding a **community of choice**[35] where women can develop their own voices. I have described my involvement with such a community, which grew from my teaching of Narrative practices to students of pastoral therapy, which I developed alongside my participation in the DRC. The painful decision my husband and I made to move our membership to another congregation in our area that better fitted our values and that was

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[34] Characteristic of participatory praxis: Participating in *voicing.*
[35] Characteristic of participatory praxis: Participating *together with* others.

more welcoming of the gifts that we had to offer was our attempt to find a 'community of choice' within the DRC. Like Ackermann (2003: 50) I believe that the church is a tool in the hands of God for making good the promise of healing creation. She refers to Paul's first letter to the Corinthians where he calls the church the Body of Christ and says that **all members of the Body are interrelated, interdependent and indispensable[36]**. I believe that I, like all the baptized, have a gift to offer in making the Body more Christ-like. Through my participation in the leadership of the congregation and in the regional synod I have a responsibility to participate in **the transformation of our church and our community by addressing the oppression of sexism, racism and poverty[37].** Sometimes this task feels overwhelming in a church which is still dominated by patriarchal discourse. Basing her understanding of resistance on the work of Foucault, Weedon (1987:111) reassures me that: 'Resistance to the dominant at the level of the individual subject is the first stage in the production of alternative forms of knowledge or where such knowledge already exists, of winning individuals over to these discourses and gradually increasing their social power.' This gives me hope that lone voices for change can make a difference – even in the most patriarchal of structures.

For me, the first step in making a difference came in acknowledging my own complicity in injustice. Desmond Tutu, Archbishop Emeritus of the Diocese of Cape Town and a stalwart in the struggle for political freedom in South Africa, suggests that reparations need to be made when there have been injustices. He uses the example that if I have stolen your pen, it would not be enough to say "Please forgive me," if I keep your pen. If I am truly repentant I will return the pen. Only then will reconciliation, which is always costly, be reached (Tutu in Ericson 2001:426). Through my **embodied participation[38]** with the Muslim community I wanted to make reparation for past injustices. I hope to show in my research some of the ways in which a participatory pastoral praxis opens up opportunity for **restitution[39]**.

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[36] Characteristic of a participatory praxis: Participation in *interrelatedness.*
[37] Characteristic of a participatory praxis: Participating in *social transformation.*
[38] Characteristic of a participatory praxis: Participation with our *bodies.*
[39] Characteristic of a participatory praxis: Participation in *restitution.*

1.6 Research Methodology

1.6.1 Type of study

Empirical research

Empirical research is indicated in the case of a research question that addresses a real-life problem. My research question, 'How does a participatory pastoral praxis contribute to transformation in a post-apartheid South Africa?' fits with the category of 'descriptive questions' as identified by Mouton (2004:54). I will do empirical research of the 'social interventions' (Mouton 2004:52) involved in a participatory pastoral praxis as expressed in my work as therapist, community participant, trainer of Narrative Therapy students and member of the DRC. The main source of new information in this research is the description and discussion of examples from my praxis in the various contexts of pastoral participation; this makes it an empirical study. Non-empirical research, which Mouton (2004: 57) describes as 'philosophical analysis, conceptual analysis, theory building, literature reviews', also forms an important part of the research. Literature reviews assist in providing theoretical frameworks for my praxis and critical lenses for reflecting on my praxis as well as on my personal story. I rely on literature reviews to provide important data in terms of a contextual analysis of the post-apartheid society in which I develop my praxis and where I strive to contribute to social transformation. According to Pieterse (1998:180), South African Liberation theology is inductive and empirical in its approach: it stresses the importance of context and experience, the religious interpretation of these experiences and theological reflection thereof in the light of the message of the Bible and theological tradition.

A hermeneutical approach to pastoral and practical theology

The word 'hermeneutics' is derived from the messenger of the gods, Hermes, in Greek mythology, who had to explain the plans, thoughts and decisions of the gods to human beings. Literally meaning the 'art of interpretation', hermeneutics has to do 'with explanation, with speech, with translation, with communicating a message, with interpreting something to people who want to hear and understand' (Smit 1998: 275-276).

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The pastoral encounter is about the relationship between God and humanity. This relationship 'should be understood as a hermeneutics of pastoral care which endeavours to establish an encounter which, metaphorically speaking, is an embodiment of the presence of God' (Louw 2000: 81) According to the hermeneutical model, it is no longer possible to explain God in terms of cause and effect to prove God or to explain God's characteristics in an abstract and objective manner:

> The choice of a dialogical and metaphorical model of God, linked to a personal concept of the God-human relationship, means that pastoral care views theology as a hermeneutical science. Theology is concerned not so much with a declaration of the being of God and of creation, but with understanding and interpreting the meaning of the God-human encounter. A hermeneutical approach aims to explain and interpret the nature and character of God's involvement with humanity.
>
> (Louw 2000: 83)

In both pastoral theology as well as practical theology's empirical models there is a tendency to give preference to an inductive rather than a deductive approach (Louw 2000: 86). Van der Ven's spiral model in epistemology (theory-practice-theory) and the reciprocity between theology on the one hand, and theory and praxis on the other leads Heyns and Pieterse (in Louw 2000:87) to conclude that: 'Practical theology may, because of its involvement with praxis, be described as empirical theology.'

Louw (2000:88) explains why the term 'empirical' can be applied to theology. Firstly, it implies an attempt to focus theology on real life issues. Secondly, 'it is an attempt to enhance the process of understanding and interpretation' because knowledge of God is never 'pure', but reflects human experience of God: 'Theology in general does not have God as its direct object, but religious praxis; this religious praxis can be observed and tested' (Van der Ven in Louw 2000:89).

Both pastoral theology and practical theology should be viewed as sciences that deal with the venture to interpret and understand the intention of God's salvific acts within different human and social contexts:

> As 'doing theology' they try to assess the intention of human acts in order to transform our world in terms of the basic ethical principle: love. Both are involved in different methods of discourse, communication and dialogue in order to instil meaning in life.
>
> (Louw 2000: 106)

The praxis of pastoral ministry is the ethical principle of Christian love. This involves the unconditional acceptance of the fellow human being who becomes the metaphor for the challenging presence of God within creation. A hermeneutics of pastoral theology should assist us in the rediscovering of our

identity before God and, at the same time, re-discovering the 'you' in the 'me' by putting myself in your place (Louw 2000: 107). The pastoral endeavour should also assist us to listen more deeply to the loving care of God.

Qualitative research

'Qualitative' implies that the emphasis in research is on the qualities of entities, processes and meanings which are not measured in terms of quantity, amount, intensity or frequency. There might be no measurement involved at all in qualitative research:

> Qualitative researchers stress the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry. Such researchers emphasize the value-laden nature of inquiry. They seek answers to questions that stress how social experience is created and given meaning.

<div align="right">(Denzin & Lincoln 2003: 13)</div>

Quantitative studies, on the other hand, emphasize measurement and analysis of causal relationships between variables and are not interested in processes. They also claim that their work is done from a value-free framework (Denzin & Lincoln 2003: 13). In terms of this distinction between qualitative and quantitative studies, my research is definitely located within the qualitative domain.

My understanding is that qualitative research is **difficult to define** as it means different things in different historical moments and within different disciplines (Denzin & Lincoln 2003: 4). My research fits with the broad definition of qualitative research as given by Denzin and Lincoln (1994: 2), namely 'the study of things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings that people bring to them.' In an attempt to give a generic definition of qualitative research Denzin & Lincoln (2003:4-5) explain that:

> Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world.

A **variety of empirical materials** can be collected and used in qualitative research. These include case studies, personal experience, introspection, life stories, interviews, artefacts, cultural texts, observational, historical, interactional and visual texts (Denzin & Lincoln 2003:5). All of these materials may be collected to describe particular routine or problematic moments in the lives of individuals. I

used storytelling and personal experience earlier in this chapter and I will make use of a variety of empirical materials in the rest of the research as I will indicate later in the discussion of participatory action research.

A **wide range of interconnected interpretive practices** are deployed by qualitative researchers in their effort to get a better understanding of the matter at hand (Denzin & Lincoln 2003:5). Each practice contributes to make the world visible in a different way. In my own work I will use more than one interpretive practice, which is often the case in qualitative research. As indicated earlier in the chapter, my interpretive lenses include Liberation theology, especially Feminist theology and post-structuralist theory as reflected in Narrative Therapy and feminist theory.

Post modernity, which deconstructs the certainty of modernity with its rationalistic search for logic and proof, has opened new avenues for theology to be described as a science in its own right (Louw 2000: 103-104). Science now becomes an endeavour which is embedded in historical and cultural contexts and which acknowledges that theory is continually influenced by subjective and relational factors. Instead of the demand to prove, there is the need to understand and to interpret. **Research in theology becomes qualitative** as it focuses on interpreting the meaning of the relationship between God and human beings/creation. According to Louw (2000: 104), 'it becomes a hermeneutic enterprise which tries to understand the *intention* of God's salvific acts and the *intention* of human endeavours.'

Participatory action research

I have selected participatory action research as the best fit for the research of a participatory pastoral practice for three reasons. First, it suits my research interest in describing *actions* taken in different contexts of my life and work (Mouton 2004:151). Second, it has an explicit *political commitment* to the empowerment of participants and to contribute to social change (Mouton 2004: 151). And third, it takes seriously the *knowledges and understandings of participants* (Kemmis & McTaggart 2003:347) as does a participatory praxis.

In their discussion of participatory action research Kemmis and McTaggert (2003:354) explain a reflexive practice which is to be studied dialectically that I fully identify with in terms of my study. It is a view of practice that challenges the dualisms of the individual over the social and the objective versus the subjective. These dimensions are seen as related aspects of human life and practice, to be understood dialectically and as mutually necessary aspects of human, social, and historical reality in

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which each aspect helps to constitute the other. Practice is understood as enacted by individuals who act in the context of history and in ways constituted by a vast historical web of social interactions among people. It is also understood that practice has both objective and subjective aspects: both are necessary to understand how practice is practised; how it is constituted historically and socially; and how it can be transformed. This view can be described as 'reflexive', because:

> [C]hanging the objective conditions changes the way in which a situation is interpretively understood, which in turn changes how people act on the 'external', objective world, which means that what they do is understood and interpreted differently, and that others also act differently, and so on.

> (Kemmis & McTaggart 2003: 354)

In the study of practice within complex contexts, where many kinds of communicative and organizational relationships exist among people in socially, historically, and discursively constituted media of language (discourse), work and power must be understood dynamically and relationally:

> And we should recognize that there are research approaches that aim to explore these connections and relationships by participating in them and, through changing the forms in which people participate in them, to change the practice, the way it is understood, and the situations in which the practice is conducted. At its best, such a research tradition aims to help people understand themselves both as 'objective' forces impinging on others and as subjects who have intentions and commitment they share with others, and both as people who act in ways framed by discourses formed beyond any of one of us individually and as people who make meaning for ourselves in communication with the others alongside whom we stand, and whose fates – one way or another – we share.

> (Kemmis & McTaggert 2003: 356)

The spiral of cycles of self-reflection – planning, acting, observing, reflecting, replanning, and so on – is the dominant feature in participatory action research. Kemmis and Mc Taggert (2003: 384) however, identify **seven other key features of participatory action research**. I have included literature from action and feminist research that support their theory.

- **Participatory action research is a social process.** It deliberately explores the relationship between the realms of the individual and the social. It is a process followed in research settings where people individually and collectively try to understand how they are 'formed and re-formed as individuals and in relation to one another in a variety of settings' (Kemmis & McTaggert 2003:384).

- **Participatory action research is participatory.** Shared decision-making and self-disclosure (Reinharz 1992:181) will assist in ensuring that all participants have ownership and agency in the production of knowledge and improvement of practice (McTaggert 1997:6, 28-29). Hall (1996: 29) stresses that the relations between researcher and research participants proceed in a democratic manner and that the researcher's theory-laden view is not given privilege over the participant's view. Zuber-Skerritt (1996: 5) agrees that a hallmark of action research and the action researcher is collaborative participation in theoretical, practical and political discourse.

- **Participatory action research is practical and collaborative.** It is about '[l]earning to do it by doing it' (Freire in McTaggert 1997:5). It is about theorizing *in* and *from* practice (McTaggert 1997:20). Lather (1991: xv), who researches teaching methods, asserts that 'in our action is our knowing.' Action research values what people know and believe and starts with everyday experience (Smith 1997:184). It is concerned with the development of 'living knowledge' (Reason & Bradbury 2002:2). The researcher and participants learn from their own experience and make this experience accessible to others (Mc Taggert 1997:28). Evidence is derived from authentic data which resonates with the life experience of the researched and researcher (Hall 1996:29). According to Grundy and Kemmis (in Zuber-Skerritt 1996:5), '[a]ction research is research into practice, by practitioners, for practitioners.'

- **Participatory action research is emancipatory.** McTaggert (1997: 40) emphasises that action research is about changing situations, and not just interpreting them. The purpose of the research is thus more knowledgeable action rather than to know more about the problem (Reinharz 1992: 178). Writing about their research on rape, Bristow and Esper (in Reinharz 1992:179) urge that research must be tied to specific implementation practices: '[W]e believe that research embodying consciousness-raising in its process, as articulated by feminists, is research that empowers oppressed people.' Action research has as its purpose, 'liberating (humanizing) science to create movement for personal and social transformation in order to redress injustices, support peace, and form democratic spaces' (Smith 1997: 180). Reason

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and Bradbury (2002:2) agree with this liberating agenda. For them, action research is about working towards practical outcomes and theories that 'contribute to human emancipation, to the flourishing of communities.' Reinharz (1992: 194) asserts that feminist researchers report being profoundly changed by what they learn about themselves and stresses that self-reflection is essential in action research. Melrose (1994: 52) supports the personal and social transformative effect of action research.

- **Participatory action research is critical.** It helps people to release themselves from the constraints embedded in language (discourses), structures in which they work, and the social relationships of power (Kemmis & McTaggert 2003: 386). I will use various critical theories interested in questioning social movements such as feminism and poststructuralism to question my practice (Lather 1991: 3). McTaggert (1997: 5) points out that interpretation is a collective activity and that interpretation of experience is more trustworthy if others help. I will give the text that I write to participants for their reflections and include their comments in the research text. By including their voices and by quoting from other texts I hope to make my research text 'multi-voiced' (Lather 1991:9).

- **Participatory action research is recursive (reflexive, dialectical).** Researchers change their practice through a spiral of cycles of critical and self-critical action and reflection, as a deliberate social process designed to help them learn and theorize about their practices (Kemmis & McTaggert 2003:386). This involves a self-reflexive enquiry into practice based on professional values, aims and personal constructs of effectiveness (Zuber-Skerrit 1996: 86). The researcher thus writes herself into the research report, while noting her perceptions of the way in which her values and ideological and epistemological positions have influenced the selection, interpretation and analysis of data (Hall 1996: 39; Lather 1991:2). 'Critical self-reflection requires that we rigorously challenge our motivations, ideas, and assumptions from alternative perspectives' (Ballard 1996: 30).

- **Participatory action research aims to transform both theory and practice.** According to Kemmis & McTaggert (2003:386) it 'does not regard either theory or practice as preeminent in the relationship between theory and practice; it aims to articulate and develop each in relation to the other through critical reasoning about both theory and practice and their consequences.'

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These are the principles that will guide me in my research while I keep in mind that at the core of transformation is 'a reciprocal relationship in which every teacher is always a student and every pupil a teacher' (Gamsci quoted in Lather 1991:63). In developing my participatory praxis I have constantly researched it using participatory action research principles. Most of the data that I will include in this research project is selected from work that has taken place over a period of twelve years. All data collected has been used to inform my praxis and I will make visible how I have used it. I have documented the processes very carefully while I was doing it. I will share these documents, as well as text developed for this research report, with those participants for their reflections and comments. According to Kemmis and McTaggert (2003:375) participatory action researchers 'make sacrifices in terms of methodology and technical rigor in exchange for more immediate gains in face validity: whether the evidence they collect makes sense to *them, in their contexts.*' Loss of methodological sophistication is a price worth paying in most practical contexts of social transformation:

> Most action research (and most participatory action research) is, in our view, correct to choose practical significance over methodological sophistication in the trade-off between epistemological and methodological gains – the choice between what evidence makes critical sense to participants and what evidence would satisfy the contextually non-specific methodological criteria likely to satisfy external researchers.

(Kemmis & McTaggert 2003: 376)

Literature research

The participation of scholars in a wide range of fields has been sought in the development of the participatory praxis that I describe as well as in the academic research and writing as reflected in this research document. The literature research has included:

- Narrative Therapy literature which includes theory as well as examples of other clinicians' work;
- Literature from the theoretical models within which Narrative Therapy is positioned – such as post-structuralism and feminism;
- Feminist and other liberation approaches to practical theology and pastoral therapy;
- Texts from contextual theologians which assisted in understandings regarding the role of the church and theology in the struggle for liberation in South Africa;
- Literature informing a participatory approach to research;
- The work of practical and pastoral theologians within the South African context;
- Research literature which documents the South African social context assisted in forming an understanding of historical and social context pre- and post-liberation.

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The participants from literature have become powerful allies that enabled, strengthened, guided and enlightened my work.

1.6.2 Selection of case material

Sampling and selection are vitally important strategic elements of qualitative research as these have direct implications for whether and how generalisation of findings would be possible (Mason 2002:120). In selecting research participants and sampling events and texts for this research I have used as a guiding principle the requirement that my samples need to help provide me with the data that I will need to best address my research question (Mason 2002:121). Thus I want to select material that will illustrate:

- *how* a participatory pastoral praxis participates in transformative ways
- while dealing with the *main social problems* that call for transformation,
- within the *four contexts of my participation* in the post-apartheid South Africa.

I have already highlighted how issues of **poverty, racism and sexism** are the most pressing in the healing and transformation of the post-apartheid South African society. I have also indicated that these categories of social problems are closely related, that they operate in close interaction with one another, and that they are operative in all levels of society. Narrative Therapy has provided me with ways of being and doing that have had transformative effects on myself and therefore have influenced all the different and very diverse contexts of my participation as a **psychologist, pastoral community worker, trainer of Narrative practices as well as a member and leader within the Dutch Reformed Church**. I have a fear that, should I choose to focus on one social problem or one context of my pastoral participation, my praxis and its effect might be reduced, for example, to 'gender work'; 'community work'; or 'activism'. I am determined to show how patriarchal society and relations of power affect us all: my clients, the community, my colleagues, the church and my personal life. I have to consider both the healing of the oppressed as well as the healing of the oppressors and hope to show the range of practices employed to participate with them. I have explained how Narrative Therapy and the poststructuralist theory that informs it, together with Feminist and other Liberation theology has informed the participatory pastoral praxis that I have developed. This praxis has assisted me in becoming the kind of Christian humanist that John De Gruchy (2006: 31) describes as:

> ...[believing] that the salvation we have in Christ is not about making us more religious but more fully human, reconciling relationships, restoring human wholeness and well-being, and unlocking potential and creativity.

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In an attempt to do justice to the way in which participatory pastoral praxis has become a way of life for me as Christian psychologist, community worker, teacher of Narrative Therapy and leader within the Dutch Reformed Church, I have chosen to research my pastoral participation by selecting examples from each of these contexts of my participation. In addition, I have tried to ensure that the main social problems of racism, sexism and poverty are reflected in the examples selected. I am involved more with therapeutic work when working in my psychology practice and with communities: individuals and groups of people become more aware and empowered witnesses to, and agents in, their own lives and communities. In my capacity as teacher/supervisor/trainer and church leader, my participation involves advocacy: colleagues are encouraged to become more empowered and aware witnesses of the wider context of the church and society in which they live and practice. I will now indicate how the selection criteria mentioned above has assisted me to select the specific data from the four contexts of my participation to research my praxis in this dissertation.

Researching my therapeutic and community work praxis[40]

Case example 1: Yvonne Barnard[41]

As a case example of my **participatory praxis as a psychologist,** I will describe the first three sessions of my therapeutic participation with Yvonne Barnard, a woman who had experienced **childhood sexual abuse**. I have made this selection because sexual violence can be regarded as the most severe expression of **sexism,** one of the main social problems that call for transformation in post-apartheid South Africa. The second reason for selecting this case example is the fact that Yvonne Barnard's work as a child evangelist in a farming community allows me to illustrate the influence of a participatory pastoral praxis (as expressed in our therapeutic participation) on her life and work over the decade of my involvement with her. Our therapeutic participation has enabled me to become a witness and participant to her **work in a context of extreme poverty, sexual oppression and racism.** While my client struggled to find a voice in her personal life and relationships, as result of the sexual abuse and patriarchal attitudes to women, she started to become increasingly empowered in her response to the devastation and need that she encountered in the community where she is working. Through our participation **she developed a community participatory praxis**. I will use this to illustrate how a missionary/evangelist can apply the principles of

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[40] Application to the University of Stellenbosch Research Ethics Committee: Human Research (Non-Health) for clearance of the research project has been submitted.

[41] Yvonne Barnard has given informed consent for participation in the research project.

a participatory praxis within a rural community which is still deeply divided because of racial, cultural, social class and religious segregation.

Case example 2: Strand Muslim community[42]

I have selected my participation with the Strand Muslim community as case example of community participation. This case material assists me to address my research question by illustrating the engagement of a participating praxis to cross the divides of **social class, culture, religion and race.** Although I participated in this community by volunteering my services as a psychologist, for the purposes of this study, I will discuss the collaborative relationship that I developed in the process of my participation with Sadik Fanie, the principal, and Ebrahim Rhoda, who has researched the history of the Strand Muslim community. These two men, who acted as cultural consultants to my work, assisted me to understand the effects on this community of the slave history, racism, religious oppression and the forced removals under the Group Areas Act of the apartheid government. I will describe **the Bridge-Building Function** that my husband and I organized in collaboration with Sadik Fanie and Ebrahim Rhoda in September 2005. The function was attended by people from the Muslim community as well as our friends, colleagues and members of the Helderberg DRC congregation. It became an event of participation and healing for both communities as reflected in the feedback I have included from participants.

Case Example 3: Drakenstein Palliative Care and Hospice[43]

By selecting my participation with the Drakenstein Palliative Care and Hospice I want to illustrate a participatory praxis in a context of **extreme poverty and with people living with HIV/AIDS**. In Chapter Three I will discuss the interrelatedness of poverty, race, gender and HIV. In this context my praxis involved caring **for the caregivers -** to the social workers, nursing staff and home-based care workers. This participation has extended to include **witnesses from Norway** who became involved in raising funds and interest in the building of an **After-Care facility, Butterfly House**, for children affected by HIV/AIDS in Fairyland, an informal settlement outside of Paarl.

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[42] Mr Fanie, principal of Strand Moslem Primary School, has written a letter of consent regarding the participation of the school in this research and has read and approved the text referring to that participation as it appears in this dissertation.
[43] Elizabeth Scrimgeour, CEO of Drakenstein Palliative Care and Hospice, has written a letter of consent regarding the participation of this organization in the research. She has also read and approved the relevant text as it appears in this dissertation.

Researching my praxis as Narrative Therapy trainer and as leader in the DRC

Case example 1: One week intensive workshop

I will research my Narrative Therapy training praxis to show how it is used to **raise awareness of social injustices with my colleagues**. As background to this case example I will discuss the way in which black colleagues have contributed to raising my awareness to the effects of past injustices and to how **racism** continues to affect their lives. I will discuss The **Other-Wise Initiative** which refers to my attempt to do restitution for the injustice of my privileged education and the schisms of the psychology profession by offering sponsorship to colleagues from previously oppressed groups. By inviting and sponsoring their participation in workshops, I ensure that workshop participants get the opportunity to form networks and talk about our **painful past** within a **context of diversity**. I have documented one particular intensive workshop that took place in January 2003 as an example of the kind of **transformative conversations and processes** that take place within training contexts. I have also researched the feedback from participants to thirteen one week intensive workshops to find out which **values and commitments support a transformative training praxis.**

Case example 2: Helderberg Congregation[44]

It was difficult to select from many examples the material that could best illustrate my participatory pastoral praxis in the DRC Helderberg congregation. I have decided to include three different examples of my participation in transformation:

- Task team for diversity and inclusively: I was the leader of this task team in the church council. I have included a discussion of the background and some of the work of this task team because it **illustrates a participatory praxis in a diverse team of participants within a congregation and the kind of awareness raising** that becomes possible in terms of **race, gender and class divides**.
- Participating with Michelle Boonzaaier: I selected to include my reflections on my participation with Michelle Boonzaaier, the first coloured person to be ordained as DRC minister, as **a relationship that strengthened and transformed both of us** in our joint commitment to the transformation of **racism, sexism and classism** within the DRC.

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[44] Ds Hannes Theron, leader pastor of Helderberg Congregation of the Dutch Reformed Church, wrote a letter of consent regarding my participation with this congregation and the inclusion of the material as it appears in this dissertation. It has been read and approved by him.

- Raising awareness with Paul Barnard: I included my participation with Paul Barnard as it illustrates the way in which a participatory pastoral praxis **raises awareness about gender discourses within preaching and liturgy.**

Case example 3: Moderature of the Regional Synod of the DRC[45]

I was co-opted to serve on the moderature of the Synod of the Western and Southern Cape to **redress the gender imbalance** in the leadership structure. My **embodied and critical participation** in this male dominated leadership structure was extremely challenging because of the patriarchal practices and discourses that still dominate within the DRC. I researched the effect of my participation by sending some questions for reflection and feedback to the other members of the moderature. I have analysed their feedback and reflected on it. They were invited to read my text and comment on it.

1.6.3 Data generation strategies

I have found the list of data collection methods described by Winter (1996: 15-16) very useful. These are the ones that I have used during the time of collecting data:

- **Research diary** of my impressions, thoughts and reflections as I continued the process of the research.
- **Process notes** of meetings, sessions and visits to communities.
- **Documents** such as the document developed by the task team for diversity and inclusivity.
- **Letters of acknowledgement** to various participants.
- **Letters of reflection** as a way to summarize and clarify understandings to participants.
- **Written feedback** received and requested from participants.
- **Audio-recordings and transcripts** of sessions with the Hospice staff, interviews conducted with the One Week Intensive training group and with Mr Fanie and Mr Rhoda.
- **Records of informal conversations** via email, notes, letters and telephone calls that I have kept.

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[45] Dr Braam Hanekom, Chairperson of the Moderamen of the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk in Suid-Afrika, has written a letter giving permission for my research of the participation with the Moderature of this synod. He has read and approved the text of this participation included in this dissertation.

1.6.4 Data analysis

As social researchers cannot be free of ideology, knowledge in the social research is not a system of accumulated certainties, but always a matter of interpretation (Winter 1996:18). How then do we address the influence of ideology in the analysis of our research data? Winter (1996:18-24) offers the following guidelines:

- **Reflexive critique** whereby the reflexive basis of the accounts in the research report is made explicit and analysis is made in ways that suggest that it is never final or complete thereby making other alternatives possible.

- **Dialectic critique** refers to and draws on the complexities, contradictions and constant changing of phenomena that we study. The influence of the social world on individuals is both conflicting and varying and so can never be unambiguous and final. I try to be explicit about these complexities.

- **Collaborative resource** means that participants' points of view will be taken as a contribution for understanding the situation; no one's point of view will be taken as the final understanding of what all the other points of view really mean.

- **Risk.** I kept in mind that my provisional interpretations of a situation, my ideas as to what is relevant and what not as well as the sequence of events in my participation could not be controlled, but were open to transformation.

- **Plural structure** of research reports as a result of various accounts and various critiques is important. I attend to that by inviting participants to reflect and comment.

- **Theory, practice, transformation.** Theory can question practice, but practice can also question theory. Together, practice and theory comprise mutually indispensable phases of a unified change process.

1.6.5 Ethical considerations[46]

For the purpose of this research document I found the ethical guidelines provided by Dreyer (2004: 6-8), Mason (2002: 79-81) and Winter (1996: 16-17) useful to ensure **voluntary** and **informed consent** from participants and assist me in treating them with dignity and respect.

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[46] I have indicated that I have applied for the necessary clearance of my research with the Research Ethics Committee of the University of Stellenbosch.
I have received letters of consent from four organizations that participated, namely: The Strand Moslem School,
Drakenstein Palliative Care and Hospice, Helderberg DRC congregation and the Moderature of the DRC of the Western and Southern Cape Region.
In the chapters that follow I have indicated that I received informed consent from all participants mentioned in the research. Each of them read and approved the text which refers to their participation in this research.

1.7 Chapter outline

I attend to a theoretical discussion of the different characteristics of a participatory pastoral praxis in Chapter Two. In Chapter Three I do a contextual analysis of the post-apartheid South African context reflecting back on the apartheid history and then focussing on the social problems of racism, sexism, poverty and HIV/AIDS as we experience these at present. I refer briefly to the part that the DRC played in the context of apartheid and post-apartheid society. In Chapter Four the focus is on the expression of a participatory pastoral praxis within my therapeutic practice as well as in my participation in communities. In Chapter Five I describe the ways in which I use my Narrative Therapy training work as well as the opportunities to participate in the leadership of the DRC to promote awareness of unjust social norms and practices. Chapter Six is the final chapter in which I reflect on the contributions of a participatory pastoral praxis to practical theology in post-apartheid South Africa.

Chapter Two

Participatory pastoral praxis: deconstructing pastoral theology

[33]But a Samaritan, as he travelled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity. [34]He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. [35]The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.'

(Luke 10: 33-35)

As we seek to keep our balance while the ground of our practice rumbles under our feet, we (pastoral practitioners) learn ways in which our house was built on rock and sand. The rock: We know how to be good at middle-class, growth-orientated pastoral care; we know how to counsel people in extreme life crises; we know how to care for the hospitalised and their families and legitimate ourselves with the hospital staff, if not with the bureaucrats. The sand: We never were very good at caring for the poor, the person of colour, the person in extreme life crises who couldn't afford specialized counselling, the out-patient or the person quickly released from the hospital, and we have rarely attempted to articulate the interaction between the people for whom we care and the political, economic and social conditions in which they live.

(Couture & Hester 1995: 53)

2.1. Unpacking[47] participatory pastoral praxis

In Chapter One I have clearly stated my commitment to participate in the healing and transformation of post-apartheid South African society in which the injustices of racism, sexism and poverty are still very much alive despite our liberal constitution and democratic government. Through sharing and critically reflection on my own story as a white Afrikaner woman I have indicated how the injustices are caused and sustained by people's *actions* and that it therefore calls for *actions* to redress the balance. The parable of the Good Samaritan, a favourite childhood story, has assisted me in understanding the dualism with which I practised my Christian faith. The split between love for God and love for my neighbour resulted in the 'passing by on the other side' of people who were oppressed and marginalized. This parable has also become the guiding metaphor in my search for the kind of actions that would be healing in a way that redresses power imbalances and injustices.

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[47] By 'unpacking' I refer to the engagement in a process of deconstruction in order to notice how an idea is constructed, to note its limits or to offer possibilities to consider it from a different perspective (Freedman & Combs 1996: 57).

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I have explained how making the shift from an aware/disempowered to an aware/empowered response to the hardships and injustices within the South African context required me to re-train as therapist. In Narrative Therapy I found an approach and a worldview which enabled me to build my practice 'house' on rock and sand by acknowledging the 'interaction between the people for whom we care and the political, economic and social conditions in which they live (Couture & Hester 1995: 53). Chris Weeden (1987: 12), a feminist using poststructuralist theory, asserts that 'We need a theory of the relation between language, subjectivity, social organization and power.' Such a theory would be able to address the questions of how social power is exercised and how social relations of gender, class and race might be transformed. The feminist pastoral theologian Susan Dunlap (1999: 134) joins Riet Bons-Storm (1996), Elaine Graham (1996) and Sharon Welch (1990) in writing about the use of discourse theory in 'the process of reinterpreting traditional pastoral care practices in the light of greater concern for the corporate context of both human problems and pastoral responses.' Narrative Therapy uses discourse theory and the poststructuralist understanding of power to address the problems with which clients and communities struggle.

2.1.1 Participatory pastoral praxis: From kerygmatic proclamation to Narrative Therapy

A participatory pastoral praxis is a movement away from viewing the pastor as the one with superior knowledge about God to an approach which involves compassionate participation with people in processes involving meaning-making: it takes seriously their experiences, knowledges and the contexts in which they live. In my unpacking of participatory pastoral praxis from a Narrative Therapy perspective, it would be important to attend to the poststructuralist understanding of power, discourse theory, discursive positioning and the narrative metaphor.

Poststructuralist understanding of power

Michael White (2002: 35 – 36) asserts that, when considerations of power are raised in the context of therapeutic explorations, it is mostly a classical analysis of traditional power that is evoked. This traditional power is appropriated by certain individuals and groups according to particular and unitary interests and is exercised from the top-down by those who have a monopoly on it. It is a power that is mostly negative in its function - power that people are subject to - as it operates to oppress, repress, limit, prohibit, impose and coerce. Today there are many operations of power that are institutionalized and that resemble the classical analysis of power. White (2002: 37) mentions as examples the operations of power present 'in race relations and in the subjugation of indigenous people, in gender relations and in the oppression of women, and in the power relations of heterosexism and the

disqualification and marginalization of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered identities.' White concludes that traditional forms of opposition to a classical analysis of power will remain important and relevant to the therapeutic context.

In his development of Narrative Therapy, however, White (2002: 35) is more interested in the analysis of modern systems of power for therapy. White (2002: 36) refers to the work of Foucault who drew attention to the development of the operations of modern power which have become the predominant system of power in the achievement of social control:

> This is a power that recruits people's active participation in the fashioning of their own lives, their relationships, and their identities, according to the constructed norms of culture – we are both a consequence of this power and a vehicle for it. By this account, this is a system of power that is particularly insidious and pervasive. It is a power that is everywhere to be perceived in its local operations, in our intimate lives and relationships. Foucault sought to illustrate the many ways that we live our lives on the inside of the web of power relations of this system of modern power, and to draw attention to the extent to which we have become its unwitting instruments.

(White 2002: 36)

White (1995; 2004; 2007; White & Epston 1990) describes the work of Foucault as he studied, among other things, the various ways in which people in western society have been categorized as 'normal' and 'abnormal'. Foucault examines madness (1965), illness (1975), criminality (1977) and sexuality (1985) as concepts around which certain people have been labelled as insane, sick, criminal, or perverted. He describes how, on the basis of that labelling, these people have been separated, sequestered, and oppressed. The professional disciplines of psychology, medicine/psychiatry, criminology and social work have played a key role historically in developing the technology of modern power (White 2002: 36). For Foucault, 'language is an instrument of power, and people have power in society in direct proportion to their ability to participate in the various discourses that shape that society' (Freedman & Combs 1996: 37). Foucault argues that there is an inseparable link between knowledge and power. As the discourses of a society determine what knowledge is held true, right or proper in that society, so those who control the discourses control knowledge. At the same time, the dominant knowledge of a given society determines who will be able to occupy positions of power in that society (Freedman & Combs 1996: 37-38). I have indicated in Chapter One how for centuries in South Africa educated white male voices and experience have dominated the most powerful and influential domains of knowledge production – such as the government, academic institutions and the Church - and in the process, have marginalised and often excluded the poor, the uneducated, women and persons of colour.

Within the narrative metaphor, the discourses of power that Foucault studied can be seen as historical, cultural meta-narratives (Freedman & Combs 1996: 38). They are stories which have shaped and been shaped by the distribution of power in society:

> …dominant narratives are units of power as well as of meaning. The ability to tell one's story has a political component; indeed, one measure of the dominance of a narrative is the place allocated to it in the discourse. Alternative, competing stories are not allocated space in establishment channels and must seek expression in underground media and dissident groupings.

(Bruner in Freedman & Combs 1996: 38)

People tend to internalize these dominant cultural narratives as they come to the conclusion that these narratives speak the 'truth' of their identities. Using terminology from Foucault, White (2007: 23) says that people tend to become 'docile bodies' under the internalised 'gaze' of those who control the discourses of power in our culture. In this way people are blinded by dominant narratives to the possibilities that other narratives might offer them. Foucault was particularly interested in how the 'truth claims' carried in the 'grand abstractions' of modern science constituted a discourse that dehumanised and objectified so many people (Freedman & Combs (1996: 39).

Foucault believed that it was at the local sites of people's lives that the practices of power were perfected and most evident and that it is because of this that power can have its global effects. He thus argued that efforts to transform power relations in a society must address these practices of power at the local level: at the level of the every-day, taken-for-granted social practices of people's lives (White 1992: 137). Foucault (1977) uses an analysis of Bentham's Panopticon to draw attention to a structure that is at the heart of the operations of modern power.

If we accept Foucault's proposal that the techniques of power that 'incite' people to constitute their lives through 'truth' are developed and perfected at the local level and are then taken up at broader cultural levels, then, in joining them to challenge these practices of power, we are also accepting that we are inevitably involved in political action (White & Epston 1990:29; White 2004: 105). This political activity does not imply the proposal of an alternative ideology; rather, that we challenge the techniques of power that subjugated the person to dominant ideology. In Narrative Therapy we invite people to gain a reflexive perspective on their lives and assist them to separate from the unitary knowledges and 'truth' discourses that are subjugating of them. In this way Narrative Therapy is a process of re-engagement with people's histories.

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Michael White (2002: 36) explains that he found some of the implications of Foucault's analysis of modern power significant and hopeful in terms of the problems for which people seek therapy:

- Systems of power are rarely total in their effects. This means that examples of opposition to the relations of modern power and refusal of its requirements will always be present to be acknowledged, known and celebrated;

- If the operations of modern power is dependent upon people's active participation as its instruments, then individuals are uniquely placed to challenge and to subvert the operations of modern power;

- If the operations of modern power are derived through the uptake of self and relationship practices that are first developed at the local level of culture, then people can contribute significantly to social change through the development of self- and relationship-forming practices that do not directly reproduce the constructed norms of contemporary culture;

- If the professional disciplines have played a key role in the phenomenon of modern power, then therapeutic practice can work on those practices that are 'counter' to the technology of modern power. This emphasizes the political aspect of therapeutic practice.

White (2002: 66) states clearly that the notion of 'acts of refusal' is linked to the idea that life and identity is constituted, not given, and that such refusals will be linked to possibilities that constitute life in other, more creative ways.

Discourse theory

Radical scepticism about the dominant discourses as 'regimes of truth' (Lowe in Kotzé & Kotzé 1997: 35) brings about an analysis of the gaps, silences, ambiguities and power relations that are implicit in these discourses. This is a strategy that is often referred to as deconstruction – an application that is broader than the deconstruction in the study of literary and philosophical text (Kotzé & Kotzé 1997: 35). The definition of deconstruction that I find most useful is the one by Anderson and Goolishian;

> Deconstruction is to …take apart the interpretive assumptions of a system of meaning that you are examining… [so that] you reveal the assumptions on which the model is based. [As] these are revealed, you open up space for alternative understandings.

(Anderson & Goolishian in Chang & Philips 1993:100)

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The engaging of persons in externalizing conversations in Narrative Therapy leads to the objectification of familiar and taken-for-granted practices of power which contributes significantly to their deconstruction:

> It is through these externalizing conversations that persons are able to:
> (a) appreciate the degree to which these practices are constituting of their own lives as well as the lives of others,
> (b) identify those practices of self and of relationship that might be judged as impoverishing of their lives, as well as the lives of others,
> (c) acknowledge the extent to which they have been recruited into the policing of their own lives and, as well, the nature of their participation in the policing of the lives of others, and to
> (d) explore the nature of local, relational politics.

<div align="right">(White 1992:140)</div>

Through these externalizing conversations persons no longer experience themselves to be at one with these practices of power, but sense a certain alienation in relation to them. Persons are then in a position to develop alternative and preferred practices of self and relationship.

In academic circles, the word 'deconstruction' is immediately associated with the work of Jacques Derrida. Freedman and Combs (2002: 206) explain how Derrida explores, amongst other things, the slipperiness of meaning, by examining and illustrating how the meaning of any symbol, word, or text is inextricably bound up in its context. It is thus fruitless to seek for the 'real' meaning of any word or text. By using the number of gaps and ambiguities that form part of any text, the deconstructionist scholar will show that the generally accepted meaning of a given text is but one of a great number of possible meanings. In Narrative Therapy we thus listen to people's stories with the belief that these stories may have many different meanings, and that the meaning that a listener makes is not necessarily the meaning that the speaker has intended. We listen for gaps and ambiguities in meaning and, when we hear them, either we ask people to fill in these gaps or we tell them what we are hearing and ask how our understanding fits with their intended meaning. This way of interacting with persons in therapy invites them to start considering their life narratives not as passively received facts, but as actively constructed stories – thus deconstructing the factual/truth status of their narratives.

Michael White (2000:37; 2004:102; 2007:210) proposes that another possibility for re-engagement with the history of people's lives is through attending to the 'absent, but implicit' in their expression of life. Once again White is referring to Jacques Derrida's deconstructive method of reading text which unmasked the absent signs or descriptions that are relied upon for a text to establish its meaning:

An assumption of this text analysis is that every term or description contains both itself and its opposite or its other, and that the relationship between these terms can be identified through a close reading of the text. In making reference to Derrida in this way I am not proposing that life is just a text, but suggesting that by a closer listening to people's expressions we might have the opportunity to engage with them in conversations that are identifying of the relationship between what they discern in these expressions, and the absent but implicit descriptions without which these discernments could not be arrived at.

(White 2000:37)

If it is not possible to draw a dividing line between absence and presence, then the same applies for all other oppositions we might think of, for example: mind/body, freedom/determinism, health/illness, masculine/feminine, rational/emotional, individual/society and so on (Burr 1995: 107). Derrida argues that, for thousands of years, western thought has been founded on the logic of 'binary oppositions' or the logic of 'either/or', whereas in fact neither of the positions on either side of the dichotomy can exist without the other. Derrida thus recommends that we adopt a logic of 'both/and' instead of 'either/or' (Burr 1995:107). I have illustrated in Chapter One how I took the term 'infertile' under erasure and adopted instead of 'either fertile or infertile' a position of 'both infertile and not infertile (or fertile)' to describe my own life.

Positioning as discursive production of self

Poststructuralist theory bases its founding insight - that language does not reflect social reality, but that language constitutes social reality for us - on Ferdinand de Saussure's work on structuralist linguistics (Weedon 1987: 22). Saussure regarded language as an abstract system consisting of chains of signs. Each sign is made up of a *signifier* (sound or written image) and a *signified* (meaning) and the two components of the sign are related to each other in an arbitrary way. The meanings of signs are not intrinsic, but signs acquire meaning through the language chain and their difference within it from other signs (Weedon 1987:23).

Poststructuralist theory, and particularly the work of Jacques Derrida, questions Saussure's logocentrism whereby signs have an already fixed meaning recognized by the self-consciousness of the rational speaking subject. Derrida replaces the fixed signified with a concept of *différence* in which meaning is produced via the dual strategies of difference and deferral (Weedon 1987:25). The contribution of Derrida's critique can be explained as follows:

> Signifiers are always located in a discursive context and the temporary fixing of meaning in a specific reading of a signifier depends on this discursive context. The meaning of the signifier 'woman' varies from ideal to victim to object of sexual desire, according to its context. Consequently, it is always open to challenge and redefinition with shifts in its discursive context. What it means at any particular moment depends on the discursive relations within which it is located, and it is open to constant rereading and reinterpretation.

> (Weedon 1987: 25)

Davies and Harré (1991: 45) use the term 'discursive practice' for all the ways in which people actively produce social and psychological realties. A discourse is 'a system of statements, practices, and institutional structures that share common values' (Hare-Mustin 1994: 20). What we know, we know in terms of one or more discourses. These discourses may be in competition with one another or may create distinct and incompatible versions of reality (Davies & Harré 1991:45). The constitutive force of discourse and discursive practices as well as the fact that people are capable of exercising choice in relation to these practices is very helpful. Davies and Harré (1991: 46) argue that the constitutive force of the discursive practice lie in its provision of subject positions.

Poststructuralist theory captures the experience of being a person through the concept of 'positioning' rather than the concept of a 'role' with its static, formal and ritualistic aspects (Davies & Harré 1991: 43). I have illustrated in the discussion of my personal story in Chapter One that I had a variety of discursive practices available to me which enabled me to make choices for my life instead of becoming the victim of dominant cultural discourses that prescribed certain roles to me as a woman. Over the past ten years the possibility of a 'multiplicity of selves' has assisted me in teaching the poststructuralist understanding of identity, an understanding offering radical possibilities for agency within the context of therapy:

> An individual emerges through the processes of social interaction, not as a relatively fixed end product but as one who is constituted and reconstituted through the various discursive practices in which they participate. Accordingly who one is, is always an open question with a shifting answer depending upon the positions made available within one's own and others' discursive practices, and within those practices, the stories through which we make sense of our own and others' lives. Stories are located within a number of different discourses, and thus vary dramatically in terms of the language used, the concepts, issues and moral judgements made relevant and the subject positions made available within them. In this way poststructuralism shades into narratology.

> (Davies & Harré 1991:43)

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When we consider the concept of 'self' it can be said that humans are characterized both by a continuous personal identity and by discontinuous personal diversity as it is the same person who is variously positioned in a conversation (Davies & Harré 1991: 46).

The narrative metaphor

From the above discussion it is clear that my training in Narrative Therapy involved the revision of many ideas from traditional psychology. It is important to understand that this has been a very challenging process as it involved a different understanding of the construction of the self, of knowledge and of relationships between people. Michael White (2004: 71) discusses the revival of 'internal state psychologies' in the late 1960s and early 1970s and points out how 'the notion of "essential self" was assigned an unquestioned status.' These self-psychologies propose that there is a self to be discovered at the core of personhood. All expressions of life are seen to be either an expression of the essences of this core self or a manifestation of the repression or distortion of these essences. The self-psychologies are linked to cathartic injunction through an obligation to discover the 'truth' about who one is and to seek a life that is an authentic and accurate expression of this truth. This was the paradigm that I was trained in and which I used with great success and confidence in my predominantly white middle-class practice up until that stage of my career as a psychologist.

At the time of the revival of the internal state psychologies, some social sciences were going through what has been referred to as an 'interpretive turn'. Meaning was placed at the centre of social enquiry:

> With meaning at the centre, this new cultural anthropology took the focus of inquiry to the social construction of people's realities. These were realities that were not radically derived through one's independent construction of the events of one's life. These realities were not the outcome of some privileged access to the world as it is. They were not arrived at through some objective grasp of the nature of things. Rather, people's realities were understood to be historical and social products, negotiated in and between communities of people and distributed throughout these communities. This was the case for identity as much as for any other construction; identity was understood to be a phenomenon that was dispersed in communities of people.
>
> (White 2004: 74)

An understanding developed that all meanings are linguistic and social achievements and that people give meaning to their experiences of life by taking these experiences into frames that render them intelligible (White 2004: 75). It soon became clear that people construct meaning by trafficking in stories about their own and other people's lives and that those narrative structures provide the principal frame of intelligibility for everyday life experience. This is what White (1995: 13) means by

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'narrative as life' which forms the basis of his work. The meanings derived in the process of interpretation are not neutral in their effects on our lives: they have real effects on what we do and the steps that we take. White and Epston (1990: 12) propose that it is the story - or self-narrative - that determines which aspects of our lives are expressed. In this way we live by the stories that we have about our lives: they shape our lives and constitute our lives. Thus, the theoretical position from which I practise pastoral participation is based on the understanding that realities are socially constructed through language and that people organise and maintain these realities through narratives.

The process in which Narrative therapists engage can be summarized briefly in the following way. The various discourses in society have a constitutive or shaping effect on the personal discourses and lives of people as the narratives that people have about their lives reflect (Kotzé & Kotzé 1997: 33). People make sense and give meaning to their life experiences through the stories that they have about their own and other people's lives. These stories then become dominant stories which determine which experiences are included and are shaping of their lives. The alternative narratives and knowledges about their lives become marginalized and do not get told (White &Epston 1990). White & Epston (1990) attend to these alternative stories with the purpose of empowering the alternative stories to become more constitutive of people's lives. People are encouraged to re-author their own lives by objectifying taken-for-granted practices of power. In this way agency of self is established.

This fits with what Weedon (1987:106) believes regarding the subject's agency:

> In the battle for subjectivity and the supremacy of particular versions of which it is a part, the individual is not merely the passive site of discursive struggle. The individual who has a memory and an already discursively constituted sense of identity may resist particular interpellation or produce new versions of meaning from the conflicts and contradictions between existing discourses. Knowledge of more than one discourse and the recognition that meaning is plural allows for a measure of choice on the part of the individual and even where choice is not available, resistance is still possible.

The implication for people in terms of agency in their lives is very hopeful. This hope for agency is what makes Narrative Therapy such an attractive way of participating with people in all contexts of life.

2.1.2 Participatory pastoral praxis: From Shepherd to Samaritan

For most of my professional life I have practised my faith and call to healing from my profession as a Christian psychologist. It has only been in the past decade, since my studies in pastoral theology, that I have come to consider the shepherding metaphor, the traditionally dominant image in pastoral

theology as publicized by Seward Hiltner (in Louw 2000: 22). Some feminist pastoral theologians have found this image to be problematic. They claim that the implied relationship between shepherd (pastor) and sheep (members of the congregation/counselees) reflects hierarchical authority (Moessner 1991: 210) where the counselees might be deprived of showing initiative and independent thought (Bons-Storm 1996: 28 - 29) while fostering paternalistic and dependent attitudes (Moore 2002:9). Moore (2002: 15) points out that it is important for women to be acknowledged and taken seriously both as recipients and agents of pastoral care, while the shepherd image has historically been associated with men in the role of shepherd. However, she reminds us not to lose a crucial aspect of the shepherd model and that is the focus on the care and love of God mediated through human beings to the human community (Moore 2002: 16).

The significance of the shepherd metaphor for pastoral care lies in the fact that it connects what pastoral care involves to the sacrificial and redeeming love of Jesus Christ for humankind: 'This means that the mode of pastoral care is not limited to human sympathy alone, but also includes the compassion of God Himself' (Louw 2000: 41). Breuggemann (1978: 86) discusses Jesus' compassion for the whole range of people who are harassed and helpless 'like sheep without a shepherd' (Mt 9: 36). It is precisely this compassion, described as empathy in Chapter One, that was lacking in my life as an 'unaware' witness of the injustices in South Africa. He (Breuggemann 1978: 87) points out that Jesus' two best known parables - the narrative of the Good Samaritan and the story of the Prodigal Son - contain the word compassion. When Jesus teaches the parable of the Good Samaritan, the Samaritan embodies the alternative consciousness of compassion from which the dominant consciousness is criticised. The ones who pass by with indifference are the carriers of the dominant tradition; the Samaritan expresses a new way that replaces numbness with compassion:

> The end of cynical indifference and the beginning of noticed pain, signals a social revolution….The capacity to hurt the hurt of the marginal people means an end to all social arrangements that nullified pain by a remarkable depth of numbness.

(Breuggemann 1978: 88)

This compassion seems to be the key from where to consider a participatory pastoral praxis and the parable of the Good Samaritan is the guiding metaphor that I find most useful in my understanding of a healing praxis.

2.1.3 Participatory pastoral praxis: From being apart to participating

I have been haunted by the lack of awareness and compassion that marked my life as a Christian despite being confronted by the words 'God is love' engraved on the pulpit of the church where I

worshipped every Sunday until I left school. When the realization hit me that such a life reflects the unloving attitude of the Priest and Levite that brought that terrible ache to my chest every time I heard the story of the Good Samaritan as a child, I was left with no other choice but to search for ways to relate differently to all people. During my MTh studies I was exposed to the writing of Heshusius (1994; 1996a; 1996b; Heshusius & Ballard 1996). She challenged the objective-subjective dichotomy in research by describing a 'participatory consciousness' which is 'the awareness of a deeper level of kinship between the knower and the known' (Heshusius 1994: 16):

> An inner desire to let go of perceived boundaries that constitute 'self' – and that construct the perception of distance between self and other – must be present before a participatory mode of consciousness can be present…It requires an attitude of profound openness and receptivity….One is turned toward other (human or nonhuman) 'without being in need of it' or wanting to appropriate it to achieve something….(it involves]) a 'total turning to' the other which leads not to a loss of self but to heightened feeling of aliveness and awareness.

(Heshusius 1994: 16)

This description fitted with my experience when I was opening myself up to become a compassionate witness to the experiences of my black colleagues and the people from the Strand Muslim community. In my efforts to change my life from one that was literally reflecting apartheid (apart-ness) - where people of colour did not feature as people in my life - to one where there would be 'saamheid' (togetherness) I expanded my practice to embrace more of this kind of relationality. In a discussion about the possibility to research the praxis that I had developed from my position as Christian psychologist, community worker, teacher of narrative practices and as part of the leadership within the DR Church, Dirk Kotzé[48] suggested that 'pastoral participation' would be an apt way to describe the praxis that I was involved in.

Dirk Kotzé (2002:1-34) wrote a chapter entitled '*Doing Participatory Ethics*' which is based on Heschusius' (in Kotzé 2002: 5) understanding that '[w]hen the self and the other are seen as belonging to the same consciousness, all living is moral….To live morally requires, in the first instance, not moral discourse, but a relentless awareness of ourselves in the particulars of moment-to-moment living.' This is the kind of awareness of myself in relationship to others that I strive for in participatory pastoral praxis.

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[48] Prof Dirk Kotzé, director of the Institute for Therapeutic Development, my colleague in the training of MTh students in pastoral therapy.

I am familiar with the way in which Kotzé (2002) discusses the doing of participatory ethics in pastoral work; my work is strongly influenced by the same ideas. I have also come across one chapter by Couture (2003: 219 – 230) entitled 'Songs of Struggle: Exploring the Uncharted Terrain of Participatory Pastoral Practice' in which she discusses participatory pastoral practice as it occurs when people join in participatory music activities which contributes to healing. In his comprehensive work on pastoral theology, Louw (2000: 6) distinguishes pastoral encounter, pastoral conversation, pastoral counselling and pastoral therapy, but does not mention pastoral participation. He also makes no reference to power and its effect on relationships, language and discourse. I hope that this research might expand upon the possibilities in the field of pastoral theology by including a participatory pastoral praxis with its focus on social transformation in the context of our consultation rooms, community involvement, training of therapists/carers and our understanding of church and society.

McBride (1996: 183-184) explains that the term 'praxis' was popularized in Marxist ideology. Praxis is seen as action for social transformation specifically of economic structures and their development. Theory and action are constantly interrelated: both are constantly modified in the light of the other and in response to changing and developing conditions. The influence of Marxist thought has helped theology, especially liberation theologies, to recognise the importance of 'praxis of faith' which is the biblical action of 'doing of truth' (Mc Bride 1996: 184).

Liberation theologians find inspiration from Jesus' praxis as his attitudes embody God's love for the socially and religiously marginalized – poor people, public sinners, lepers, drunkards and prostitutes. Jesus' praxis is both social and political in nature. He was a threat and an affront to the powerful elite and their domination as he challenged the values and institutions of his day (Mc Bride 1996: 184). Feminist theologians have pointed out the liberating character of Jesus' social relationships, particularly his relationship with women:

> Thus praxis is a prophetic function. Theologizing in the light of past and present injustices and oppressions demands conversion of sinful structures and systems, and individual and community commitment to the *basilea*[49]. Christian praxis cannot be limited to private virtues but necessarily contains socio-political involvement.
>
> (Mc Bride 1996:184)

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[49] Basilea is 'Reign of God' (Mc Bride 1996: 184).

Elaine Graham (1996: 132) identifies commitment to praxis as the overarching goal of theological knowledge in liberation theologies. She also stresses that liberation theologies pose a challenge to Western theology's claim to reflect universal and abstract truths: 'Liberation theologies succeed in reminding all theologians that their truth-claims have authors, contexts and practical implications.'

Bosch (1991: 421) explains that contextual theology is a blanket term for a variety of theological models which include theologies such as liberation theology, black theology and feminist theology. Contextual theology constitutes an epistemological break when compared with traditional theologies:

> Whereas, at least since the time of Constantine, theology was conducted *from above* as an elitist enterprise (except in the case of minority Christian communities, commonly referred to as sects), its main source (apart from Scripture and tradition) was *philosophy*, and its main interlocutor the *educated non-believer*, contextual theology is theology '*from below'*, 'from the underside of history', its main source (apart from Scripture and tradition) is the *social sciences*, and its main interlocutor the poor or the *culturally marginalized.*
>
> (Frostin in Bosch 1991:423)

The epistemology of contextual theology gives priority to praxis. Bosch (1991: 423) quotes Gutiérrez who says that theology is 'critical reflection on Christian praxis in the *light* of the word of God.' There is thus the emphasis on *doing* theology. This challenges the hermeneutic of language by a hermeneutic of the deed, 'since doing is more important than knowing or speaking' (Bosch 1991: 425). Following the way in which Dietrich Bonhoeffer brings together the need for faith *and* obedience in knowing God, De Gruchy (1994: 12) concludes: 'Theology is, then, about more than "faith seeking understanding" in an academic way; it is also about obedience or faithful praxis.' The tension between orthopraxis and orthodoxy is well-explained by Bosch (1991: 424) when he emphasises commitment to the poor and the marginalized as the first act of theology, making orthopraxis the point of departure. Although the traditional sequence in which theory was elevated over praxis is turned upside down, this does not imply a rejection of theory: 'Orthopraxis and orthodoxy need one another, and each is adversely affected when sight is lost of the other' (Gutierrez in Bosch1991: 425). I hope that this tension between orthopraxis and orthodoxy will become clearer as I unpack some of the central ideas and practices that inform participatory pastoral praxis.

2.2. Characteristics of a participatory pastoral praxis

Over the past twelve years of my pastoral participation beyond the confines of my consultation room as a psychologist, I have embraced Narrative Therapy and have been introduced to liberation theologies, such as feminist theology. I approached my participation with clients in my consultation room, participation in communities, teaching contexts and church as action research. I constantly researched my praxis and adjusted it according to the feedback from the context, while searching for better understanding in theology, theory from social sciences and by participating in critical contextual analysis of post-apartheid society. In Chapter One I briefly illustrated the ten characteristics that I have identified as central to a participatory pastoral praxis. I will discuss these ten characteristics in more detail in the rest of this chapter.

2.2.1 The personal is the professional is political

I have combined two phrases – namely, 'the personal is the political' and 'the personal is the professional' - into this one phrase by claiming that 'the personal is the professional is political.' Hanisch (2006), a feminist, who coined the phrase 'Personal is Political' argues that personal problems confronting women are in fact political problems, with 'political' referring to power relationships in the wider society. Within Narrative Therapy we claim that the personal is also the professional which directly challenges the academic discourse that separates the personal from the professional (Weingarten 1997: xii). Power politics affect both domains of living. A commitment to understand people's personal experiences as influenced by broader relations of power is implied.

At this stage of my life I agree with Ackermann (2003: xvi) that I would not know how to separate the personal from the political or professional: 'Personal and public themes are woven into the fabric of our lives, and together they tell the story.' By starting my research with my personal story I have illustrated how my theological understandings as well as my praxis as a Christian have been shaped by my personal experiences as a white Afrikaner woman and a member of the DRC living the first thirty seven years of my life in apartheid South Africa. My experiences of gender oppression, complicity in racial oppression and the tremendous economic and educational privileges that I still enjoy today have all interacted in contributing to the way in which I view the world and participate in it. Who I am, what I believe, how I live my life as professional, Christian, wife, mother, daughter, sister, aunt and friend are all closely interrelated. The participation in one relationship or domain of life/living influences and informs the other. I use my personal experience of oppression as a woman in a patriarchal South African and DRC culture to inform my professional work. My professional work in the

wider society has supported a growing awareness of the traumatic impact of apartheid. This awareness guides my actions in both my professional and my personal life, especially in terms of social justice.

2.2.2 Participating with the *other*

Referring to the story of the Good Samaritan, Ackermann (2003:14) talks about how badly we deal with our differences. The priest and Levite pass by the beaten-up man lying at the roadside, ignoring his plight and minding their own business: 'They deal with otherness through exclusion and abandonment. It is another excluded person, a Samaritan, who comes to help the already excluded man.' In his discussion of Luke 10: 25-37, SteinhoffSmith (1995: 144) highlights how the shock of Jesus' story resides in its portrayal of religious persons (priest and Levite) as not caring and the enemy Samaritan as caring. He (SteinhoffSmith 1995: 145) continues by saying that the practise of pastoral care as the activity of 'pastoral professionals who diagnose and treat the spiritual and ultimate troubles of parishioners and clients' does not encompass responses to material or social suffering – the suffering caused by physical illness, poverty and oppression. These responses are usually classified as prophetic or social, not pastoral ministry. This exclusion results in the neglect by the church as a whole of people living with AIDS, in poverty and within extremely challenging life circumstances. As South Africans we shall have to face and confess our unwillingness to deal lovingly with neighbours who are different (Ackermann 2000a: 218). We often stigmatize 'the other' and refuse to be in relationship with her or him: 'We forget that Jesus taught us that our neighbour is the radically other who is also the radically related. We forget that our neighbour has inviolable claims on us to be welcomed as Christ has welcomed us' (Ackermann 2004: 13).

To speak of 'the other' is immediately a problem of language as we might wonder – other than whom or from what? (Ackermann 2004: 4) Am I the norm and are those who do not conform to my norm 'the other'? Otherness as mere acceptance of difference without any analysis of what constitutes that difference is insufficient: '[I]f the voice of the other is already strong, clear, available, fully fore-grounded, then we are likely to have less trouble hearing it than if it is not' (Cochrane 2001: 74). The question would be: Whose voices are subjugated and silenced? 'The other' represents most strongly those people whose interests are suppressed, who are oppressed. In Chapter One I discussed the effect of the exclusionary and oppressive practices of patriarchal traditions and structures on my life as a woman. I have also considered four responses to otherness of race with examples from my personal story. The complexities we face when we speak of 'the other' are well summarized below:

> To speak of the other is to speak of space, boundaries, time, difference, our bodies, cultures, traditions, ideologies, and beliefs. To speak of the other is to speak of that other human being

that I may mistakenly have assumed to be just like me and who, in fact is not like me at all….To speak of the other is to speak of poverty and justice, of human sexuality, of gender, race and class. To speak of the other is to acknowledge that difference is problematic; often threatening, even alienating, and that we do not always live easily or well with it.

(Ackermann 2004:7)

De Gruchy (2006: 144) talks about the great compassion that Jesus had for the underdogs of society, about how he reached out to the poor and the victims of injustice and welcomed women and children into his circle and gave them status often denied in their culture. One of the most striking things about Jesus' life was the way in which he kept crossing over cultural, religious and ethnic barriers to reach out to others, especially those in need, to bring them into his disciple community (De Gruchy 2006: 144). Jesus also expressed virulent criticism towards those in Jewish society whose hegemony and domination silenced, excluded and marginalized people (Cochrane 2001: 75).

In valuing the local community of faith we must reconcile ourselves with the fact that 'there are persons for whom congregational life is painful and, at times, abusive' (Ruether in Marshall 1995: 174). Thus valuing the congregation does not imply that we deny the ways in which communities participate in unjust and destructive practices such as racism, patriarchy and the abuse of power. We are called and challenged to listen to and hear the voices of the marginalized, the quiet, the oppressed, and those who make us uncomfortable and, in this way, become a more inclusive church:

> Carter Heyward suggests that 'justice is the shape of mutuality in our life together, in our societies and relationships …the "righteousness" of God…is reflected in human justice to the extent that we are willing participants in creating God's justice on the earth among ourselves …. Justice is the actual shape of love in the world.'

(Heyward in Marshall 1995:175)

'Indeed, the covenant to care is a covenant to seek justice on behalf of all persons, not only those who appear at our office doors or who can afford to pay for our salaries' (Marshall 1995: 175).

In considering a liberating ecclesiology Villa-Vicencio (1988:194) refers to Matthew 25:31-46 which suggests that the primary and most concrete mediation between the transcendent God and human nature is the poor and repressed. Quoting Phil.2:6-11, Villa-Vicencio (1988:194) reminds us that the 'great and mysterious God of the Hebrew scriptures is revealed as being present in the Christ who emptied himself of all this glory and took on himself the form of a servant':

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> The alternative church, the church of the poor is a church 'outside the gate' (Heb.13:13) its members being those excluded from the dominant society, including thieves, prostitutes, criminals, outcasts and rebels. It was there that Jesus was crucified. But the institutional centre of the churches now is found elsewhere – at the centre of society, among the powerful and those whose social location in life is essentially responsible for the others being driven to the edge of existence.

> (Villa-Vicencio 1988:194)

Difference matters to the church as the church is thoroughly pluralistic (Ackermann 2004:8). The church is 'a Body whose fundamental vocation should be to make a place for the immense diversity of human beings who give their allegiance to Jesus Christ' (Ackermann 2004: 8).

My understanding is that we lose much when we do not engage with 'the other'. Participation with 'the other' is essential to our moral being in the world:

> Conversation with others (with whom we differ with regard to religion, social/economic class, sex, race, culture or sexual orientation) is essential for knowing and overcoming of 'epistemological deficits' that result from an advantaged parochial vision. 'All perspectives are partial and the creation of a moral vision and a strategy of moral action requires by definition the counterbalance of other groups and individuals', argues Sharon Welch. Welch goes so far as to claim that a single actor cannot be moral alone. The fullness of knowing occurs in a conversational context where there is a fullness of participation in those seeking to know.

> (Hess 1998: 54)

Welch (1997: 126) warns of the grave danger when liberation theology equates inclusion with epistemic privilege. She points out that marginalized groups can be as partial, petty, subject to power abuse and cruelty as those currently in power. Welch (1997: 127) supports the post-modern theories which claim that our experiences as women and other marginalized groups should be included in understanding social systems 'not because we are superior, but because we are human.' It is important to understand that our contribution will be unique as Welch explains, because it is easier to see the cost of a social system from the bottom. Thus, critical analysis needs the perspective of all, not because it is free of distortion, but because it provides a key piece in understanding the contours of social reality.

Weingarten (2003:161) talks about the danger of experiencing others as completely different from us and how it then becomes possible to feel a wide range of negative emotions towards others, such as disgust, revulsion, contempt, rage, hatred, or terror. She warns that the experience may become self-perpetuating, justifying continued expression of these negative emotions towards them so that, over time, we might dehumanize them:

> Dehumanization, the process by which people are viewed as less than human, a process that individuals, groups and nations all do, obstructs caring about the other. Perceiving someone's shared humanity is a prerequisite for compassionate witnessing.

(Weingarten 2003:161)

By compassionate witnessing Weingarten (2003: 161-169) implies the kind of awareness referred to on her grid that includes attitudes of empathy and compassion which are foundations for empowered responses. As a Narrative therapist I have found the practices of compassionate witnessing, whereby I join communities and individuals through respectful witnessing, a good way to break down barriers and begin a process of participation. I often engage in 'taking-it-back' practices (White 1997:132) through writing letters of reflection about the privilege that has been granted me to be included in their lives, to name the hopeful developments that I have witnessed in their lives and to acknowledge the ways in which my own life has been impacted by my participation with them.

2.2.3. Participating *with* people

Pastoral *participation* implies an awareness of power-relations in the caring relationship. After telling the story of the Good Samaritan Jesus asks the lawyer to judge who acts lovingly from the perspective of the half-dead man: 'Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?' (Lk 10: 36). The afflicted man becomes the one who defines love and determines who acts lovingly (SteinhoffSmith 1995: 148). In this way Jesus places those who might be excluded or treated merely as passive objects of pastoral care in the authoritative centre to the definition of care. An alternative politics of care is established whereby care is defined as: 'the activity of a person or a community that supports the full and powerful participation in communities and societies of those who are suffering, excluded, objectified, or oppressed' (SteinhoffSmith 1995: 148).

Adopting this 'alternative politics' (SteinhoffSmith 1995: 148) means relinquishing the claim to privileged knowledge about care or love. In participatory pastoral practice we follow the Jesus of Luke 10, who placed the power to define love in the perspective of the sufferer and the power to practise love in the activity of an unbeliever. In this 'alternative politics', rather than focusing on differentiating

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themselves from non-Christians, Christians join with and learn from sufferers and any who practise love: 'Care then becomes an activity done *with* not *to* others. It is a 'relational activity' (SteinhoffSmith 1995: 149). There is the danger that care can be done from a safe distance where pastors diagnose and treat clients. In contrast, this alternative politics encourages closeness to the person and the problem. Christian practitioners join with the afflicted and others who respond to suffering in devising strategies aimed at destroying the barriers which prevent the afflicted from fully participating in society and in constructing or supporting communities in which the afflicted exercise power. Reflection on the therapeutic process is critical in order not to replicate the politics through which therapists retain the sole power to define what care is and to determine the course of therapy. This kind of therapy must endeavour to eliminate the social and economic barriers that prevent the poor and suffering from fully participating in the therapeutic relationship (SteinhoffSmith 1995: 149).

In participatory pastoral praxis my concern is with the question: 'How do we join people in caring *with* them, rather than doing care *to* or *for* them?' Narrative therapist, William Madsen (2007: 20), stresses that a relational stance in therapy offers therapists the best opportunity to draw on and enhance client resourcefulness. His preferred relational stance with clients is one of an 'appreciative ally' (Madsen 2007: 22). This means that he stands in solidarity with his clients and that he joins them in continually searching for 'elements of competence, connection and hope.' Madsen (2007:22) continues: 'A relational stance of an appreciative ally is characterized by a spirit of respect, curiosity, and hope.' As Narrative therapists we believe that clients are the experts in their lives and that they often have more competence than we realize. This makes our participation together a collaborative process that draws on the abilities, skills and knowledge of both parties:

> A collaborate partnership is enhanced when we come across as regular human beings rather than distant professionals with clients. In daily practice, this connection is supported by talking in a conversational way rather than conducting interviews, checking our use of jargon, and attempting to match clients' language. The process of connection is facilitated by emphasizing our similarities with clients while acknowledging and becoming curious about our differences.
>
> (Madsen 2007: 34)

In collaborative relationships there are attempts to acknowledge and minimize the power differential between clients and therapists. Narrative therapists talk about 'negotiating co-authorship' and a 'power-sharing relationship' with their clients to indicate this kind of relationship (Winslade & Monk 1999: 30-31). Externalizing conversations, a narrative practice, are ways of speaking that separate problems from people (Morgan 2000: 17). By using language that creates space between the client and the problems the therapist is able to join the client in viewing the influences of problems on their

lives. It also invites people to discern their own meaning and exploration of events and seek to discover what skills and knowleges are present in their lives (Morgan 2000: 30-31).

This kind of collaboration implies that therapists constantly have to undermine the idea that they have privileged access to the truth. White (1993: 57) mentions three practices that assist in doing this:

- Giving persons notice of the extent to which the therapist's participation in therapy is dependent on the feedback from the person's experience of the therapy – this is essential guidance for the therapy;
- Constantly encouraging clients to evaluate the effect of the therapy by asking questions about it;
- Engaging in practices of 'transparency', a term introduced by David Epston (White 1993:57) to refer to the process of sharing our organising thoughts and assumptions with our clients.

These practices assist clients to be better able to decide for themselves how they might respond to our efforts and to become more active participants in the therapeutic process.

2.2.4 Participating with *awareness*

According to Dunlap (1999: 136) pastoral theology has in the past viewed those who receive care 'in modernist terms as a self that is a separate, autonomous, freely choosing being, disconnected from community, context, tradition, power relations, and constitution by language.' This perspective ignored the influence of social location - and with it the power of race, class, gender - to construct who we are. Many pastoral therapists are challenging the individualistic paradigm, born out of white American and European culture, which has dominated pastoral therapy (Pattison 1994: 214; Marshall 1995: 171; Miller-McLemore 1998: 188; Van den Blink 1995: 196). They point out how the challenge of raised consciousness compels pastoral therapists to see more clearly how the prevailing cultural assumptions - for example, about, gender and race and class - have shaped their behaviour as pastoral therapists in ways that they unconsciously or uncritically perpetuate in their theory and practice. It is often only when a difficult encounter with clients or colleagues brings their unexamined assumptions to the surface that their awareness is raised.

Van den Blink (1995: 197) agrees with Weingarten (2010: 11-12) that when therapists lack a sufficient awareness of the extent to which their individual development has been shaped by class, economics, gender, culture and ethnicity this can lead to ineffective and harmful interventions as indicated by the unaware/empowered position on the grid. One of the tendencies from such a position would be to blame the victim, leading 'researchers and clinicians to seek an explanation for the perpetrator's crimes in the character of the victim….Instead of conceptualizing the psychopathology of the victim as a response to an abusive situation, mental health professionals have frequently attributed the abusive situation to the victim's presumed underlying psychopathology' (Herman in Van den Blink 1995: 201). Van den Blink (1995: 210) also points out that insufficient awareness of context by pastoral therapists can lead to their premature and myopic focusing on transference and counter-transference issues and result in a dangerous naiveté about their own contribution to whatever is going on. It can blind them to the existence of power differentials between clients and therapists and the fact that therapy is always a political act.

There is no question that unjust social conditions are the breeding ground of much individual and group suffering and dysfunction (Van den Blink 1995: 199). To help people who are subjugated accommodate or adjust to unjust or dysfunctional familial or social systems in a way that keeps them victimized has earned pastoral therapists the reputation of being keepers of the status quo:

> To presume to care for other human beings without taking into account the social and political causes of whatever it is they may be experiencing is to confirm them in their distress while pretending to offer healing.

(Selby in Pattison 1994: 218)

Miller-McLemore (1996:14) also stresses the importance of the social analysis of oppression, alienation, exploitation, diversity, and justice in its assessment of individual's problems if pastoral care wants to be taken seriously by women and people of colour. The understanding that subject positions are not fixed - that there is not just one correct way of being a woman, Christian, citizen or mother in the world - engenders hope as it implies choice and agency (Dunlap 1999: 138).

If we, as therapists, do not want to perpetuate the oppressive influence of the dominant culture we are compelled to listen from a 'not-knowing' position led by curiosity to the explanation made by the client

(Anderson & Goolishian 1992:29-30)

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> The goal of therapy is to participate in conversation that continually loosens and opens up, rather than constricts and closes down. Through therapeutic conversation, fixed meanings and behaviours…are given room, broadened, shifted, and changed.

> (Anderson & Goolishian 1988: 381)

It requires of us to check ourselves constantly: as we listen we will notice and be able to question the assumptions that we are making. Such constant questioning of our own assumptions invites people to question theirs (Freedman & Combs 1996: 45). This means that we have to turn our backs on our 'expert' filters and focus on the meaning that the client makes. Freedman and Combs (1996: 46) calls this kind of listening 'deconstructive listening' during which we seek to open up space for aspects of people's lives that have not yet been storied. In this way the restrictive grip of certain dominant narratives on people's lives can be loosened and changed.

The practice of externalizing in Narrative Therapy greatly assists in deconstructing the problem narratives that people bring to therapy and locates them in a bigger social context. Morgan (2000: 30) summarizes some of the advantages of externalizing conversations. These conversations:

- Allow for multiple descriptions of identity;
- Make visible the social practices that promote, sustain and nurture the life of the problem;
- Examine the cultural and socio-political stories that influence the lives of people seeking help;
- Celebrate difference and challenge notions of 'norms'. Embrace difference and seek to make discriminatory practices visible.

My case discussion of therapy with Yvonne Barnard in Chapter Four will illustrate very clearly these practices of deconstructive listening and externalising conversations.

2.2.5 Participating in *voicing*

Riet Bons-Storm (1996:11) opens her book, *The Incredible Woman: Listening to Women's Silences in Pastoral Care and Counseling* with the following:

> Many women find it difficult to tell a pastor or counselor about their problems. They are not sure they can find the right words, and frequently they have a vague or even acute sense of embarrassment in referring their problems to a pastor or counselor. Women often ask themselves, 'Isn't this problem somehow my own fault?' or, 'Is this problem even worth discussing?' Consequently women fall silent.

Nelle Morton's concept of 'hearing to speech' (in Bons-Storm 1996: 12) - which literally means to listen carefully and patiently while someone finds the courage to say what she or he really means - is of extreme importance in pastoral participation. Morton (in Bons-Storm 1996: 11) asserts: 'Speaking first to be heard is power over. Hearing to bring forth speech is empowering.' Eiesland (1998: 104) agrees that justice begins within relationships of speaking and listening. She (Eiesland 1998: 104) refers to the reminder in Dorothee Solle's *Suffering* that victims of intense suffering and oppression are often deprived of the ability to speak about their experience. They might lack language that would place the suffering in its social context and might instead view their problem as a personal fault or as essential to the ordering of the universe. This gets people to view their suffering as unspeakable: a misery that must be hidden and accepted rather than being named publicly and transformed. In contrast, suffering that is voiced and shared can be very healing and strengthening as it creates solidarity between people who suffer similarly (Eiesland 1998: 10). In order 'to hear speech' (Billmann 1996: 31) or help people to voice their experience of what they have never before articulated we have to make a commitment to listen 'past the borders of our categories.' This includes that we communicate that we value what is waiting to be voiced and are prepared to learn a language which might be other than our own while we remain deeply aware of that which is spoken through bodily expression as well as words:

> Listening in such a way has always been an art and a mystery, the profoundest gesture of respect. To communicate, by eyes, face, voice, and posture, that one has something infinitely precious to learn from someone else is to offer back what often seems to be ebbing away – the capacity to touch or enrich another human being.

(Billmann 1996: 31)

My personal story reflects the same experience which Bons-Storm (1998: 10) writes about when she claims that although she has not been violently oppressed, she has 'a lifetime's experience of discrimination, of knowing that a woman has less authority to speak and to be heard than has a man.' She points out how, in this process, the voices of many women, together with their valuable contributions to the formation of thought and practice are ignored or silenced. Similarly, I 'have come to understand this phenomenon not so much as the vice of brutal men, but as a structural problem of our societies and churches, because they are constituted by patriarchal ideologies' (Bons-Storm 1998: 10-11). Theology is deeply influenced by the social-cultural climate which marginalizes and silences people according to their lack of the power-rendering qualities of society:

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> The group who has the power to speak and be heard in practical theology hardly includes women, poor people, blacks, people who lack official education, homosexuals, the disabled, old and weak people and young persons.

(Bons-Storm 1998: 16)

Neuger (1996: 98) agrees that helping women and other marginalized persons in the naming of reality in their 'mother tongue' is needed for the sake of the full participation of humanity in the ongoing co-creative process with God:

> A 'living human web' cannot simply be 'read' and interpreted like a 'document'. Those within the web who have not yet spoken must speak for themselves. Gender, feminist, and black studies all verify the knowledge of the underprivileged, the outcast, the underclass, and the silenced. If knowledge depends upon power, then power must be given to the silenced.

(Miller-McLemore 1996: 21)

Narrative Therapy's definitional ceremonies provide a powerful way of recruiting audiences and assist in having people join others around shared and significant themes in their lives:

> Definitional ceremonies provide people with the option of telling and performing the stories of their lives before an audience of carefully chosen outsider witnesses. These outsider witnesses respond to these stories with retellings that are shaped by a specific tradition of acknowledgment.

(White 2007: 165)

In Narrative Therapy the therapist is very active in asking questions to encourage the telling of the clients' stories. 'Deconstructive questions' (Freedman & Combs 1996:57) offer the client an opportunity to 'unpack' the narratives that they live by in such a way that they see that those narratives are not inevitable and do not represent essential truth but are constructions which can be constructed differently. Once people are offered another possibility to view the narrative they can commit themselves to protesting it. In Narrative Therapy the process of voicing is much more than just a cathartic expression: it is an active seeking of alternative ways of understanding and acting.

2.2.6 Participating with our *bodies*

Embodiment has always been celebrated by feminists while they have lamented the distortion of the body-mind dualism created by patriarchy (Waldron 1996: 66). The assumption that people are most able to develop their spirituality when they are most detached and disengaged from their bodies and from body-mediated sensuality is closely linked to this body-mind dualism. But, as Moore (2002: 15) reminds us, knowing happens through our bodies as well as our minds:

> Feminists believe that failure to live deeply with our body, our feelings and our perceptions means that we lose our connectedness and our ability to relate. In feminist spirituality, this connectedness and relatedness has always been valued, and this is a point of differentiation from the male, whose tendency is to emphasize detachment.
>
> (Waldron 1996: 66-67)

Feminists believe that we are not just on earth for some future goal that we might reach in our relationship with God, but that we are here to relate, to weave and spin creative webs in our relationships and interactions and find God in our present situations and experiences (Waldron 1996: 67). We do this by attending to interconnections as part of life for all embodied beings, by resisting oppression and by seeking to redress the imbalances of sexism, racism, culture and class (Waldron 1996: 68).

The power to love one another as well as the power to hurt or injure one another begins in our bodies as 'we are our bodies':

> The fact that apartheid has done so much damage to the bodies of South Africans compels us to reflect on the body theologically. Under apartheid our bodies defined our reality with sickening precision. No black bodies in this queue, no black bodies in this bed, no black bodies in this ambulance; no white bodies in shacks, no white bodies in drought stricken 'homelands', no white bodies in broken down class rooms. Our bodies defined whether we were stigmatized or advantaged. Our bodies became the site of the struggle for freedom and a rightful share in our country's resources.
>
> (Ackermann 1998: 87)

The work of justice and healing is 'body work' (Ackermann 1998:88). The stories told to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) gave witness to bodily harm that was done in the time of apartheid. In the 1980s church leaders literally put their bodies on the line by leading protest marches and being arrested as they participated in non-violent action 'in solidarity with "our people" to share in their pain and suffering' (MacMaster 2008:6).

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The struggle against the AIDS pandemic calls for committed bodies as much as the struggle for liberation did. It is all about bodies as HIV enters, lurks and as it infiltrates the immune system until it ultimately destroys the body (Ackermann 2006: 238). HIV-infected women and children - whose bodies are in pain, hungry, abused or rejected - remind the church that the gospel is rooted in embodied acts of love and care otherwise the gospel will remain 'pleasant-sounding theological theory' (Ackermann 2006: 239). Couture (1998: 27) encourages us to engage in embodied actions. We cannot be practical theologians in mind only: 'Practical theology reaches into our souls to engage our intellect and our bodies, our being and doing.' Couture views pastoral care as a creative act of imagination where human gifts meet human need. It involves a vision of life in which care of persons, for creation and for God is central. Embodied participation might, at times, look like this:

> ...providing transportation for those who don't have any, providing a place to sleep, a telephone or simply an address other than a shelter for a homeless person applying for a job, buying groceries and cleaning up the house of a person living with AIDS, providing space for people who have no space to meet together and organize themselves, providing materials – paper, pens, computer terminals, copy machines, telephones, fax machines – needed by such communities of the dispossessed when they get organized and launch campaigns to make themselves heard, using our access to those with power to support such campaigns, providing child care for dispossessed organizers, and other seemingly 'worldly' activities. This list should not be taken to be exhaustive. A central principle of the new politics of care is that any caring act done by any person deserves recognition as being an act of love. Changing a diaper or washing dishes or preparing a meal – each, when done with care, possesses all the dignity that God and humanity can give.

(SteinhoffSmith 1995: 150)

This is the embodied caring participation that the Samaritan engages in when he interrupts his own journey, nurses the wounds, transports the man, takes him to an inn, sleeps over for the night to tend to him and then arranges for continued care and follow-up by himself.

Our bodies encompass all that we are – our thoughts, emotions and our acts. Thus 'embodied' ethics refer to our actions performed in the service of a way of life which embodies core Christian beliefs. Ackermann (2004: 10) reminds us that 'the most compelling reason for ethics to translate into embodied acts lies in the embodied nature of the Christian faith.' The story of the man Jesus of Nazareth in the world as well as his suffering body on the cross – the one body given for many – is at the heart of our faith. Christ's offering does not obliterate our differences; it offers to break down the divides between us, to do away with exclusion, discrimination and prejudice:

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> Through deliberate, embodied acts of acceptance and care, destructive differences which separate Jew from gentile, female from male, slave from free, black from white, and gay from straight, are overcome. Difference is accepted as God-given. Then we can be set free to accomplish God's will in this world.
>
> (Ackermann 2004:11)

Our bodies are subject to social constructions, in the form of standards of beauty and normality (Graham 1999:79). Every aspect of social reality is always already an embodied reality. As creators and creations of human social relations bodies are active agents in the construction and mediation of our world: 'The deepest dynamics of the social, political and economic order are always incarnated into persons/bodies-in-relation' (Graham 1999:80).

Moore (2002: 14) points out that the theme of embodiment has served to focus attention on a wide range of topics like motherhood, lesbianism, eating disorders, fashion, ecology, representation of women in art, menstruation and rape. Violence to women points to fundamental structures of historical human existence and is therefore a very important theme for feminist pastoral theology (Moore 2002: 15). It is critical for us to be aware of how our words, behaviours, uses and practices of Scripture and tradition, participate in constructing the body (Dunlap 1999: 139). A participatory pastoral praxis challenges and deconstructs these dominant discourses thereby contributing to the healing and liberation of women from oppressive and violent practices.

Michael White (1993: 55-56) joins feminist thinkers when they object to body/mind dualism. Feminists object to those patriarchal language practices that determine that members of professional disciplines have access to the 'truth' in the world. These ways of speaking and of writing are considered to be 'rational, neutral, and respectable, emphasizing notions of the authoritative account and the impersonal expert view.' These practices of speaking and writing disembody the perspective and the opinions of the speaker and writer. They make dialogue over different points of view impossible and impose 'global and unitary' status on them. Other ways of speaking are rendered invisible as they are considered to be inferior. In all the narrative work therapists and participants of outsider witness ceremonies are encouraged to give embodied responses by situating his/her responses (including comments, questions, thoughts and opinions) in the context of his/her personal experiences, imagination, and intentions (White 1993:57).

I consider practices of the written word as found in Narrative Therapy an important embodied response to the witnessing of people's lives. Note taking is used to record 'some of the important-seeming words that people they work with have to say' (Freedman & Combs 1996:206). People say that it is a different experience to hear something than to say it. Thus the reading of the client's words

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from the therapist's notes - which then become an official record of the counterplot - becomes very significant. Therapeutic letters, documents of knowledge, documents that circulate news about the therapy and documents of rite of passage are some of the documents that Fox (2003) mentions in an article reviewing the use of therapeutic documents in Narrative Therapy. I have used practices of the written word extensively in the clinical work presented in this research. I hope to illustrate that this embodied participation with clients, communities and colleagues can make powerful contributions.

Embodied participation is also expressed in compassionate witnessing when visiting communities and when participating in rituals and celebrations with clients and communities.

2.2.7 Participating *together with* others

The image of 'the living human web' and of 'weaving the web' counteracts traditional individualistic images of pastoral care. Christian feminists regard mutuality, interrelatedness and compassion as key principles (Gelder 1996:32). Community, teamwork and interconnectedness are possible in pastoral care (Moessner 1996: 323). SteinhoffSmith (1995: 148) advocates that those on the margins of society can offer significant care to others. He opposes the hierarchical models of care as he views care as 'the activity of a person or a community that supports the full and powerful participation in communities and societies of those who are suffering, excluded, objectified, or oppressed.' The Samaritan would represent such a person from the margins of society as Ackermann (2003:14) pointed out.

There has been a shift of focus from pastoral care as individual counselling to a focus on care understood as part of a wider cultural, social and religious context (Miller-McLemore 1996:14). Within congregations this means that members of congregations provide care and clergy become facilitators of these networks of care rather than acting as the chief source of care. There is a wave towards the future where more lay people will participate in care (Miller-McLemore & Gill-Austern 1999:19). Couture (1998: 27) echoes this inclusive view: 'By "pastoral care" I mean the divinely-given mutuality of care shared across laity and clergy on the basis of theological beliefs and values.'

The relationship between the Samaritan and the inn-keeper illustrates pastoral participation together with others:

> [A] new reading of the story of the Good Samaritan gives us an important metaphor for life-generating love and care. Jeanne Stevenson Moessner has pointed out that in this story we have a model of love that is based on inter-dependence. The good Samaritan was not called to

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extraordinary self-giving. He did not cancel his journey. He did not give up his plans or sacrifice all his needs to the needs of the occasion. Rather, he met the need of the wounded one on the road, but then also relied on some communal resources, represented by the innkeeper at the inn. He then continued on his journey. The work of compassion often begins with the act of joining with, accompaniment, solidarity, rather than self sacrifice. Caring requires effective action, and effectiveness demands the sharing of burdens and allowing others also to assume responsibility.

(Gill-Austern 1996: 316- 317)

Kaethe Weingarten (2000: 399) says that 'matters of life and death are too hard, too onerous, too painful to "do" alone.' She (Weingarten 2000: 400) quotes Tutu who said that: 'A person is human precisely in being enveloped in the community of other human beings, in being caught up in the bundle of life. To be…is to participate.' Weingarten (2000: 402) taught me that:

Hope is something we do with others. Hope is too important – its effects on body and soul too significant – to be left to individuals alone. Hope must be the responsibility of the community.

I have already discussed the outsider-witness work as part of definitional ceremonies which is one of the ways in which others can join in therapeutic work. The idea of 'communities of concern' (Freeman, Epston & Lobovitz 1997: 132-133) refers to the recruiting of communities that have 'the power to appreciate alternative stories in the making, and to offer locally based knowledge and techniques for changing dominant, problem-saturated stories that equate a person with a problem.' Families can be resourceful communities to include in therapy:

I think we can usefully expand our conceptualization of family as those important others who might serve as a resource or community of support in a person's life. In this way, family can include immediate family, extended family, family of origin, family of choice, friends, neighbours, and other important members of a families network….With this expanded definition of family in mind we can think of involving families in clinical work because they are potentially the most powerful resource in people's lives.

(Madsen 2007:4)

Madsen works from the assumption that the important people in a person's life would have intentions to be part of a resourceful community to that person. Narrative therapists often think of possibilities to suggest the inclusion of members from clients' lives who can support and act as resources to the therapeutic work.

2.2.8 Participation in *social transformation*

Pattison (1994: 212) challenges Christian theology to ask questions about the politics of therapy and counselling. He warns that if therapy and counselling are not involved in doing something about the problems confronting human society, they are in fact simply helping people to be well-adjusted in a society whose fundamental values and assumptions remain unquestioned:

> To act as if individuals and their problems are not affected by the social order is to support the status quo and to leave social and political structures unchallenged by a kind of therapeutic quietism. In this sense, the personal is very definitely political, if only tacitly and implicitly. Adjusting people to unsatisfactory social conditions so they can live more contentedly in them may provide pastors and counsellors with a sense of agency and job satisfaction but it prescinds from questioning the injustice of the present social order.

(Pattison 1994: 214)

Pattison (1994: 216) explains the serious consequences of seeing pastoral care as being mainly and narrowly concerned with individuals as an 'unhelpful misrepresentation which colludes with, and perpetuates, circumstances of injustice and oppression.' Social or political action might sometimes be the only appropriate pastoral action. Pattison (1994: 217) relates the urgency of social advocacy to the story of the Good Samaritan and points out that the problem of the 'robbers on the road between Jericho and Jerusalem' needs to be addressed for longer-term benefit to more people.

Miller-McLemore and Anderson (1995: 109) challenge those who engage in pastoral care to engage in efforts towards social transformation. This can be done by challenging from pulpit and pastoral office the social norms that undermine the dignity and humanity of people. Hunter (1995: 23) points out that since the mid-seventies, Don Browning has been arguing for more explicit ethical reflection in the field of pastoral care and that feminist, black and liberation theologies have pressed the case for pastoral advocacy.

Ackermann (1998: 83) considers the 'cry for healing' within the South African context as inseparable from the need for justice. These actions for justice may emerge from those who are suffering, marginalized and oppressed, but also from those who have privilege and power as they hear the pain of the suffering of 'the others' and act in response. We need to understand that daily living is not separate from the life of faith. Healing praxis is concrete:

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> ...[B]read, a roof over one's head, running water and employment are as fundamental to human well-being as are our rights and freedom. A theology concerned with healing praxis in South Africa seeks economic sustainability and fosters a culture of human rights as a means to finding the wholeness intended by God for a healed world.

> (Ackermann 1998: 83)

The onset of many clinically-identified problems of people with low incomes is often associated with socio-economic events. If these problems are isolated from the context of poverty and its related meaning the therapist has acted politically to silence the voice and understanding of the main victims of inequitable economic policies:

> Making people happy in poverty by treating their clinical problems without reference to their political and economic context ensures that they identify themselves as the problem, thus leaving the state free of blame. It is bewildering that there are still people who consider this sort of therapy is a non-political activity.

> (The Just Therapy Group in Waldegrave 2003:27)

Therapists from the Just Therapy Group are involved in local community projects as part of their work. This ensures that therapeutic conversations involve cultural, socio-economic and gender-perspective reflections as they relate to problems: 'Themes of liberation and self-determination in therapy help unmask social myths that condemn the victims of political and economic policies' (Waldegrave 2003: 29). In the next chapter my critical analysis of the social problems in South African society is an important part of a liberating participatory pastoral praxis. I believe that it is also important for therapists to participate in advocacy for justice through powerful institutions in society - such as the church - as our privileged access, as therapists, to the effects of social injustice on people's lives puts us in a position to do it in an informed way.

Narrative can be regarded as a cultural vehicle as featured in the therapeutic conversations that unpack the stories of people's lives and identities (White 2004: 105). Through the unpacking of these stories the cultural and historical ways of being in and thinking about the world become explicitly known and are no longer accepted as certainties about life or truths about human nature and identity. The alternative identity claims and stories of life that people explore and describe in re-authoring conversations provide a context to explore these stories about alternative knowledges and practices of living. This provides a basis for the development of new possibilities and options in self-formation

previously unseen and for the recognition of problem-solving skills not previously available. In this way re-authoring conversations are also cultural vehicles and might contribute to social transformation.

2.2.9 Participation in *interrelatedness*

In a publication on women and the church in Southern Africa, Ackermann (1991:100-103) writes about a relational anthropology in which she claims that relationality is the key concept when feminists seek to understand what it means to be human. She describes what relationality is by expressing what it is not. For instance, relationality is not alienation or apathy, isolation or separation (Ackermann 2004:14). It is definitely not sexism, classism and racism (Ackermann 1991:101). Relationality implies living in loving relationship with ourselves, with our neighbours, being linked to nature and understanding that relationality finds its source in our understanding of God-in-relation (1991: 101). Relationality does not deny or minimize difference, but we need to carry our differences into 'deep-going conversation and serious honest conversation – speaking with head and heart and flesh; listening with head and heart and flesh' (Copeland in Ackermann 2004:14).

Positive relationships are two-way affairs by nature. Interrelatedness implies mutuality between and responsibility for one another: 'We come to know ourselves by being in relationship with others' (Ackermann 2006: 233). When it comes to the therapeutic relationship, White (1997: 130) views a two-way account of therapy as one which emphasises the life-shaping effect of this work on the life of the therapist. The constructing of a two-way account of therapy - in which the therapist takes the responsibility to acknowledge the extent to which therapeutic interaction is constitutive of the lives of all parties to the interaction - is an ethical commitment (White 1997:143). The taking-it-back practices that White (1997:133) describes are a way in which the therapist can acknowledge the effect of the consultations with clients on the therapist's life. These taking-it-back practices contribute to rich descriptions of our clients' lives and also acknowledge how our work is potentially shaping of therapists' lives and work (White 1997: 143).

When the helper feels the pain of the one who is oppressed it becomes possible to form mutually transformative relationships with those that we are helping:

> When mutual transformation occurs, there is the power of empathy and compassion, of delight in otherness, and strength in the solidarity of listening to others, bearing together stories of pain and resistance.

(Welch 1990: 135)

As we listen to others and allow previous and present worlds of meaning to be challenged we might find that there is an enlargement of the self. Following Heshusius, Kotzé and Kotzé (2001: 3) remind us that the solidarity and care required should not involve a patronizing, objective self-other relationship distinction. Heshusius (1994:17) regards a 'participatory consciousness' as a relationship construction which she calls the 'self-other'. It requires an attitude of openness and receptivity to create a greater wholeness. When the Samaritan saw the beaten-up man 'he was moved with pity.' This seems to be a reflection of the kind of self-other relationship that involves a participatory consciousness:

> Hospitality is the insistence that life must be kept open to those unlike us, not only for their sake but for ours as well....In a biblical understanding of life, the neighbor is not extra, marginal, or elective. The neighbor is definitional to social reality. The neighbor is indispensable for health, not only to care for but as a giver of gifts which we cannot generate ourselves.

(Brueggemann 1978: 170)

The 'gifts' that others can give us 'that we cannot generate ourselves' are closely related to identity construction. Following the work of Barbara Meyerhof, White (2007: 136) incorporates re-membering conversations in Narrative Therapy. These remembering conversations are shaped by the idea that identity is founded upon an 'association of life' rather than a core self:

> This association of life has a membership composed of the significant figures and identities of a person's past, present and projected future, whose voices are influential with regard to the construction of the person's identity. Re-membering conversations provide an opportunity for people to revise the memberships of their association of life: to upgrade some memberships and to downgrade others; to honour some memberships and to revoke others; to grant authority to some voices in regard to matters of one's personal identity, and to disqualify other voices with regard to this.

(White 2007: 128)

These re-membering conversations open up opportunities for people to challenge the dominant notions of identity that are so isolating of them – ones that emphasize norms about self-possession, self-containment, self-reliance, self-actualization and self-motivation. The re-membering conversations provide alternative ways to understand their identities and identity formation.

2.2.10 Participation in restitution (*'doing sorry'*)

As my own awareness of the South African context increased and my reflection on the story of the Good Samaritan continued it struck me that, in addition to associating myself with the Priest and Levite who 'passed by on the other side', I might also be represented by the robbers in this story. My people, the Afrikaner, and my church, the DRC, were responsible for extreme violence and violation towards black people in our country. We were responsible for robbing others of their dignity by enslaving and humiliating them; we robbed them of their land, of their right to live together as families and communities, their right to enjoy the facilities and natural gifts of this country, their right to be educated, their right to speak their languages etc. In a discussion on the position of the DRC in the process of the TRC, Botman (1999: 130) writes: 'Religious notions of reconciliation expect from perpetrators an ethical commitment to making redress, restitution and reparation.' Restitution starts with an admission of personal and communal guilt based on a realization that while we may not have caused each and every individual injury 'we may have occasioned it, permitted it, not acted against it or benefited from its ill-gotten gains' (Maluleke 2008). Restitution focuses our attention on the injured, those members of society who are left out. Restitution stems from the realization that we owe God so much there is not enough time and scant resources to pay it back – there is an urgency about participating in the restoration of just relations between and among humanity, creation and God. Pastoral participation is also about 'doing sorry' in relation to those who have been hurt through our actions. Saying sorry will not be enough in the healing of a community in transformation such as South Africa: we will have to find ways of 'doing sorry' too.

Waldegrave (2003: 29) notices that 'therapeutic practice, generally speaking, is concentrated in areas that can be accessed by those who are economically comfortable.' This is certainly the case in South Africa. In Chapter One I told my personal story where I admitted that my own practice as Christian psychologist excluded ninety percent of the population as they are not able to pay the consultation fees. Volunteering time to poor communities and finding ways to work effectively in those communities has become one of the ways in which I 'do sorry.' It required a challenging of 'economic orthodoxy' and doing counter-cultural practice.

Couture and Hester (1995: 52) point out that 'economic orthodoxy' has influenced pastoral care and counselling to practice the economic creed of caring for those who can pay for services and ignore those who cannot pay as less worthy of service. They pose the critical question of how to extend God's care to those most vulnerable in our midst - the poor and the marginalized:

> The God revealed in the prophetic tradition of the Judeo-Christian faith is a God of reversal. This God brings the powerful down and lifts up the powerless. Jesus revealed this God to be one who turns accepted economies on its head. This God becomes known in situations of suffering and oppression. Is it far-fetched to believe that this God can equip us to participate in the reversal of our social captivity to the economic creed? In counseling rooms and beside hospital beds we offer a message of trust, hope, and acceptance for those who experience betrayal, despair, and rejection. The reversals, however, are too often limited to intrapsychic, interpersonal, and familial conditions. We rarely try to understand these reversals in the larger institutional context of the church, hospital, or counseling center, much less in the society at large.
>
> (Couture & Hester 1995: 54)

A participatory pastoral praxis has a commitment to the powerless in the society at large and challenges our 'captivity to the economic creed' by remembering that God's abundance is meant for all.

2.3 Conclusion

The quote by Couture and Hester at the opening of this chapter provides a very good summary of what it is that I want to deconstruct in pastoral therapy. First, I want to deconstruct *whom* we participate with so that we view our scope of practice to include those people who live on the margins of society – the poor, people of colour and communities of people who might be considered as 'the other'. Second, I deconstruct *pastoral practices* that focus on explanatory or advise counselling (Louw 2000: 14) and challenge pastoral counselling 'to articulate the interaction between people for whom we care and the political, economic and social conditions in which they live' (Couture & Hester 1995: 53). Third, I challenge ideas of pastoral practice as an *individual healing activity* done 'apart' from the rest of society. I argue for a pastoral praxis that will 'take part' in the social transformation of the church and wider South African society. Fourth, I deconstruct the *central metaphor for pastoral therapy* - namely the shepherd and the sheep - by focussing instead on the parable of the Good Samaritan. This parable assists in raising awareness to the commitment to care for those people on the 'side of the road' or on the margins of society in a way that reflects the loving compassion of God through a person who is also a stranger and marginalized individual. Jesus illustrates how we need to 'embody' God's love and compassion for 'the other'. While centralising the Samaritan metaphor at the

same time I hold the metaphor of the Shepherd as an expression of Jesus' compassion and redeeming love for all of humankind.

I introduce Narrative Therapy as a practice which assists a participatory pastoral praxis to extend beyond white middle-class society and to attend to the political, economic and social factors of people's lives in therapy and community work. I do this by discussing the theoretical and philosophical ideas that support Narrative Therapy. Drawing on Narrative Therapy and feminist theology I identify and describe the ten features that inform a participatory pastoral praxis as it has developed from my reflections on my work as a Christian psychologist, community worker, and teacher of narrative therapists in post-apartheid South Africa. Over the past twelve years I have come to this combination of features in my praxis through studying and practising Narrative Therapy and reading and integrating liberation theology with these ideas. It has been developed through further reading, application in therapy and community work, brought back to reflect on for teaching and participation in the church that supports justice and transformation. More reading, application, writing and reflecting followed. I have presented papers and workshops in various contexts over the past twelve years. This has also helped me to reach more clarity about my praxis. It is important to note that these features should not be seen as separate from one another, but should be read together: one informs the other and all contribute to the deconstructions mentioned above. Narrative Therapy has given me very specific and very useful practices which I have referred to briefly. These will be described more clearly in my reflections on my case work in Chapters Four and Five. In the next chapter I will do a critical analysis of the social problems of a society in transformation – the post-apartheid South African society.

Chapter Three

Participatory pastoral praxis: A critical contextual analysis

'A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half-dead. [31]   A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. [32]So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.

(Luke 10: 30-32)

We are also grappling with the legacies of apartheid. Violence and criminality are placing the lives of many South Africans in a straightjacket of fear and uncertainty. Poverty, displacement and ruptured family lives are still the social reality for scores of people. Violence against women, particularly rape and battering, has reached endemic proportions. Diminishing resources are wreaking havoc with our systems of social security, education and health. It is difficult to translate the expectations of the majority of South Africans into concrete realities. We are a society suffering trauma, a society in transition.

(Ackermann 1998: 76)

3.1 Participatory pastoral praxis and context

In Chapter One I described my personal awakening from an unaware witness to becoming more aware of the oppression, injustice, pain and violence of the apartheid system for which my people, the white Afrikaners, were responsible and from which I benefitted greatly as a white South African. This raised awareness had been evoked mainly through my contact with my black colleagues and their generous sharing of personal stories, my reading of the stories of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) as told by Antjie Krog (1998) and my search for contact with 'the other' South Africans by visiting neighbourhoods on the margins of my privileged life. Suddenly it was like living in a new reality where, for the first time, I really *saw* the robbed and beaten-up man on the side of the road and *heard* his cries. The blinkers that had allowed me to ignore the pain of black South Africans 'and pass by on the other side' whilst rushing to church and a successful professional life fell off: I was filled with shock, anger, guilt and deep shame. Remorseful, I was forced to revise my understanding of being in relationship with a loving God so as to make space to also be a loving neighbour to those in my life who previously had never appeared to have 'neighbour status' – those 'blacks' and 'coloureds' who had had inferior status in the world that I grew up in - as they were mere servants, workers and strangers.   As I allowed myself to love and grow in empathy, a deep compassion and desire to reach out in a helpful and healing way - to 'do sorry' - started driving my actions as a Christian psychologist. This is when I discovered how the skewed context of my own privileged life and the belief systems that

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I had grown up with and which also formed part of my training as a psychologist left me disempowered in the face of the complex problems related to racism, gender oppression and severe poverty that I encountered while seeking to offer my services to people from the townships.

My use of personal experience as well as social analysis in this research has been assisted by these words:

> The use of experience as a primary source in theology is open to criticism if it does not specifically address the range of human experience within particular social locations of race, class and gender divisions. For white women in South Africa this means that we explore the question of difference in terms of our place, our history, and our society. Social analysis is a recognized source of understanding our world. A critical analysis of white women's place in our society reveals that our experience is one of being both oppressors and oppressed. The tension between these opposing experiences impacts on how we see ourselves, our relationship with the church with one another and with women of different racial groups, and also informs our search for transformation.

(Ackermann 1994: 201)

My search for transformation is based on the critical analysis of my place in society as oppressor and oppressed. My personal background convinced me that the validity of research should be related to an experiential context hence my methodological choice: participatory action research.

In Chapter Two I described participatory pastoral praxis as informed by feminist theology; poststructuralist theory as practiced by Narrative therapists; and those Narrative practices which have provided me with possibilities for an empowered response to the broader South African context. A participatory pastoral praxis emphasises that therapeutic conversations involve cultural, socio-economic and gender-perspective reflections as they relate to problems that people experience. My research question concerns itself with a praxis that 'contributes to social transformation in post-apartheid South Africa.' This implies a critical awareness of the effect of living conditions, power relations and cultural discourses on the lives of people that I engage and work with as a therapist, community worker, teacher and member of the Dutch Reformed Church.

My context of praxis is our post-apartheid South African society where the legacies of racism, sexism and poverty remain deeply ingrained. Race, class and gender domination are all interrelated:

> As long as we regard class, race, and gender dominance as separate though overlapping systems, we fail to understand their actual integration. We also fail to see that they cannot be abolished sequentially, for like the many-headed hydra, they continuously spawn new heads.

(Lerner in Cock & Bernstein 2002: 148)

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According to Lerner, the implication of this interrelatedness is that instead of 'engaging in endless, fruitless, and counter-productive activity to prioritizing discriminations' we should find the commonalities amongst them. We should acknowledge and respect the differences, but form alliances on issues where there is commonality of interest. My proposal of an integrated approach to praxis that addresses power relations and the deconstruction of dominant discourses while embodying a compassionate and participatory stance is an expression of a pastoral praxis that reflects this 'commonality of interest.' In this chapter I will give an overview[50] of the social context of post-apartheid South Africa. I will describe and discuss the problems of class, race and gender separately with reference to their interrelatedness. As a woman working from a feminist perspective I position myself as follows:

> Focusing on the specific nature of our (South African) context can lead to myopia, which sees racism as *the* evil to be eradicated, without paying attention to issues of gender and class and their interrelatedness with race. Feminism attempts to analyze systems of oppression comprehensively in order to hold out a holistic vision for change; yet its particularity is found in its attention to women's oppression.

> (Ackermann 1994: 198)

In order to argue for such a holistic approach, a contextual analysis is of fundamental importance. Due to the fact that the research is done within the context of the South African scenario, attention should be given to the following important issues that contribute to shaping this context:

(a) The ideology of apartheid
(b) Systemic poverty
(c) The HIV/AIDS pandemic
(d) Racial prejudice
(e) Gender inequality

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[50] A critical and in-depth discussion of the context (present and historical) is not possible within the limited scope of such a study.

3.2 Our Apartheid history: a contextual analysis

A brief historical account of the apartheid era - its main objectives and its implications for the various social groups within our context - is important when considering our present South African context and the social problems which confront us.

Since my own awareness has been raised through the stories of people who I met as well as through the stories that were recorded in literature, I have included the personal story of Tinyiko Maluleke, a theologian, which reflects some of the experience of growing up as a black child in apartheid South Africa:

> In 1961, the year of my birth, South Africa withdrew from the Commonwealth, declared itself a republic and effectively told the world to go to hell. People – Black and White – opposed to Apartheid were either being jailed, driven underground, or fleeing into exile. Black political organizations which for years had preached non-violence now actively formed armed wings. During these years Mandela was nailed, jailed for life and all sorts of attempts installed to banish him from people's memories.
> The Apartheid state was flexing its muscle. The Bantu Education system whose aim was to educate Blacks for servitude was in the final phases of being rolled out. The 'South African way of life', with its petty Apartheid 'whites only' signs were being entrenched. As a Black child, both my future and my potential were constrained if not already determined by a political ideology and a seemingly intractable political arrangement. I was socialized into knowing and accepting 'my place' – my lower place and my lesser destiny. During my first decade on earth, I thought that this was the way God had ordained things. All around me I saw evidence that the ceiling of achievement and fulfilment for people like me was very low and their lot in life was hard. Unlearning this is a lot harder than imaginable, for through repeated 'lessons' and experiences this reality becomes a truth inside one and not merely a truth out there.
> …The great South African 'truth' was that Black was Black and White was White, both materially and qualitatively. White was best and Black was worst; White was 'baas' and Black was 'kaffir'. This was the 'truth' of my youth and the 'truth' of many generations of South Africans.
>
> (Tinyiko Maluleke 2005: 107)

We live in world where racial labelling and discrimination is commonplace. Although many aspects of apartheid were not unique to South Africa, the South African system of apartheid stood out as an extreme attempt to order a society explicitly and systematically according to racial lines:

> What made apartheid unique was its systematic depth and breadth, as powers of a modern state were deployed to order society along 'racial' lines, going far beyond racism and racial discrimination to generalized social engineering around state-sanctioned racial ideology and legislation.
>
> (Seekings 2007a: 20)

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The foundation of apartheid as implemented by the National Party government, in power from 1948 to 1994, was the system of racial categorization that became law through the Population *Registration Act* (1950) and its subsequent amendments The Act provided for all South Africans to be classified into one of three basic racial categories:

> A white person is one who in appearance is, or who is generally accepted as, a white person, but does not include a person who, although in appearance obviously is a white person, is generally accepted as a Coloured person. A native person is a person who is in fact or is generally accepted as a member of any aboriginal race or tribe of Africa. A Coloured person is a person who is not a white person or a native.

> (Seekings 2007a:3).

A fourth category – Indian - was later added for people of South Asian descent and the label 'native' was replaced first by the label 'Bantu' and then 'Black'. Racial classification was largely based on consensual factors around descent, language or culture and appearance. Contested and ambiguous cases generally involved the 'coloured' minority and, instead of using purely descent or biological markers, informal 'rules' about appearance and judgments about social standing were important determinants in these cases (Seekings, 2007a: 4). The classification sometimes even broke up families whose members were differently classified and hence not allowed to live together (Ericson 2001: 152).

The first main objective of the apartheid project was ideological - to maintain **racial purity** by preventing the 'mixing' or 'dilution' of 'white' blood by criminalizing sex across the colour bar and inter-racial or 'mixed' marriage (Seekings 2007a:4&5). The *Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act* (1949) and the *Immorality Act* (1950) prohibited all sexual contact between whites and blacks (Ericson 2001: 152). A hierarchy of power relationships is implicit in this idea of racial purity: value is assigned to categories of people defined as inferior or superior which invites and justifies the treatment of fellow human beings as 'others' (Ramphele 2008: 73). In order to prevent (sexual) temptation there had to be residential segregation by race. This led to the Group *Areas Act* (1950) and the forced removal of almost a million people from mixed residential areas when these areas were declared 'white'. Segregation was extended to other areas of contact - like hospitals, educational institutions, transport, beaches, parks and other amenities - through the *Reservation for Separate Amenities Act* (1953) (Seekings & Nattrass 2005: 22). At the same time the *pass regulations* - which required Africans to obtain official documents in order to move between town and countryside - were centralized into a single administrative system. Psychologists De la Rey and Duncan (2003:47) explain how racism as an ideology attempted to justify the racial inequalities through notions of 'innate inferiority and

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superiority of different races.' As scientists started acknowledging that they could not defend notions of racial inferiority or superiority on scientific grounds, racist beliefs and practices were increasingly justified on the grounds that they were essential for the preserving of the 'other's' culture.

The second objective of the apartheid project was to ensure and **protect the privileged economic position of the white minority**. Policies of reserved land for white ownership as well as better-paid occupations for white people (through the 'colour bar') were already in place before apartheid and were further enforced by the apartheid government (Seekings & Nattrass 2005:20). Racial discrimination in education, with massive investment in the education of white children, was so successful that the colour bar became largely redundant. The *Bantu Education Act* (1953) was based on separate education for black children which was further enforced in colleges and universities (Ericson 2001: 152). There was a huge discrepancy between the facilities provided for white children compared to black children. For example in 1978, two years after the Soweto Uprisings, the government spent ten times as much per capita on white students compared to black students (Ericson 2001: 153). The apartheid state also protected the profits of white-owned capitalist enterprises like farming. As influx control policies as well as pass laws restricted where black people were allowed to live and work, white farmers were able to benefit from the supply of labour at low wages as urbanization of black people was curtailed. The *Native Laws Amendment Act* (1952) stated that Africans were granted permission to live in urban areas only if they had been born there or had lived there for more than fifteen years or had worked for the same employer for ten years. In this way families were often split as the husband might qualify to live in the city, but the wife not (Ericson 2001: 153). Moreover, the cost of white or skilled labour was inflated and the cost of black or unskilled labour was depressed.

The third objective of the apartheid project was to maintain the **political dominance** of the white minority. During the 1950s there was a lot of focus on removing the coloured voters from the voters roll. By 1956 this had been achieved. The primary concern now became the political threat posed by the black majority (swart gevaar) who were already disenfranchised. The political rights of black people were restricted to the 'homelands' where power was given to appointed chiefs and later to Bantustan governments. According to the *Promotion of Bantu Self-Government Act* (1959), eight 'Bantu Homelands' were established; and, in 1970 homeland citizenship was imposed upon all Africans who simultaneously lost their South African nationality. These Bantustans constituted just 14 % of South African territory and had to accommodate three-quarters of South Africa's people (Ericson 2001: 153).

The Afrikaner Broederbond (formed in 1918) which drew its membership from committed elite in Afrikaner society was largely responsible for the formulation of the ideas behind apartheid (Ericson 2001: 153). Botman (1999: 127) describes how the DRC played a formative role in shaping the Afrikaner's mind to value 'separateness' which became its norm. In Chapter One (p 32), I referred to the decision of the DRC synod in 1857 to exclude non-whites from communion by describing their decision based on a value choice that is 'desirable'. Botman (1999: 127) points out that integration and segregation were debated in churches long before these issues emerged in political institutions. In the minds of the settlers of the seventeenth century Cape Colony, Christian status and European decent were identified so that the word 'Christian' became a synonym for 'settler' (Botman 1999: 127). Christians used the term 'heathen' to describe the black peoples of South Africa, so that 'heathen' denoted a racial as well as a religious category (Botman 1999: 127). The implications of the 1857 decision were far-reaching:

> In this decision the DRC affirmed first that what is scriptural is more desirable: the unity of the races in one religious institution. However, this biblical position would no longer serve as the ultimate orientation of the church because of the 'weakness of some'. The reference to the 'weakness of some' is a metaphor for the attitude of over-againstness and the value of separateness among the majority of members. The majority of the Afrikaner people as members of the DRC had, then, successfully internalized separateness as their personal and tribal core value.

> (Botman 1999: 128)

In 1948, the year in which the Nationalist government was voted into power on its electoral policy of apartheid, the DRC could make the following claim: 'As a church, we have always worked purposefully for the separation of the races' (Kerkbode in Botman 1999: 128). Maluleke (2007: 45) points out that the colonial project of Christian mission towards native peoples served the purpose of both marking them out as 'different' and providing Christian service to the 'lower' races. 'The result was that some of the most missionary minded South African Christian groupings were also the most racist in their understanding of acceptable social arrangements between Blacks and Whites' (Maluleke 2007:45). The DRC, one of the most mission-minded church denominations in South Africa, also championed the apartheid cause of separating people so that it seemed to be aligned to the deepest objectives of Christian mission (Maluleke 2007: 45). The DRC had shaped the minds of the Afrikaner with a powerful value of separateness and value of over-againstness of whites in relation to blacks in South Africa and these values found embodiment in the practices of apartheid. Willie Jonker (1998: 7) discusses two main historical factors that contributed to the Dutch Reformed Church's vulnerability in justifying apartheid. The first factor was the DRC's identification with the Afrikaner's struggle for survival against British imperialism and black dominance. The second was the DRC's one-sided piety

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which emphasized the sanctification (heiliging) of the individual above the sanctification of life in totality – namely in the spheres of politics and the economy. Jonker highlights the contribution of the Scottish ministers in the nineteenth century as a strong influence in establishing this one-sided piety. Over time apartheid developed 'common sense' status for white Afrikaners.

Throughout the apartheid era the numbers of English-speaking whites who supported the Nationalist Party increased and it became the dominant political party. In 1961 South Africa left the Commonwealth and became an independent Republic (Ericson 2001: 153).

The Struggle against Apartheid: A legacy of violence

I will attempt to highlight some of the main acts of resistance in the struggle against apartheid as this reflects the turbulent and violent society that forms part of the Apartheid legacy. It also serves to illustrate the level of control and oppression exercised by the Apartheid government and tells some of the story of 'the struggle' that made the liberation possible and that set the stage for our current democratic government. The *Defiance Campaign* (1952), in which people defied the apartheid laws in a non-violent way, led to violent incidents when some rioters were killed by the police and white civilians came in the way of agitated demonstrators. More than 8 000 people were arrested and heavy fines or up to five years imprisonment for civil disobedience and its 'incitement' were enacted. In 1955, the National Congress of the People was convened and the *Freedom Charter* (in Ericson 2001: 154) was adopted. The opening words of the Freedom Charter stated that:

> South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white, and no government can justly claim authority unless it is based on the will of all the people….The rights of the people shall be the same regardless of race, colour or sex.

The authors of the Freedom Charter and organizers of the Defiance Campaign, including Nelson Mandela, were arrested and charged with treason in 1956 resulting in a trial of five years. The Treason trial ended in 1961 with the acquittal of all the accused (Sparks 2003: 344). In 1959 the ANC and the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC), which broke away from the ANC earlier that year, embarked on a defiance campaign against the pass laws. In March 1960 the PAC called a countrywide campaign in which protestors marched to police stations throughout South Africa to hand in or burn their passes. In *Sharpeville,* a township about 20 kilometres from Johannesburg, the police opened fire killing at least 69 people. Massive protest demonstrations followed, resulting in the declaration of a State of Emergency by the government, the detaining of ANC and PAC leaders and the banning of both organizations. These events marked a turning point in the struggle. Some members in both the ANC

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and PAC concluded that an armed struggle had become the last resort. They organized their military wings *Umkhonto we Siswe* (MK) and the *Azanian People's Liberation Army* respectively (Ericson 2001: 155). In 1962 Nelson Mandela was arrested and, during the Rivonia Trial in 1963-4, Mandela and other ANC leaders were sentenced to life imprisonment (Sparks 2003:344).

With the ANC and PAC banned, *white liberal organizations* - such as the Progressive Federal Party (PFP) and the Black Sash - articulated the grievances of black people. Resistance against apartheid also grew within sections of the churches. Maluleke (2007: 46) points out that it was the Sharpeville massacre that shook the church from its slumber so that South African churches organized the *Cottesloe Consultation* in December 1960 at which they unequivocally condemned the action of the police and warned that the country was on a slippery slope. The ecumenical *Christian Institute of Southern Africa* was established in 1963 to support work against apartheid. The Rev Beyers Naudé distanced himself from the Dutch Reformed Church for which he had been a delegate to the Cottesloe Conference and became the director of the Christian Institute (Ericson 2001: 155).

In the three decades following Sharpeville opposition towards apartheid was expressed in various ways by different groups within the churches in South Africa:

> 'The message to the people of South Africa' in 1968 declared apartheid to be a 'false gospel.' More recently 'The Belhar Confession of Faith' (1982) of the Dutch Reformed Mission Church (NGSK) has declared apartheid to be a heresy. *The Kairos Document* (1985) and the *Evangelical Witness in South Africa* (1986) have sharply expended this tradition of theological opposition to apartheid and applied it more directly and specifically to the immediate crisis facing church and society. The *Road to Damascus* has located this crisis in its international setting and has called for all Christians to consider anew the call for conversion from any weakening of betrayal of the intent of the gospel.

(Cochrane, De Gruchy & Peterson 1991:6)

In South Africa the idea of a contextual theology was central to Christian resistance against apartheid in the 1980s (Cochrane 2001:67). The liberation theology, which developed in South Africa with the publication of The Kairos Document in 1986, is called a Prophetic Theology and has its roots in Latin American Liberation Theology (Cochrane et al 1991:56). The Kairos Document acknowledges the fundamental role of racism in the apartheid order, but it analyses society in terms of the categories of oppression rather than race so that Scripture is read in relation to social analysis and from the perspective of the poor, the oppressed and the disadvantaged.

The *Black Consciousness Movement* (BCM) was formed in 1969 by Steve Biko and a group of black students. They argued that blacks needed to empower themselves and work for their own liberation. They came to work closely with Beyers Naudé and the Christian Institute and their ideas spread to the universities and schools forming one of the factors which inspired the *uprisings in Soweto* on 16 June 1976. The protest was triggered by a decree that half of all teaching in black secondary schools had to be in Afrikaans. Ten to fifteen thousand school children participated in the demonstrations and the police met them with live ammunition and tear gas. Many children were killed, the first being a boy called Hector Pietersen. The protests expanded to other parts of the country with young people attacking police and government buildings. The state responded with armed force, detention and by closing down institutions. Both the BCM and Christian Institute were banned and, in September 1977, Steve Biko was killed in police detention (Sparks 2003: 149). After the banning of the Christian Institute, *the South African Council of Churches* (SACC) assumed a more active role in the resistance (Ericson 2001: 156). In 1977 the Institute for Contextual Theology was established to continue the 'religiously motivated testimonies against apartheid, torture, detention, forced removals, class exploitation, and the like' (Cochrane 2001: 68). In The Institute for Contextual Theology white Christian dissenters and Black Theology leaders continued to work closely together (Cochrane 2001: 71).

Under the leadership of President P W Botha, the Nationalist government became increasingly alarmed about internal resistance as well as by the de-colonization of neighbouring countries, such as Angola and Mozambique (in 1974) whose new governments allied with the ANC and were supported by the Eastern Bloc. The Nationalist government envisioned that Communism was conducting a *total onslaught* against South Africa and hence, a *total strategy* was deemed necessary to counter it. This included constitutional, economic and social reform coupled with repressive legal, military and policing measures. A covert 'counter revolutionary' force with special units was established to conduct sensitive operations (including assassinations) outside of official channels (Ericson 2001: 156).

From the late 1970s and especially in the 1980s the apartheid state began to dismantle racial discrimination in the labour market, invest more in secondary schooling for black children and to lift the restrictions on the growth of a black middle class and stable urban working class (Seekings, 2007a: 6). Some of the segregation laws were lifted and, in 1984, a Tricameral Parliament with separate chambers for white, coloured and Indian Members of Parliament was created. No provision was made for Africans, because theoretically they still had their constitutional representation within the Bantustans – even though no other country in the world recognised their independent existence. In 1983 the *United Democratic Front* (UDF) was formed as an umbrella organization for a variety of anti-apartheid groups who protested the formation of the Tricameral Parliament and the lack of facilities

provided by local township authorities. The UDF organized a variety of protests to *make the country ungovernable*. From 1984 the government declared *successive states of emergencies* with an increasing number of arrests, detentions, and torture of detainees. The UDF was banned together with a number of other organizations, and their members were assassinated or 'disappeared'. In 1988 the headquarters of the South African Council of Churches and of the Southern African Catholic Bishops Conference were bombed by state agents while ministers and other church officials were detained, tortured and killed. One million people were killed and three million left homeless in the military campaigns into those neighbouring states which supported the ANC. White male school leavers had to do two years compulsory national military service (Ericson 2001: 158). Within the ANC militancy increased after the Soweto uprising and guerrilla attacks by the MK increased. Within the black townships tension and division between the UDF comrades and those working for the state intensified. People who declined to participate in boycotts or who were suspected of giving information to the police were intimidated or killed (for instance, by 'necklacing'[51]). Rivalry between black political parties also led to bloody conflicts (Ericson 2001: 159).

As a result of a country-wide revolt from below and intensified international pressure with economic sanctions and isolation the apartheid state began to negotiate an end to all aspects of apartheid. Maluleke (2005: 109) describes the late 1970s and 1980s as follows:

> The world took particular notice of South Africa: Reformed churches declaring Apartheid a heresy in Ottawa, Canada; The World Council of Churches unveiling its controversial Programme to Combat Racism; world governments debating sanctions against the Apartheid State; world musicians openly singing in support of Mandela's release; Gorbachev's Perestroika and then the actual release of Nelson Mandela.

In 1989 F W de Klerk succeeded P W Botha as President. In February 1990 the ANC, PAC, the SACP and other restricted organizations were unbanned while Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners were released and political negotiations started (Sparks 2003: 346). In 1991 all remaining apartheid legislation was abolished. In April 1994 all South Africans voted in the first non-racial elections and, on 10 May 1994, Nelson Mandela was inaugurated as the first President of a democratic South Africa (Sparks 2003: 347). Unfortunately the time of negotiations between 1991 and 1994 marked the most violent period within South Africa with some 14 000 people being killed (Ericson 2001:160).

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[51] The 'necklace' was a tyre filled with petrol that was placed over the suspect and set on fire (Ericson 2001:159).

3.3 Post-Apartheid[52] South Africa: Towards change and transformation

3.3.1 A remarkably peaceful transition into the 'new South Africa'

Allister Sparks (2003:3-5), one of South Africa's most distinguished journalists and commentators, summarizes some of the achievements of the new South Africa as follows:

> We have entrenched a new democratic Constitution, perhaps the most progressive in the world….We have a Constitutional Court presided over by world-class jurists to interpret and defend it, and we have established a number of other institutions to give effect to the Constitution, including an Independent Electoral Commission, a Human Rights Commission and a Commission for Gender Equality….We have scrapped all the old race laws, guaranteed freedom of speech and press, abolished the death penalty, legalized abortion on demand, protected the rights of gay people, and advanced women in many spheres of life.
>
> We have brought clean water to more than 9 million people who did not have it before, electricity to more than 2 million, and telephones – that vital connection to the new Information Age – to 1.5 million. We have integrated, at least nominally, more than 30 000 public schools that used to be racially segregated, as well as all the country's universities and other institutions of higher learning, raised the literacy rate of 15-to-24-year olds to 95%, and brought free health care to millions of children. We have ended diplomatic isolation and rejoined the community of nations to play an influential role on the international stage.
>
> We have resurrected an economy that was on its deathbed….But the greatest achievement by far has been to avoid the bloodbath that was so widely predicted for so long by so many as the inevitable destiny of apartheid South Africa….Mandela did so through a series of extraordinary gestures of reconciliation…

It was clear, however, that if ever there was to be a true spirit of national unity in South Africa, the victims of oppression and its perpetrators must come to terms with one another. If South Africa hoped to have a sound democracy based on human values then past violations of those values had to be exposed and purged from the national psyche (Sparks 2003: 160). The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), headed by Archbishop Desmond Tutu, was formed on 5 December 1995. Its role was to compile as complete a picture as possible of gross human rights violations that had taken place between 1 March 1960 (the time of the Sharpeville shootings) to May 1995 (Ericson 2001: 331). The archbishop's commission became a series of travelling confessionals, covered extensively by the media, that investigated 31 000 cases of human right abuses in three years. It ended with a report of one million words presented to President Mandela (Sparks 2003: 161).

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[52] 'Post-apartheid' is a term used to indicate the official end of the apartheid regime and the beginning of a democratic government. In terms of social practices and beliefs, however, transformation from apartheid to post-apartheid society is a very gradual process which might take generations to realize.

Bit by bit, in town after town around the country, the truth came out about at least some of apartheid's worst atrocities. White South Africa, which had voted for the policy in ever-increasing numbers for half a century, was confronted with the appalling facts of the crimes committed in its name. And there could be no escaping them, for these were not reports that could be disbelieved or denied. They were confessions, by the perpetrators themselves.

(Sparks 2003:162)

The cascade of horror was numbing to those who listened to the stories of 'betrayal, of informers, of dirty tricks, of cover-ups, beatings, stabbings, shootings, electric shocks, burning of bodies' (Boraine in Sparks 2003: 163). As an Afrikaner I feel deeply ashamed and sad about our guilt, the more so, because the leaders of the National Party did not express repentance. Like Sparks (2003), I am pleased to know that some of the truth has been told and put on record. Unfortunately my experience of the project towards national reconciliation is not very hopeful as the majority of white Afrikaners still deny our guilt and complicity. As Maluleke (2007: 51) points out, many white South Africans feel that they did not do anything wrong and see nothing for which to be thankful; instead they moan about crime, corruption and falling standards in the new South Africa. They thicken and increase the height of the walls surrounding their homes, both literally and figuratively.

3.3.2 Unequal society with severe poverty

South Africa's past policies of segregation and discrimination have left a **legacy of inequality and poverty**. Seekings (2007b:2) and Woolard (2002:1) highlight some of the discriminatory policies of the past and their links to poverty in the post-apartheid society. Under the apartheid system African people had been dispossessed of most of their land and were physically confined to impoverished parts of the countryside or cities. Other resources - like mining rights and access to capital - were unequally distributed to benefit the white population. Black South Africans received low-quality state health, education and services. Through job reservation policies for whites, influx control and the Groups Areas Act black people faced restricted opportunities for employment and self-employment. The white minority benefitted from these discriminatory public policies while the black population was denied the opportunity to accumulate human and physical capital.

South Africa is an upper-middle income society, but it is a country of stark contrasts where one sees destitution, hunger and overcrowding within minutes of being in extreme affluence (Woolard 2002:1). After having been named for years as one of the most unequal societies in the world (Seekings 2007b:11; Woolard 2002:1), Haroon Bhorat's (in Lefko-Everett 2010) analysis of income and expenditure data 'has found South Africa climbing to steep notoriety, assuming a position as the most

unequal society in the world' at the beginning of 2010. The income inequality measured by the Gini coefficient[53] shows that inequality has risen since 1994 (Seekings 2007b:11; Van den Berg et al 2007; Woolard 2002:6). If social grants and taxes are excluded, the Gini coefficient for the whole country would be 0, 80 rather than 0, 72. The reduction of inequality through redistribution policies thus reduces the Gini coefficient by 8 percentage points. Ten percent of the total population continues to receive 50% percent of household income, the poorest 40% of the population accounts for less than 7% and the poorest 20% accounting for less than 1,5% income (Statistics South Africa 2008:2). Poverty has remained stagnant despite economic growth, inequality has deepened and the benefits of growth have not reached the poorest of the poor (Du Toit, 2005:4).

I am aware of the fact that my description of poverty is done from a western perspective which rests on a materialistic and capitalistic understanding of the economy. I also have some understandings, through my contact with people living and working in contexts of poverty, that poverty severely impacts people's lives in terms of their self-worth, their hope for the future as well as their access to emotional and social resources. People living in what I might describe as 'poverty', might also not describe their own realities in these terms. At the same time it could be said that exposure through the media and through living right next door to affluence in South Africa - where billboards hold up a lifestyle of consumerism - might set very high standards and expectations which exacerbate the experience of being 'disadvantaged'. Ramphele (2011) emphasizes this 'intimate proximity of "haves" and "have nots"' as a critical factor in the painful experience of deprivation and inequality by poor South Africans. They have always been servants to the wealthy and denied access to the privileged that they witness on a daily basis.

Where past inequality in South Africa was largely defined along racial lines, in recent years the gap between rich and poor *within* each population group in South Africa has increased substantially while inter-racial difference declined (Seekings 2007b:12). The interaction between poverty, race and class is reflected in the description in 1998 by Mbeki of South Africa as a 'two nation' society:

[O]ne of these nations is white, relatively prosperous, regardless of gender or geographic dispersal….The second and larger nation…is black and poor, with the worst-affected being women in the rural areas, the black rural population in general and the disabled.

(Seekings 2007b:11)

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[53] A widely-used measure of inequality, which can vary in value from an egalitarian 0 to an inegalitarian 1(Seekings, 2007:11)

Seekings (2007b: 12) argues that inequality shifted from race to class long before 1998 as apartheid served to transform state-imposed privileges of being white into the advantages of class that were rewarded by markets, ensuring that the white elite became a middle class whose continued privileges no longer depended upon active racial discrimination by the state. The state could dismantle policies of racial discrimination without undermining white privilege while growing numbers of black South Africans could be upwardly mobile into the middle classes. Seekings (2007b:13) concludes: 'The rich are no longer all white, even if almost all white people are still rich.'

Poverty still runs along racial lines and is highest amongst blacks (61%) and coloureds (38%) and lowest amongst Indians (5%) and whites (1%). White South African's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is ranked 45th in the world while black South Africans GDP is ranked 180th. Poverty affects people in rural areas most, with 72% of the poor living in rural areas (Landsberg & Mackay 2006: 12). Ramphele (2008: 245) responds to the two economies debate by arguing that there is only one economy 'which marginalizes the majority of South Africans who are the poorest, least educated and least skilled, while rewarding those with sought-after skills and those connected to people with power and influence.' She continues by pointing out that wealth accumulation was accomplished largely on the backs of black people and that a post-apartheid South Africa, in which only white people are wealthy, is unsustainable. According to her, democratizing wealth creation and distribution through black economic empowerment is crucial.

The literature reflects an ongoing debate on the **definition of poverty** and the relation between monetary and 'capability' poverty (Du Toit 2005:17). Using monthly household income in the 1999 OHS Household Survey, Amoateng et al (2004: 25) drew up a rough social class index constructed with the following values: 'Poor' included people earning less than R2 000 per month; 'Lower Middle Class' included people earning less than R5 000 per month; and 'Middle Class' included people earning more than R5 000 per month. According to this social class scale one half (50%) of the South African household population was classified as 'Poor'; 30% was classified as 'Lower Middle Class'; and only 12% was classified as 'Middle Class'. An analysis of the income and expenditure data between 1995 and 2002 suggests that the proportion of people living below the 1995 poverty rate of R354 per adult equivalent per month declined marginally from 51% to 48%, but the actual number increased by more than a million, while the number of people living in extreme poverty – defined as a dollar a day at purchasing power parity – increased from 9.4% (3.7 million) to 10.5% (4.2 million) (Du Toit 2005:4). Although it was difficult to find comparable recent statistics the Human Development

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Report of the United Nations (2011) indicates that 17.4% South Africans live below the income poverty line set at US$1.25 per day and suffer multidimensional deprivations.

Du Toit (2005: 2) uses the CPRC's [54] definition for the *chronic poor* as those people 'who experience poverty for extended periods of time or throughout their entire lives, whose children are also likely to remain poor, and who have benefited least or are likely to benefit least from economic growth and national and international development initiatives.' He alerts us to the importance of taking studies on chronic poverty beyond the focus on income and to develop a broader focus on the underlying structural dimensions that render people vulnerable to being poor for long periods of time. *Structural poverty* is shaped, and is likely to be maintained, by the interactions between asset poverty, cash hunger, job insecurity and unemployment, the thinness, limited nature and ambiguity of social capital and people's subjection to exploitative power relations (Du Toit 2005: 18). Seekings (2007b:15) points out that South Africa's poor are not land-holding peasants. The black peasant class was slowly destroyed in the course of the twentieth century by forced removals from large commercial farms and overcrowding in the 'homelands'. Thus, livelihoods are characterized by significant asset poverty with low rates of access to productive resources like household-level food-production. This, together with high levels of monetization and integration into the broader economy leads to high level of cash-dependency and dependency on formal employment (Du Toit 2005:10-11).

Unemployment, the most important factor in poverty and inequality, has risen steadily since 1994 and peaked in early 2003 at 31,2% (by the narrow or strict definition including only active job-seekers) and 42,5% (using the broad or expanded definition, including also people who want jobs but are not looking for it in active ways) (Seekings 2007b:16). Although unemployment rates have dropped marginally since 2003 they are higher than anywhere else in the world excepting Iraq. Unemployment rates reached a record low of 23% in 2007, but the global economic downturn in 2007 has impacted South Africa severely and has resulted in hundreds of thousands of South Africans losing their jobs in the following three years (Hofmeyer 2010: 1) The unemployment rate in South Africa was last reported at 25% in the third quarter of 2011 (Trading economics 2011). Seekings and Nattrass (2005) describe an 'under-class' of people who lack the skills (including language skills), credentials and the connections (social capital) which is crucial in terms of securing employment. The number of unemployed people who live in 'workless' households has increased (Seekings 2007b:17), making up a large proportion of this under-class. Despite popular perceptions about racial discrimination against

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[54] Chronic Poverty Research Centre, a development research centre funded by the British Department for International Development (DfID).

white persons after 1994, the 2001 census shows that while Africans have an unemployment rate of 30%, the rate is 5% amongst Whites (Amoateng et al 2004: 21).

The second immediate cause of income poverty and inequality is **education**. About 15% of adults in South Africa are illiterate (Woolard 2002:1). According to the GHS[55] of 2005 (in Seekings 2007b:18) the median grade attainment among young people in their mid-20s is Grade 11 and almost one in three young people have attained Grade 10 or less. There is great concern about the level of skills that are associated with a particular level of grade attainment as South African students perform worse in reading, science and mathematics compared to even poorer neighbouring countries (Seekings 2007b:18). Most South African schools provide a very low quality of education despite the redistribution of public resources from schools in rich neighbourhoods to schools in poor neighbourhoods that removed 'the most glaring inequalities' in conditions (Seekings 2007b:19). Some of the inequalities that remain result from inequalities in family background, difference in the quality of teaching, student discipline and the restructuring of the school curriculum after 1994. Most young South Africans leave school with limited skills and are not equipped for semi-skilled or skilled employment. In an economy that is increasingly re-structuring around skilled employment unemployment is fuelled among the unskilled, while those lucky enough to find jobs face low earnings. Amoateng et al (2004:20) points out that increased years of education are associated with a higher likelihood of participating in the labour force and a lower unemployment rate.

In terms of **social service delivery** the ANC government has expanded the social grants system considerably: both the child support grant for poor children younger than fifteen and the old age pension is well-targeted and effectively reduces poverty (Van den Berg et al, 2007:12). There has been a dramatic improvement in access to water, sanitation, electricity and housing (Seekings 2007b: 22). But fiscal resource inputs do not necessarily guarantee the desired social outcomes as in the case of education and health care (Seekings 2007b: 22; Van den Berg et al 2007: 38). Botman (2003: 24) quotes Judge Arthur Chaskalson's words from the Bram Fischer Lecture in 2000:

> Millions of people are still without houses, education and jobs and there can be little dignity in living under such conditions. Dignity, equality and freedom will be achieved only when the socioeconomic conditions are transformed to make this possible.

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[55] General Household Survey

Mandela (in Botman 2003:24) pointed out in 2003 that the 'great moral struggle – to cast off apartheid – is over, the challenge of bringing equality and dignity to our people remains.'   Judge Chaskalson's concluding remarks are sobering indeed:

> Generations of children born and yet to be born will suffer the consequences of poverty, of malnutrition, of homelessness, of illiteracy and disempowerment generated and sustained by the institutions of apartheid and its manifest effects on life and living for so many. The country has neither the resources nor the skills to reverse fully these massive wrongs.

> (Chaskalson in Botman 2003:25)

The South African Reconciliation Barometer Report (Lefko-Everett 2010) indicates that more South Africans view **economic class** as the most significant social cleavage in the country, than those who attribute current divisions to race, language, political parties, religion, or disease.

The new globalized economy is ruthlessly competitive and places a premium on skills so that the unskilled - of whom there are many in the developing countries – become not only unemployed, but unemployable (Sparks 2003: 203). While globalization generates much greater wealth world-wide, the distribution of wealth is unequal with the rich getting richer and the poor poorer, within nations and between them (Sparks 2003:203). Botman (2003: 22-23) discusses the consequences of economic globalization. He refers to the work of Bauman who claims that economic globalization produces two human forms, the tourist and vagabond. The tourist represents those people who have the means to travel because they choose to. The vagabonds have no other bearable choice - they are forced to travel. The vagabonds are the poor and side-lined members of society who live in the squatter camps of South Africa. They are seen as the 'flawed consumer' and, as such, are useless to the global economy. They are unwanted and participate in crime in order to become more like the tourist. Cochrane et al (1991:62) points to the way in which in many nations the doctrine of national security has arisen to protect the socio-economic system of a country rather than its people. Structural violence - where poor people are repressed from acting against their fate - results from such a situation. In South Africa there are signs that young poor and unemployed people are becoming nihilistic in their approach to life. Maluleke (2007: 54) asks whether what is often described as crime, wanton violence and lack of respect for human life are all part of this nihilism.

Poverty and the implications for the church

The marginalization of the poor is not confined to secular society, but is often manifested in the church itself (Cochrane, de Gruchy & Petersen 1991: 62). Most governing structures of the church do not allow the poor much role in determining their lives. While their membership is important, their perspectives and ways of expressing themselves in the world are not taken seriously (Cochrane et al 1991:62). Thistlewaite and Hodgson (1994:312) define **classism** as 'the belief in the inherent superiority of one class over all the others and therefore the right to dominance':

> Class carries with it *necessarily* its ideological legitimation in the form of class*ism* – the belief that social stratification or class division is justified on the basis of inherent human inequality, or the will of God, or accommodation to the fallen condition, or productive efficiency, or some other reason. Historically, religion has played a major role in the legitimization of class.

(Thistlewaite & Hodgson 1994: 312-313)

Post-Marxist sociology has convincingly argued that since social stratification is rooted in modes of social organization and not in innate differences between human beings as individuals or groups, it could be changed by changing social structure (Thistlewaite & Hodgson 1994: 324).

Thistlewaite and Hodgson (1994: 313) show how the church lived with the dualism whereby the communism of love was applied inwardly - within the life of the religious community - while adopting a conservative attitude outwardly toward social institutions such as property, classes, slavery, patriarchy, and so on. The assumption was that these social institutions 'serve purposes of God under the conditions of sin and thus must be accommodated….The dominant social ethic has been one of philanthropy rather than of structural reform' (Thistlewaite & Hodgson 1994: 313).

In their discussion of the Church of the poor and oppressed, Cochrane et al (1991: 60) point to the tendency to talk about the 'church *for* the poor' indicating that church members often do not identify themselves with the aspirations of the poor. The church should recognize instead that it is already a church *of* the poor: 'Whilst the majority of Christians are poor, black and oppressed, the church has prevented rather than facilitated this consciousness of oppression, and the need to overcome it, from surfacing.' They (Cochrane et al 1991: 61) continue by reminding us about the way in which members who are not materially impoverished have defined poverty as a spiritual or emotional or psychological lack on which basis the rich are also 'poor'. This position is challenged with the bias of the gospel to the materially poor which is seen as a momentous theological and pastoral event:

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To be poor is not to be able to satisfy basic human needs: food, housing, health, education, job and social participation. In this sense, as is very often pointed out in the Bible, to be poor is the same as to be oppressed. The person who is poor is assailed by urgent material and intellectual needs which he or she cannot fulfill. To be poor is to suffer not just lack, but an injustice that has a structural basis in the society within which one lives. It is to 'have not' among those who 'have' in abundance.

<div align="right">(Cochrane et al 1991:61)</div>

Bons-Storm (2003: 73) discusses the effect of the ideology of the Market and Order on how we view the poor, even in Christian faith communities: 'The Market-ideology condemns and ignores the poor, the weak, the vulnerable, the children, because they have no economic value.' We live pursuing the realization of order where our worth depends on our allotted place in an established ordering of society. Our place in society depends on our sex, skin colour, class, affluence:

Seen from the perspective of the non-poor Christian, living in a Market-ideology, there are the deserving poor who are willing to be industrious, frugal, law-abiding and simply victims, and the undeserving poor who have created their own fate by being not industrious, frugal and law-abiding. Christians are more willing to help the victims, than the undeserving poor.

<div align="right">(Bons-Storm 2003: 73)</div>

Because of their historical experience of sustained deprivation, repression and exclusion the poor in South Africa find it extremely difficult to organize themselves in ways that they could make their plight known to those who might be able to significantly change their circumstances (Van der Water 2001: 48). The poor seem to suffer in silence – they can be found sitting silently and patiently in front of factory gates day after day hoping for employment, or occupying pavements with produce hoping for a new sale or walking the streets to beg. Van der Water (2001: 49) asks the question whether 'the *voice* of the poor will be heard' and acknowledged as the prophetic voice of this new era in South Africa. In his reflection about the meaning of 'the option for the poor' Van der Water (2001: 49) quotes Albert Nolan:

The option for the poor is not a choice about the *recipients* of the gospel message, to *whom* we must preach the gospel; it is a matter of *what gospel* we preach to anyone at all….The gospel may be good news to the poor and bad news for the rich but it is a message for both the poor and the rich.

<div align="right">119</div>

In South Africa it is impossible to analyse the situation of poverty without attending to the interrelatedness of poverty and HIV/AIDS. Poor people are more vulnerable to becoming infected, and illness and death contribute to more poverty.

3.3.3 The links between AIDS, poverty, race and gender

Illness and death are stark realities in the poor communities of South Africa. One in every seventeen children die before they reach five years and, despite the introduction of free healthcare for women and children. This figure has not changed in recent years (UNICEF 2009: 3). According to UNICEF (2009:3) HIV-related illnesses, neonatal causes and childhood infections such as pneumonia and diarrhoea are responsible for a third of all under-five deaths and malnutrition contributes significantly to child mortality. Neonatal mortality is a serious problem, with stillborn babies and those dying within the first month of life accounting for 30% of all child deaths. Despite the improvement of antenatal and child delivery services the maternal mortality rate has doubled between 1998 and 2003 (Developmental Indicators: Mid-term review, The Presidency, Republic of South Africa, 2007). HIV-related disease and pneumonia are the main killers of women and mothers (UNICEF 2009: 3).

UNAIDS' 2006 figures estimate that at least 11% of South Africa's population are infected by HIV/AIDS (Ramphele 2008: 238). With 5.5 million people infected out of a population of 47 million, this is the largest recorded number of infected citizens of a single country. Ramphele (2008: 238) points out that the overwhelming majority of the infected population is black people in their prime. In 2007 an estimated 1000 South Africans died each day of AIDS, which is an increase from 600 per day in 2006. The numbers of AIDS orphans, estimated at more than a million in 2006, are growing (Ramphele 2008:238). It is estimated that life expectancy has dropped by twenty years in South Africa: without AIDS it would have been 68 years; with AIDS it will be 48 years or even less (Seekings 2007b:14). Although white people make up only about 10% of the total population, the proportion of white elderly is twice that of the rest of the population as this group is relatively unaffected by the HIV/AIDS pandemic and poverty (Amoateng et al 2004:46). Illness increases poverty as it involves significant costs for families – loss of income, interruption or termination of subsistence activities, as well as costs of treatment and transport to access care (Amoateng et al 2004:47). Burial costs and funerals, which form an important part of cultural tradition, consume valuable resources (Greyling 2003: 121).

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Nicoli Nattrass (2004), an economist at the University of Cape Town, has examined the links between vulnerability to HIV/AIDS and poverty. She found that poor people are more likely than not to be uneducated. Poor uneducated women were found to lack the basic knowledge about how HIV is transmitted (Nattrass 2004: 29). Poor people, especially women and girls, are also likely to be less able to exercise choices of safe sexual practices because of their dependence on men for support. Nattrass (2004: 28) describes the 'sexual economy' that operates between men and women on a continuum of a scale of benefits ranging from basic-needs provision to luxury goods in exchange for sexual favours. Younger women (15 – 25 years) are particularly vulnerable to 'sugar daddies', usually married older men, who provide for their material needs in exchange for sex. Nattrass's (2004:30) study shows that access to employment, which is linked to higher levels of education and skills, correlated with lower levels of HIV infections. In both South Africa and Swaziland people with higher levels of education and skills, who are likely to be employed, have lower levels of HIV infections than poor uneducated, unemployed or unskilled labourers. Poverty is linked to hunger and malnutrition. This further compromise the body's immune response as AIDS treatment and prevention programmes are more effective when people are well-nourished (Nattrass 2004: 34).

The pandemic is fuelled by the cultural, sexual and economic subordination of *women* (Pillay 2003:155). Greyling (2003:118) explains some of the implications of HIV/AIDS for women. Women often lack the socio-economic power to negotiate safer sex be it with her regular partner, as sex worker and certainly during rape. Women-headed households in South Africa tend to be poorer than those headed by men, unemployment is far higher among women than men and even married women suffer high levels of economic maltreatment. Many women face the risk of abandonment and abuse if they disclose their HIV-positive status. Traditionally women provide care for terminally ill family members and female children are often the ones required to care for siblings in single parent families.

Children affected by HIV/AIDS are the most tragic and long-term legacy of the pandemic and caring for them is one of the greatest challenges facing South Africa (Greyling 2003: 119). Many AIDS orphans will grow up as street children, live in child-headed households or be brought up by grandparents with limited capacity to take on parental responsibilities. All will suffer the trauma of the illness and death of parents as well as possible separation from their siblings. The stigma and secrecy around HIV/AIDS might hamper the bereavement process and also expose children to marginalization and discrimination within their communities and extended families. Orphans could be more susceptible to abuse, high-risk relationships, HIV-infections as well as developing anti-social behaviour. The

consequences for affected children and the society in general could be profound (Greyling 2003: 119-120).

According to Professor Makgoba (in Sparks 2003:285), renowned microbiologist and president of the MRC[56] , the pandemic could have been curbed during the early period of its incursion. The fact that it was not seems to be largely because between 1990 and 1995 both the old regime and the ANC were too preoccupied with their negotiations and the drama of writing the new constitution and transferring power. When the new ANC-led government found itself facing an array of problems across the full spectrum of governance, the HIV pandemic, according to Makgoba, 'simply became one challenge too many.' The ANC went into denial. The mismanagement of the pandemic was one of the main factors leading to the loss of confidence in the leadership of President Mbeki. It was only in April 2002 that the ANC cabinet announced a major policy reversal regarding the use of anti-retroviral drugs (Sparks 2003:295).

When listening to the personal stories of those infected by HIV/AIDS we are often confronted by the problem of silence and stigma that nourish this pandemic:

> Stigma breeds a stubborn multi-layered silence commonly called 'the denial' that has characterized this pandemic since its beginning. The reasons for this silencing stigma are complex and raise many questions. Is it about a social acceptance of death in our culture? Is it a reflection of cultural restraints imposed on discussing matters that may in any way relate to human sexuality? Is it related to shame or guilt that comes from religious convictions and social mores? What is clear is that silence and stigma are bed-mates. They do not encourage meaningful survival.

(Ackermann 2006: 223)

In her discussion of the stigma surrounding HIV/AIDS, Ackermann (2006:229) points out the following metaphors and associations that have been mobilized around the disease: 'AIDS as death, as horror, as punishment, as crime, as war, as other(ness), as shameful.' In terms of stigma, AIDS is also seen to be associated with various categories of division in society. It is related to 1) class division (AIDS as disease of the poor); 2) gender-related division (AIDS as a women's disease caused by men); 3) race division (AIDS as a black or African disease); and 4) sexual relations and division (AIDS is a gay plague). Stigma is also often associated with notions of sexual promiscuity while societies have their own understandings and descriptions of disease transmission. The effect of stigmatization has been profound:

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[56] Medical Research Council of South Africa.

> Perhaps the greatest tragedy of all is that HIV and AIDS-related stigmatization causes much of the energy that could be useful to prevent infection to be displaced. People are victimized and blamed, social divisions are reinforced and reproduced, and new infections continue to take place so long as people continue to systematically misunderstand the nature of the epidemic and its causes.

> (Parker & Aggleton in Ackermann 2006:230)

Nadar (2007:238) agrees with Maluleke who regards the HIV/AIDS pandemic as a 'the new *kairos* moment for the theological education in Africa.' She calls for an ethical understanding in theology of the link between HIV/AIDS, social injustice and gender injustice (Nadar 2007: 239). Pillay (2003: 156) refers to various researchers who assert that gender inequality could be regarded as the main problem hindering HIV/AIDS prevention. Ackermann (2006: 233) puts it plainly: 'AIDS is in fact a gendered pandemic. As such it requires gender analysis to unravel the complex relationship between culture, gender, and religion and how this unholy trinity contributes to fuelling the pandemic.' The church as the Body of Christ is a body with AIDS. When we stigmatize, shame and judge others the functioning of the Body is undermined as each member has worth and a role to play (Ackermann 2006: 236). Ackermann (2006:237) challenges the church to attempt to mirror God's reign on earth by being moved to compassion towards those affected by the pandemic. Churches have the strength of being grounded in communities from where to respond effectively to the impact and challenges presented by the HIV/AIDS pandemic (Pillay 2003:157). The response of the Church to the pandemic should be a spirit of solidarity which is 'the public equivalent of compassion' (Pillay 2003: 158).

The crisis that many black people experience in relation to their Christian faith as a result of HIV is well illustrated by the following story that sits right here in my heart as I type. Yesterday, 11 June 2010, marked one of the most glorious occasions in the history of post-apartheid South Africa: the country erupted in festivity with the opening of the 2010 FIFA Soccer World Cup. In the morning I had a supervision session with a colleague, Nobuntu Matholeni[57], a pastoral therapist. Our conversation rings loudly (even louder than the sound of festive vuvuzelas[58]!) in my ears as I type here today. During our session she mentioned her painful conversation with two women who are infected with HIV. She spoke about their despair and helplessness and quoted the one who said: 'Nobuntu, what did the black community do to God that He hates us so much that He gave us apartheid first and now this illness?' Nobuntu had tears in her eyes as she told me that she sat in her car afterwards asking God the same thing: 'I also want to know, God, do you really hate us this much?'

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[57] Ms Matholeni has signed an Informed Consent Form to give permission that this part of our conversation be included in this research. She has read and approved this paragraph in the text.
[58] The noise-making trumpet of South African football fans.

> In a sense HIV/AIDS is repeating what apartheid did, marginalizing a section of the population and tearing families apart. People who are infected and directly affected by HIV/AIDS are stigmatized and discriminated against, even by their very own family members. As was the case during apartheid, women and children bear the brunt. Their vulnerability and powerlessness in the face of the onslaught of HIV/AIDS are made worse by poverty, patriarchy and violence.

(Greyling 2003: 120)

The ways in which these black women speak alert me to the fact that the effect of racial oppression is still a reality to the majority of South Africans.

3.3.4 Race in post-apartheid South Africa

I have discussed the South African history of racial segregation and oppression and how it gave birth to apartheid. Before describing the post-apartheid South Africa in terms of race, it might be useful to **clarify some of the terminology** associated with race and racism. Towards the late twentieth century scientists have finally concluded that 'race' is a cultural construct, not a biological category (Cock & Bernstein 2002:12). Kritzinger (2001: 266) emphasizes that 'race' is a social construct – a way of experiencing and describing social reality. I support his position 'that the elevation of biological differences between people into anthropological differences lies at the heart of the perpetuation of racism.' I use concepts such as 'black' and 'white' to acknowledge that they describe significant patterns of privilege and disadvantage created by a racist society, and not to indicate that they refer to any significant differences between people. Like Kritzinger (2001: 267), I refer to myself as white, not as a reference to my skin colour or other biological features, but to signify my privileged social position through decades of race-based affirmative action under apartheid. Kritzinger (2001: 267) suggests that we use these descriptions not as racial categories, but as anti-racist categories as we work towards a situation where it would no longer be necessary or meaningful to use them.

I find the discussion of racism by feminist theologian Sharon Welsh (1994: 170) very helpful:

> The effects of racism on people of color are deep and profoundly tragic. The drama of resistance to racism is equally deep and profoundly awe-inspiring. People of color are far more than victims of racism. The struggle for human dignity in the face of racial oppression is a complex story of politics, culture, and religion, all shaping a people's ability to survive and transform conditions of oppression.

Welsh (1994: 172) makes a distinction between prejudice, bigotry, racism and white supremacy in considering the reasons why racism is maintained by whites. *Prejudice* refers to erroneous

generalizations about a person or a group of people based on an assumption that one has significant information about that person or people as member(s) of a particular group in society:

> Someone who is not prejudiced knows that the history of any group and the life of any individual within that group are too complex and multifaceted to support broad generalizations. As a result, our encounters with members of other groups are characterized by openness to learning more about a particular person or people.

> (Welsh 1994: 173)

Welsh (1994: 173) describes *bigotry* as an extreme form of prejudice which includes a deep-seated hatred of people from other social groups based on beliefs that other groups are dangerous, inferior in intelligence and ability and lacking in moral virtue. Bigotry may also be condescending rather than hateful, as expressed in paternalistic ideas that members of the other group are less able and need guidance and control. As described in Chapter One, *racism* refers to an attitude of prejudice combined with a system of collective structural discrimination and oppression. *White supremacy* is the cultural ideology that lies behind racist structures and systems. Frederickson (in Welsh 1994: 175) states that white supremacy in South Africa has created 'a kind of *Herrenvolk* society' in which people of colour, however numerous they may be, are treated as permanent aliens or outsiders. Welsh (1994: 176-177) refers to Kovel who distinguishes two types of white supremacy: dominative and aversive. *Dominative* white supremacists will want to oppress black people directly and resort to violence when threatened by black people while *aversive* white supremacists will oppress black people indirectly through avoidance. She summarizes Kovel's definitions of white supremacy:

> White selves: either arrogantly larger than life or pure, seemingly unsullied by complicity with structures of oppression; black selves: objectified, reduced, ignored in their full human complexity, dignity, and richness. Such are the terms of white supremacy.

> (Welsh 1994: 178)

Almost all South Africans use racial categorization in everyday life (Seekings 2007a: 8). Seekings (2007a: 8) reports Adhikari's findings published in 2006 that after apartheid there has been a resurgence of coloured identity where a racialised conception of colouredness has grown stronger with renewed affinities to whiteness and deepened racism towards African people. Post 1994, South Africa employed the discourse of the multi-cultural 'rainbow nation' rather than building a common non-racial South African national identity. Unfortunately, multi-culturalism has often served to reproduce the culturally-based racial identities of the past (Seekings 2007:8). Referring again to Thabo Mbeki's 1998 speech - 'two nations, the one black and the other white' - Seeking (2007a:9) points out

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that it is more appropriate to refer to the three 'nations': 'the almost entirely African poor, the mostly African working classes, and the multi-racial middle-classes and elites.' Seekings and Nattrass (2005) discuss extensively how the programmes of race-based affirmative action introduced after apartheid have shifted inequality between racial groups to inequality within racial groups with a rapidly growing African elite and middle class, while locking many other African people into chronic poverty. With the massive redistribution of corporate ownership to emerging black elite comes the reinvention of African culture where 'African' names and dress are adopted and traditional rituals are practiced with newfound fervour (Seekings 2007: 10). Ramphele (2008:85) views the continuing use of racial categories as a basis for redress in the Employment Equity Act (EE Act) to be a major dilemma. She points out that many people complain that they are treated as 'not black enough' to qualify for benefits of EE. Consequently, comrades who fought side by side in the anti-apartheid struggle find themselves pitted against each other in competition over positions that are seen as the route to personal wealth and power. She also highlights how EE forces young white South African professional people, who were trained locally with tax-payers' money, to leave the country in search of job opportunities overseas while South Africa suffers skills shortages in professions such as engineering, medicine and the humanities. Hofmeyer (2007: 26) reports that the measurement of South African's preference for group association found that the three most preferred association groups were 'language', 'race' and 'ethnic' groups in this order.

While some of the openly bigoted apartheid-era beliefs concerning the intellectual, moral and physical inferiority of Blacks seem to have shown a decline in recent years, generalizations about the 'cultural distinctiveness' has become prevalent (De la Rey & Duncan 2003: 49). Because apartheid was an ideology based on bias, prejudice became entrenched into the psyche of millions of South Africans so that they look at their fellow South Africans through stereotypes which they have created of each other. Hofmeyer (2007: 40), referring to Ryland Fisher's book *Race*, argues that one of the biggest challenges that faces us as a nation is to break down these stereotypes through meaningful conversations. Psychologists refer to a hypothesis that posits that sustained contact between antagonistic social groups can break down negative stereotypes (Hofmeyer 2007:40).

Seekings (2007a:11) refers to the survey by James Gibson (completed in 2000-1) and remarks that few South Africans enjoy much inter-racial contact. This correlates with the 2007 SARB Survey (Hofmeyer 2007: 41) where only 26% of respondents noted that they never talk to somebody from a different race on an ordinary day, while 48% indicated that they never socialize with other groups. In the 2007 SARB survey 61% of respondents indicated that they do not understand the customs and ways of other racial groups. Since the transition to democracy the pace of desegregation of residential

areas has been very slow indeed, as economic inequalities make it almost impossible for low-income African households to move into middle class suburbs. Consequently, most South Africans continue to live in mono-racial neighbourhoods. Seekings (2007: 19) looked at research on various forms of residential integration in South Africa and concludes:

> ...even when the market or the state throws people from different racial groups together in a neighbourhood, there is little interaction, and racial othering and prejudice remain commonplace.

School desegregation remains modest as most African children attend schools in townships or rural areas where all of the other children are also African. It is only a small and fortunate minority that is able to get access to the better schools which are found in the formerly white and coloured areas. This means that a minority of children - mostly white, Indian and coloured – have the experience of attending a multi-racial school (Seekings 2007: 19-20). Although the workplace is an important site for inter-racial contact there seems to be very little published research on the effect of this contact on race relationships.

Where racial prejudice is defined in terms of beliefs and feelings, racial discrimination is generally described as that which is 'actionable' (Jones in De la Rey & Duncan 2003: 49) or the behavioural enactment of racial prejudice. The examples of racial discrimination from the apartheid era are legion. The legacy from this discriminatory structure results in the following disadvantages for the various racial groups according to Seekings (2007a:28):

Most children from poor neighbourhoods (almost all of whom are African) grow up in home environments that are not conducive to educational success; they attend schools where the quality of education is very poor and thus remain at school for many years without acquiring adequate skills. Their lack of skills, their location far from job opportunities and lack of contacts with jobs constrain their ability to find employment so that many move into the underclass of the chronically unemployed with intermittent short spells of unskilled work. A second group – those children from middle-class neighbourhoods (comprising rapidly increasing numbers of African as well as Indian and white children) attend better schools, have the benefits of middle class homes and have better contact with the job market. They move into higher education and then into the labour market. White children from middle-class homes enjoy the relative benefits of wider and deeper social networks, but the disadvantage of being white in an affirmative action environment.

3.3.5 Gender in a patriarchal society

I have pointed out how all South Africans are affected, in one way or another, by the apartheid ideology of the past. The ideology of patriarchy is regarded as the one ideology that still exists in all of South Africa's various cultural and ethical groups. It has resulted in women of all colours being treated as second class citizens. This disadvantages women in almost every sphere of society and denies them many of the opportunities and rights available to men (Vetten 2000a: 57). The word '**patriarchy**', originally referring to 'father right' - the kinship structure in which the father wielded all authority - is now commonly used to describe societies in which ideology grants men power and privilege over women (Vetten 2000a:57; Madlala-Routledge 2009:1). On 24 May 1994 former President Mandela declared:

> Freedom cannot be achieved unless the women have been emancipated from all forms of oppression…the objectives of the Reconstruction and Development Programme will not have been realized unless we see in visible practical terms that the conditions of women in our country have been radically changed for the better, and that they have been empowered to intervene in all aspects of life as equals with other members of society.

(Ramphele 2008: 100)

Ramphele (2008:100) points out that our society struggles to live up to this commitment and that in South Africa women are still treated as second class citizens.

In order to form an understanding of women's position in the current South African context it would be useful to take a look at the **historical background**. In pre-colonial South Africa African women enjoyed a degree of economic independence by working the land as source of independent livelihood. They also enjoyed a relatively high personal status. Vetten (2000a: 57) shows how their status and power had been eroded by white colonists' codification of customary law in Natal at the turn of the 20th century which firmly entrenched the dominance of African men over African women. She (Vetten 2000a: 57) points out that Afrikaner women who trekked into the interior and lived on the frontiers were expected to be strong and resourceful, but at the same time obedient to their husbands and make the home the centre of their existence.

Under the *apartheid system* the fundamental condition affecting the lives of African women in South Africa has been the migrant labour system (Maluleke 2005: 108). The migrant labour system was maintained by harsh legislation and administrative procedures like the Pass Laws and the resettlement of women, children and the elderly in the 'homelands' or 'Bantustans'. Overcrowding of the Bantustans resulted in women being forced off the land into the migrant system, leaving their

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children behind while seeking employment in the cities (International Defence and Aid Fund for Southern Africa 1981). Men who lived as migrant workers in the cities were forced to live in 'bachelor hostels' where no women and children were allowed (Sparks 2003: 284). Family life was devastated by apartheid and particularly by the migrant labour system. The majority of African women worked as domestic servants for white women and lived in single accommodation in the cities (International Defence and Aid Fund for Southern Africa 1981:9). Although this seems like an unfair generalization there is some truth in what South African author Hilda Bernstein (in International Defence and Aid Fund for Southern Africa 1981:10) observed about white women in the apartheid years. She said that after childbirth 'the primary role of a white woman becomes that of consumer and a living display, through leisure and adornment of her husband's wealth.' Maluleke (2005: 108) observes that nowhere were the skewed gender relations more acute than among white South Africans. He relates the joke from the Botha and De Klerk's eras that South Africa's most famous white woman was Evita Bezuidenhout, the fictional creation of Pieter-Dirk Uys, who owes her fame to Apartheid homeland policies where she served as ambassador:

> The disconcerting truth is that such had been the subjugation of White women that for a long time they had neither a visible ambassador nor visible rebel to serve as role model, until a man stepped forward to create this fictitious character.

(Maluleke 2005: 108)

Some white women became involved in the struggle against apartheid, like the members of the Black Sash, for example. Some white women have been imprisoned, detained or left South Africa as exiles, but they were few and far between. Just one example of an exceptional woman's voice was that of Helen Suzman who showed extraordinary courage and worked very hard as aware/empowered witness within the South African society.

The 1970 census (in International Defence and Aid Fund of Southern Africa 1981) showed that most African women who were employed worked as domestic servants (38%) and as farm labourers (35%). Only 4.4% of African women in employment in 1970 worked as professionals, administrative and sales workers. The only two professions open to African women were nursing and teaching.

When considering the *history of women's political participation in South Africa,* Lewis (in Vetten 2000b: 86) reminds us that: 'Since women from different racial or class backgrounds do not share the same history of oppression, they inevitably define their struggles and goals differently.' In South Africa *white women* first laid claim to their political rights when a deputation of Voortrekker women in Natal

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approached the British High Commissioner in 1843 demanding their rights to vote, but these claims were dismissed. It was only in 1930 that the vote was finally granted to white women (Vetten 2000b:86). The extension of the vote to women did not result in their large-scale participation in national politics nor did it translate into political rights for the black majority. It seems as if white women of this period was more interested in using their political rights to maintain their privileges as white people than to effect changes in the status of women. In fact it could be argued that white women reinforced the inferior status of black women by employing them as domestic workers in their homes so that they could participate more fully in civilian life outside the home (Vetten 2000b: 36).

There have always been b*lack women* who have taken part with men in the battle against apartheid, but in addition to activities aimed at national liberation, women have campaigned on issues affecting them as women. In 1913 African women living in the urban townships were made to buy a new entry permit each month. Black and coloured women publicly destroyed their passes, petitioned Parliament and confronted the police during the anti-pass protest in the Orange Free State and, in the end, these permits were withdrawn (Vetten 2000b: 87). Women were excluded from full membership of the African National Congress (ANC) until 1943, despite many years of active participation on many levels. In the same year, 1943, the ANC Women's League was constituted and from this political base the Federation of South African Women (FEDSAW) was formed in 1954. FEDSAW was made up of women from all four racial categories – white, black, coloured and Indian. The history of women's involvement in the struggle against apartheid showed examples of remarkable and courageous solidarity across racial lines. FEDSAW adopted a Women's Charter at its inauguration. While FEDSAW located itself firmly within the national liberation struggle from apartheid, the document also highlighted the discrimination women experienced as a result of their sex and emphasized the need for women's equal rights with men. FEDSAW organized the march of 9 August 1956 to the Union Buildings in Pretoria where between 6 000 and 20 000 women participated to protest against extension of the pass laws to women (Vetten 2000b: 87). This day is now commemorated as 'National Women's Day'. Vetten (2000b: 89) points out that it was always understood that the struggle against racial injustice would take precedence over the struggle for women's rights. The Sharpeville shootings of March 1960, the State of Emergency that followed, the banning of the ANC and PAC, and the purge of political activists after the enactment of the 'Sabotage Act' and the detention without trial laws of the early 1960s changed the pattern of the women's struggle. Their organizations were destroyed. If not banned outright, like the ANC Women's League, they were rendered inoperative by banning individual members. Women, together with men, have been banned, detained, imprisoned, tortured and killed and many were forced into exile in their struggle against apartheid (International Defence and Aid Fund for Southern Africa 1981). For many women their oppression as black people was a matter of

greater priority than their oppression as women. This resulted in the struggle for gender equality in South Africa being obscured by the struggle for racial equality:

> During the years of struggle against Apartheid Black women were advised to wait and not make too many demands, until the country had first been truly liberated. So when 1994 came, many of them were still waiting, without skills, without confidence, without health, without power.

(Maluleke 2005: 108-109)

Violence against women is the most extreme form of sexism. South Africa has the 'unenviable record of having the highest recorded prevalence of violence against women' (Ramphele 2008: 103). It is very difficult to establish reliable statistics as incidence of women abuse are typically under-reported (Boonzaier 2003: 178).

In their research on the experience of victims of gender based violence in South Africa, Bollen, Artz, Vetten and Louw (1999: 8-9) give comprehensive definitions of *four forms of abuse*: namely, economic abuse, emotional abuse, physical abuse and sexual abuse. They point out that these four categories of abuse are not mutually exclusive, but they often co-occur in combination with one another. In a national survey on violence against women Rasool, Vermaak, Pharoah, Louw and Stavrou (2002) interviewed one thousand survivors of economic, emotional, physical and sexual abuse across all nine provinces in South Africa. They found that the most common location of all four types of abuse was in the home and that all four types of abuse tended to be experienced over a long period of time (Rasool et al 2002:27). Over half the women who experienced economic, emotional and physical abuse reported that the perpetrator was a spouse or partner, while survivors of sexual abuse where more likely abused by someone other than their partner or spouse (Rasool et al 2002:51).

Vetten (2000a) discusses the types and incidents of violence against women in South Africa highlighting *rape, domestic violence, femicide and sexual harassment.* She points out how the law defines *rape* in terms of a sexual experience for both victim and perpetrator, as 'the intentional, unlawful sexual intercourse with a woman without her consent.' However, women experience rape as an act of control, violence and invasion. The SAPS estimates that in South Africa a rape occurs every 35 seconds (Vetten 2000 a: 50). It is further estimated that one out of every two South African women have suffered or will suffer the trauma of rape and that one out of every four South African girls will have been sexually abused by the age of sixteen (Cock & Bernstein 2002: 169). According to the South African Police, rape is one of the most underreported crimes in South Africa. This is the case because of negative perceptions or experiences of the police, fear of retaliation, shame and social

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stigma (Ackermann 1996c: 149). *Domestic violence* had not received the recognition of an official definition until the Domestic Violence Act of 1998 which describes domestic violence as including:

> [P]hysical abuse; sexual abuse; emotional, verbal and psychological abuse; economic abuse; intimidation; harassment; stalking; damage to property; entry into the home without the complainant's permission; and any other abusive, controlling behaviour.

(Vetten 2000a: 51)

Wife abuse is widespread. Although no official statistics exist, Rape Crisis estimates that one in every three woman is assaulted by her partner while the Women's Bureau estimates that it is one in four. The term *'femicide'* - first used in the 1976 International Tribunal on Crimes against Women - refers to murders of women that are motivated by misogyny or the hatred of women (Vetten 2000a:52). The most extreme form of violence against women is the killing of women by intimate partners, also known as *intimate femicide*. A national study on this tragedy conducted by the Medical Research Council found that in South Africa in 1999 four women were killed per day by an intimate partner: one woman is killed every six hours by an intimate partner. This is the highest rate that has ever been reported in research anywhere in the world. Perpetrators were overwhelmingly male. Cohabitating partners were the most common perpetrators, followed by boyfriends and husbands. The rate for coloured women was more than double that of African women and more than six times that of White women. Men who killed their intimate partners are more likely to be employed as blue-collar workers, farm hands and security workers. The report further shows that women killed by intimate partners are likely to be killed at home, be younger, work as domestic workers, be killed by a firearm or blunt instrument and be killed by perpetrators who have a problem with alcohol.

Although complaints of sexual harassment in the workplace go back as far as 1931, as in the case of domestic violence, *sexual harassment* has only recently made official entry into the South African legal system with the 1989 Industrial Court Case (Vetten 2000a: 53). Studies suggest that between 67 and 76 percent of South African women have experienced harassment in the workplace. Other forms of violence against women that have been referred to in these studies are: pornography, female genital mutilation, prostitution and sexual slavery and violence against girl children.

The suffering caused by sexual violence does not cease when the violence ends. Women may endure years of severe psychological trauma, rejection by their families and communities, unwanted pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases and/or HIV/AIDS . When one considers the risk of

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HIV/AIDS infection, rape can be seen as another way of killing women and children. Although it is difficult to show a correlation between the incidence of rape and suspected or confirmed HIV positivity there are many anecdotes about the desire to spread the disease and ensure that one does not die alone (Vetten 2000a: 71). Another well-circulated myth - that sex with a child virgin will rid oneself of HIV - has led to a number of reported cases of rape of young virgins. It is important to point out that while domestic violence cuts across all social barriers, recorded victims of rape are concentrated among the poor and disadvantaged women and children of South Africa. It is true that all women are potential rape victims, but poor women in this country are more vulnerable to rape as they do not have private transport, have to walk long distances and live in areas plagued by crime, gangsterism, overcrowding and poverty (Ackermann 1996c: 149).

The striking disparities between men and women in HIV/AIDS prevalence attest to the risks that women face in South African society. The mortality rates from AIDS amongst women aged 20 to 39 years more than tripled between 1997 and 2004, whereas deaths more than doubled for men aged 30 to 44 years. Over the same period deaths from AIDS-related conditions in the age group from 25 to 29 years increased six fold among females and tripled among males (Ramphele 2008: 108). It is estimated that women make up 58 percent of the adult population who are HIV positive in South Africa (UNAIDS in Ramphele 2008: 108).

I have used Vetten (2000a 57-75) to summarize the *historical and societal factors influencing violence against women.* I have referred above to women's status as second class citizens in South Africa with its *patriarchal ideology* which gives men power and privilege over women. Very particular *masculine and feminine identities* have come to dominate, with women being seen as receptive, caring, emotional, nurturing, passive and submissive. Being wives and mothers is regarded as women's 'proper' roles (Vetten 2000a: 58). Men are supposed to be self-assertive, competitive, rational and aggressive. Their roles are defined as breadwinners, heads of households and community leaders (Vetten 2000a:58). In this way women have become confined primarily to the private sphere of the home while men are active in the public world of work, community affairs and politics (Vetten 2000a:58).

The *separation between public and private spheres* has resulted in *economic disadvantage for women* with men earning more, women experiencing higher rates of unemployment and men controlling finances as well as owning the family home. Women are often financially dependent on men and therefore trapped within abusive relationships. Wives are often viewed as a form of property. This notion is reflected in the bride being 'given away' by her father to her husband (Fedler & Tanzer

2000:28) and under customary law, lobola being paid in the form of cattle or cash to the wife's family (Vetten 2000a: 58). According to several studies, many young African men view their girlfriends as a form of property and the institution of lobola, which is still widely practised even in urban townships, involves large cash payments and is often described as 'buying a wife' (Cock & Bernstein 2002: 169). Together with the view of the wife as the husband's property is the man's right to inflict corporal punishment on 'his' woman as a form of punishment (Cock & Bernstein 2002: 169).

A norm was created through the *gendered construction of male and female sexuality* that men should be sexually active and women passive. This resulted in women who are sexually active being labelled promiscuous and that a woman's 'no' may be interpreted as 'yes' as it would be socially unacceptable for her to express sexual desire. Double standards around sexuality exist. It is believed that it is acceptable for men to have many sexual partners, but not for women. Female partners are expected to be constantly available to their male partners. Metaphors drawn from sport - like 'scoring' - are often used to depict successful sexual access to women. If sexual relationships with women are viewed a kind of sport and interaction between men and women as competitions with winners and losers – then sex is regarded as the prize. Sexuality is also constructed differently amongst the various race groups in South Africa. While stereotypes about the sexual promiscuity amongst black women abound, black women's bodies are seen as the property of men and have been violated throughout the history of South Africa. Once again, double standards exist. When white men perpetrated violence on black women these acts have often been ignored, but when a black man raped a white woman he could, until recently, receive the death penalty (Vetten 2000a: 60).

The anthropologist Reeves-Sanday (in Vetten 2000a: 62) identified the *construction of a tough, violent masculinity* as a key component for creating a rape-prone society. Gender construction makes violence a prototypical male activity and a preferred way of resolving conflict in South Africa, as reflected in our high crime statistics (Campbell in Vetten 2000a: 62). For some men violence is an inevitable part of their male personality traits, greater physical strength and uncontrollable tempers. Large numbers of South African men have learned to be more aggressive through their experiences in the South African Defence Force, the police and the armies of various other groupings in South Africa. The experience of combat has also left many men with harmful after-effects of violent situations that translate into violence in their homes and relationships. The high levels of violence in the height of apartheid - when the Nationalist party government instituted highly repressive tactics to control any form of dissent - served to legitimize violence and harden people to tolerating more violence. The post-apartheid state is a symbol of victory over apartheid. While women are more involved and influential in the economy and public life than before, South Africa's male citizens who had been

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involved in the armed struggle are unsettled and unsure of their place in the new order. Violence in the liberation struggle was noble and necessary, but in the new South-Africa it is criminal and destructive (Morrell 2001: 21).

Sexual violence is essentially an evil abuse of power and, as such, it is a *theological problem* (Ackermann 1994: 205) as 'it calls into question the very nature of humanity and it raises doubts about God's presence in and care for this world' (Ackermann 1996c: 145). Both racism and sexism are structures of domination which create conditions for an abuse of power. While many church leaders have been very vocal in their condemnation of apartheid, very few have spoken out against sexism (Ackermann 1994: 205; Govinden 1991: 279):

> An area that cries out for reconciliation in South Africa is the area of gender and sexual orientation. Regretfully here, it sometimes does seem that the government is ahead of the church. The many and extreme incidents of violence against women point to a situation where gender remains an unaddressed area.
>
> (Maluleke 2007:54)

Feminist theologians have identified a number of ways in which *Christian theories and Christian praxis themselves contribute to the problem of rape.* Ackermann (1996c: 150-151) summarizes the four key traditional theological discourses in this regard as identified by Fiorenza. First, the politics of subordination of women, children, slaves and other marginal beings are doctrinally legitimated and experienced daily in the practices of the Christian church. Second, teachings about the sinfulness of women imply that women must be silent as it was a woman, and not Adam, who was deceived and became a transgressor:

> Hence, the cultural pattern of making the victims of rape, incest or battering feel guilty and responsible for the victimization has its religious roots in the scriptural teaching that sin came into the world through Eve.
>
> (Fiorenza in Ackermann 1996c:150)

Third, scriptural texts link suffering and victimization to the suffering of Jesus. There is a great danger that, if one extols the silent and freely chosen suffering of Christ as an example to be imitated by all those victimized by patriarchal oppression – especially those suffering from domestic and sexual abuse - one legitimizes and supports the violence against women and children. Fourth, the Christian values of love and forgiveness help to maintain relationships of domination and the acceptance of abuse and victimization. A Christian ethic which stresses an uncritical attitude of a love that endures

all things and forgives up to seventy-seven times can support the acceptance of suffering of abuse without resistance.

These discourses identified by Fiorenza are clearly reflected in the findings of Ericson's (2007: 36-39) research on violence against women and the churches as potential safe or unsafe places. The beliefs and practices that were identified as still promoting the abuse of women and leading to continued silence within the churches in South Africa, even after transition to democracy, include patriarchal theological traditions according to which 'God intends men to dominate and women to submit and that women (as "descendents of Eve") are morally inferior to men and cannot trust their own judgement (and hence are in no position to criticize their men' (Ericson 2007: 36). Similarly, the hierarchical structure of the church with the (usually male) minister as head of the congregation and someone whose authority is not questioned has also perpetuated silence on the abuse of women:

> This hierarchical structure of the Church most often exemplifies the parishioners' relationship to God. God is on high, for God is holy, and they are low because they are human and sinful. The minister becomes a mediator between God and humans. Whenever the minister speaks, they believe God has instructed it, and therefore they listen….If the ministers and therefore the Church leadership are silent on rape, it is to be expected that the Church and the wider community will be silent on rape too.

> (Easau in Ericson 2007: 37)

The other belief that promotes abusive relationships is 'the belief that God commands Christians to hurriedly (or even automatically) forgive and reconcile with those who sin against them' (Ericson 2007:38). Moreover, a distorted understanding of a 'suffering Christ' theology - which emphasizes suffering and endurance as desirable qualities for a 'good Christian' and that suggests that women are particularly chosen to be suffering servants - might encourage an abused woman to believe that through enduring her suffering she will redeem others or that through her passive acceptance the perpetrator might repent and become more righteous and responsible (Ericson 2007: 38).

Speaking from their different South African experiences as a black African man and an Indian woman respectively, theologians Maluleke and Nadar (2002:7) describe 'an unspoken, unwritten but very real covenant between human societies and violence' which is a *deadly covenant*. Above all, it is a 'covenant of silence – silence about violence, especially violence against women.' The participants in this covenant with silence often include pastors, church elders, siblings and parents:

> Their participation in the covenant often manifests in the advice and counsel they give to the woman victim: telling her that it is her fault that she was beaten; advising her that 'the Bible says' that she must be submissive; telling her that she is the one who needs to be counselled, that marriage is *like that*. Given the great cloud and intricate network of witnesses and conspirators who subscribe to the covenant of death, standing up against this covenant of death and violence is costly. It often results in rejection of those who dare to speak. Therefore, the voices of those who dare to stand up against the covenant are often like voices in the wilderness.

(Maluleke & Nadar 2007:7)

By using two stories from their respective contexts within the South African society Maluleke and Nadar illustrate how what they call the 'unholy trinity' of religion, culture and the subsequent power of gender socialization act to underwrite a culture of violence against women. In both stories religion had been no ally to abused women, but instead the religious leaders used themes and sections of sacred texts to justify the violence they experienced. Ackermann (1996c:151) says that the silence of the Christian church on the subject of violence against women in its preaching, teaching and pastoral practices communicates an 'uncaring timidity' about this shocking problem. In the light of this she does not find it surprising that women of faith who have been raped prefer to seek help from secular organizations rather than from their priests or ministers. The questions these women are asking - such as 'Why is this happening to me?'; 'Why has God allowed this to happen?'; and 'Is this my fault?' - constitute both theological and pastoral crises for women of faith:

> Feelings of guilt, shame, anger, abandonment by God and by your community and the need to break the silence around an experience of horror and abuse, cry out for adequate theological and pastoral response.

(Ackermann 1996c:151)

I subscribe to the definition that Miller-McLemore and Anderson (1995: 101 -102) give of gender as primarily referring to one's socially constructed sexual identity and to learned differences in behaviour and thought. At the same time I agree that the particularities of physical givens and biologically shaped encounters significantly influence a person's sense of gender, so that *sex* and *gender* are mutually influential. Typically, men and women are constructed as different sorts of persons who possess qualities and abilities distinct from one another which equip them to engage in different sort of tasks and activities. Relationships between men and women have been structured and ordered in a hierarchical fashion on the basis of these perceived differences with feminine subordinate to the masculine (Vetten 2000a: 64). Thus gender identity is bound up with experiences of power and status so that challenges to the exercise of power are perceived as threats to power, position, control or assets. Violence emerges as the outcome of an inability to control others' behaviour. It can also be

argued that gender violence does not represent a breakdown of the social order, but rather as an attempt to maintain a particular, gendered social order (Vetten 2000a: 65). Changes in the relationships between men and women brought about by apartheid, migration patterns, the breakdown of traditional family structures and urbanization can be seen as extremely threatening. Some men respond to these threats to their gender identity and power with violence. Morrell (2001: 28) supports feminist research that shows that rape and other related acts of violence - like spousal abuse - is a way of asserting the dominance of men over women.

The public world of government is traditionally seen as a male realm where interaction between the State and its citizens is regulated. The *home represents the private sphere* where relations between men and women should not be regulated by the law and authorities. On the domestic front women are subjected instead to the 'marital power' that is in the hands of her husband. Violence against women thus remains largely unchecked, ignored and rendered invisible. Social hierarchies that privilege traditional authorities and men over women still remain fairly intact in rural areas. Constitutional protection of 'customary law' has legitimized practices such as lobola, polygamy, child betrothal and women's minor status (Vetten 2000a: 74).

As pointed out earlier violence against women is often associated with attitudes of male superiority. Most *institutional religions are structured along patriarchal lines*, replicating the gender role stereotypes of women as passive homemakers, and men as 'heads' of households and breadwinners (Fedler & Tanzer 2000: 31). Du Pisani (2001: 163) writes about the ways in which patriarchy became firmly entrenched within Afrikaner society on a conservative religious base. Biblical texts were used to justify and uphold patriarchal authority in Afrikaans churches and schools where the male-headed family was viewed by puritan Afrikaners as the cornerstone of a healthy society. The Afrikaans churches have held the view that the male head of the family should fulfil a priestly function, not only by providing for his family's material needs, but also looking after their spiritual well-being. The ideal of fatherhood may not have changed much within Afrikaner culture, but the gap between the ideal and reality has become more evident. Since the 1970s the veil of secrecy has been lifted and the realities of domestic violence and unhappy marriages have become exposed. Du Pisani (2001: 164) concludes that violence by men within the family is a major social problem within Afrikaner society.

In April 2010 between 250 000 and 300 000 men, mostly white Afrikaners, attended the Mighty Men Conference (MMC) hosted by farmer-turned-evangelist Angus Buchan on his farm outside Greytown (2010 www.charismamag.com). Since he started the annual Mighty Men Conferences in 2004 attendance has grown steadily. 'What is evident in Buchan's rhetoric is a language of conquest and

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might and strength' (Nadar 2009:6). Nadar (2009:6) asks the question why the vast majority of those attending were Afrikaners, including many farmers, and reflects on what might motivate them. She explains that the crisis facing Afrikaner men is that the nature of Afrikaner hegemonic masculinity has been challenged by the democratic order established since 1994, by the increase in acceptance of diverse sexual orientations as well as by the rise in women's emancipation. Nadar (2009:6) quotes Du Pisani's description of 'puritan' hegemonic Afrikaner masculinity and how it is being challenged in the post-apartheid South Africa:

> Initially the puritan ideal of Afrikaner masculinity was expressed in the image of the simple, honest, steadfast, religious and hard-working *boer* (farmer)….Patriarchy, the rule of the father, was justified in all spheres of society in terms of biblical texts….

Nadar (2009:6) points out the striking similarities between this puritan masculinity that Du Pisani describes and Buchan's message. Buchan reiterates over and over again the focus on the man as priest, provider and king in his home. It appears that in Buchan's MMC a new version of Afrikaner hegemonic masculinity is emerging. The Afrikaner women's response to the MMC has emerged recently in the form of Gretha Wiid's Worthy Women conferences. A visit to her website (www.grethawiid.co.za) reveals similar rhetoric to Buchan's, urging women to treat their husbands as kings. Nadar (2009:5) cautions that all the empirical evidence links submission of women to violence on women.

In 3.3.2 (Unequal society with severe poverty), I mentioned how poverty impacts women more than men. The **feminization of poverty**, or concentration of poverty among female-headed households, is the result of the fact that men are more likely to be in the labour force than women: men have a participation rate of 53% compared to 40% for women (Amoateng et al 2004:21). Correspondingly, men have a lower unemployment rate than women and male-headed households have a higher total income than households headed by females (Amoateng et al 2004:26).

As has been pointed out in 3.3.5 (Gender in a patriarchal society) the **political participation of women** has been complicated by the struggle against apartheid as well as the racial segregation in South Africa. Cock and Bernstein (2002: 148) argue that the exploitative nature of the *relations between South African white and black women* - as expressed most visibly in the domain of domestic service - presents a real challenge for any possibility of sisterhood. Low wages, long hours and demeaning treatment suggests a strong level of exploitation of black maids by their white employers. However, a shared sense of women's exclusion from the transitional negotiation process was the generative force in forming the Women' National Coalition (WNC) in 1992. In April 1992 seventy

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women's organizations came together to identify women's needs through a process of campaigning and research in order to draw up a Women's Charter which could be presented to Parliament. The WNC represented an extraordinary convergence of women across geographical, age, racial, class, religious, ideological and political lines. The Women's Charter was approved by delegates from ninety-two organizations from across the political and social spectrum and presented to Parliament in August 1994 (Cock & Bernstein 2002: 149). Five issues were prioritized – women's legal status, women and land, women and violence, women and health and women and work.

The WNC had an important factor in its favour in that the ANC, the majority party in government, had a tradition of support for women's rights. A statement - 'On the Emancipation of Women in South Africa' - released by the ANC's National Executive Committee in May 1990 expressed this support:

> The experience of other societies has shown that the emancipation of women is not a by-product of a struggle for democracy. It has to be addressed in its own right within our organization, the mass democratic movement and in society as a whole….The prevalence of patriarchal attitudes in South African society permeates our own organizations, especially at decision-making levels, and the lack of a strong mass women's organization has been to the detriment of our struggle.

(Quoted in Cock & Bernstein 2002: 153)

Until 1994 South African white women had been largely excluded from political decision making. Only one woman served in the National party cabinet and there were only eight women among the 308 members of Parliament. The ANC had only one woman on its 26 person National Working Committee and twelve on its 90 person National Executive Committee (Cock & Bernstein 2002: 161). In 1994, following the first democratic election when the Government of National Unity was created, twenty-five percent of the new parliament were women, including the Speaker of the House and three cabinet ministers (Morrell 2001: 19). South Africa has now moved from 141st place on the list of countries with women in Parliament to 7th in 1994 (See figures in Ramphele 2008:103, Morrell 2001:19). Three prominent structures were put in place within government to attend to gender issues: the Commission on Gender Equality; the Parliamentary Joint Standing Committee on the Improvement of the Quality of Life and Status of Women; and the Office on the Status of Women (Vetten 2000b: 92).

Some of the most significant changes for women since 1994 have been the measures such as the Employment Equity Act, the Maintenance Act and the Domestic Violence Act (Cock & Bernstein 2002: 168). One dramatic change has been the access of black women to the middle class, with a number of women serving in both public and private sectors as government ministers and managers. Nevertheless, the difference between women of various classes, race and ethnic groups remains very high. Women in general, but particularly women of colour, earn less than men. Unemployment is

especially high among the African population, but whereas half of the African population is unemployed, only 9 percent of white women are. Rural African women are particularly powerless, voiceless and dependent as almost 65% cannot read or write and women are subjected to customary law which denies them access to land (Cock & Bernstein 2002: 168).

The **masculinity of South African men** has been impacted by the changes in the post-apartheid society. Robert Morrell (2001: 18) summarizes the chauvinism of South African men in the past when he says that until recently South Africa was a man's country where men exercised power politically and publicly. In both black and white homes men made the decisions, earned the money and held power. As pointed out earlier both customary and modern law supported the presumption of male power and authority and discriminated against women. The country's history developed 'brittle' masculinities which are defensive and prone to violence. White men had many privileges as a result of the uneven distribution of power and they became defensive about threats or challenges to that privilege by women, blacks or other men. Black men, on the other hand, experienced harshness of life in poverty and political powerlessness which gave their masculinity a dangerous edge. For them honour and respect were rare and they often had to attain it through violence from their white employers, fellow labourers and women. The description of South African men as chauvinistic is too sweeping to account for the diversity of individual experience especially the changes in men of power that have been noted that led up to the release of Nelson Mandela from prison in 1990 (Morrell 2001: 18).

Morrell (2001: 26) summarizes the responses of men to change in South Africa in three categories: reactive or defensive; accommodating and responsive; or progressive. In the first category men are determined to change things back to the way they were in order to reassert their power. In the second category are those men who can be understood to resuscitate non-violent masculinities. These men have shown an absence of opposition to the improvement of women's position and are tolerant of gay men. Evidence of the third category of response is the emancipatory masculinities which are the most obvious in the gay movement; however heterosexual men of different class and racial groups also have been developing new ways of being men.

From the critical reflection on my personal story in Chapter One as well as the contextual analysis in this chapter it is clear that patriarchal ideology affects everyone in society. I have also indicated how the church, and specifically the DRC of which I am a member, is responsible for supporting patriarchy through its structures, teaching and practices.

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3.4 Race, class and gender in the context of the DRC

A very important part of my participatory pastoral praxis relates to my experiences as a member of the DRC. As my participation in the leadership of the DRC will also form part of the participatory research discussed in Chapter Five, it is important to attend to a specific analysis of issues of gender and race within the DRC. Poverty will not be discussed separately as I have already attended to the church and poverty in the section on poverty in this chapter under 3.3.2 (Unequal society). I will, however, keep in mind that social class, poverty and race are closely interrelated in the context of South African society.

As previously noted, the **ideology of apartheid** has its roots within the DRC itself: it grew into a widespread religious way of life after the synodical decision in 1857 to allow separate services of the Lord's Supper 'because of the weakness of some' (Cloete & Smit 1984: vii). The DRC developed along racial lines into a 'family of churches'[59] (Cloete & Smit 1984: vii) justified by – and justifying – the ideology of apartheid:

> When the pseudoreligious ideology of apartheid was implemented as an economic and political policy during the forties, theologians and ministers from the ranks of the DRC developed and popularized a theological, scriptural, and moral justification. Through the years no serious challenge to the ideology of apartheid, its pseudoreligious character, or its theological and moral defence came from the so-called 'daughter churches' in the Dutch Reformed 'family', although some of its 'practical implications' or 'the concrete way in which it was implemented' was criticized from time to time. Several reasons for this silence can be advanced, among others the powerful influence of white ministers in church structures, ministerial training, and ecumenical relations.

> (Cloete & Smit (1984: vii)

Over time the number of coloured and black ministers increased and some studied overseas. They made important independent contributions and started articulating the voice of the people. As ecumenical ties strengthened they were joined by people sensitive to racism and critical of apartheid. By the 1970s members of the Dutch Reformed Mission Church (DRMC) started playing a leading role in the opposition to apartheid. An important turning-point came in August 1982 when the World Alliance of Reformed Churches declared a *status confessionis* concerning apartheid by declaring it a

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[59] The white Dutch Reformed Church (established in 1652); the coloured Dutch Reformed Mission Church (DRMC) established in 1881; the African/black Dutch Reformed Church in Africa (DRCA) established in 1963; and the Indian Reformed Church in Africa (RCA) established in 1968. Three further churches represent the white Reformed community: the Gereformeerde Kerk (1859), the Hervormde Kerk (1853) (these two churches formed in reaction to events in the Netherlands) and the Afrikaanse Protestanse Kerk (APK, 1986) which split off from the DRC when the DRC opened its membership and accepted church reunification with the black churches.

heresy. Together with this declaration, the membership of the DRC was suspended and Dr Allan Boesak of the DRMC was elected as president. At the DRMC synod meeting that took place in Belhar in October 1982 a confession was drafted in the light of the *status confessionis*. The draft confession addressed three main issues: the unity of the church; reconciliation in Christ; and the justice of God (Cloete & Smit 1984: viii). The confession of Belhar was formally adopted as the fourth confession of the DRMC in October 1986 (Naudé 2010: xvi).

The DRC has confessed its sin for the theological support of apartheid many times in the past and has expressed its desire for the unification of the DRC family (Naudé 2010; 139). The DRC has recognized Belhar as 'confessing the same faith handed down in Scripture and tradition', but it has not accepted it yet as a full common confession and reunification is still incomplete (Naudé 2010: 138). The unification between the DRMC and the DRCA resulted in the Uniting Reformed Church in South Africa (URCSA). But it also led to Supreme Court cases and a schism: this resulted in the DRCA continuing as a separate church (Naudé 2010: 138). The interrelatedness of these two issues is complex. At times the URCSA has made the acceptance of the Belhar confession as full confessional a precondition for the talks about unification. Naudé (2010:138) points out the sad irony that in many cases Belhar's intention to bring about unity among formerly divided churches has led to exactly the opposite. Although the scope of this thesis does not allow for a discussion of the reasons why the DRC struggles with the reception of Belhar (Naudé 2010: 139 –148), I want to record what I believe (following Jonker) regarding the Belhar confession:

> The Belhar Confession is a gift of God to our churches. It enriches and deepens our historical confessional treasure of the church. As Reformed people we have always known that God not only is the God of justification through faith, but also the God of sanctification; not only the God of the individual, but also of the community; not only the God of worship and private piety, but also of politics and social justice. God does not only save us from the guilt of sin, but also from enmity and the many forms of suffering and injustice that people inflict on one another. God wants the sanctification of the whole of life. Nevertheless, these insights have found little concrete expression in our historical confessions. At least, they are not spelled out in them. It took the evil and suffering of the political situation in South Africa to call forth this aspect of our confession from the heart of the church. That through this a critical contribution to the confessional treasures of the Reformed world was made, has been an unexpected gift of God to all of us in this land, and to all Christians worldwide….The message of the Belhar Confession is universal. Through God's grace it is a contribution from our soil to the confessional heritage of the world church.

> (Jonker in Lombard 2009: 122-123)

In May 2011 the Synod of the Western and Southern Cape accepted the Belhar Confession as a confession at their meeting in Goudini. At the meeting of the General Synod in October 2011 in Boksburg ninety present of the delegates voted in favour of the Belhar Confession and a decision was taken to start the legal process towards the adoption of Belhar as part of the official confessionals of the DRC. This decision, together with very hopeful decisions about church unification surprised and delighted the family of DRC's and was very well-received in the wider ecumenical world.

In Chapter One I have explained how **my experience as a woman in the church** has been contradictory, largely because:

> The church, as institution, is dominated by men. Authority and places in decision-making bodies are overwhelmingly in male hands. Ordination is still largely a male preserve. Yet women, as much as men, are the church and always have been. They constitute its silent, if not silenced majority. Theological teachings on the worth and equality of all human beings are denied by the church's praxis of treating women as second class members.

> (Cochrane, De Gruchy & Petersen 1991:40)

Many women on the African continent, including South Africa, are, through critical reflection combined with active participation in their churches, exploring the relationship between women and their religious institutions. The Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians, founded in 1989 by Mercy Amba Oduyoye, a Ghanaian theologian (Ackermann 2003: 185; Pillay 2003: 143; Nadar 2009: 147) has challenged inequalities in religious institutions:

> …churches, which most often take the form of patriarchal hierarchies, accept the material services of women but do not listen to their voices, seek their leadership, or welcome their initiatives….Whatever is keeping subordination of women alive in the church cannot be the spirit of God. In the church we expect to experience 'reciprocity and mutual respect, support and protection of each person's freedom in continuum with our freedom as the children of promise'….It seems that sexist elements of Western culture have simply fuelled the cultural sexism of traditional African society.

> (Oduyoye in Ackermann 2003: 186)

The Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians has published a number of theological works exploring the relationship between women and their religious institutions (Ackermann 2003: 188). Ackermann (2003:188) suggests that 'it is the right to human dignity that offers women in the church a powerful tool with which to challenge the church.' Her conviction rests on 'the fact that human dignity and the idea that all humanity is created in God's image, go hand in hand.'

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It has to be pointed out that many women do not question religious theories or practices. Such reticence might be because of personal conviction, social and cultural mores or indoctrination. Ackermann (2003: 187) refers to the way in which oppressive images and practices are internalized and that ignorance or fear conspires to keep women silent. Moreover, oppression of women by other women has become evident: in some church denominations ordained women clergy are simply not called to serve in congregations as women are strongly opposed to women's ordination (Pillay 2003: 148). Similarly, in addition to males still dominating the leadership structures in many churches, those women who are now part of churches' leadership structures frequently do not challenge the status quo because they accept the 'natural order of things' (Pillay 2003: 148).

Ericson (2007: 30-33) makes interesting observations regarding the women's organizations within South African churches. These organizations often form the backbone of the parish or congregation: 'in social work, lay ministry, fundraising, cooking, baking and cleaning the church.' She says that these gender roles and separate organizations for women and men date back to at least to the early Christian missions to Africa and other non-Western continents. She then observes that women's preference for organizing themselves separately in their churches - where men are still overrepresented in leadership - might be, at least partly, based on a need to create their own safe spaces where they can handle their own affairs, independently of those normally in charge. In South Africa the descendants of 'missioned' peoples have articulated their need for 'safe spaces' away from their madams and bosses where they may articulate their own spirituality without the fear of being subjugated by white women (Ericson 2007: 31-32). Ericson (2007: 32) asks the critical question how churches might be able to offer space for the potential and talents of each individual beyond racial or gender stereotypes.

Female subordination and the general theology of headship have been the basis of arguments for women's exclusion from ordained ministry (Pillay 2003: 151). Although we have celebrated the 20th anniversary of women in ordained ministry in the DRC, at present there are only 68 women who work in congregations as DRC ministers. Women make up 4.13% of the total number of ordained ministers in the DRC (DRC Yearbook 2011). Ericson (2007: 48-49) discusses how women in non-stereotypical roles are treated by men within certain sections of the DRC in order to punish the woman who is 'out of place' by being involved in the 'male' public place like the church council. She found that many women who studied theology opt not to go into the ministry, but rather to become part of the diaconal work in the church or in a non-governmental and local government structure where they can assume leadership positions: 'It thus appears as if, to many of them, non-church institutions offered a more

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enriching and inspiring space to develop their potential and give something back to wider society' (Ericson 2007:53).

Many women who had successfully completed their studies with the intention of going into ministry are sidelined and excluded by their churches. Ericson (2007: 54) points out that generally women are included in ministry through the concept of justice and equal opportunity. Pillay (2003: 151) warns that this perspective ignores the fact that the shape and form of patriarchal ministry is problematic and needs to be reformed:

> Women are allowed in token numbers to integrate themselves into this male-defined role. They adopt the same garb, the same titles (Reverend, if not Father), and the same clerical modes of functioning in a hierarchical structured church... [Women] are allowed success only by being better than men at the games of masculinity....In such a system it is not possible for women to be equal, but only to survive in a token and marginal way at tremendous physical and psychological cost.

(Reuther in Pillay 2003: 152)

It is crucial that where women find themselves in leadership positions with men in the church they should not allow themselves to blend into the natural order of things, but challenge any perceptions, practices and structures that give rise to, or perpetuate relationships of domination or subjugation (Pillay 2003: 152).

3.5 Conclusion

Contextual analysis of our apartheid history and current post-apartheid South African realties as reflected in this chapter played a significant part in raising my awareness to the complexities with which we live. Awareness of the ways in which racist and patriarchal ideologies are interrelated and impact the socio-economic status of various groups of people in our society assisted me in attending to socio-cultural factors when participating with individuals and communities in therapeutic work. To do the kind of deconstruction of dominant cultural discourses as described in Chapter Two I needed to understand what these are and what their historical roots are. The most significant learning from this chapter is the fact that South Africans live in two realities that are almost like living in two worlds – the poor, unemployed mostly black people of this country on the one side and the rich, mostly white people, on the other side. 'Apartheid' is now the rapidly growing economic divide which could easily keep those who are privileged in an 'unaware/empowered' state. The information in this chapter regarding the extent and the severity of suffering as a result of poverty, HIV/AIDS, racism and violence on women and children serves to strengthen my commitment to participate in marginalized

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communities. It also assists me in understanding what limiting and often de-humanizing realities face millions of South Africans every day. The research that reflects the effects of our racist past with its economic oppression, forced removals, inferior education and other de-humanizing legislation and practices has moved me to be even more committed to participate in healing and restitution. This chapter also reflects the ways in which my people (white Afrikaners) and my church (the DRC) have been part of motivating and supporting the evil system of apartheid and how we struggle to deal with our racist past. Some of us do this by choosing to stay in an unaware/empowered position where we deny our complicity and the benefits that we enjoy as being products of a system that oppressed and denied black people their humanity. A participatory pastoral praxis deals with the life of the person who is robbed and beaten up and left on the side of the road, as well as the 'robbers' and those who 'passed by on the other side of the road.' When I participate in raising awareness through my training practice and by participating in the DRC as discussed in Chapter Five, I need to know and understand these contextual issues. All of South African society is affected by our apartheid history and the current effects of racism, sexism, poverty and HIV/AIDS - whether we live or have lived as the oppressed, as witnesses and bystanders, beneficiaries or as oppressors. Our identities, our experiences of self-worth and hope for the future – all of our hopes, dreams, and expectations - are severely impacted by the social problems that we face each day. Understanding the complexity and interrelatedness of all of our lives as we live within the context described and analysed in this chapter is critical to a pastoral praxis that wants to be participatory in a transformative way. I believe that we live in the 'bundle of life' (Tutu 1999:31) and that therefore, we are accountable to others who suffer. I also believe that those of us who are privileged will not be healed until all South Africans are given the opportunity to live with humanity:

> Ubuntu ... speaks of the very essence of being human. [We] say ... 'Hey, so-and-so has ubuntu.' Then you are generous, you are hospitable, you are friendly and caring and compassionate. You share what you have. It is to say, 'My humanity is caught up, is inextricably bound up, in yours.' We belong in a bundle of life. We say, 'A person is a person through other persons.'

(Tutu 1999:31)

In Chapter Four I will research the way in which I participate with awareness and accountability in the contexts of my therapeutic and community practices.

Chapter Four

Networking pastoral participation: the praxis of social transformation

[36] "Which of these three do you think was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?' [37] The expert in the law replied, 'The one who had mercy on him.' Jesus told him, 'Go and do likewise.'

(Luke 10: 36-37)

Hospitality is the insistence that life must be kept open to those unlike us, not only for their sake but for ours as well. In such a perspective, health does not derive from self-sufficiency, but from openness, interdependence, commitment, and solidarity. Modernity hopes for the banishment of the neighbor in order to live an unbothered life. But pastoral care rooted in the Bible stands as a mighty protest against such a mistaken notion which finally will not yield life.

(Brueggemann 1991: 170)

4.1 Multiple 'roles' and participatory praxis

The participatory pastoral praxis which I am researching started with an awareness that my work as a Christian psychologist has to include more than the white middle-class people who can afford my services and who have dominated my life for so many years. The search for ways to cross the boundaries of my middle-class consultation room to the wider South African society brought me into contact with Narrative Therapy which assisted me in expanding my participation to communities outside of middle-class society. The focus of this chapter is on the 'how to do it' of participatory pastoral praxis in contexts of therapy and community work. As such, it reflects the practises and values that shape the aware/empowered position I have tried to adopt since I have started to work with greater sensitivity to socio-political context and more inclusively of those who represent 'the other' in my world.

Miller-McLemore (1996: 16) points out how many colleagues in pastoral theology have harkened back to Anton Boisen's powerful foundational metaphor for the existential subject of pastoral theology as 'the study of living human documents rather than books.' She proposes that today, the 'living human web suggests itself as a better term for the appropriate subject for investigation, interpretation, and transformation.' The web provides us with a metaphor of connectivity for selfhood, religion and all life and is a metaphor of relationality and interconnection (Miller-McLemore 1996: 17). This metaphor fits with my belief that pastoral therapy should shift from care as counselling the individual to care as part and parcel of a broad social, religious, cultural and economic context. The metaphor of the web can be

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used to look at clients' support systems, but can also alert us to victims that might be caught up in the web as entanglement (Moessner 1996: 7).

The psychology profession places a great deal of emphasis on professional boundaries. I am often questioned by colleagues about the way in which I practise my skills outside my consultation room within the wider community. The elitism of the psychology profession has some psychologists frowning at my Narrative Therapy training practice which includes psychologists, community workers, social workers, clergy and pastoral therapists. Even more confusing to them are my studies in practical theology and the energy that I put into participating in church leadership. In discussions of this research many people advised that I select and 'focus' on one of these 'roles'. I was relieved to read about other women who have made choices similar to mine:

> I have also gradually recognized that my insistence on multiple roles had something to do with an approach to work typical of many women who resist the rigid, classificatory boundaries of most professions. It is not unusual for women to enter interdisciplinary fields, to attempt to integrate divergent foci such as psychology and spirituality, and to hold down more than one job at once.

(Bonnie J Miller-McLemore 1996: 12)

I will show that the multiple roles from where I participate support each other and make for a kind of praxis that is richer and more contextual than would otherwise be possible.

In this chapter I bring my own therapeutic and community praxis into the spotlight in order to reflect on my central research question (as formulated in Chapter One), namely: **How does a participatory pastoral praxis contribute to social transformation in a post-apartheid context?** The following **criteria** have been used to guide me in the selection of case material for this chapter:

- Problems addressed in the case examples have to reflect the most prevalent social problems in the post-apartheid society as described in Chapter Three: namely, racism, sexism and poverty;
- Case examples must come from two contexts of participation and illustrate two of the 'roles' from where I participate: namely, therapeutic work done as a therapist in private practice and community participation in the wider society;
- The work described in the different cases must illustrate the 'how' of the various characteristics of a participatory praxis.

I have selected the following case examples:

- I will write about my therapeutic participation with Yvonne, a **woman whose life had been affected by sexual abuse** as a child. This work is relevant as sexual violence is one of the biggest problems facing South African society and is seen as an expression of the patriarchal culture that forms part of all levels and diversities of culture and religion in South Africa. My participation with her over the past ten years has also included me being an **aware and empowered witness to her participatory praxis with farm workers** in a rural apple farming community. I volunteered my time to therapeutic work with and in support of Yvonne as an act of restitution for the ways in which I benefited from the labour of the farm workers on the apple farm where I grew up, as described in Chapter One. Themes relevant to social transformation - such as sexism, racism and poverty - are attended to and her praxis reflects the same kind of interrelatedness that marks my own life and work.

  Data collecting strategies used:

  Over the ten years of our participation I have collected 200 pages of written notes during sessions with Yvonne and saved 120 email exchanges between us. We have compiled various documents together and I have written reflections on our participation in my research diary. I used this data as a source to compile my research document.

- My participation with **the Strand Muslim community** led to a Bridge-building function with members of my church and community. I will reflect on ways in which we might begin to make visible the impact of the injustices and suffering caused by apartheid - such as the history of the forced removals, religious oppression and racial discrimination - so that healing could become possible for both the white and black communities of South Africa.

  Data collection strategies used:

  I made notes during conversations with participants; wrote reflections in my research diary; made a video to use in presentations of a discussion with Mr Rhoda and Mr Fanie where we reflected on the value of the Bridge-building function; documented the Bridge-building function with photos; and kept the letters that I wrote, newspaper articles and emails that I received from participants. I have used a variety of these documents in my research report.

  I have described the interrelatedness of HIV/AIDS, poverty, gender and race in South Africa. I will discuss my participation with **the Drakenstein Hospice and Palliative Care** where I participated as a supervisor and was involved in staff-support for a number of years. I will focus

on my role as an aware and empowered witness and describe the ripples of the witnessing into Norway and back.

Data collection strategies used:

In the more than twelve years of my involvement with Drakenstein Hospice my participation has been mostly documented in notes taken during staff support meetings; letters written to various participants and groups; documents compiled with the staff group; written feedback from participants; email exchanges and examples of exercises done with participants. I also compiled papers with photos for use in presentations at workshops and conferences.

4. 2 Therapist and participant to Yvonne[60], child evangelist and community worker

I will discuss my participation with Yvonne in two parts. In the first part I will focus on a detailed description of the first three sessions following her referral to me as a psychologist. I will use this material to illustrate the way in which participatory praxis is used in working towards healing with a woman who has suffered sexual abuse, one of the most prevalent and serious problems of our sexist South African society. In the second part of this case discussion the focus will shift to illustrate how the therapeutic work that we are involved in supports Yvonne in developing a participatory praxis that moved her work from an exclusive focus on child evangelism in a coloured community to community participation. I will illustrate how both Yvonne's praxis and my praxis in supporting her over the past ten years reflect the characteristics of a participatory praxis and how this has contributed to social transformation on an individual as well as community level.

4.2.1 Therapeutic participation in living with childhood sexual abuse:

In February 2001 I was contacted by Heather Barrow[61], Yvonne's employer at a Youth Evangelism Trust in Villiersdorp. She sought consultations with a Christian psychologist for Yvonne, a child evangelist, who had been living with bi-polar illness since 1997. I agreed to meet Yvonne for a *pro bono* consultation. In those first meetings Yvonne, then a woman in her early thirties, struggled to make eye contact and speak audibly. With great difficulty she shared the painful and shameful story of living with bi-polar illness which involves manic episodes, hospitalization as 'state patient' and

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[60] Yvonne has given permission for me to use her name as acknowledgement of her as research participant in the action research reflected in this document. She read the part of the script that describes and reflects on our work and offered reflections which I have included verbatim in this text. Our conversations, my notes and all correspondence were originally in Afrikaans and have been translated into English by me for the purpose of this research document. Yvonne read this and found it to be an accurate reflection of our conversations and its intentions. She has signed the official Informed Consent Form of the Ethics Committee of the University of Stellenbosch.

[61] Heather and Bruce Barrow were the founders of the Youth Evangelism Trust and continue to support Yvonne and her work in the most caring and committed ways.

psychiatric treatment with medication. At the time of our **first consultation** Yvonne was struggling with severe depression. The resignation of Hesmarie, her senior colleague who had shared a house with her for the previous four years, precipitated the depressive episode. Yvonne spoke about her strong desire for a partner ('maatjie') and how she envied Hesmarie who had married recently. She told me about the difficulty she experiences in trusting men. She explained that she had been sexually abused by two men - her brother-in-law and his brother-in-law - from the age of twelve. She grew up as the 'laat-lammetjie' of alcoholic parents in a family of five children. Her father died when she was nineteen and her mother, with whom she had a close relationship, suffered from bi-polar illness.

A terrible sense of loss, loneliness and despair had invaded Yvonne's life. She doubted her ability to manage the work without Hesmarie's leadership. Comparing herself to other young people Yvonne concluded: 'I feel a failure; I have not accomplished anything in life.' As proof of her 'failure' she mentioned that she had dropped out of a secretarial course and that she hated her clerical job with Telkom. Her two years at Bible College, however, were very happy. This was where she developed a vision for working with children from 'other racial groups.' But she devalued her Bible College training as 'my only training.' She found the emotional pain of the children that she worked with overwhelming and felt despondent about 'seeing so little fruit in my work.'

As a Narrative therapist I am fully aware[62] of the way in which 'modern systems of power encourage people to actively participate in the judgment of their own and each other's lives according to socially constructed norms' (White 2002:43). Listening to Yvonne I was aware of the way in which the dominant culture ascribes higher value than others to certain qualifications (e g university degrees), certain jobs (e g highly-paid and professional) and work within certain contexts (e g less status for working with children, especially those from marginalized groups). Narrative therapists listen to their clients in ways that will assist them[63] to deconstruct these cultural truths and challenge their 'truth status' (Morgan 2000: 45):

> We call the special kind of listening required for accepting and understanding people's stories without reifying or intensifying the powerless, painful, and pathological aspects of those stories *deconstructive listening.* Through this listening we seek to open space for aspects of people's life narratives that haven't yet been storied. Our social constructionist bias leads us to interact with people in ways that invite them to relate to their life narratives not as passively received facts, but as actively constructed stories. We hope they will experience their stories as something that they have a hand in shaping, rather than as something that has already shaped them. We believe that this attitude helps to deconstruct the 'factity' of people's narratives, and that such deconstruction loosens the grip of restrictive stories.

(Freedman & Combs 1996: 46)

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[62] Participating with *awareness.*
[63] Participating *with* people.

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The process of deconstructing these 'truths' that people have about their lives involves listening for 'unique outcomes' or exceptions to the problem-saturated story (Winslade & Monk 1999: 41). The dominant narrative about Yvonne's 'failure identity' seemed to be contradicted by her vision of working with children from other racial groups and her compassion for the children who live in poverty. I felt an excitement as I sensed that her 'by the way' comments about her vision and compassion might indicate a commitment and purpose in life with potential for development into an 'alternative story' to the dominant story of failure (Morgan 2000: 55).

Yvonne also expressed grave concern about her ability to live on her own: 'I find it impossible to keep myself occupied.' If we do not observe openings to alternative stories or if the people we work with do not tell us about them, we can co-construct[64] them by asking questions about exceptions to the problematic story (Freedman & Combs 1996: 125). When I asked Yvonne about her interests I was surprised about the enthusiasm that she expressed for nature and outdoor activities such as hiking, jogging and horse-riding. Upon exploring friendships, it transpired that although Yvonne and Hesmarie did almost everything together, she had some young Christian friends from her Bible Study group. She felt that since they were mostly married couples they did not choose to spend social time with her. I stayed with Yvonne's focus on her experiences of loss and despair, but I made careful notes of all the potentially hopeful aspects of her life. I knew that they might 'provide a gateway' to what Yvonne might consider the preferred or alternative stories of her life (White 1992: 127).

From the beginning I was struck by the interrelatedness of our lives as I experienced a strong resonance with Yvonne's vision and compassion as a result of my own work with children living in poverty (Morkel 2002). The specific context of her work, an apple farming community, was very familiar to me. Therapists are influenced by their own biases:

> It is inevitable and unavoidable that we will pick out certain things as relevant and meaningful and that we will ignore others. Our minds are not, and never can be, blank slates on which other people inscribe their stories.

(Freedman & Combs 1996: 46)

My decision to contract with Yvonne for free therapy was motivated by two things – my commitment to the transformation of our sexist society[65] by supporting women who have experienced sexual abuse

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[64] Participating *with* people.
[65] Participating in *social transformation.*

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and because I hoped that my therapeutic participation with Yvonne might assist her work with children of farm workers, a group of people that I feel indebted[66] to.

In the **second session** Yvonne reported that she was able to enjoy her programme with the children that past week 'despite some disappointments.' She said that she 'hates imperfection,' 'has a negative way of seeing things' and that she 'is pessimistic.' Her negative view of herself fits with what White (1995:83) describes as the way in which a person who has experienced sexual abuse is 'recruited into a very negative story of who they are as a person, and it is likely that they will give meaning to their experience that emphasizes culpability and worthlessness.' To open up for a re-authoring conversation I decided to ask Yvonne more about what seemed like a 'unique outcome' - her apparent love for and enjoyment of the farm children - as it formed such a strong contrast to the negative self-descriptions (White 2007: 61). I used 'landscape of action' and 'landscape of identity' questions to do this:

> [I]t is in the trafficking of stories about our own and each others' lives that identity is constructed. The concepts of landscape of action and landscape of consciousness[67] bring specificity to the understanding of people's participation in the meaning-making within the context of narrative frames.

(White 2007:80)

I questioned Yvonne about specific aspects of her contact with the children that bring her joy (landscape of action question). She explained that she looked past the neglect to see each child's unique personality. She knows each child by their name and knows that her interest in them helps them when they experience hurt. Yvonne told me that she has noticed the vulnerability of children as they are often the targets of pain and injury. I asked Yvonne what it was about her own life experience that might have prepared her to notice the pain and vulnerabilities of the children (landscape of action question going back in her history). She said that her experiences of alcoholic parents and sexual abuse assist her in caring for these children, many of whom live in similar circumstances. I then asked her how this fits with her understanding of the purpose of her life (landscape of identity question). Yvonne said that she believed that God uses her own experience of pain to help others[68]. She continued by saying that, although she is unable to take the pain away from them, she noticed that talking to her seemed to make their pain more bearable for them. Yvonne was starting to re-author her life and identity as person who had been injured, but whose injuries and hardships are used by God in caring for the children:

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[66] Participation in *restitution.*
[67] White (2007: 81) substituted 'consciousness' for 'identity'.
[68] The personal is the professional is the political.

> [R]e-authoring conversations…assist the therapist in building a context in which it becomes possible for people to give meaning to, and draw together into a storyline, many of the overlooked but significant events of their lives. These concepts also guide the therapist in supporting people to derive new conclusions about their lives, many of which will contradict existing deficit-focus conclusions that are associated with the dominant storylines and that have been limiting of their lives.

<div align="right">(White 2007: 83)</div>

In these re-authoring conversations I ask questions that will assist the client in the re-engagement with her own life story while I de-centre my own knowledges, expertise and experiences. In this collaborative conversation I am influential, but I do not impose my own meanings onto her.

When I asked Yvonne[69] she indicated that she would like to tell me about the sexual abuse. Kamsler (1990:23) emphasizes the importance of externalizing conversations, a linguistic practice to separate persons from problems, when working with women who have experienced child sexual abuse:

> They (externalizing conversations) employ practices of objectification of the problem against cultural practices of objectification of people. This makes it possible for people to experience an identity that is separate from the problem; the problem becomes the problem, not the person. In the context of externalizing conversations, the problem ceases to represent the 'truth' about people's identities, and options for successful problem resolution suddenly become visible and accessible.

<div align="right">(White 2007:9)</div>

As in the work with other trauma it is useful to ask about the *effects* of the sexual abuse on the client's life: while 'the abuse' cannot be un-done, *the effects* can be challenged (Durrant & Kowalski 1990:72) Yvonne mentioned nine significant effects which I listed[70]. It was clear that she had been persuaded into culpability for the abuse which had resulted in feelings of self-loathing, guilt, secrecy, silence, fear and distrust. As she engaged in a reinterpretation of the abuse by looking at its effects she was able to name what had happened as abuse and as an injustice. When we re-visited this list a few years later while revising her progress in therapy, Yvonne referred to the two men who had abused her and exclaimed: 'Sulke bliksems!' (Those bastards!)

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[69] Participating *with* people.
[70] See Appendix A for the list.

> In responding to these externalizing questions, people are actually engaging in a reinterpretation of their experiences of abuse, and are breaking from the negative stories of identity that have been so capturing of them. No longer can the abuse reflect personal culpability, and no longer does it reflect to people the truth of their 'nature' and of their 'personality'. I believe that these externalizing conversations can be considered as 'deconstructing' conversations.

(White 1995:88)

This reinterpretation clearly facilitated an expression of anger towards the perpetrators instead of the anger and blame directed at herself which had tended to get her to see her 'self' as 'useless' or 'weird' (White 1995:84). Abuse happens in a context where there is an imbalance of power in relationships. It is thus important that a therapist working with childhood sexual abuse has an awareness of the politics of abuse:

> Child sexual abuse consists of a set of subjugating practices or techniques of power perpetrated against the most vulnerable, dependent and impressionable members of our society. It involves the whole spectrum of dominant power/knowledge from brute force and inscription on the body to the most subtle and difficult to detect forms of manipulation.
>
> (Linnel & Cora in Joy 1999:149)

Following a contextual approach as advocated by Kamsler (1990: 14-19) I asked Yvonne detailed questions about her relationship with the men who had abused her and the specific strategies and knowledges they had employed to abuse their power (White 1995: 88). She said that they used her love for motor-cycles and horse-riding and, when she tried to avoid that, they invented opportunities to be alone with her. She observed that the one man had similar relationships with other young girls. She concluded that he was the one responsible for the abuse and that she did not 'make it happen.' After making the connection of their power abuse as adults over her as a child, Yvonne was able to express her outrage at the power abuse reflected in the way her brother-in-law treats her sister who is never thin enough or good enough for his liking. As she began to consider the abuse in a wider social, political and cultural context it allowed for an alternative understanding of her own position as victim rather than being responsible or culpable (Esler & Waldegrave 1990:134). Since Yvonne had struggled with ideas about herself as bad and unacceptable, in an effort to win acceptance of others', her weight and dieting became an obsession.

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My awareness of the effects of a patriarchal society assists me in contextualizing the abuse when I work with stories of abuse of men against women:

> We hold the view that we live in a society grounded in, and shaped by, patriarchal ideology, and our social, political and cultural analysis occurs within the context of this ideology. Society encourages patriarchal attitudes and actions. Society condones men having power over women and children. This encourages the subordinate status of women in society and in the family.

<div align="right">(Esler & Waldegrave 1990: 134)</div>

When I questioned Yvonne about her experiences of the power difference between male and female in the wider society, she was able to name many examples[71]. She concluded that, although she believes that men and women are equal before God, they are not equal in society. The outrage that Yvonne was expressing seemed to be an expression of a 'passion for justice' (White 1995: 91) and an anger that could be honoured as standing with her in the reinterpretation of her own life story:

> Once abuse knowledges and techniques are established in their specificity, they can be contextualised – linked to the dominant knowledges and practices of power of our culture, the familiar operations of which can be traced through history in families and other institutions of our culture, and through the history of dominant knowledges and practices of men's ways of being in relation to women, children, and to other men. This contextualisation of abuse knowledges and practices is a very important aspect of this work. It provides further opportunities for the reinterpretation of one's experiences of abuse and for the deconstruction of the negative stories of identity of which we have been speaking.

<div align="right">(White 1995: 89)</div>

One of the effects of the sexual abuse had serious implications for Yvonne's mental health: she feared visits to doctors. This created complications for the treatment of the bipolar illness. In our second meeting Yvonne shared a unique outcome in this regard. Dr van Heerden, a male doctor who is a Christian, offered to treat her as a state patient, but to do the consultations in his private surgery. She did not pass out when he took blood during the consultation as Dr van Heerden got her to lie down and spoke to her in an encouraging way. I was touched by and grateful for this man's care for Yvonne: it spoke of alternative ways of manhood compared to the abusive ways that she had been subjected to in the past. White (1995:93) discusses 'the difficulties in the area of discernment – difficulties in distinguishing abuse from nurture, neglect from care, exploitation from love' that women who have been subjected to abuse often experience in their relationship with men. I knew that these experiences

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[71] See Appendix B for the examples that she named.

of care[72] from Dr van Heerden might be helpful in opening up more of the ability to discern how and when to trust men[73].

The **third session** took place in the week before Hesmarie was due to leave. Yvonne was panicking and spoke about 'my dependency' in a self-blaming way. Michael White (1995: 104) notes that people he meets who have been subjected to abuse are often rather critical of themselves for what they perceive as their 'dependent natures.' The expectation of therapy is often thus one of reaching a 'destination in their life at which they "stand on their own two feet".' White (1995:104) reflects on this definition of the problem and these conclusions about solutions as follows:

> Could it be that these definitions and these conclusions are informed by and reached through dominant cultural notions of what it means to be a real person – that is, 'independent', 'self-possessed', 'self-contained', 'self-actualising' etc. – and dominant cultural notions of how this might be achieved – that is, through separation?

In Narrative Therapy, we challenge these individualistic ideas and work with the understanding that identity is socially constructed in interaction with people:

> In the social constructionist view, the experience of self exists in the ongoing interchange with others…the self continually creates itself through narratives that include other people who are reciprocally woven into these narratives.

> (Weingarten in Freedman & Combs 1996:17)

Instead of thinking about working towards independence I was reminded of the re-membering work of Michael White (1997; 2007) where he uses the notion of a club of life to assist clients 'to challenge what has been so isolating of them' (White 2007:137). In his work with people who have been subjected to abuse White (1995: 105) encourages the establishment of a 'nurturing team'[74] to provide a counterweight to the abuse team. A nurturing team could provide Yvonne with an alternative story in the face of the dominant stories of loss and loneliness that were so prevalent at that stage. I suggested to Yvonne that we look for people and strategies that would support her in the time after Hesmarie's departure.

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[72] Participating *together with* others.
[73] Upon reflection on this manuscript Yvonne commented that Dr van Heerden is like an angel who has been present in her life for the past fourteen years and still treats her with the same respectful and kind compassion.
[74] Participating *together with* others.

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Using my notes Yvonne and I listed all the people and strategies that she could rely on for assistance after Hesmarie's departure when Sadness, Longing and Aloneness might threaten to overwhelm her. Yvonne took the list, written in the form of a 'document of knowledge'[75], home with her in order to 'remember what [she] needed to remember when [she] needed to remember it' (Fox 2003:30). I highlighted the names of the people who could be considered as a nurturing team. Yvonne was surprised and very encouraged to see how many people there were. She was also enthusiastic about the idea of informing these people that they have membership of her nurturing team.

The first year after Hesmarie left was like an emotional roller-coaster for Yvonne. I witnessed her admirable efforts in making adjustments. She continued to reach out to others; she expanded her nurturing team considerably; and forced herself to accept nurturance from them. She often referred back to the document of knowledge and said that it assisted her in challenging ideas of dependency and that it taught her to treasure her interconnectedness with other people.

Yvonne's response:
Elize came into my life just at the right time when I desperately needed someone to talk to – someone other than the people of Villiersdorp. She never judged, she listened and comforted me, allowing me to express my pain. Her tears and compassion meant a lot to me. Over the years we shared many tears together. Sometimes tears of pain and sadness, but often also tears of joy and amazement at God's grace and participation in our lives. My over-all sense when reading this part is one of thankfulness for God's presence in my life. He truly carried me through very difficult times and supported me by sending people like Elize (and many, many others) into my life.

4.2.2 From evangelist to participatory praxis: the next ten years

When I met Yvonne in February 2001 her work centred almost exclusively around holding weekly 'clubs' for the children on the farms, where she shared the gospel with them. Over the years Yvonne spoke more and more about the social problems and the living conditions of the children and their families on the farms. She told about developing relationships of trust with the children and adults as well as stories of networking within the community. I would like to argue that a participatory pastoral praxis can guide Christians from different backgrounds and professions who participate in a variety of contexts. Yvonne is a missionary whose participation in the community developed through her conversations and reflections with me and other participants on her life and work. Yvonne's work gives

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[75] See Appendix C for the Document of Knowledge.

me the opportunity to research and illustrate from another perspective how participatory praxis can be transformative in a community that represents many of the rural farming communities in the Western Cape. I will also reflect on the effect of this participation on my life and work and consider how our therapeutic participation together has supported Yvonne's work. In order to research the characteristics of a participatory pastoral praxis I will use the headings that I identified in Chapter Two.

- **The personal is the professional is the political**

I have illustrated how a growing awareness of power relations and its effect on her own life and in the wider society contributed significantly to Yvonne's healing following the sexual abuse that she had been subjected to as a child (See **4.2.1**). As she realized that these personal problems had a political basis she was able to stop the self-blaming and started to voice her outrage. The connection between her personal experiences, power politics and her work in the Villiersdorp community is something that runs like a clear thread throughout her reflections on her work. Yvonne makes very little distinction between the two domains of her life. Her personal experience informs her work and she adjusts her personal life as a result of her work: the personal is professional is political. The rest of the discussion of her praxis will illustrate this.

Yvonne's reflections:

Upon reading this I knew that my pain had not been in vain. I was reminded of how God uses it in the lives of others.

- **Participating with the *other:* Crossing boundaries**

Yvonne's life and work in Villiersdorp invited her into a position where right from the start she had to cross boundaries. A white Afrikaner woman from the Free State, Yvonne came to the Boland to work with coloured people, an ethnic group to which she had had limited previous exposure. The white farm-owning community are predominantly Afrikaans-speaking members of the Dutch Reformed Church. Yvonne, however, was employed by the Child Evangelical Trust under the auspices of a very small white English-speaking Community Church where she became a member. I have selected two stories, both involving experiences in the Dutch Reformed Church which clearly illustrate the difficulties involved in efforts to cross boundaries of race, class and gender in post-Apartheid South Africa.

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First story: In May 2005 Yvonne heard on the radio that a 'Mothers and Daughters' morning with a well-known gospel singer was to be held at the Helderberg DRC where I am a member. Since the radio announcement mentioned that domestic workers were also welcome, Yvonne assumed that the meeting would be inclusive of women of all races and social classes. She decided to invite the group of coloured women who had been assisting with the clubs to this function to thank them. They arrived at the church - dressed up and excited - and found they were confronted by smart cars and affluent white women in their fancy clothes. A bit unnerved, the women wondered if it would be a good idea to go inside. Yvonne, struggling hard to rise above her own reservations, encouraged and reassured the group as they approached the church. At the registration desk they were greeted by a woman who asked: "Are you sure you are at the right church?" It was clear that they did not belong! After a brief consultation with her group they decided not to attend, but settled for a visit to the beach and a movie at the Mall instead.

Second story: On Sunday 23 February 2009 I joined Yvonne where we first attended the morning service in the DRC and afterwards a celebration of her work together with her participants and supporters. There was an incident that disturbed both Yvonne and me deeply. I wrote the following reflections in my research diary:

> *As we sat in church Yvonne was sad about the two coloured women who came from the farm with their employers who were sitting outside waiting for the function to start at 11h30 (the church service started at 9h30). Yvonne had invited them to the church service when they arrived, but they did not feel comfortable to join as there were no other coloured people in the church….I am wondering what we should have done. Would it not have been better if we stayed outside and joined them in Bible Study? Is it right for us to sit in the church if we feel that they should also be there? How does God's body work if some are outside and others are inside and how do we celebrate Holy Communion under such circumstances?*

> *The function was beautiful – many people from all the different communities in Villiersdorp were present. During the Ice-breaker activity I stood in a group with lovely coloured women who shared their verses from the Bible and I was strengthened by their faith. I saw many familiar faces – of farmers and their families and other people who have been part of Yvonne's work for many years….There are so many stories of hope, blessings, growth, success and community…*

In my journal I also expressed rage and outrage at the stark contrast between the way in which the DRC work within their own congregation as opposed to the way in which Yvonne's work seemed to create a safe and inclusive community. I experienced my own complicity and guilt about being a member of an exclusively white church.

Reflections on the stories:

In the **first story** Yvonne crossed the boundaries of race and class by training coloured women who work as labourers on the farms to join her in doing the clubs with the children. Welch (1990: 135 -136) explains how 'emancipatory conversations are the fruit of work together, the result of alterations in relationships between groups' as working together affirms the rational principles of a shared humanity. In order to attend the special 'Mothers and Daughters' tea Yvonne's group of women had to cross various boundaries of race and social class. The misleading radio announcement had created an expectation of safety. On arrival, however - and following years and generations of being 'othered' and shamed by white people who are almost always more wealthy, more educated and more powerful than they are - these farm women could sense immediately that they did not belong. When their sense was confirmed by the woman's question: "Are you sure you are at the right church?" they experienced a response to their 'otherness' similar to the one that Ackermann (2004: 6) names as 'indifference followed by abandonment.' The woman's response seemed to be one of: 'I do not care enough to find out who you are so that I might include you and I do not care what happens to you when you walk out.' Fortunately Yvonne and her group of friends were able to protect themselves by finding alternative ways to celebrate their special day together. In their ministering together they had clearly already experienced what Welker (in Ackermann 2004: 10-11) sees in the pouring out of the Spirit on all flesh:

> When the Spirit of God is poured out, the different persons and groups of people will open God's presence with each other and for each other. With each other and for each other, they will make it possible to know the reality intended by God. They will enrich and strengthen each other through their differentiated prophetic knowledge.

Another layer of the impact of this story is that this incident of exclusion and humiliation happened in the heart of my own congregation where the leadership strives for inclusivity and where hospitality is a strong value. Through our large NGO, 'Helderberg Outreach', we are involved in many marginalized communities. Yvonne's story made me aware of what Harlow (in Welch 1990: 139) calls 'a redefinition of responsibility':

> We in the first world are not responsible for others; we are responsible for ourselves – for seeing the limits of our own vision and for rectifying the damages caused by the arrogant violation of those limits. Nadine Gordimer describes the limits of the white Western perspective concisely and eloquently: 'We whites in South Africa present an updated version of the tale of the emperor's clothes; we are not aware of our nakedness - ethical, moral and fatal - clothed as we are in our own skin.'

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I was able to take this story and my learning about a redefinition of responsibility back to my work within the leadership of the DRC.

In the **second story** I participated as an embodied witness to Yvonne's life and work in Villiersdorp. This time I had a direct experience of the exclusivity of church: two coloured women did not feel that it was safe enough to join the church service. Because they were poor and had no access to transport they had had to wait outside the church for more than two hours. I had witnessed and had participated in a response which, once again, could be described as 'indifference followed by abandonment.' I have had to confront myself and my own position. Suddenly, these two women had become what Seyla Benhabib (in Graham 1996: 154) refers to as the 'concrete other' and I was forced to 'regard everyone as specific, diverse and heterogeneous.' This is opposed to a morality based on the 'generalized other' where 'justice rests on treating others as one would wish to be treated in return; thus morality is based on similarity and equality.' Welch (1990: 124) asserts that moral critique of structural forms of injustice emerges from the material interaction between people from different communities. She continues that 'moral reasoning cannot be carried out by any one theorist but requires dialogue with actual members of different communities' (Welch 1990: 128). Inside the church I witnessed Yvonne's agony as she engaged in what Welch (1990:134) describes as: 'It is essential that we examine the ways in which excluded groups are not seen as fully human, or the exclusion itself is not seen, or the pain of the exclusion is not heard.'

As a result of my embodied participatory presence I am confronted with questioning my very understanding of the church as the Body of Christ:

> If we do not practice relationship there is no hope for building up the Body of Christ (1 Cor.12). The Body is the result of the practice of mutual relationship, as well as the place where these relationships are put to test. Being a 'community in difference is a hard-won achievement'.

(Ackermann 2004: 14)

In church I tried to envisage Holy Communion while the two Christian women were sitting outside. I was reminded how the synod of the DRC was responsible for resolving in 1857 that 'as a result of the weakness of some' the people of other races were separated at the communion table (Ackermann 2004: 3)[76] and in that way the DRC 'using communion as a means of exclusion, makes a mockery of Christ's death on the cross and its intention of reconciling' (Ackermann 2004:16). This is how the separation of believers along racial lines began a separation that eventually led to the theological

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[76] Discussed in Chapter One.

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justification of apartheid. Something happened to me as I allowed myself this awareness through my involvement and solidarity with Yvonne and the coloured women:

> Particular stories call us to accountability. As dangerous memories of conflict, oppression, and exclusion, they call those of us who are, often unknowingly, complicit in structures of control to join in resistance and transformation.
>
> <div align="right">(Welch 1990: 139)</div>

I looked at my own church and membership of that church through the eyes of 'the other' and was confronted by my own complicity. An outcome of participatory praxis is the rage experienced in the face of injustices which strengthens the commitment to resistance. Such rage is important:

> As we, too, resist the evil of racism, seeing its connections with other forms of structural oppression, we need to learn that failure to develop the strength to remain angry, in order to continually love and therefore to resist, is to die.
>
> <div align="right">(Welch 1990: 20)</div>

I take this rage – a rage that feeds my commitment to resist injustices and power abuse - into my life as I continue my participation with Yvonne, but also into my work as a therapist, my community work and as a leader in the DRC.

Yvonne's participation with 'the other' changed her to such an extent that in May 2006 she commented to me: "I find the farmers difficult to deal with. I no longer know how to work with my own people." She said that her awareness of the unjust labour practices on some of the farms, as well as the close relationships that she has maintained with the farm workers, had resulted in her being treated by the farmers as 'the other'. She overheard a farmer say to his wife: "Yvonne from the *English church* is here." I am reminded of my own experience of becoming 'other-wise' through my work within the Muslim community. I shared with Yvonne how that had made me 'otherwise'[77] in relation to my own people. The knowledge of injustices and my alliances with the oppressed now made it impossible for me to witness injustices - especially racial and religious - and not speak out against these. Through joining and witnessing Yvonne's participation with 'the other' teaches me, once again, how important participation with 'the other' is in shaping my understanding of how to live morally and accountably in post-apartheid South Africa. I agree with Welch (1990: 38):

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[77] In South Africa we have a slang expression that refers to 'being otherwise' as meaning that you have changed, become strange and different from what you have been before – a bit of a 'spoil-sport'.

…all perspectives are partial and …the creation of moral action requires by definition the counterbalance of other groups and individuals. A single actor cannot be moral.

Yvonne's reflections:

I realised how different my work is from the way in which the DRC works. It saddens me deeply to be critical of a body of believers that truly support me and my work with such commitment and generosity. However, I am afraid that these things still happen where people of colour are not treated as part of the body of believers in the DRC. In a recent development a member of the local DRC congregation started a group 'Hannah' which is racially diverse. I was touched when at the first meeting some of my coloured friends were asked to lead the worship. That gave me the courage to take a coloured friend along. Things do change…

- **Participating *with* others: De-centred and influential**

When I first met Yvonne her ministry was very much from a 'top-down' position. As the 'expert' on the Bible, she 'took' very well-prepared messages 'to' the farm children. Yvonne experienced great tension when the children did not seem to listen or respond according to her norms and expectations. The tension posed a threat to her mental health. It was clear to me that the idea of doing perfectly prepared lessons with perfectly behaved children was something that Yvonne had inherited or learnt somewhere. It clearly did not fit the context of her work or what she most valued in relation to the children. I used her earlier expression of love and concern for the children to invite her to explore the meaning of her relationship with the children. By describing the joy of engaging with them in loving and caring relationships, Yvonne was able to de-centre her own knowledge and agenda *for* the children. She became more flexible and focused instead on using the influence of her love and compassion for the children to build trusting relationships *with* them. As she started enjoying the children and what they had to offer her, their cooperation became a lot better. In Narrative practices White (in Morgan 2006:60) refers to a Decentred and Influential position that enables the person doing care to honour the skills and knowledges of the people that she or he participates *with.*

I witnessed more of this caring *with* the coloured community when, towards the end of 2001, Yvonne responded to a request from a few teenagers to run a training course so that they could qualify as presenters of the Good News Clubs. When seven students - teenagers and adults from the coloured farming community - successfully completed the course which was held on four Fridays and Saturdays, it was a huge and significant step that changed Yvonne's ministry forever. I was extremely touched by this step as I knew, from growing up on an apple farm, that the farm labourers often have very limited education, work extremely long hours and receive no training or empowerment after

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leaving school. Most drop out early to start assisting the family with additional income. Just by being called 'students', receiving the course material and studying to teach had had transformative value! Yvonne brought photos along to tell me stories about each student as she witnessed their growth and achievements with joy. Yvonne was assisted in the training work by Clifford Heys, a retired DRC minister and his wife, Matty, with whom she had developed a nurturing partnership. By using her influence to train these students Yvonne had de-centred herself more in the work as she expanded her work through them to more children on the farms. This part of Yvonne's ministry continued to grow over the years. In September 2006 we attended the celebration of the tenth anniversary of the work of the Trust. Yvonne had arranged for two of the farm women to give a demonstration of the club work with a group of the children. Yvonne could not have been more de-centred and influential! Seeking opportunities for the people of the farm workers community to participate as active agents in the spiritual, emotional and physical care of their community had become a guiding principle in Yvonne's work[78]. Yvonne's praxis has become guided by her belief that people have gifts to share and potential to develop. She always finds ways to make that visible to others and themselves. She writes in a newsletter:

The students who did the training with me form the team who work to evangelize 600-700 children in this community on a weekly basis. We will work as a team on Saturday 24 November when we will do a day camp for more than 200 children at Graymead. The theme is God, the Creator! A junior team of high school teenagers will assist us in organizing the games, music and singing.

Yvonne's reflections:

Elize's input was very significant as I struggled to let go of the rigidity of rules and perfection. Her sharing of the story of her work in the Moslem school with the children assisted me in becoming more lenient and personal in my relationship with the children in the clubs. She opened my eyes to the importance of relationships.

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[78] At the recent birthday celebration and AGM of Tools4Life which I attended in February 2011 in Villiersdorp I was deeply touched by the way in which one coloured person after the other stood up to testify about the significant blessing their participation in various projects and teachings at Tools4Life has been to their lives and the lives of the people in the community.

- **Participating with *awareness*: Poor children, the most vulnerable people in society**

The Child Evangelical Trust that employed Yvonne focused on evangelism through the Good News Clubs. Yvonne's life, however, was deeply affected by witnessing the unjust practices and poor living conditions that impacted the lives of many of the families living on the farms. She related to me some of the violations that farmers were guilty of: for example, filling bags with wine and selling these at double the price to farm labourers. This practice keeps these labourers dependent forever on the farmer. Not only are the labourers in constant debt – their   weekly wages reduced so that families literally starved – but it fuels alcoholism, with all its attendant problems. Conditions in some of the crèches are terrible: for example, one such a facility is in a converted pigsty which leaks in the cold and wet Boland winters. Poverty, alcoholism, violent deaths, family violence, fetal alcohol syndrome, sexual abuse, teenage pregnancies, deprivation, neglect and limited vision for the future have become a fact of life affecting scores of children in this community.

In September 2002 Yvonne started showing symptoms of depression and burn-out that were a result of compassion fatigue[79]. During the year she shared with me various stories of trauma and suffering that she had witnessed. She spoke about a twenty year old woman who was murdered by being beaten and then suffocated. Yvonne witnessed the effect of poverty and neglect, alcoholism and violence on the lives of some of the children.[80] She received news that boys from one of her clubs had raped a young girl[81] and was deeply affected by the news that a fifteen year old girl was pregnant following a rape[82]. In a session in September she exclaimed: "You cannot believe the heart-cries of these children!!"

Our conversations often revolved around the conflict that she experienced between 'works of mercy and works of piety.' I shared with Yvonne the position adopted by pastoral theologians like Couture (2000), who regards 'care for the most vulnerable persons in society, poor children' (2000: 13) to be the central work of pastoral and congregational care:

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[79] The term 'compassion fatigue' was coined by Figley (in Weingarten 2003: 81) and refers to the biological, psychological and social exhaustion that can occur as a result of prolonged exposure to a sufferer.
[80] Appendix D email 11 June 2002.
[81] Appendix D email 29 July 2002.
[82] Appendix D email 11 September 2002.

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Our relationships with poor children involve works of mercy and works of piety – traditionally called the means of grace – that, when kept in the right relation with one another, give deep meaning to the love of neighbor and the love of God.

The work of care through the right relationship between mercy and piety is biblically grounded. The idea that our spiritual fullness is dependent upon our care for the most vulnerable of persons is central to the biblical witness. The Old Testament shows care for the most vulnerable person in the Hebrew community, the orphan (along with care for the widow and care for the resident alien), to be at the ethical center of mercy and piety, or care and worship. The New Testament shows Jesus to be the fulfilment of the right relation of mercy and piety. Jesus demonstrates for us how the right relation of mercy and piety is at the center of faith, the sacraments, and discipleship.

(Couture 2000:15)

In July 2002 Yvonne attended a Child Forum where statistics related to the social problems of South African children were discussed. The audience was challenged to consider the life circumstances of children before 'jumping in with preaching.' This strengthened Yvonne's growing conviction that she 'cannot be involved on a spiritual level only.' Yvonne focused increasingly on building relationships of care and offering activities like puppet shows, a concert with 170 children participating, day camps, Grade 7 camps, a gardening project, family camps and holiday programmes. Children's poverty can be understood as both material poverty and the poverty of 'tenuous connections' (Couture 2000: 14). Yvonne described the effect of the poverty of 'tenuous connections':

A group of children visited me last Friday afternoon. They sat next to me on the stairs and while wiping their tears they told me about their longing for parental love: some parents have died, other parents went away leaving their children in the care of strict/fierce [kwaai] grannies etc. When they share their stories they cry and then some others join in the crying. Sometimes I had no answers for them, but I was able to share some of my own story about my own parent's drinking with them. I wish I could adopt them. They said repeatedly that I am like a mother to them, because I make time for them, swim with them, listen to them and do not scold them. They kept saying that they enjoyed the peace and quiet at my place and that they did not want to go home, because on Friday nights the drinking and fighting are at its worst.

(email to author: 17 November 2004)

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Yvonne's praxis as described in this email reflects Couture's (2000:14) concern that: 'Children's poverty must be overcome by building relationships with vulnerable children. This work of care is a means of finding God.' Indeed at the end of that traumatic year 2002, Yvonne concluded: 'The Lord gave me all the yearnings of my heart and more!' (Die Here het my gegee al die begeertes van my hart en nog meer!).

At the beginning of 2006 friends who shared Yvonne's vision for her work offered to pay for her enrolment for a Diploma in *Skills for People Centred Community Work* through the University of South Africa. This marked a turning point in Yvonne's life and work. She excelled: she completed the course as the top student, with distinction. She wrote a research project about her work in one of the very poor areas of Villiersdorp where she initiated the establishment of a new crèche by involving many different role-players. At that stage the Child Evangelical Trust did not share Yvonne's vision to shift the focus to include projects and partnerships involving development work. Yvonne, however, had such a strong conviction about this and had such a strong network of relationships in place that in February 2007 she was able to launch a new non-profit organization called *Tools4Life*.

Yvonne's response:
It is true, this has been a very important turning point in my life and ministry as well as for the community of Villiersdorp – so many are involved now.

- **Participation in voicing: Gaining, giving and supporting voice**

The first thing that struck me upon meeting Yvonne was her literal lack of voice - I was hardly able to hear her. Herman (2010: 8), in her well-known work on sexual and domestic violence, says that secrecy and silence are the perpetrator's first line of defence. Thus remembering and telling the truth about terrible events are key to the victims' healing (Herman 2010:1). As Yvonne gained a voice in therapy it rippled out into the voicing of the trauma within her family. At the beginning of 2002 Yvonne told her mother about the abuse without disclosing who the perpetrators were. Her mother responded by sharing some of her own experiences of abuse with Yvonne. In a surprising next step Yvonne confronted her brother-in-law about the sexual abuse during a visit to her family in December 2002[83]. She approached him by first talking about good childhood memories and then spoke about the abuse. She made a condition: he had to inform his wife - her sister - and apologize to her sister. He confessed to her sister that he abused Yvonne. This opened up the relationship between Yvonne and her sister so that they became closer. Yvonne could also tell her mother that he was the perpetrator

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[83] The sexual abuse was later mentioned in the divorce court by Yvonne's sister.

thereby taking a significant step in her own healing by re-establishing the connections and gaining the support of family members (Herman 2010: 63). Yvonne was relieved to discover that she was not the one responsible for her sister's marital problems as she had always believed. Unfortunately Yvonne's Christian beliefs and experiences in the church had supported the silence, shame and secrecy that had dominated her life for so many years. Neuger (2001:95) writes about the way in which the church has used theological justifications, particularly the sanctity of the family, to justify its silencing of abuse victims within families.

Feelings of inferiority are almost universal in victims of trauma so that they find it difficult to speak out against injustices in relation to their own lives (Herman 2010: 53). Yvonne struggled with this at work. When a married couple was appointed to work with Yvonne she had to move out of the lovely cottage belonging to the Trust so that they could live there. Yvonne was moved into a tiny flat on the same property. Yvonne voiced to me her sadness about leaving her home and expressed her determination to start using her voice when she declared: "I am taking responsibility for my own life now, I have been treated like a child for long enough." She insisted on buying her own furniture for her flat when borrowed furniture was offered to her once again. The new working relationship was very challenging for Yvonne as her male colleague immediately started taking charge of the office. He was task orientated and demanded detailed planning. She experienced him as rigid and controlling. He confronted Yvonne about being late for meetings and then started using a bell to call her. When Yvonne told me this we were both outraged! The effect of this treatment was a loss of drive, feelings of helplessness, and a sense of being invaded, suffocated and unwelcome in her own space. By voicing her outrage and being joined in it by me Yvonne's voice was strengthened so that she was able to voice and resolve the problems with her colleague.

A while back Yvonne sent me an email about her upset when she was asked to move her office to the attic of the church as the church council had decided to convert the space that she was using into a church office with air conditioning and fitted desks. At a meeting an elder 'joked' about her being disorganized and it left her feeling humiliated. Yvonne immediately reminded herself that the chairperson of the board of the Crèche project acknowledged her by nominating her as a member of the board 'since she was the one who noticed the need of the children and voiced it.' I replied in an email:

'How many times do you have to experience this treatment where other matters and other people's needs are placed before your work and your needs? It saddens me when I hear these stories!! I know one thing – the Lord blesses your work despite the attitudes and priorities of others. There are many

people who notice your amazing gift to serve, to build relationships and take the suffering of people seriously. I do not read anywhere that Jesus touched people through His exceptional organizational skills, but above all it was His compassion, care, love and serving attitude that touched them. Go and store your stuff in the attic and continue your work of love – let the church organize from its air-conditioned office with its built-in furniture!!'

My voicing of the injustices that Yvonne had to endure served to strengthen her. At times I can hear myself talk when she takes a stand. When her colleague, an ordained DRC minister, checked whether she was going to church the next day she reminded him: "I am the church." In April 2008 she told me about the cancellation of a committee meeting because people wanted to attend a talk about the Mighty Men Conference in Greytown. Her response to me about this was: (plaas dat hulle kom luister na 'n paar Mighty women van hul eie gemeenskap!) "They should come and listen to a few "mighty women" from their own community instead!"

Yvonne documented these activities by taking photos and videos which are used to make the work visible to others. She uses these in meetings, in her newsletters and as feedback to her participants. This is a powerful way to give voice to the needs and the contributions of the children and community.

Yvonne's response:
It was only while reading this that I truly realised the impact that the sexual abuse had had on my ability to speak for myself. I see the benefits of having a voice and standing up for myself and others in many aspects of my life and work. Elize taught me that whenever I spoke in public or send out photos or newsletters I represented the voices and plights of others. This assisted me in gaining more confidence. I realized that I was able to give a voice to people who had no voice.

- **Participating with our bodies, together with others, in social transformation, interrelatedness and restitution**

The ten characteristics of a participatory pastoral praxis cannot be illustrated completely separate from the other. I have selected two examples that illustrate the other five characteristics well. One example is about Yvonne's work in partnership with a DRC congregation from the city. The second example involves my reflection on the effect that my participation with Yvonne had on me.

Case example 1: 'Rainbow Nation' Outreach

In the winter school holidays of 2002 a DRC congregation - Proteahoogte from Brackenfell[84] - sent a group of young people under the leadership of their minister, Dominee Tielman Germishuys, to join Yvonne in an outreach involving day camps for primary school children on the farms. The young people from Brackenfell, teenagers from Yvonne's (white) congregation and local coloured teenage leaders worked together in teams. They played games, sang and told stories to children on three different farms. Yvonne called it 'The Rainbow nation Outreach' and described how English and Afrikaans, white and coloured people, city dwellers and rural people accepted each other in love, befriended one another, exchanged telephone numbers and started caring for and understanding one another. Yvonne said it amazed her: "I was dumb-struck." She was also delighted about the way in which farmers and coloured adults started helping. She told me: "I have experienced a piece of heaven" (ek het 'n stukkie van die hemel beleef).

This partnership had a ripple effect when the Proteahoogte congregation from Brackenfell invited Yvonne and the teenagers from her community to visit them for a weekend. Coloured children were invited to stay with white families – a first for both sides of the racial divide. Yvonne and her team were spoilt, but also invited to assist the Proteahoogte congregation from Brackenfell with their outreach to street children and to talk to the 'kinderkrans' children! Together the young people gave their testimonies about the Outreach in church in front of 600 people. Stephnie, a coloured teenager from Villiersdorp, said that she was filled with apprehension when she saw all the white teenagers arriving. One of the Brackenfell boys told his congregation: "The farm children taught us a lot." Yvonne's community of care expanded significantly through this partnership as people also befriended her and took a personal interest in her.

The outreach also impacted the white farming community as discussed in an email by Yvonne to me on 2 Aug 2002:

I attended an Amos meeting this evening and was asked to show pictures of the holiday outreach. Three of the farmers from farms where we worked attended the meeting. They said that the adult farm workers told them that the outreach was blessed. The farmers expressed their appreciation for what took place on the farms during the holidays.

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[84] Northern suburbs of Cape Town.

Case Example 2: Reflections to Yvonne about how participating with her touches my life

I am using an extract from an email that I wrote to Yvonne to illustrate my experience of our participation.

The email (14 July 2009) was written in response to Yvonne's written feedback with photos of a Family Camp with farm workers:

I am especially touched by the photo of the laughing and playing adults. When I think back on my experience as a child on an apple farm I am reminded of the family violence (shouting, fighting, conflict, hitting of children), violence, alcohol abuse, boredom and brokenness of people. I also remember the humour, playfulness and the witty remarks from the workers when we worked together in the packing shed or in the orchards. How well do I remember the trauma at witnessing some of the tragedies and accidents that form part of life on such a farm. I am sad to hear about the man who ran over a child – what a terrible accident. It moves me deeply when I hear the story of how this family camp provided an opportunity for this man to share time with the parents of the child who was killed as well as with his own children. I can just imagine how healing it must have been for him to learn about the values of love, acceptance and nurturance. The work of Tools4Life gives me a lot of hope, Yvonne. Hope for the possibility of healing and growth in these broken rural communities. I am always amazed – I cannot seem to get used to it – at the ways in which people who have been oppressed and exploited for many generations are still prepared to give white people a chance, willing to join us in worship, to learn from us and to play and laugh with us….How this is possible I do not understand – it has to be God's grace and love. It fills me with great humbleness and appreciation and supports my commitment to keep working towards healing of old and new wounds in our South African community.

Discussion of case examples:

In the first example, the *embodied participation* of the young people from the Brackenfell DRC congregation, a white middle-class community, in the holiday outreach programme to the farm children of Villiersdorp provided the opportunity for them to meet face to face with children who live in poverty. Couture (2000: 56) refers to John Wesley's observation that if we care for the poor 'from afar we rarely learn what we need to know in order to be a better human being.'

> One great reason why the rich in general have so little sympathy for the poor is because they so seldom visit them. Hence it is that, according to common observation, one part of the world does not know what the other suffers. Many of them do not know, because they do not care to know; they keep out of the way of knowing it – and then plead their voluntary ignorance as an excuse for their hardness of heart.

(Wesley in Couture 2000:56)

I agree with Couture (2000:49) that 'one cares better for an individual when one also cares for others in the individual's environment, including family and institutional staff.' Yvonne embodies this care for the children's caregivers by organizing the family camps where parents are included and given the opportunity to play, worship, talk, eat and do activities together with their children. I consider my caring participation with Yvonne to have the effect of caring for the caregiver that supports her in her work.

In support of the praxis of *caring together* with other people Couture (2000:92) writes that: 'A caring journey requires cooperative knowledge.' This is so because some know some parts of the terrain better than others – no one knows the whole. Yvonne's work in Villiersdorp reflects her understanding of the importance of networking and teamwork. The partnership with the Brackenfell congregation, the joining of teenagers from her own congregation, farmers, adult students and other people from the Villiersdorp community who offered their help during the outreach serve as examples of this. Our therapeutic participation served to support Yvonne in her own reaction to witnessing trauma. Herman (2010: 141) emphasizes that those therapists who work with traumatized people 'require an ongoing support system to deal with these reactions.' I hope that my participation with Yvonne provides her with this kind of support.

Yvonne's commitment to form partnerships contributed significantly to *social transformation* in our deeply divided society. In collaborating with the Proteahoogte congregation from Brackenfell she partnered in ministry with a DRC minister, a highly educated man. She assisted others to cross barriers when the white middle-class rural English speaking teenagers from the Community Church joined hands with the middle-class white Afrikaans speaking young people from the city and the coloured Afrikaans speaking young people from the working class on the farms. The significance of this step was expressed by Stephanie who voiced her initial apprehension at being faced by the white teenagers. The social order of South African society was turned upside down when a group of coloured and white teenagers from Villiersdorp visited Brackenfell to assist the DRC congregation in reaching out to street children and minister to their Sunday school children. Their public appearance in church as part of a single team embodied a South African society which Yvonne called the 'Rainbow Nation'. This outreach marks the beginning of collaboration between the DRC and Community Church,

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as well as between the farmers and their farm workers. This collaboration came to fruition years later in the Tools4Life project when a committee consisting of coloured people (farm workers), DRC members (farmers) and English speaking white people from the Community Church start working together. When the young man from Brackenfell testified about learning so much from the farm children, it was evidence of the kind of transformation that Couture (2000: 69) refers to when initial power imbalances are transformed though caring relationships:

> Within a short time, people who enter deep relations, with others and with themselves, discover that acts of mercy continually reorganize that power relationship, until people who share in acts of mercy give and receive from one another. This reconstruction of power relations is the work of grace.

This brings me to the praxis of *interrelatedness* which implies that we acknowledge and expect that everyone that participates will be affected by the participation. My reference to my personal experience of growing up on an apple farm adds significance to my reflections on Yvonne's work and experience. I also express to Yvonne that her work and the stories that she gives voice to in relation to it, moves me into renewed commitment to stand up to injustices and work for healing. Couture (2000: 69) writes:

> Mercy and charity in their older, theological sense do not refer to the kind of paternalistic, dependence-creating, client relations that we associate with contemporary, secularized understandings of mercy and charity. Acts of mercy and charity, in their Wesleyan sense, reshape the Christian character and the spirit of all participants.

The mutuality of our participation is expressed in my acknowledgement of the impact of her work on my life. In relation to her participation together with the Brackenfell group the interrelatedness of the participation and mutuality of care is expressed in the joy that Yvonne experienced from the friendships that are built during that time – not only amongst the participants but also towards her.

White Afrikaners, and specifically the DRC, have had a long history of treating coloured people as inferior and 'apart' from themselves. The hospitality expressed by the Brackenfell congregation towards the young coloured people of Villiersdorp could be seen as an *act of restitution* in the light of past oppression. Not only were they honoured guests, but, by inviting them to teach, guide and give their testimonies they were treated as knowledgeable and as people with gifts to share. The farmers, through their participation, were able to give something back to the farm workers. When I acknowledged the injustices of the apartheid past in my email to Yvonne and honoured the way in which many coloured people were willing to participate with white people despite these injustices I

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gave back some of the dignity that people had been robbed of and, hopefully, contributed to restitution. My participation with Yvonne was motivated by a commitment to give something back: to acknowledge that I had been a complicit beneficiary in a system that, for generations, had oppressed the farm workers.

Yvonne's reflections:

I have just realized that this is what church should be – like the story of the Good Samaritan – we should love God first and our neighbours as ourselves…

4. 3 Building bridges with the Strand Muslim community

The story of our participation[85]

In Chapter One I described how I moved into a more aware and empowered witnessing position in relation to the hardships endured by the wider South African society. Becoming aware of the realities of our South African society was the first step in my commitment to participate in redressing some of the injustices of the past and working towards greater equality, justice and healing for all our people. Finding a point of entry to serve this society beyond my middle-class practice posed a further challenge. I was well aware of the discrepancies between services available to township schools and those in middle-class suburbs. Under the Bantu Education Act (1953) the apartheid government had used separate and inferior education for blacks to ensure a cheap black labour force with no rights and to achieve the goals of segregation in South African society (Bloch 2009:25). In the new democracy formerly white schools, with their superior facilities and infrastructures inherited from the apartheid years, were able to raise funds from their middle-class parents' base as extra contributions to education quality. Vast inequalities are produced and reproduced in schools, with formerly white schools producing uniformly better results while rural and township schools survive with great difficulty (Bloch 2009:59). The money that has been poured in to try to redress the imbalance is frequently mismanaged or not spent and the poor record of teaching and school attendance in township schools form part of the 'apartheid legacy.'

In an attempt to find a point of entry, I approached Ms Hamley-Wise, the school psychologist in our area, to volunteer my services one day a week to a township school. She confirmed the disproportionate psychologist-client ratio in the privileged community, where parents could pay for

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[85] This story has been shared as part of presentations in workshops and in an article (Morkel 2011) with the permission and approval of Mr Rhoda, Mr Fanie and the Governing body of the Strand Muslim School. Mr Fanie has also written a letter of consent after reading this part of the research manuscript for its inclusion in this dissertation.

private psychologists versus the disadvantaged community where the government employed one psychologist for thirteen thousand learners. She was grateful for my offer and had no difficulty in arranging this with the education authorities.

Ms Hamley-Wise took me to the Strand Muslim Primary School in a coloured township five kilometres from where I live. At this school, with a mosque on its doorstep, Muslim teachers are committed to education based on Islamic philosophy. Mr Fanie, the principal, needed help with six eleven year old boys who had been stealing together for years. The poverty, extreme hardship and complex social problems endured by most of these boys and their families shocked me, and left me feeling overwhelmed and inadequate. Fortunately, David Epston, one of the co-founders of the Narrative Therapy approach, was conducting a workshop in Cape Town at that time. He agreed to a consultation about his approach to stealing (Seymour & Epston 1992). Epston (1999) proposed that a community of concern from each boy's life gather for Honesty Meetings to prepare for Honesty Tests. I followed Epston's guidelines in a process documented elsewhere (Morkel 2000:118-119; Morkel 2002: 55-66). I was surprised by the community's response and delighted that five of the boys were able to receive Honesty Certificates within the next six months.

Mr Fanie's participation as principal and cultural consultant (Waldegrave, 2003:22) to my work as a white psychologist was invaluable. In a letter to apply for funds for Mr Fanie's attendance at a conference where I was presenting a paper on my participation with the school I wrote:

I'm moved by the way my own life has been enriched through my involvement with this school. I worked very closely with Mr Fanie, the principal, and was touched by his sincere caring for each of the boys. He knew them and their families well through taking the time to talk to them, sometimes getting into his car to fetch them or to speak to them at their homes….The spirit of community and caring in that school - where many children come from homes where poverty, crime, violence, abuse and death is part of everyday life - is remarkable. The staff members I met and worked with demonstrated the same concern and love for the children.

I shared these words with the audience at the conference - a moment filled with emotion as a white woman acknowledged the transformative effect of connections across racial, religious and cultural barriers.

Mr Fanie seemed to value my keen interest and always made time to talk to me about Islam and the Strand Muslim community's history of poverty, oppression and hardship. Their forefathers had been

brought as slaves to the Cape from Indonesia in the late 17th century. In an aggressively 'Christian' apartheid state, Islam was regarded as the enemy and Muslim communities victimized (The RICSA Report 1999). Mr Fanie described the 'worst day of my life' when, in the mid 1960s and in accordance with the infamous Group Areas Act, their community was forced to move from their homes near the beach where they had lived for generations as a fishing community. Mr Fanie and I are of a similar age. I spent my childhood just thirty kilometres away on the other side of the mountain, completely unaware of the trauma which these forced removals had caused this community.

Mr Fanie introduced me to Mr Rhoda, a retired principal of the Muslim school, who was documenting his community's history through oral and photographic evidence. Although apartheid histories omit the Strand Muslim community's rich legacy, Mr Rhoda's research revealed that their ancestors were the first inhabitants of the Strand area. I was touched and honoured when my husband, Jaco, and I were invited to the launch of Mr Rhoda's historic photo exhibition during the Strand Muslim community's 2003 Heritage Day celebrations. In my letter thanking the organizing committee, I reflected on the interrelatedness of my personal life with the Strand community and acknowledged the injustices that the community suffered, as well as my own complicity:

As a child growing up in Grabouw, the Hottentots-Holland Mountains were also my beloved landmark and the Strand an extension of my known world. I have numerous childhood memories of buying fish at the jetty, watching movies at the Rialto and shopping at Friedman and Cohen and at the Co-op. I am embarrassed and heart sore that I was part of the group who, as carefree children, swam at the Strand totally oblivious of the injustices that my people were practising towards your community in the Strand.

I commended Mr Rhoda for his research and the community for what it reflected about their spirit of survival and their contribution to the Strand:

I believe that this exhibition belongs in the heart of the wider community as a symbol of the remarkable capacity to survive, the anchor provided by your faith, the dedication of your community and the richness of your traditions and culture. Indeed, at last the first inhabitants of the Strand have been justly honoured.

The committee circulated my letter in the community. It was read on radio, published in the newspaper and used as part of a document to appeal for a public display of the photo exhibition. In support of the fundraising for a building project at the school, Jaco and I decided to organize a function where more

people could witness the Muslim community's story. Mr Fanie and Mr Rhoda collaborated with us in a Bridge Building Function, attended by members of the white community (mainly colleagues, friends and members of the Helderberg Dutch Reformed church) and the Muslim community. The photo exhibition was on display. This provided an opportunity for stories of the community's history to be shared and witnessed. Mr Rhoda spoke about his research while Mr Fanie and I shared the stories of our meaningful collaboration. The two communities shared a traditional Cape Malay meal and were entertained by a Malay choir. We received letters of reflection from many of the participants[86]. White participants voiced their sadness at the injustices of the past and the joy that they had experienced in sharing time together. A Muslim participant wrote about 'feeling proud to be a Muslim.' Photos and letters from the Bridge Building function now also form part of the historic photo exhibition.

Discussion:

By volunteering my therapeutic services and going into the Strand Muslim school to work with the children and their families I embodied a caring participation with the 'other' as described in my MTh thesis (Morkel 2002:8):

> Not only was the school in the poorer predominantly 'coloured' community, it was also a Muslim school. As a white, middle-class, Afrikaner woman, a member of the DRC and a private practicing psychologist, I have never found myself further from my 'usual' clients, society or faith community.

The witnessing of the trauma and suffering of the boys and their families served to raise my awareness about the roots of poverty, racism and religious marginalization and its very real effects on the lives of others. The only way in which I could counter the feelings of despair that threatened to overwhelm me when faced with the complexities of the problems was by joining hands with others. My burden was lifted as I collaborated with Mr Fanie, David Epston, the communities of concern, Mr Rhoda, the wider Muslim community and later, the white community.

Reflecting on my participation in the Muslim school, Mr Fanie commented: 'I appreciate that you never told us what to do, but always asked what we think could work best and how it would fit with our ways and beliefs.' By collaborating with cultural consultants (Waldegrave 2003:22), I positioned myself as an ally *working with* them rather than an expert *acting on* them (Madsen 2007:49). This enabled an honouring of the community's experiences and meaning patterns. The communities of concern that supported the boys in regaining honesty reputations (Epston 1999) reflected the expanded

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[86] Appendix F.

conceptualization of family to include those who might serve as a resource to the boys' lives (Madsen 2007:4). Their participation delighted and surprised me as they brought expertise and resources that I could never have imagined!

In a participatory approach the personal is professional and political. By sharing personal stories from opposite sides of the apartheid divide we transcended the division between personal and professional life in the Muslim community. I moved beyond my professional boundaries by collaborating with people from other professions and by including my husband and members of my community in acts of witnessing and collaboration.

My embodied participation in the heart of the Muslim community took me out of the comfort of my consultation room. It required that I step out of traditional 'therapy roles' as illustrated by my participation in the stealing work, Heritage Day celebrations, Bridge Building function and conversations with Mr Fanie and Mr Rhoda. My letter to the Heritage Day committee, which was used to raise public awareness and rectify past injustice, was an embodied act of restitution. In the letter I expressed deep remorse at the wrongdoing of the apartheid system. Gobodo-Mazikizela (2002:21) explains that remorse stems from a potential for empathy. Remorse is thus more concerned with the other, while guilt is more focused on the self and might sometimes be expressed without remorse leaving people stuck in a place of denial, rationalization or justification. I think the letter affected the community so deeply because it contributed to a healing process in the way expressed by Gobodo-Mazikizela (2002:21):

> Naming the deed, owning up to responsibility without any rationalization, clarifying what was involved, and showing regret allow victims to process their emotions about their trauma.

The letter, as part of the public exhibition, now serves as a physical testimony of a white person's commitment to acknowledging past injustices and testifies to the community's remarkable survival. The physical evidence of the Bridge Building function (photos and letters) tells the story of healing through embodied participation across the racial and religious divide.

Our participation in the Heritage Day celebrations presented an opportunity to acknowledge injustices and assume accountability for past traumas in an important ritual of healing (Herman 2010:1). My awareness that the problems that I encountered in the Muslim community were symptoms of broader structural injustices - like racism, religious oppression and poverty - enabled me to take action towards healing and restitution in the wider society (Waldegrave 2003: 5). The Bridge Building function gave the Strand Muslim community the opportunity to participate in what the social anthropologist, Barbara

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Myerhoff (1986: 267), calls a 'definitional ceremony': a marginalized group has the opportunity for a collective telling and performance of their understanding of the stories of their lives to an audience who would not otherwise be available:

> Definitional ceremonies deal with the problems of invisibility and marginality; they are strategies that provide opportunities for being seen and in one's own terms, gather witnesses to one's worth, vitality and being.

(Myerhoff 1986: 267)

Erstwhile 'oppressors' met with formerly 'oppressed' and 'privileged' with 'previously disadvantaged'. The members of both communities who attended were given the opportunity to embody and voice their willingness to reach out to 'the other' and thus to participate together in the healing and transformation of our deeply divided and traumatized society. Gobodo-Madikizela (2006:75) indicates that we will regain our humanity only 'through consistent dialogue with one another about our past.' Judging from the feedback, we managed to 'jump-start' (Hardy 2008:83) the healing of strained relationships in our communities. We broke the silence, engaged in healing dialogue, and promoted critical racial introspection. Herman (2010: 181) stresses the restorative power of truth-telling in that the telling of the trauma story becomes a testimony which becomes a ritual of healing. For those of us who participated, the Bridge Building function witnessed to the spirit of 'saamheid' (togetherness) instead of apartheid. More than that, it was a step in the direction of healing and hope for the future:

> There are millions of people in South Africa who have stories to tell from the apartheid years – stories of what they did, stories of what was done, stories of what we failed to do….Through the power of God at work in our lives we can begin to make what has happened to us redemptive – to bring the good out of the evil, the life out of the death. We cannot be healed until we recognize our sickness. As we recognize our woundedness and brokenness and seek for healing, the South African nation begins to move from being the polecat of the world to become a light to the nations.

(Lapsley 1996:23)

I became a witness to the multiple stories – both painful and hopeful - from the Muslim community. I reflected on these in the letter I read at the SAAMFT conference in which I publicly honoured Mr Fanie's work and that of his staff, and acknowledged the transformative effect that this experience had had on my own life. Given the power difference in our relationship (White 1997: 131), the practise of acknowledging or 'giving back' how my participation had affected my life resulted in a meaningful shift of power. In contrast to the dominant story of despair regarding education in South Africa (Bloch

2009:17), theirs was a significantly alternative story (White 2007:61). The participation of all citizens in supporting schools fits with researchers' recommendations (Bloch 2009:157; Kamper 2008:15) regarding the improvement of our failing school system. I was inspired by Mr Fanie. His passion for upliftment and pastoral care for his learners represents what Kamper (2008:14) describes as the characteristic leadership style in successful high-poverty schools. I was privileged to join hands with Mr Fanie who is 'adamant about networking for the benefit of the school' (Kamper 2008:10). My hope for the future of our country has been strengthened by meeting Mr Fanie and the teachers at the Muslim school. If the test of teacher excellence in high-poverty schools is 'the extent to which the learners experienced that the teachers truly cared for them' (Kamper 2008:10), then they have excelled.

4.4 Participating with the staff of Drakenstein Palliative Hospice and Palliative Care[87]

In Chapter Three I have written about the impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic as well as the links between AIDS, poverty, race and gender in South Africa. There is no doubt that reflections on a participatory pastoral praxis in South Africa should concern itself with the serious challenges that HIV/AIDS poses. My connection with the Drakenstein Palliative Hospice, where I have participated in training volunteers since 1991, was strengthened in 2001 when Elizabeth Scrimgeour[88] and Fran Tong[89], two of the professional staff members, were students in the MTh pastoral therapy course where I taught and supervised Narrative practices. As their supervisor I visited the Hospice and went out into the community with them while they interviewed and visited their patients. At present, the staff provides palliative care for dying patients and patients with incurable illness. The Hospice serves people right across the socio-economic spectrum of society: from the wealthy, middle class to very, very poor people living in informal settlements and on farms. Black people who have moved to the Western Cape from the Eastern Cape after the dismantling of apartheid are living in shockingly poor conditions. They often speak English and Afrikaans with difficulty and have limited education or skills. They thus find it extremely difficult to find employment. Many of these are people living with HIV/AIDS, often in conditions of extreme poverty. I will discuss my participation with Drakenstein Palliative Hospice by focusing on two areas of participation: staff support and participating with Norwegians in building a day care facility for children.

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[87] This text on my participation with Drakenstein Palliative Hospice has been read and approved by Elizabeth Scrimgeour who wrote a formal letter of consent for its inclusion in this dissertation. Most of it has been approved for use by Drakenstein Palliative Hospice staff and colleagues of the Norwegian Family therapy office in Trondheim as it has been used for presentations at conferences in Kristiansand, Norway in 2007; Cape Town in 2009; and Stavanger, Norway in 2010.
[88] Elizabeth is the present Chief Executive Officer of Drakenstein Palliative Hospice.
[89] Fran is a Social worker, who is a Palliative Care Development Officer for the HPCA (Hospice Palliative Care Association).

Case example one: Staff-support

The Hospice Board contracted with me to do monthly staff support sessions with the nursing and psychosocial staff team from 2003 until 2009. In South Africa - a country with insufficient medical services - the demands on the staff in the face of the devastation of HIV/AIDS and other terminal illnesses are very taxing. They were traumatized by witnessing the suffering, trauma, deprivation and hopelessness that result from living in poverty and with illness and death: 'Not only those who experience the violence and violation directly, but those who witness it – that is, see it or hear about it from others – may develop a trauma response' (Weingarten 2003: 43).

In an effort to expand and deepen my position as an 'aware witness' to their work context and organizational structure, I visited the Hospice to accompany staff members on their rounds in the community whenever I could. Although it was often traumatic to witness their life circumstances I met wonderful people and enjoyed witnessing their warm interaction with the staff. My embodied contact enhanced my position as a compassionate witness. I always wrote letters of reflection on these visits and mentioned each patient that I met and how they touched me:

> When we acknowledge each other's despair we transform it. This is the essence of compassionate witnessing. That is why even a small gesture can have great impact. Feeling seen, feeling known, we can change. This kind of chosen witnessing goes to the heart of the matter.

> Weingarten 2003: 207

In the support meetings I interviewed staff members in the presence of the rest of the group. I followed roughly the guidelines of the 'Definitional Ceremonies' - where 'outsider witnesses' listen in a specific way to the person at the centre of a telling - as described by Michael White (1995; 1997; 2000; 2002; 2004; 2007) based on the work of Barbara Myerhoff. A non-judgemental position supports a climate that is conducive to what Johnella Bird (2005 -workshop) calls 'uncensored speaking'. The content of our discussions varied, and ranged from discussing personal challenges and organizational difficulties, to voicing of particularly difficult, traumatic or encouraging experiences in the course of their work. The mood shifted from being light and humorous to times when we were very, very heavy, serious and deeply sad. My job was to listen attentively and to ask questions in order to assist in the process of telling:

> As narrative therapists we think about questions, compose them, and use them differently than we did before. The biggest difference is that we use questions to generate experience rather than to gather information. When we generate experience of preferred realities, questions can be therapeutic in and of themselves.

(Freedman & Combs 1996:113)

My careful note-taking ensured that I 'rescue the said from the saying' and 'the told from the telling of it' (White 2000:6) so that we could refer back to what was said. Note-taking and practices of the written word form an important part of Narrative Therapy. By acting as a 'scribe' the therapist makes available a client's history and the particular understanding with which they make sense of their lives (Epston 1998:96). The development of documents in the form of letters and summaries formed quite a significant part of our work. These documents supported agency and made visible those values which the staff group held dear.

For instance, when the staff expressed unhappiness and frustration with a new Staff Performance Appraisal system we explored the unhappiness. It transpired that the fact that the exclusive focus on medical competence was regarded as an insult by them as it represented a very 'thin description'[90] (White 1997:15; 2000:62) of the work that they do. By asking for details to assist them in giving voice and finding language, I encouraged a 'rich description' of their work. Energy levels improved as we listed the practices and values on a flip chart. Elizabeth Scrimgeour[91] used the flip chart list to devise the 'Acknowledging of Caring Practices in Staff' form[92] which they now use in conjunction with the official Performance Appraisal form as it reflects the values and practices which they regard as important to their work.

The writing of therapeutic letters is a common Narrative Therapy practice (Epston 1998; Epston & White 1992; Fox, 2003; Freedman & Combs 1996, Freeman, Epston & Lobovits, 1997; Monk, Winslade, Crocket & Epston, 1997; White 1995; 2000; White & Epston 1990). On a few occasions I wrote letters to the staff team in which I summarized the sessions and also added my reflections. These letters were valuable documents to refer back to as they contained powerful testimonies to the work of the staff team. When I was invited to be guest speaker at the AGM of Drakenstein Hospice in 2006 I used the opportunity for a definitional ceremony to honour the staff and their work (White 2007:165). With the staff's permission I read a letter which reflected the heart of their work, the spirit in which it was done, the effect of the work and their support of one another. This telling - in front of an

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[90] White explains that thin descriptions of identity are informed by expert and professional knowledges, while thick descriptions are derived at through the sense and meaning that people whose lives are impacted make about their own lives.
[91] Chief Executive Officer of the Drakenstein Palliative Hospice.
[92] Appendix G.

audience and in the presence of the staff - had a profoundly honouring effect on them. Members of the Board and public expressed their respect and appreciation for their level of dedication and commitment despite the struggles that the staff face every day.

From my position - an outsider, but a consistent witness and audience to their work - I safeguarded memories of parts of their journey that had become marginalized and over-looked in their overwhelming and challenging work. I often reminded them of solution knowledges, past successes, expressed values and progress over time by reading from the notes or using a timeline to trace progress. These conversations often served to encourage them as they were reminded of the bigger picture of their work.

My own life has been changed through my witnessing of the work of the Drakenstein Palliative Hospice team: I can no longer pretend that I do not know. When I drive past the townships and see the shacks and have clear pictures in my mind of the people who live there because I have met some of them, I am now acutely aware of the devastating effects of poverty, the despair of unemployment, the shame of illiteracy, the destruction of illness and the injuries and horror of racism where for generations people were treated as second class citizens. My awareness is raised all the time and the appeal to be an empowered witness continues to challenge me. I have also found some healing for the burden of guilt and shame that I carry as a white Afrikaner. I have learned about survival and caring skills that sometimes take my breath away. I have grown in hope - the hope that is possible when responsibilities are shared, when people open their hearts, when we are prepared to become aware and respond in empowered ways.

Case Example 2: Creating opportunities for empowered witnessing from Norway

In October 2005 twenty family therapists[93] from Trondheim, Norway, visited Cape Town under leadership of Anthony Hawke, an ex-South African who had lived in exile. They attended a workshop with me that focussed on a contextual approach to therapy in post-apartheid South Africa. As poverty is such a big part of our South African reality, I wanted to expose the group to my work with colleagues in impoverished communities. Drakenstein Palliative Hospice was ideally suited for such a visit, because we could split up into smaller groups to visit the community with staff members. I used Kaethe Weingarten's witnessing positions grid to prepare the group for the visit. I emphasized that poverty and illness are a global responsibility. I also warned the group that they would become aware witnesses and so we explored how their compassionate witnessing could be transformed into empowered ways of responding.

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[93] Staff members of the Norwegian Churches Family Counseling Office.

Elizabeth Scrimgeour, CEO of the Drakenstein Palliative Hospice, briefly mentioned during the orientation presentation the dream to build a Palliative Resource Day Care Centre for children and adults infected and affected by HIV and life threatening illnesses who were in Fairyland (an informal settlement) and surrounding areas. Referring to the 'danger' of becoming aware, she emphasised that donating money is often an easy response as it means that you do not have to become involved. At the Day Care where a group of patients and volunteers were gathered, the Norwegian group surprised and delighted us by singing our National Anthem, Nkosi Sikelel 'iAfrika, which they had practised before coming to South Africa. After the visit to the community we met for lunch where we shared reflections from the Norwegians and the Hospice staff. The Trondheim group were overwhelmed by what they had seen and heard. Their reflections were very honouring of the staff and people that they had met and they spoke of the morning as having been a life changing experience for them.

At our workshop the next morning we engaged in a further de-briefing of the previous day's experiences. Instead of centralising the stories of trauma, illness, despair and poverty, I asked the group to split up into smaller groups and to think about a hopeful moment that they had encountered the previous day. I gave them a few questions[94] to use while interviewing each other in pairs. There was an amazing energy in the room as people started sharing their hopeful experiences. I did not need to understand Norwegian to witness what was happening: hands, bodies, faces and the tone of voices spoke clearly enough!

I took some of their responses back in re-tellings to the Hospice staff when I wrote the Hospice staff a letter of thanks. I was touched by the rich tellings and reflections that came back to me from Trondheim about how their lives had been changed through the witnessing. They commented on the following[95]:

- The stark contrasts between rich and poor
- Concern about being in an onlooker-position in relation to the people in the township
- Being touched physically and emotionally
- How their work has been affected
- The relationship of the staff with the patients
- The values that they had experienced and witnessed

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[94] See Appendix H.
[95] See Appendix I for quotes from the emails.

On 1 December 2005, World Aids Day, the Trondheim group shared their experiences at a memorial service. The congregation responded by holding a collection which was the beginning of a fund for the Butterfly House project, the Drakenstein Palliative Hospice's Palliative Resource Day Care Facility. An article in a Trondheim newspaper resulted in Ivar Koteng, a generous donor, expressing his interest in becoming involved in the building of Butterfly House. The money donated and promised in Norway set the Butterfly House project in motion. The local Round Table adopted Butterfly House as project. I served on the board of Butterfly House during the next two years, together with their representatives, members of Hospice and the local community. At his first visit to Drakenstein in April 2007 Ivar Koteng told the board: "I am sending my people here, because ours is a rich country with small problems, they need to work in a country with big problems so that they will see what it is like and become better people." Ivar sent his staff to give physical assistance with the building project. The opening of Butterfly House was an emotional and joyous occasion:

On Sunday 2 November 2008 we gathered in Fairyland, a township outside Paarl, to celebrate the opening of Butterfly House which will serve as a day care facility for children affected and infected by HIV and AIDS. Ivar Koteng, donor from Trondheim, Norway did the unveiling of the cornerstone. It was lovely to have my colleague from the Family Counseling office in Trondheim, Øyvind Standvick and his wife Anne Marie, present at this happy event to witness firsthand the realization of a dream that they have shared with Drakenstein Hospice since their visit in 2005. My participation as Board Member of this project from 2006-2008 has proven to me what can be achieved when people from a diversity of communities work together towards a common goal.

(www.elizemorkel.co.za)

The Trondheim staff group returned to South Africa in October 2009 to attend a Narrative Therapy Conference. They spent a day at Butterfly House where they met the new staff and children who are being cared for in the youth and early childhood day care programmes.

On 22 July 2011 the world was shocked to receive the news of the bomb that killed eight people in central Oslo and the massacre that followed, in which 76 young people were killed on the island of Utøya. At Drakenstein Palliative Hospice there was a strong sense that it was now our turn to show our love, compassion and solidarity to our friends in Norway. Elizabeth Scrimgeour organised a silent march the following Friday for all the staff and the children at Butterfly House. I was asked to give a

short speech[96]. I was surprised at how the children joined in the spirit of grief and solidarity as we silently marched through the muddy streets of Fairyland, the informal settlement. I found great solace in this embodied act of solidarity and love towards our Norwegian colleagues and beneficiaries. Photos and a You-tube video clip of the march were sent to Norway and were received with much gratitude. It was also shared with some of the survivors and families of victims who were counselled by our colleagues in Norway[97].

Discussion:

My participation with the Drakenstein Palliative Hospice is in the role of an 'outsider' support person, like I had been with Yvonne's community work: I make my professional skills and networks available to workers. Although my embodied participation is mainly with the staff and board of Butterfly House, I have expanded it by visiting patients in the community to ensure a greater awareness of the context and challenges of the work. My life as a white middle-class woman has been changed through compassionate witnessing of black people living in shacks with life-threatening illness. I can no longer 'other' them by ignoring them: I now know their names and carry their stories in my heart. Ackermann (2006: 224) points out that not all stories of those living with HIV/AIDS are stories of silence, stigma and death: there are also many stories of endurance under difficult circumstances. The kind of endurance that is vital in the cultivation of hope in hopeless situations means 'bearing suffering with fortitude, courage and tenacity *without giving way to it*' (Ackermann 2006: 224). Mere existence would be living in conditions where people are robbed of autonomy and where the daily struggle to deal with stigma, shame, deteriorating bodily functions, discomfort, pain and fear is overwhelming. In contrast to mere existence, tenacious endurance reflects a life lived 'with determination, courage, the rejection of stigma, and the insistence that life can have meaning, [where] many South Africans are creating fragile, temporary pockets of human endurance' (Ackermann 2006: 225). I would like to emphasize that this has been my overwhelming experience in my participation with the Drakenstein Palliative Hospice, as reflected in my letter to the staff. I retold the story told by Mariaan of the love, care and joy of the family of the two and a half year old boy when he visited his home. I recorded Mariaan's story of how the community of Simondium took turns to care for one of her patients and how she notices the pride and dignity with which some of the people in poor communities live in their homes. The letters contain and safeguard the stories of endurance, courage and exceptional care so that they can strengthen us all during times of hardship. They also give voice and serve as testimony of the work to others, for instance when I read the letter at the AGM of Drakenstein Palliative Hospice.

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[96] Appendix J contains the words that I sent to Norway. These words were spoken in plain Afrikaans and translated into isiXhosa before the march so that even the youngest of the children could understand why we were doing the march.
[97] Appendix J also contains the words from Anne Stolberg, a colleague from Stavanger, Norway who has been involved in counselling survivors and families of victims, about the effect the video of the march had on them.

In my support of the Hospice staff I strive to assist them in finding their own voices for the trauma that they sometimes experience, but also for the values that guide them in their work. Our work on the Caring Practices[98] serves as example. The interrelatedness of my teaching and community work becomes evident when I look at how many of the characteristics of a participatory praxis have been integrated: through staff members who have been my students, my teaching at the Hospice over the years and the way in which I witness the work. Many of these practices appear on the list of Caring Practices and in the letters about their work. Amongst these are the staff's commitment to work sensitively with 'the other' as represented by religious, language, cultural and class diversity. Teamwork is valued - amongst the staff, and also the exceptional networking that they do with volunteers, home based care workers and medical professionals. The Caring Practices express sensitivity to the tension of working within a country of stark contrasts between rich (mainly white) and poor (mainly black). They voice outrage at the gender injustice in response to the humiliation of the woman with AIDS who is rejected by her husband while he brings his first wife into the home that she has made. I also notice the care that they take in acknowledging one another during the meetings. They express their appreciation about Dr Grobbelaar's care - who takes them for coffee - and the volunteer who lies awake on a stormy night because she worries about the patients in the shacks.

When I reminded the Norwegian group that poverty and illness is a global responsibility I had the interrelatedness of our lives in mind:

> Africa matters, I suggested, because in the global village you *are* your neighbour's keeper. Because if you are not, if you ignore your neighbour's plight as you grow wealthier and he sinks ever deeper into poverty and despair, he may pollute your property, his family may contract diseases that infect yours, he may burgle your home, he may try to invade and occupy it, and in his resentment at your indifference he may even throw a bomb at it.

(Allister Sparks 2003: xi)

The Norwegian group's response provides a good example of how people can live with knowledge of and information about HIV/AIDS, but without real *awareness* of the pandemic. Such *awareness* comes when they witnessed it embodied in the community and started to understand the interrelatedness of this illness with poverty, racial injustice and gender oppression. It is clear from the Norwegians' feedback that they were moved into an aware witness position. As empowered witnesses they talked publicly about their experiences in voices that moved others to awareness and response. Ivar Koteng's embodied response was from the aware/empowered quadrant. His many visits and the way

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[98] Appendix G.

he sent his staff and family members to come and help with the building speak of empowered responses beyond the disembodied donating of money.

On the last day of the workshop Anthony Hawke read out a letter. Addressed to me, a white, Afrikaner woman (part of the oppressors), the letter told of how I had become the unlikely link to bring him, a white, English South African man who lived in political exile (oppressed), back to his country after liberation. He spoke about the healing that he found through our relationship and how our shared commitment to justice based on our strong Christian beliefs formed the bond between us. The singing of the South African National Anthem was a reflection of the thoughtful and careful preparation with which the Trondheim group came and their willingness to give of themselves in order to participate with us. The joining of hands, the mutuality in care and the interrelatedness of all of our lives remains the strongest theme of my participation at Drakenstein Palliative Hospice. My interaction with a diverse group of professional staff members and the (predominantly African and coloured) home-based care workers supported the transformation that happens when people join hands across race and class barriers to work together for a common cause. I experienced this with the staff, volunteers, board members of Butterfly House, patients, Norwegian colleagues and Ivar Koteng's people. Not only am I changed through my participation, but so also are the Norwegians when they testify to the effect of the visit on their lives and work. By acknowledging our interrelatedness and interdependence we are able to participate in supporting South Africans to create 'pockets of human endurance' despite poverty and illness.

The church as the Body of Christ is the church with AIDS (Ackermann 2006: 236). My participation as a Christian in the care for people living with HIV/AIDS implies the participation of the church. Referring to the parable of the Good Samaritan, Ackermann (2006: 237) asks what it could mean for all its members if the Body of Christ were to be moved to compassion toward those affected by the pandemic. Nadar (2007: 238-239) calls for a shift in our theology from mere 'cognizance of' context to 'commitment to' context, warning that 'we do not know how to *do* theology, because doing requires that we go beyond being aware *of* to being committed *to*, our context.' A truly ethical understanding and adequate theology of HIV/AIDS implies the necessity of making the linkage between HIV/AIDS, social injustice and gender injustice (Nadar 2007: 239)., My participation at Drakenstein Palliative Hospice thus is motivated by compassion, but also by a commitment to *do* church in ways that will serve justice, reconciliation and restitution.

4.5 Conclusion

The web of our interrelatedness, interdependence and the mutuality of our lives is the central focus of this chapter. The theme of the networking of care is central in the three contexts of my participation: Yvonne in the Villiersdorp community, the Strand Muslim community and the Drakenstein Hospice. I joined hands with Yvonne through our therapeutic relationship not only in enabling her care, but also in identifying and supporting the values that informed her care with the farm workers of Villiersdorp. Yvonne's ministry has developed into a network that crosses many boundaries: workers, farmers, a white English speaking congregation, the DRC congregations of Villiersdorp and Brackenfell and many other collaborators have joined hands. My work as a therapist at the Strand Muslim Primary School involved networking with Bridget Hamley-Wise, a school psychologist, the principal Mr Fanie, the staff, communities of care for the children and David Epston as consultant. At the Heritage Day Celebrations and Bridge-Building function we faced the past together with the wider Muslim community and involved more white people from my own church and professional communities. At the Drakenstein Hospice I networked with my students, the staff, the patients, volunteers, the Hospice Board, the Butterfly House Board, my colleagues and Ivar Koteng, the donor from Trondheim, Norway.

In this chapter I have also shown how my different 'roles' are interrelated when I do pastoral participation. As I have pointed out, I supported Yvonne in her work in the community in my capacity as her therapist, but it is my experience as a worker in the Strand Muslim community that has enabled me to join Yvonne as a compassionate witness in her community work. My participation in her community provided opportunities to experience my church in ways that would otherwise not be possible - a valuable experience in terms of my leadership work in the DRC. It is my work as a therapist that takes me to the Strand Muslim community. Soon I am involved as a community participant and am able to connect members from my own faith community to the work. I get involved at the Drakenstein Hospice as a teacher, then as a staff support person with therapeutic skills and then - as teacher - I connect the Hospice with the Norwegians. When I participate as a Board member of Butterfly House I am in the role of volunteer to a community project.

The interrelatedness of personal, political and professional is expressed when I allowed my experiences - as a child who grew up on an apple farm - to inform the motivation (restitution) and compassion with which I participated with Yvonne in the Villiersdorp community. I encouraged Yvonne to use her own childhood experiences of abuse and violation to assist her in her work with oppressed groups. Similarly, I allowed my childhood experiences to assist me in understanding the blindness with which white Afrikaners witnessed the injustices of apartheid – the stories of the Strand Muslim

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community assist me in this. By taking responsibility and asking for forgiveness I allowed for personal healing to become part of political awareness and professional participation. My professional involvement with the Drakenstein Hospice is a way in which I, a benefactor of apartheid, '*do sorry*' and make restitution for the ways in which apartheid impoverished black South Africans and contributed to their vulnerability to HIV/AIDS.

The Narrative practices that I have engaged in to express the characteristics of a participatory pastoral praxis are interrelated, despite the diversity of the contexts of my participation. The Narrative practices of storytelling, finding audiences, witnessing, re-membering, deconstruction of dominant discourses and letter-writing form part of the work in all three contexts. I have illustrated how Narrative Therapy assisted in de-centring the therapist/community worker by utilizing the networks available and honouring as valid and useful the knowledges, experiences and cultural and religious understandings of participants. Agency is supported through the focus on the hopeful aspects of people lives and communities.

In terms of our response to seeing and hearing those who suffer, Smit (2003: 64) reminds us that in Matthew 25 Jesus did not ask who cured the ill or released the prisoners, but who *visited* them. Thus the big challenge for us seems to be to practise compassion on a relational level:

> [W]e are not challenged, in the first place, to solve the problems of the suffering and the poor. We are challenged to relate to the many faces we see all around us, to recognize that we are related to them, part of them, part of the suffering. We are implicated in so many ways in the stories of their suffering, that our stories are integrally part of their stories, yes, that the story of Jesus Christ, of the church, of our faith, of our identity and our integrity is all part of the story, even and especially when we fail to see.
>
> (Smit 2003: 65)

In Chapter Five I will describe my participation in raising awareness about the 'faces', injustices and suffering that we often 'fail to see'.

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Chapter Five

Prophetic pastoral participation: Raising awareness to unjust social norms and practices

The 'Good Samaritan' model of picking up individuals when they are down may provide a sense of power, goodness, and satisfaction for pastors involved in this work, but doing something about the robbers on the road from Jerusalem to Jericho might be of greater long-term benefit to more people!

(Pattison 1994: 217)

Our struggle today does not mean that we will necessarily achieve change but, without our struggle today, perhaps future generations would have to struggle so much more. History does not finish with us, it goes beyond.

(Paulo Freire in Denborough 2008: xi)

5.1. Raising awareness to unjust social norms and practices

In this chapter I will focus on Moessner's (1996:7) third application of Miller-McLemore's 'human web' metaphor: namely, that pastoral care is not just concerned about the victims who are entangled in the web or about their support systems as webs of care, but also with those who spin the patterns of the web that entangle others. The latter refers to those people whose voices are privileged in the formation of truth discourses in our culture and who hold positions of power in structures that are often exclusive, marginalizing and oppressive of certain members of society. It might not be enough to care for individuals like the Good Samaritan did: we are also called to do something 'about the robbers on the road from Jerusalem to Jericho' (Pattison 1994:11). This kind of 'socio-political aware and committed pastoral care' might be of longer term benefit to more people.

In Chapter One I described the devastating effects which living as an unaware witness to the effects of apartheid and an unaware victim of the violations of patriarchy had had on my own life. The grid developed by Kaethe Weingarten assisted me in understanding how becoming an aware and empowered witness is beneficial and essential to me not only as an individual and a therapist, but also in enabling me to become involved in contributing towards social transformation:

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> A key to the transformation of violence in everyday life resides in how we witness it. In some instances awareness may be all we can offer…awareness builds the platform for future action.

> (Weingarten 2003:34)

Awareness seems to be the key to transformation. Both Weingarten (2003: 34) and Ackermann (1996a: 49) suggest that the temptation for most of us is to remain unaware. 'We do not know because we choose not to know', writes Ackermann, citing Adrienne Rich's words which remind us that we 'are born both innocent and accountable':

> Accountability requires awareness. The well-known Jesuit spiritual guide Anthony de Mello describes the spiritual quality of awareness as 'waking up'. In other words, it is the opposite of apathy, the opposite of being uncaring and uninvolved with one's neighbour, being out of relationship.
>
> (Ackermann 1996a: 50-51)

This 'waking up' implies that to truly be able to 'hear' truth we have to be willing and able to unlearn almost everything that we think we know. According to Ackermann (1996: 51), De Mello points out that we are not really afraid of the unknown: what we fear is the loss of the known. I agree with Ackermann that apartheid rested on the fear of white people that we would lose the known. She calls this a condition of 'utmost spiritual apathy and lack of awareness.' She points out that patriarchy as a system of male dominance rests on fear of loss and also results in uncaring and unaware attitudes:

> Awareness about the pervasive evil of race oppression is essential to the healing of our country. So is the recognition of and repentance for the evil of gender oppression. Waking up to the 'truth' cannot be restricted to a single self-selected arena of our lives.
>
> (Ackermann 1996a:51)

Ackermann (1996a: 49) takes us back to the idea of relationship as the opposite of apathy and powerlessness. She explains that it is only once we understand that our lives are made up of many and diverse relationships that are mutual that we become accountable to one another. It is within this web of relationships that we find how we are accountable to one another for 'whatever we do which breaks, damages, or, on the other hand, which nurtures or restores relationships.'

In addition to my practice as psychologist and my involvement, since 1999, in community practice there are two other contexts in which I participate regularly. Both contexts are very influential in the formulation of truth discourses where relationships of power are significant. For the past number of years I have had considerable influence within my profession - amongst colleagues where I offer

Narrative Therapy training - and within the Dutch Reformed Church where I actively participate in leadership. Although these are two very different contexts involving very different communities of people, my participation in both these contexts has been actively committed to the raising of awareness to the socio-political complexities of post-apartheid South Africa. I will discuss my participation in my profession through my Narrative Therapy training practice first and then move on to my participation within the Dutch Reformed Church.

5.2. Professional participation and raised awareness

I will start by relating two stories about the way in which **relationships with black colleagues** served to **raise my personal awareness** about social injustices. These are:

- My **first encounter with an African colleague** and supervisor during my internship;
- Working with **coloured colleagues on a conference organizing committee.**

I will then examine **my empowered response** to this awareness by discussing my attempts at raising awareness to injustices of race, gender and class through my Narrative Therapy training work. I will organize this discussion to include the following:

- The **Other-wise initiative** that describes my conscious effort to include a diversity of people in the training activities that I offer;
- A **case example from one of the workshops** which illustrates how working with cultural discourses within a diverse group supports the raising of awareness;
- The **values and commitments** which support the raising of awareness and transformative praxis within the workshops as described by colleagues in feedback forms.

5.2.1 Black colleagues raise my awareness

My 'waking up to the "truth"' happened through opportunities to form close relationships with black and coloured colleagues within the fields of psychology and family therapy. As explained earlier, up to the age of thirty my relationships with black people were highly unequal in terms of power. Ericson (2001: 108) refers to Allport who pointed out that although it is important to cross the divide and make contact with 'the other' in order to break down stereotypes and learn about each other's experiences, it is not enough simply to bring people together. Rather, 'these encounters must be designed in such a way that the participants have equal status and need to work together in the pursuit of common goals.' In

my movement towards greater awareness there are two such encounters with colleagues that stand out as highly significant:

- **First encounter with a African colleague and supervisor during internship:**

In 1988, after working as a counselling psychologist in schools[99] for children with special needs, I completed an internship in clinical psychology. My first placement was in a ward for black psychotic patients at the racially segregated Valkenberg Psychiatric Hospital[100]. My initiation into psychiatry and severe mental illness also involved my first encounter with black patients who spoke African languages and the sub-standard medical care they received. My 'life-saver' in this environment of culture shock was my Xhosa supervisor, Nomhle Msengana. At that time one of only a few black psychologists in South Africa,[101] Nomhle was a brilliant supervisor and a valued team member in the wards. We became good friends as we laughed together, shared our Christian beliefs and our experiences as women. I experienced what Ramphele (2008: 79) so aptly describes:

> …many white people have little experience of black people as fellow humans with the same capacity for joy and pain. Their experience of black people has often been limited to contact with them as menial workers. Encountering black people as authority figures is novel and disconcerting to some.

Over time Nohmle shared some of the pain, fears and frustrations involved in being a black person in South Africa. She told me about their arrival at the airport in South Africa after having lived in England in freedom and equality for a number of years while her husband completed a PhD. Apartheid South Africa hit her right in the face in the airport arrival hall: at Customs she was confronted by the two separate queues for 'black' and 'white' people. She moved towards the 'black' queue, but her husband - refusing to give in to the oppression of apartheid laws - guided her with a firm hand towards the 'white' queue. She described her fear of the police guards with their fire arms as she expected one of them to shoot or arrest them and their children there and then. As I listened I knew that I could never imagine receiving such a welcome to my country of birth! Nomhle loved working in England where she was free to choose where she wanted to work, while here she was frustrated about being trapped on the 'black side' of Valkenberg[102]. This experience at Valkenberg and my relationship with Nomhle forced me to become aware of South African realities that I have never considered before.

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[99] All government schools were racially segregated during apartheid, so my contact at work was restricted to white children, their families and white professional colleagues exclusively.

[100] The 'black side' – for psychotic and forensic patients - was literally in dilapidated buildings on the opposite side of the river linked with a bridge to the well-kept 'white side', with various specialized wards for white patients.

[101] At the beginning of the 1990s blacks constituted a mere eight percent of all registered psychologists in this country (Balwin-Ragaven, de Gruchy and London in Duncan 2001: 126).

[102] Magwaza (2001: 39) refers to the sub-standard hospitals where black interns and psychologists often had to work during the apartheid years.

- **Working on a conference organizing committee with coloured colleagues:**

I opened a private practice in Somerset West after the internship, and I settled back into the comfort of a predominantly white community[103]. In 1999 and 2000 I served on the organizing committee for a national family therapy conference which included colleagues of colour for the first time in the history of SAAMFT[104]. Although my relationship with Nomhle had moved me somewhat from essential racism - where I believed that black people were inferior -(Frankenberg, 1993:139), I was nonetheless still very much trapped in a position of colour and power evasion - where I believed that 'colour-blindness' was the answer for participation in a post-apartheid society (Frankenberg 1993:139). The challenges of working with three coloured colleagues - Ferial Johnston, who is Muslim and a psychologist, Mita Solomons, a social worker and Judy Persens, a school principal at the time – took me by surprise. Racial tension came to a head when Mita's leadership was questioned by the white committee members. The team struggled to make deadlines with the completion of tasks and soon 'competence' was interpreted along racial lines. Ferial addressed the schism that divided the 'white' from the 'coloured' committee members. Slowly, and with the help of Ferial, Mita and Judy, I started to see that racism is a significant factor shaping contemporary South African society and that it affects the way we relate to one another. As we started voicing our experiences while we worked together we managed 'emancipatory conversations':

> Emancipatory conversations are the fruit of work together, the result of alternations in relationships between groups. In work we create as much as we affirm the rational principle of shared humanity. We share our humanity in work and then can move to the conversations that explore the nature of this humanity and political imperatives it entails.

(Welch 1990: 136)

Ferial, Mita and Judy, by sharing personal stories of their experiences in apartheid South Africa, allowed me to share in their tears and pain over injustices of forced removals, racial and gender discrimination in the workplace, the trauma of working in communities of extreme poverty, violence and crime and the structural violence of racism that they had been subjected to throughout their lives. As they witnessed my pain and tears at the growing awareness of my own 'innocence' and 'accountability', we shared in a process of 'mutual transformation':

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[103] Stevens (2001: 52) points to the polarised and 'racialised' patterns in psychological service delivery that have existed in South Africa for many decades so that private practice meant (still does) mainly white clients.
[104] South African Association of Marital and Family Therapists.

> When mutual transformation occurs, there is the power of empathy and compassion, of delight in otherness, and strength in the solidarity of listening to others, bearing together stories of pain and resistance….Listening to the pain of others requires that the oppressor acknowledge his or her own pain, no longer accepting it as a necessary cost of a civilized social order, but evaluating against its necessity and its implications for a cultural and political system.

(Welch 1990:135)

In an attempt to enhance our awareness of different contexts we decided to take turns to meet at the homes and workplaces of the various committee members. This catapulted me far out of my comfort zone. I remember my fear when driving into Elsiesriver, a place notorious for gang violence and crime, to find Mita's office at a place of safety for young people. Opportunities for embodied participation and connection across racial, class, religious and cultural divides happened while we met one another's families, shared meals, visited restaurants, shared bedrooms and spoke in the intimate spaces of our cars. Our relationship made it possible for Ferial and I to transcend 'the schism': in her comment at the feedback session after the conference she told me that to her I am no longer 'white'. We both experienced 'delight in the complexity that emerges' when 'genuine conversation occurs as one finds joy in listening to others and even as previous and present worlds of meaning are challenged' (Welch 1990: 135).

Over the years my relationship with black colleagues contributed significantly to 'race-cognizance':

> Race cognizance articulates explicitly the contradiction that racism represents: on the one hand, it acknowledges the existence of racial inequality and white privilege and, on the other, does not lean on ontological or essential difference in order to justify inequality or explain it away.

(Frankenberg 1993:160)

5.2.2 Empowered response: Using Narrative Therapy training praxis to raise awareness

In the mid-1990s I made a commitment to do what Magwaza (2001:43) urges South African psychologists to do, namely to 'actively endeavour to serve, without prejudice, the needs of all communities in this country.' There are many obstacles that face psychologists if we want to serve all communities. First, psychology is still largely practised by white professionals in the context of private practices to which only middle-class people have access (Stevens 2001:51). This skewed racial representation within the profession, and a national economy which is organized along racial lines as described in Chapter Three, implies that white therapists would have to be motivated to do voluntary work in black communities to redress the imbalance. Second, this implies trans-cultural work for which white South Africans, who live in privilege and 'apart', are ill-prepared. Third, as Stevens (2001: 48) observes: 'For all the rhetoric about training clinicians who can relevantly meet the needs of the

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majority of blacks in South Africa, clinical training has remained largely westernized and mainstream.' He points out what I have experienced so painfully: 'Mainstream interventions are often inappropriate in low-income settings where psychological distress is frequently related to structural issues such as poverty, unemployment etc' (Stevens 2001: 53).

Narrative Therapy provided me the theoretical framework and skills that I needed when I started to offer services beyond the boundaries of my (predominantly white) middle-class private practice. My determination to encourage colleagues to work in impoverished communities led to the establishment of my Narrative Therapy training practice in which more than thousand people have participated since 1999.

The Other-wise Initiative[105]

My personal experience of raised awareness through my relationships with colleagues from other racial, cultural and religious groups served as strong motivation for seeking ways to ensure that my training activities would be as inclusive of a diversity of people as possible:

> Pastoral counselors who practice out of a feminist, multicultural, multiple-analysis context need to research multicultural perspectives, seek out colleagues and consultants with different racial, class and sexual orientation experience than her or his own, and explore her or his own internalized and external contexts of privilege and disenfranchisement. They need to explore how they respond to their own experiences of privilege in the culture, knowing that they are probably in categories that make them both oppressed and oppressor in the variety of situations in which they live.

(Neuger 1996:101)

My experience in the field of Family Therapy since the mid-eighties has exposed me to inter-disciplinary participation with psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, clergy and community workers. Stevens (2001:57) also emphases 'the need to transcend the strict boundaries, parameters and growing insularity of the discipline when considering mental health training and service provision for all in South Africa.' All the training activities that I offer are open to people from the different professions. This serves to deconstruct hierarchies that exist amongst and within the various professions and sets the stage for conversations about power, discourse and difference.

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[105] See Appendix K for description of the Other-wise Initiative as it appears on my website (Morkel 2011).

Through the Other-wise initiative[106] I offer sponsorship to black colleagues and colleagues working within disadvantaged communities to encourage their participation. My motivation for this is threefold. First, by including their voices and experiences I raise awareness about structural injustices. Diversity amongst participants assists in the accountable challenging of pro-racist ideology and enhances racial sensitivity (Hardy & Lazloffy 2008; Hardy & McGoldrick 2008).

Second, I want to do restitution for the ways in which I was a beneficiary of apartheid. My people (the Afrikaners) and my church (DRC) supported apartheid; and my profession (Psychology) 'has mirrored salient discriminatory and oppressive processes associated with "race", class and gender divides' (Suffla, Stevens & Seedat 2001:28). As white South Africans, we need a white leader to say to us:

> Hey, fellow whites, wake up! You may indeed have lost political power, if you mean exclusive political control, but you have a heck of a lot of power still at your disposal. You have the bulk of economic power; you have lost little of your money; you have not been kicked out of your beautiful homes; you do not live in shacks. You have great power deriving from the superior education you received, which was a great deal better than that of blacks. You can embrace the new dispensation enthusiastically and make available your considerable skills, your resources, your money to make this thing work.

> (Tutu 1999:232)

Furthermore I am compelled to acknowledge and do restitution for my complicity in a profession where:

> Psychologists utilized their expert voice to invent primitive blacks, depicting them as inferior 'other' who needed to be 'civilized' and acculturated in the interests of industrial capital and segregationist ideology. Simultaneously, psychologists submitted rationalizations to reinforce efforts aimed at preserving white political and economic hegemony, and resisting perceived social threats from the black population.

> (Suffla, Stevens & Seedat 2001:30)

Third, I hope to redress some of the imbalances which discriminatory practices (such as those arising from an inferior education system) have had on my black colleagues. Colleagues who trained during the apartheid years were prohibited from accessing knowledge and training from the well-resourced mainstream white South African universities and often had to attend substandard programmes

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[106] I use 'Other-wise' as one would use the idea of 'money-wise' or 'street-wise', that is, acknowledging the wisdom of 'the other'. I also use it like the expression: "Why are you so *otherwise* all of a sudden? Don't be so *otherwise*." As we grow in other-wisdom we also become other to what we have previously been within our own group. This puts pressure on us to be less otherwise. Other-wisdom comes at a price, but once you have become other-wise or aware you cannot become unaware again.

(Magwaza 2001: 39). Stevens (2001: 52-53) writes about the dilemmas that face black psychologists when they enter the profession, 'a domain that has historically been occupied by whites' and 'where racist stereotypes pertaining the competence of black practitioners compared with white practitioners still prevail.' There is the tendency for the polarized and 'racialised' patterns of service delivery to continue. The networking that takes place between black and white colleagues in the training activities can assist to break these patterns so that more referring and cooperation becomes possible.

I struggled to formulate the invitation to participate in the Other-wise Initiative in ways that would not be regarded as patronizing. Ferial Johnston assisted me to explain my motive to do restitution in the letter of invitation:

> *As you know I have made a commitment to contribute to the transformation of post-apartheid South African society by participating in ways that might add to the redressing of the imbalance of power and privilege from which I have benefited in so many ways. One of the ways in which I hope to 'do sorry' for the injustices of the past is through my training practice. I strive to be inclusive by keeping fees as low as possible and by offering sponsorships to participants who were part of oppressed groups in South Africa in the past. I have benefited tremendously from the education that was available to me as a result of my privileged position and I would like to give something back to others who have not yet shared in those privileges.*

A colleague who had received such an invitation told me recently how much it means to her when the past injustices are spoken about openly and when white people are prepared to do something to redress the imbalance of power.

Case example from a one week intensive workshop[107]

When I decided on selection criteria for this chapter, I once again focused on my research question: **'How does a participatory pastoral praxis contribute to social transformation in a post-apartheid context?'** The following selection criteria guided me:

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[107] I obtained the permission of participants to use this material in research shortly after the workshop when we met to reflect on our experiences of this workshop. The whole workshop was treated as action research where we all participated in the reflections and learning. The three participants mentioned in the research have signed consent forms for the use of the text regarding their participation them in this dissertation.

The **'how'** of the participatory praxis that contributes to the raising of awareness should be the central focus. In the training work it is based upon four main factors:

- The *diversity* within the groups of participants[108]
- The *philosophical* and theoretical underpinnings of Narrative Therapy[109]
- The teaching process through using *exercises* to explore ideas and practise skills
- The *values* that inform and *practices* that form part of the training that I offer

In the case example that follows I will focus on the first three factors mentioned above. This will be followed by a separate discussion of the last factor, namely the values that inform the teaching praxis.

Awareness raising should focus on at least one of the three **most prominent social problems** of a post-apartheid South Africa. If the psychology profession wants to contribute to the healing of the wider society then our racist apartheid past is definitely an important area in need of healing and raised awareness. The limitations of this research document unfortunately do not allow me to use case examples from other training activities. Suffice it to say that in the community workshops I focus on teaching skills and raising awareness for work in contexts of poverty while the couple therapy workshops offer opportunity to address the influence of patriarchy on gender relations and the experiences of same sex couples.

The case example is taken from a One Week Intensive Narrative Therapy workshop, a training activity where the number[110] of participants is limited: this provides optimal opportunity for development of trust. This specific workshop took place in 2003 while I was researching my practice so I took careful notes during the workshop.

Data collecting strategies used:

I have used my process notes taken during the workshop and the written feedback which I requested from participants. I scheduled a follow-up session with six of the participants three months after the workshop to reflect on their experiences in more detail. I made an audio-tape of our discussion which I transcribed. These documents (my notes, the written feedback and the transcription of the feedback-discussion) will be referred to in this case example.

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[108] The Other-wise initiative is important in organizing this.
[109] As described in Chapter Two.
[110] The usual limit is fifteen participants, but this workshop was attended by ten participants.

In the workshop I used an exercise proposed by McKenzie and Monk (1997:93) to introduce participants to the language of discourse, positioning, deconstruction and reconstruction. As background to the exercise they explain:

> The term *discourse*, which refers to a cluster of ideas produced within the wider culture, is a useful backdrop to the understanding and application of narrative ideas….Discourses underlie the operation of power in the counselling relationship. They place people in particular positions or relationships with others and themselves and prompt them to describe the world from particular vantage points.

Participants used the covers of well-known magazines and focus on the pictures and words to discuss what might have been taken-for-granted in the constructions of these covers. It made for lively discussion in the group. I then followed up this exercise with a more *personal reflection*. Following Morgan's (2000:9) suggestion that 'the context of gender, class, race, culture and sexual preference are powerful contributors to the interpretations and meanings that we give to life-events', I asked each participant to take their time to reflect and write about the following:

Think about how cultural discourses or stereotypes impact your lives and list these discourses, thinking about the following areas of your lives e g family, gender, race, excellence, religion and occupation.

I told the participants to do this as a private reflection which they did not need to share with the group. When I asked for comments about the learning that emerged, the sharing in this group was very personal, as often happens.

Steven, a coloured man who is a psychologist and an ordained Anglican priest, spoke very openly about the apartheid past and living in South Africa as a coloured person. He mentioned the stereotyping of coloured people and referred to the idiom that appears in the Afrikaans dictionary: 'So dronk soos 'n kleurlingonderwyser' (As drunk as a coloured teacher). Many of us were shocked when we heard this idiom. I had to fetch a dictionary so that we could check it. Indeed, it is right there! Steven explained that coloured people had to work 'exceptionally hard' to prove themselves. Even as professional people they had had limited career options - such as becoming teachers, policemen and nurses - and could hardly ever aspire to be pianists, pilots or lawyers.

Moses, a Xhosa man and psychology student at the time, talked about the racism and violence that he - as a black child and adult - was subjected to at the hands of coloured people in the Karoo town where he grew up. In his feedback letter to me after the workshop Moses refers to his experience during this exercise:

As much as a talkative person, I am very reluctant and uncomfortable to reveal myself in front of 'strangers'. For the very first time in my life, I shared a part of me in the workshop which I've never shared with anyone before for example my upbringing, my hardworking mother who lacks parental skills, the humiliation that I was subjected to being called a 'Bobejaan, dom jaan, 'n donkey, kaffer' even by my community and my family members as well. I am just curious to know which magic potion you have given me, to have courage to reveal myself this much.

Being called by names and intellectually undermined has created a self-doubt and self-pity within me, which resulted in isolation. This nearly hindered me from developing and growing. But Elize you know, taking time thinking about the stereotypes that I have subjected myself into, has helped me a great deal. Through deconstruction, the cloud in front of my eyes has been lifted up. I am now divorcing self-pity and self-doubt that have been part of my life for a long time. I intend to confront life head-on and deal with challenges as they come.

Steven, Sandra - a white Afrikaner woman who was a psychology student at that time - and I mentioned at various different stages how our encounter with Moses' story raised our awareness to the nature and effect of racism. Some of the white participants said that they had never realised that African people suffered from the racist attitudes of coloured people.

At the closing of the workshop Sandra said that she has always been an 'open person with a heart for all people irrespective of race, culture or religion', but that during the workshop she became aware of many discourses that she had not previously thought about. She also realised that she had not actively contributed to getting different groups in her community to interact more closely. She described her heightened awareness as follows:

I have thought long and hard about the stories of Steven and Moses. It changed something in my heart which is difficult to name. I catch myself looking at black and coloured people and wondering what their stories are. I find it to be a very positive experience!

In his letter to the group Moses reflected on Sandra's comment about white people who are Christians, but who often have problems in reaching out to others. Moses expressed the wish that we as South Africans would just take a few minutes to listen to one another and share our experiences with one another.

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Discussion:

Kenneth Hardy (Wyatt 2008:7) makes the following claim:

> There's a wilderness of creative space in the therapeutic dialogue for the recognition of race and class, how they inform who we are, decisions we make and decisions we fail to make. Because there's no aspect of our lives that aren't, I believe, shaped by the nuances of all these issues – race, class, gender, all of those things.

One of the aims of the exercise was to assist workshop participants to reflect on how cultural discourses have affected their own lives. Bernard and Goodyear (1992: 207) agree that self-awareness is important before we can attempt to understand a person from another culture.

Steven, a coloured professional person, used the Afrikaans idiom that stereotypes coloured teachers as drunks to illustrate the enormous pressure on coloured people to resist this stereotype by working exceptionally hard to prove themselves. They have to prove the stereotype wrong – not all coloured people or teachers are drunks *or* have been taught by drunken teachers *or* will be unsuccessful because of possible inferior education received etc. He reminded the group about the effect of structural injustices that limited coloured people's career options under apartheid. Ryland Fisher (2007:2), another coloured man who grew up under apartheid, has corroborated the implications of historical oppressive structures: 'I could not become a pilot, which was my ambition in life, because only white people could become pilots. People like me could become preachers or teachers, or maybe accountants.' By talking about our experiences we are no longer in a space of 'we are all psychologists or counsellors therefore we are all the same.' Bernard and Goodyear (1992:195) say that the complexity of appreciating difference and sameness is that each is a partial truth. They refer to Smith who pointed to the 'myth of sameness' as 'the error of most helping professionals who were convinced that their skills were generic and could be applied to individuals of varying backgrounds.'

Sandra seemed to have entered the workshop believing in the equality of all people and had accepted the position of her group (white Afrikaners) in society without speculation. This position is often related to cross-cultural unawareness (Christensen in Bernard & Goodyear 1992: 206). At the end of the workshop Sandra commented that since hearing about Moses and Steven's experiences, she looks at African and coloured people and wonders about their stories. Christensen (in Bernard & Goodyear 1992:206) explains that the transition to 'beginning awareness' is often made possible through a meaningful personal relationship and opportunities to learn about a dissimilar group. Lartey (1997:11)

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quotes Augsburger who emphasises that one needs 'encounter, contact and interaction' to become culturally aware.

Moses explained that his experience of telling the story of the trauma of being verbally abused as a child within his community and family had had a liberating effect on his life (Herman 2010:70). In his letter after the workshop Moses placed his childhood experience in a contextual framework of a mother who lacked parental skills and a family and community where people used words to injure. Ramphele (2008:79) refers to the hierarchies of privilege within township communities that led to envy and superiority complexes where coloureds looked down on Africans as the members of the lowest socio-economic rung. The contextualization opened up for Moses the possibility for personal agency, as reflected in the language that he used when he said he 'subjected himself' to these stereotypes and that this led to isolation and the development of self-doubt and self-pity. White (2007:267) explains that:

> …ideas about dysfunction and psychopathology obscure the complexities associated with human action, many of which arise from the actual contexts of people's lives. For example, many people find that avenues for the expression of personal agency and responsible action are very limited because they are subject to 'traditional power relations' that are institutionalized in local culture. These include the power relations of disadvantage, of race, of gender, of heterosexism, of culture, of ethnicity, and more.

By giving people the opportunity to recognize the power relations as a context of their negative experiences and conclusions about identity they can move to greater personal agency (White 2007: 267). Moses used externalizing language to objectify 'self-pity' and 'self-doubt'. He challenged the dominant discourses that overwhelmed him in the past and 'options for successful problem resolution suddenly [became] visible and accessible' (White 2007: 9). After having evaluated the effects of the abuse – the self-pity and self-doubt – as unwanted to his life, he declared a purpose for his life in which he intended to 'divorce' these two 'problems'.

Being heard and joined by Sandra was clearly meaningful to Moses as he mentioned in his letter. Herman (2010: 70) found that the sharing of traumatic experiences with others 'is a precondition for the restitution of a sense of a meaningful world.' She also emphasises that public acknowledgement and a form of community action play an important part to rebuild a sense of order and justice for the person who suffered trauma. Moses expressed the wish that more South Africans would have experiences similar to that of the workshop group.

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Hardy (2008:83) says that therapists have 'an ethical imperative to assume an active role in transforming the human condition both within and beyond the walls of therapy.' He mentions becoming catalytic agents in breaking the silence, recognising the healing potential of dialogues and promoting critical racial introspection as important factors in such an endeavour. In this case example we attended to these three factors with transformative effect for participants.

Values and commitments that support transformative training praxis

In the previous case example Moses wondered about the 'magic potion' he was given 'to have courage to reveal myself this much.*'* It is crucial to create spaces for safe interactions, especially because many black people still feel vulnerable in their interactions with white people, fearing racist responses and innuendo (Ramphele 2008: 82). In their feedback after the Intensive workshop colleagues gave much attention to the personal value of the experience, but assured me that this did not mean that professional development had been neglected. I believe we managed what Hardy (in Wyatt 2008:12) explains about the importance of developing skills and ways to approach diversity and social justice concerns through an emphasis on personal growth and self-awareness:

> It's hard to separate the personal from the professional lives of the therapist, that the process of becoming sensitive begins with how each therapist lives his or her life. Once change occurs on this level, it will be manifested within the therapy process.

Although this outcome is reassuring to know, I wanted to research which *specific values and practices from* my teaching praxis were responsible for creating a context where diversity and social justice could be addressed safely as part of professional training. The **written feedback forms** that colleagues filled in upon completion of the workshops are in safe-keeping. I have their permission to use these in any way that I deem necessary. I have worked through the feedback forms of thirteen One Week Intensive workshops and have summarized[111] these. I will now focus on the feedback pertaining to the raising of awareness to social injustices in the workshops, together with a brief discussion of what I understand to be the values and beliefs that this awareness speaks of.

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[111] Refer to Appendix L for the words of participants as these appeared on the feedback forms.

Stories and memory as part of healing in participating with the other

I agree with Ackermann (1998:91) when she says that the healing that we require in post-apartheid South Africa 'combines both a rigorous accountability to our different communities and histories with a reaching out across differences to "the other", seeking collaboration in the cause of healing, and being prepared to be vulnerable yet actively contributing and concerned citizens.' Since in South Africa we can no longer afford to leave to chance the 'reaching out across differences' and sharing of stories (Tutu 1999: 59), I am therefore committed to 'orchestrate' these experiences whenever I have the opportunity. According to Ackermann (2003: xvi), narrative is the life-blood of the kind of theology concerned with justice and love. Just as the TRC has shown South Africans and the world the benefits of story and memory as part of healing, so some of this healing also happens in the Intensives when people share stories about the past.

The personal is political is professional

When I share personal stories in my training it is a way of acknowledging the life experiences that inform the work that I do and the life that I live (Weingarten1997: xi). Ackermann (2003: xvi) states: 'Being personal means being vulnerable.' My willingness to be vulnerable seems to contribute much to the kind of interactions that become possible in the Intensive workshops. It is the way in which Narrative Therapy constructs relationships so that people can 'transform themselves and their lives in preferred ways within those relationship' (Freedman & Combs 1996:265) that attracts me most to this way of working. As it involves much more than a 'model' or a set of 'techniques', it is therefore good to know that others experience me as living the values that I teach. For me, narrative has become a way of being or, as Gill-Austern (1999: 167) writes about feminist teaching praxis: 'We cannot teach without being what we teach.'

Collaborative training practices

In training contexts I strive to honour the ways in which both Narrative Therapy (White 1997; Freedman & Combs 1996) and feminist pastoral therapists (Graham 1996; Couture 2000) address issues of power within the caring relationship by placing high value on greater equality and collaboration. It is especially important to make sure that all voices are heard, especially those from the margins (Gill-Austern 1999: 165). I am convinced that this commitment contributes to the often surprising depth of sharing and learning that occurs in the Intensive workshops.

Embodied care and hospitality

Right from the first Intensive I wanted to care for participants in embodied ways as I recognised that: 'The power to love one another as much as the power to injure another begins in our bodies. We are our bodies' (Ackermann 1998:87). I realised that working at home in our living room with the fire-place and breaking away into the garden was conducive to the creation of an atmosphere of openness and sharing during the Intensives. It also provided the opportunity to model that I practise the same hospitality and inclusively in my private life that I promote in my training. In our country, where therapists have a very high exposure to trauma, this kind of embodied care is vital to our ability to continue in our work. Sara Moraile, our housekeeper, and Belinda Grove, my office administrator, offer careful assistance to keep things running smoothly during the weeks of the Intensives.

Interdependence and generosity

Colleagues often express surprise at the way in which I share my knowledge, examples of my work, practical tips and metaphors that I have found useful, as well as reading material and references about specific areas of the work. I realize that this is different from the competitiveness and individualism that is so much part of our dominant society. Tutu (1999: 196) reminds me that 'we are made for community, for togetherness, for family, to exist in a delicate network of interdependence' and it is in the honouring of this interdependence that the spirit of generosity is born. The interrelatedness of being a practising therapist and a community worker who brings my experience to the teaching is a very significant feature of my teaching.

Voicing injustices and taking a stand for social transformation

'For healing praxis to be truly restorative, it has to be collaborative and sustained action for justice, reparation and liberation, based on accountability and empowered by love, hope and passion' (Ackermann 1998:83). My commitment to make better the wrongs of the past implies a commitment to justice and the plight of the poor and the marginalized. It involves taking a position for social justice which, at times, creates tension in the teaching context as participants often make racist or sexist comments. These comments provoke such strong negative emotions in me that, at times, they invite me into the unproductive interactions of the 'I am going to tell you' mode which shuts participants up or make the prejudices go underground (Derman-Sparks & Philips 1997:146). I have tremendous struggles with gaining and maintaining self-discipline when my 'buttons get pushed' and have to admit that I have done damage at times when I have lost my cool. My activist stance does not sit well with all

workshop participants and my activist voice has on occasion been likened to the irritable discord of an OMO-washing powder commercial! Gill-Austern (1999: 164) points out that:

> Transformative emancipatory teaching often entails some conflict. New insights and life emerge out of places where initially we may squirm with discomfort. Conflict occurs in the moments when we become aware that something does not fit.

The overwhelming majority of participants appreciate my stance for social justice and, in their feedback, mention my ability to balance 'activist courage and therapeutic tenderness.'

Participating with awareness of gender discourses

Gender discrimination and gender discourses are very relevant when we work with issues of power (Ackermann 2003: 10). Workshop participants often comment about the liberating affect that the deconstruction of gender stereotypes have had on their lives.

It is clear from the summary of colleagues' feedback that the characteristics of the participatory praxis that informs my work as a therapist and a community worker also informs my work as a teacher, not just theoretically or in terms of skills training, but especially in the way that I participate as a teacher. I would like to join Kenneth Hardy (Wyatt 2008: 13) when he reflects on how he teaches therapists in diversity and social justice:

> I always tell therapists that I'm training and in my role as a professor that what we're doing here is training you, teaching you how to be a different kind of human being and if we succeed in that, you're going to be fine as a therapist. And so, it's how you embrace your own sense of humanity. Doing that is the beginning of embracing the humanity of others as a therapist and a person.

5.3 Participation in the DRC and raised awareness

I started this dissertation with my painful personal story of being excluded from ordained ministry as a woman in the patriarchal DRC. I experienced that 'as long as women's activities are carried out for themselves, or serve the church's hospitality needs, or give the church a charitable face vis-à-vis the wider society, they are accepted as non-threatening to the status quo of the patriarchal ethos of the church' (Oduyoye 2009: 31). In the DRC women were (and still are) largely silent: we were/are seen as extensions of our husbands who were/are the ministers and office bearers (Pillay 2003:143). Within the Women's Societies (Vrouediens) the stereotype of the serving – 'unsalaried, cookie-baking, flower-

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arranging' - woman is supported (Landman 2002: 173). I found the denial of my gifts and my narrowly defined 'prescribed role' in church highly frustrating and oppressive, but I dared not question what was so generally accepted as the 'natural order of things.' With my non-stereotypical status – a childless, successful professional woman – I was even more unwelcome (and threatening?) to some of the powerful men in the church (Ericson 2007:51).

When I became aware of the evils of apartheid and the role which the DRC had played in justifying it, I found myself in a congregation where I had very limited influence. I was thus forced to practise in my professional capacity (outside the DRC) the contact, reconciliation and restitution across racial, religious and class barriers that were inspired by my Christian beliefs. Narrative Therapy and feminist theology assisted in raising my awareness about gender oppression. Our contact with 'the other' had changed us so much that Jaco and I became sensitive to the sexist and racist attitudes of fellow-believers. As we became 'other-wise'[112] , we were labelled as over-sensitive and hyper-critical – we no longer fitted in.

Nadar (2006:361) believes that every woman is called to the 'fullness of life' as expressed in John 10:10 and concludes that one could question the spirituality of the church that denies the full humanity of women. Colleagues often confront me with the suggestion: 'If your church discriminates against you, leave it!' But this is not such a simple choice at all. I resonate strongly with Ackermann's (2003: 187) reasons for staying. Firstly, belonging to a church involves membership of a community that is sustaining in many ways. Secondly, the DRC has 'nurtured my encounter with the divine' for generations. It is not easy to walk away from that which has shaped me spiritually, morally and theologically. Thirdly, through my growing awareness of the powerful strand of prophetic, liberating thought within Christian tradition and particularly in the Bible, I have come to understand that God is calling me to counter racist, discriminatory and patriarchal traditions and practices *within* the DRC – right in the midst of where the majority of my people, the white Afrikaners, still worship.

In 2004 we moved our membership to the Helderberg congregation as an empowered response to become more active participants in the DRC. As I have explained above[113], the belief that our gifts would be welcomed and the congregation's strong involvement in the wider community were the motivating factors. In this congregation members are challenged to practise their beliefs in every sphere of their lives. An elder once asked me when I found it most difficult to be a Seven Day Christian. It hit me: "Being a Christian six days a week is easy; it is the *seventh* day when I participate

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[112] There is a slang South African expression that someone is being 'otherwise' when they act outside of the normal expectation of ways that they would normally act – the implication is that they are being 'spoil-sports'.
[113] In Chapter One.

in the church that is by far the most challenging!" As Moore (2002: 106) points out: 'The church is the most difficult aspect of Christianity for most feminists.' I believe that my continued participation in the DRC would not have been possible without the support of 'feminist-inclined men' (Ackermann 2009:270). Two of the ministers[114] in the Helderberg congregation had participated in leadership with me at university and honoured my gifts and integrity as a Christian. Over the years we had maintained our friendships and continued our theological discussions. I felt respected and heard by them and their colleagues[115]. I was soon elected to leadership in the congregation. I served as elder for five years – later as vice-chairperson and chairperson of the Church Council. Hannes Theron, who was at that time the actuary for the regional synod, was instrumental in opening up opportunities for me to participate in the wider DRC through the invitations to do talks at the *Verantwoordelike Vernuwing* (Responsible Renewal) seminars. This exposure led to me being co-opted to serve on the executive of the regional synod.

Guidelines in the selection of case material:
Firstly, I am guided by the selection of the **various contexts of my participatory praxis**. Right from the beginning of this document I have indicated that the DRC is the fourth important context of my pastoral participation. In the past five years I have invested a considerable amount of time, energy and resources into my participation in the DRC. My participation is motivated by the following:

- As a beneficiary of apartheid and a member of the DRC who did not question the church's role in the justification of apartheid, I am accountable to *participate in the transformation*, *liberation and healing of my church*. Isherwood and Mc Ewan (1993:131), referring to the exodus of women from patriarchally dominated religions of their birth or convictions, point out that some women do not leave despite the fact that they find the space 'to be' very difficult. These women stay because 'they have a new vision to offer their churches – an inclusive model that pervades the system from grassroots level to abstract theological concepts.'
- In South Africa the Christian *churches are an important factor in society* (Pillay 2003: 142; Ericson 2007: 30) and 'traditional gender roles and power relations in churches have contributed to sexist social constructs within which the subordination of women flourishes in the family, the church and society' (Pillay 2003: 144). With its strong ideological influence on society in general the church is *the* place where awareness needs to be raised regarding gender injustices and its detrimental effects (Sporre 2009: 260). The influence of Christian

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[114] Ds Hannes Theron served with me on the Executive of the ACSV (Afrikaanse Christen Studente Vereeniging) and I served on leadership teams doing camps for school leavers with Dr Breda Ludik.
[115] In Chapter One I explained the acknowledgement of my gifts and the support that I received from the ministers at Helderberg congregation.

ideology is reflected in the fact that, according to the most recent census reports, 79.8% South Africans indicated that they are Christians (Stats SA, 2004).

Secondly, I seek to show my participation **to transform social injustices** in post-apartheid South Africa, especially in terms of gender oppression and racial oppression as these have affected me personally as was indicated in my personal story in Chapter One.

Thirdly, I will attend to the **different practices that I engage in** (the '*how*' of my research question) to raise awareness about oppressive structures, practices and discourses through my participation in the DRC. Because of the limited scope of this document I have selected examples[116] that do not involve too much detail and written data. My participation in the church raised my *own* awareness about the struggle that feminist women encounter so that I repeatedly found myself moving into aware/disempowered positions (Weingarten). In this part of my research I will rely heavily on my personal experience as legitimate source of theology (Nadar 2006: 78).

The selected case material will be structured as follows:

Participation in Helderberg congregation[117]

- **Church council: Task team for diversity and inclusivity**

  In this task team we produced a document to motivate for and guide the congregation towards becoming more diverse. The development of this document took place over several months in various meetings of a **racially and gender diverse** group of participants.

  Data generation strategies: I kept notes during meetings; organised the material after each meeting; circulated it amongst participants for their comments; and then we took the conversation further in the next meeting. I was not able to select the whole document for this research report, but selected the part that reflects the level of awareness that developed in the group because of the diversity of the group and the level of trust and openness with which we participated.

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[116] I served on a task team for Gender and Diversity of the General Synod where I presented a two day workshop on sexism and racism. I was invited to repeat this at a workshop for ministers in the Eastern Cape. A presentation that I did to the regional synod's moderamen led to a decision that took the work around a Christian anthropology and human dignity to the regional synod and general synod. At the regional synod I introduced the discussion on gender violence and oppression with illustrations and questions for discussion; it resulted in a motion to the General synod to attend to these matters.

[117] Ds Hannes Theron, leader pastor of the Helderberg DRC congregation has written a letter of permission following the reading the document relating to the participation with this congregation for its inclusion in the dissertation.

- **Michelle Boonzaaier**

  Michelle Boonzaaier was the first coloured person to be ordained as a minister in the DRC. Our relationship in the Helderberg congregation served to raise my awareness to the complexities facing the church when traditionally exclusive leadership crosses the **divides of race and gender**. Our relationship as gender-sensitive women supports our continued efforts to participate in a patriarchal church.

  Data generation strategies: I relied mainly on my own experience to draw up a document of my understanding of the meaning of our participation. I then gave my text to Michelle for her comments which I have included in this research document. I believe that we both benefitted from our friendship and that it has contributed significantly towards raising awareness in both of us.

- **Raising awareness with ministers of Helderberg DRC congregation**

  I will discuss one case example of a collaboration to raise awareness to **patriarchal discourses and practices** with Paul Barnard, one of the ministers in the congregation, following a series of sermons.

  Data generation strategies: After each sermon I made notes of the things that I found problematic. I used the notes to guide our discussion when I gave feedback to Paul. Paul wrote me a lengthy and comprehensive email in response to our discussion and I have included some of that in this manuscript. Paul read my account in this manuscript and has agreed that I could use it.

Regional Synod

- **Member of Moderature of Synod of Western and Southern Cape**

  As I was co-opted because I was a woman, I was very curious to know what the effect of my **embodied participation as a woman** was on the rest of the moderature. I felt that reflections on my personal experience could also be valuable in terms of raising awareness through the research.

Data generation strategies: I sent a list of questions for reflection to my colleagues on the moderature. I summarized these with the names of participants to indicate where I got the ideas from and also to ensure that they could check whether I understood them correctly. I kept many, many notes, emails and letters of reflection on my struggles during the term of office. I used these as reminders of my personal experiences at the time.

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5.3.1 Participation in Helderberg congregation

- **Church Council: Task team for diversity and inclusivity[118]**

Floyd McClung's[119] Pinkster (Pentecost) services in 2008 were a significant contributing factor towards raising our Helderberg congregation's awareness to our call as white Afrikaner Christians in post-apartheid South Africa. He preached about crossing boundaries, the importance of relationships (as opposed to being religious), our accountability for our apartheid past and the importance of forgiveness and reconciliation. He challenged us to action by reminding us that a sport match is won on the field and not in the locker-room. My letter[120] of reflection on the week's teaching addressed to Hannes Theron became an important document of reference for me. Our church council reflected in a planning session on the Pinkster message and experienced a definite calling to address the fact that our congregation is so homogenous. A task team for diversity and inclusivity was formed under my leadership with the instruction to assist the church council in developing strategies for transforming the congregation into one that is more inclusive of - and hospitable towards - those who live on the margins of our white, Afrikaans speaking, middle-class world.

Over the next six months the diversity *within* the task team[121] made for lively and stimulating discussions. In this group we embodied such a diversity of life experience and theological understandings. In many ways we represented and experienced the kind of church that we were trying to envisage for our congregation. Two texts became central to our discussion. Michelle brought Acts 10 and 11 where God used Cornelius, 'the other', to assist Peter in re-viewing Jewish traditions and understandings of God. We developed an understanding that God uses people from the margins of our world to re-define what we believe and confess:

> Hospitality is the insistence that life must be kept open to those unlike us, not only for their sake, but for ours as well....In a biblical understanding of life, the neighbour is not extra, marginal or elective. The neighbour is definitional to social reality. The neighbour is indispensable for health, not only to care for but as a giver of gifts which we cannot generate ourselves.

> (Breuggemann 1991:170)

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[118] Hannes Theron, leader minister of the Helderberg DRC congregation, has read and approved the inclusion of this text. I have translated it from Afrikaans and he read this translated format. He wrote a letter of consent in this regard.

[119] Floyd McClung, an American citizen, is the international director of All Nations, an international leadership training and church planting network.

[120] See Appendix M for copy of the letter.

[121] The task team consisted of eight members, and included a politically sensitive coloured couple, two young students of theology and three gender sensitive women. For composition of task team see Appendix N.

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The second text which guided us was *The Belhar Confession* with its central themes of unity, reconciliation and justice. As our discussion evolved we developed a document which was later adopted by the church council as motivation and strategy to support the focus on hospitality and openness in the congregation.

Our discussions of the challenges that could serve as **barriers** to becoming a more inclusive and diverse community are listed in this document. It has to be pointed out that this list evolved through many hours of discussion, reading, formulating and checking understandings. **The list of challenges reflect the level of awareness of the factors that play a significant part in keeping our congregation white, middle-class, Afrikaans and patriarchal**. I will discuss each item on the list briefly and indicate the way in which it reflects what other writers and researchers have found:

1. A theology with a main focus on individual salvation and relationship with God which ignores/excludes the focus on relationship with the neighbour.

The privatisation of Christian faith 'into a set of beliefs and morals that preserve family life and pave the way to heaven' (Kritzinger 2001:265) can create a vacuum which can be filled with negative ideologies, like racism. Kritzinger quotes Jewish author Elie Wiesel's warning that: 'The opposite of love is not hate, but indifference.'

2. White Afrikaners experience a loss and threat to their identities as a result of loss of political power and the issues related to language, religion and culture in post-apartheid South Africa.

Durand (2002: 54) mentions a report received by the General Synod of the DRC in 1998 which refers to this experience of loss by members of the DRC and has resulted in the withdrawal of Afrikaners into their own communities.

3. Perceptions, stereotypes and assumptions that we have about 'the other' and about one another.

In his discussion on racism Kritizinger (2001: 237) points out how racist stereotypes foster attitudes of racial prejudice which reinforce power structures which make it very difficult to eradicate racism. The same can be said about gender stereotyping.

4. The tendency to think in terms of 'us' and 'them'.

This impulse to determine who is 'us' and who is 'them' has its aim in determining identity and belonging (Anderson 1999:4). We are inclined to say that we belong with people who are like us and that those who are not like us are outsiders.

5. Patriarchal ideas that support power imbalances: for instance, the man as the head of the house; women and children as submissive; nuclear families (mom, dad and children) as ideal; handicapped people as dependent; ideas about gender roles etc.

Reuther (1996: 174) explains how 'patriarchal relations have structured both the social system and the cultural symbols about the nature of reality into a hierarchy of male over female, father over sons, masters over slaves (servants).'

6. Perfection, formality and order in the church.

The focus on perfection does not nurture the 'risk-accommodating environment' (Jansen 2009:274) that is needed for people to gather in their brokenness and to see the possibility in others (Jansen 2009: 271). An all-white congregation that imagines an integrated worship service to be 'just like usual' but with a few blacks present assumes the right to define worship and thereby are acting in a racist way (Boyd & Bohler 1999:200).

7. Fear of change and the discomfort that it involves.

'The risk of every dialogue with another who is "not me" is that I might be changed' explains Anderson (1999:8). He continues by saying that the risk of being changed evokes fear and despair in those people who have presumed that they hold the normative view.

8. Paternalistic attitudes which give preference to 'reaching out' and 'doing good' rather than 'doing together' and 'inviting in'.

Kritzinger (2001:252) describes the disempowering effect on black Christians when they experience economic dependence on white Christians. It also leads to the illusion amongst whites that they are not racist because they 'care' about blacks and are willing to make financial sacrifices to help them.

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9. The project could be unpopular with many people and be met with resistance – this might discourage us.

Our prophetic responsibility involves counter-cultural practice which, according to Jansen (2010), is a feature of leadership for transformation and restitution in post-apartheid South Africa.

10. Capitalism means that people like to 'buy' comfort, exclusivity and maintain divisions.

The SA Reconciliation Barometer survey (Lefko-Everett, Lekalake, Penford & Rais 2010) found that South Africans continue to view socioeconomic inequality as one of the foremost sources of social divisions in the country. Maluleke (2007: 51) says that the (predominantly white) middle-class 'have thickened and increased the height of the walls surrounding their homes, both literally and metaphorically.'

11. Limited socialization across race boundaries and limited understanding of how 'the other' lives, socializes and feels.

In Chapter Three I have indicated the reports by researchers (Hofmeyer 2007; 2010; Seekings 2007) showing the limited inter-racial contact in democratic South Africa.

12. The extent of the diversity of the South African context and of our contested history adds to tremendous and sometimes overwhelming complexity.

These complexities are well-described by Kritzinger (2010: 10-11). Language differences challenge us and power differences - related to economic, political, religious and other social forces - complicate our transcultural interactions.

The practices that would support the transformation of the congregation in the direction of being more hospitable and open are being developed over time; the conversations and reflections on progress continues. Our leadership has developed a partnership with the leadership of Bethesda Evangelical Church in the township area of Rusthof. Our mutual visits to attend church council meetings, worship, work to raise funds, socialize and plan projects together have been opportunities to experience diversity and to learn through trial and error about the gifts and blessings of diversity. I agree with Kritizinger (2010: 3) who says that talking about, debating and attending workshops *about* diversity is

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a bit like what the Dutch would call 'droogswemmery' (dry swimming). One has to *practise* diversity and learn in that way.

- **Michelle Boonzaaier[122]**

In 2006 Michelle Boonzaaier was appointed by Helderberg Congregation in a part-time contract post to develop an 'alternative ministry' to people on the margins of the church. Michelle has a proven record as pioneer of boundary-crossing and bridge-building. She is an English speaking coloured woman, who grew up in the URC. Michelle studied youth work at the Huguenot College in Wellington as part of the second group of black students at this formerly all-white DRC institution. She later completed her theological studies at Stellenbosch University as a member of the DRC. The first time we met Michelle told me that after she had attended my plenary at the *Verantwoordelike Vernuwing* seminar she searched for theology publications that cited me. We clearly shared similar values, theological understandings and a passion for justice and people on the margins of society. We started meeting regularly for early morning walks on the beach. A very strong friendship developed despite a seventeen year age difference. This friendship became a life-line while we each negotiated our participation in the DRC – a participation where our own awareness about injustices is continuously being raised. We are challenged to find empowered ways of responding. We believe that our embodied participation as gender-aware women in communities like the male-dominated and patriarchal DRC acts to raise awareness to alternative ways of relating with women. This requires enormous courage and commitment. I will reflect on the ways in which our relationship has strengthened this commitment and adds to courage in our lives. Our relationship *is church to us* and empowers us to *be church with others* (Holliman 1996: 182). I give my description of our relationship below. Each point is followed by Michelle's reflections which she typed in italics into my text.

- **Meeting on the bridge**: While Michelle and I both consider ourselves to be bridge-builders who are constantly attempting to cross bridges to 'the other', our relationship seems to fit with the way in which Boyd and Bohler (1999: 196) describe their womanist-feminist alliance - a meeting on the bridge. I experience in our relationship a rare and honest dialogue about race. We practise truth telling that is in stark contrast to 'the habitual way of being as avoidance, hiding, and hearsay' (Boyd & Bohler 1999: 197) that is so prevalent in our society when it comes to issues of race. I discovered that: 'Dialogue does not require a miracle; it requires effort, genuine and persistent intent' (Boyd & Bohler 1999: 197). Our dialogues often involved pain, shame and discomfort. It required true commitment to fit meetings, telephone calls and

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[122] Michelle Boonzaaier has signed a consent form regarding her participation and the inclusion of this text in the dissertation

email conversations into our busy schedules. More recently, geographical distance has added more challenges.

Michelle: *When Elize and I consider ourselves bridge builders, we are both painfully aware of the isolation that this has brought to both of us. As a bridge builder I have found that I don't belong in my old context fully anymore and I will never belong in any strange new context. This 'meeting on the bridge' with Elize helped to ease this isolation. It is through our honest conversations and sharing stories that I have been able to re-appreciate my own context. It is through our honest conversations that I appreciated Elize and her family as Afrikaners who are different to my preconceived ideas. It is true that our dialogues involve pain, shame and discomfort, but simultaneously it also involves a celebration of each other and an appreciation of the gift of the 'meeting on the bridge'.*

- **Coming to voice:** According to Bons-Storm (1998:22) it is essential for women 'to dialogue about faith amongst themselves, to strengthen their voices.' In Michelle's presence I experienced the practising of speaking out and raising my voice in a safe context (Bons-Storm 1998: 23). As a woman who had no formal theology training and who was not part of the clergy, I often doubted myself: I have internalized the oppression that denied me the authority to speak out in the contexts of the church and theology. By hearing the sound of my own voice in conversation with Michelle, who has the authority of a trained theologian and minister, I started believing that I have something valuable to contribute.

Michelle: *Elize speaks about 'internalized oppression' because of the lack of theological training. However, this idea of internalized oppression in the field of theology resonated with me even though I am a trained theologian. On reflection I have realized that even as a minister with formal theological training I have often been spoken into silence. Elize listened with such appreciation and in an honouring way when I shared with her where I came from and what influences informed my theological choices. It is always difficult to be a Contextual or Feminist theologian within the Reformed context. We 'listened' each other into finding a voice in theology.*

- **Solidarity in resisting gender stereotypes and cultural limits:** Neuger (1999: 124) emphasizes that women need the support of other women in generating new strategic options for living in contexts which are hostile and diminishing without losing themselves and their relationships. Our relationship has become one of solidarity as we both resist the oppressive patriarchal culture of our church and society. This involves the 'power of naming' (Holliman 1996: 183). Michelle and I would often share stories of experiences in the church that left us feeling 'dumb and crazy.' In talking about it we would then be able to assist one another to notice and name oppressive practices. We also focused in our discussions on what it is that women bring in terms of strengths and creativity, as we realize that 'there is more to women than the systems that oppress them' (Neuger 1999: 126).

  Michelle: *In participating in each other's lives, Elize has become my embodied witness. The reason that I use the concept 'embodied witness' is twofold. It is only through my relationships with Elize and Jaco and other people like them that I realize that the church is more than its oppressive patriarchal structures. Secondly, I can only participate in these oppressive structures knowing that there are witnesses who share my experiences of pain and isolation.*

- **Mentoring:** I am not a minister and our relationship is far more mutual and equal than an official mentoring relationship. However, there are elements of mentoring in the way that I, as an experienced member of the DRC and leader in the congregation, welcomed Michelle into the Helderberg congregation. Holliman (1996: 183) says that mentoring is hospitality, sharing one's wisdom and experience and investing in another's development or journey. I tried to offer Michelle a refuge and 'sounding board' about confusing and painful experiences. I made an effort to affirm her gifts and open up opportunities for her by inviting her to attend Narrative Therapy training. I invited Michelle to co-author a chapter in a book on Christian leadership in which we reflected on our personal stories of becoming aware and empowered witnesses to our lives as white and black Christian women leaders (Morkel & Boonzaaier 2008). I suggested that the organizers of a camp for women invite Michelle to assist me in leading some of the teaching. When this camp was cancelled due to a lack of interest, we could only speculate about the extent to which the women[123] of our congregation did not relate to us and the theological understandings that we represent.

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[123]See next section for discussion on women supporting patriarchy.

Michelle acted as mentor to me in terms of her support of my studies in theology at the University of Stellenbosch. She expressed hospitality and support by joining me at talks, conferences and in researching at a time when the building and the people at the faculty of theology were still tainted by my previous experience of oppression and exclusion. I experienced it as a place where I did not belong and had no legitimacy. Michelle connected me with people and opened the space for me.

Michelle*: Elize became my cultural guide when I was ordained as a minister in the DRC, Helderberg. I had just completed my theological training and, having grown up in the Dutch Reformed Mission Church (now the Uniting Reformed Church); I entered the DRC as a stranger, navigating an unfamiliar map. Elize became one of the few refuges in a sometimes hostile terrain. When Elize offered me the gift of Narrative Therapy I was not aware of the profound effect it would have on my life. The narrative approach gave me the language that I needed which helped me to better understand and voice my own understanding of a theology of embodiment. In co-authoring a chapter in a book with Elize the narrative approach helped us to further develop this idea of being embodied leaders.*

- **Mutual mentoring as prophetic practice:** 'Discerning with each other where God is in our questioning, our visions, our call, our doubts is a prophetic activity...[We experience that] telling our stories to one another is to bear witness to the presence of God who is continually holding the promise of transformation and renewal' (Holliman 1996: 182). In relation to the church our connection is prophetic as it enables Michelle and me to 'claim more of who God wants us to be.'

I agree with Holliman (1996:183):

> Women can have a vision of community that includes both support and risk, nurture and confrontation, tradition and prophecy, solidarity and diversity. The church remains an institution as well as a community. Women's wisdom *as women* is a crucial and needed resource to break open with each other. Mentoring is both a call and a challenge to establish relationships with other women where that resource can be revealed.

Raising awareness with the ministers in the Helderberg congregation[124]

When we joined the congregation Hannes Theron, who had attended Narrative Therapy training with me, invited me to consult with the team of ministers on issues of power. I spoke critically about patriarchal discourses and practices within the church in general and in our congregation in particular.

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[124] Paul Barnard read and approved the use of this text. He signed an official consent form in this regard.

The ministers urged me to continue the raising of awareness with them by reflecting on their practice. As I witnessed their work I made an effort to write emails with comments about specific practices and teachings that reflected their understanding of and sensitivity to issues of justice, equality and inclusion of people on the margins. At times I had to point out practices, language, rituals and teaching that undermined certain people and were supportive of gender or other stereotypes. I will discuss one example of an effort to raise awareness with Dr Paul Barnard after the Pinkster series of 2010.

I experienced discomfort in the services throughout the week and Jaco felt so alienated and disturbed that he stopped attending. I made notes of the words and actions that I found problematic. A few members expressed similar concerns. I believe that 'pastors are participating in language's creative, constructive, constitutive capacities in their role as bearers of discourse' (Dunlap 1999: 135). These discourses have enormous impact, as language creates, especially the language spoken from a powerful position such as the pulpit. The things I found problematic were:

- A joking comment about God creating women and that 'God did not say it was good.' I found this diminishing of women and setting men up against women.
- References to Esau and Jacob in ways that supported cultural discourses about male gender stereotypes.
- Comments about male violence spoken in a normalizing way.
- In a ritual where family members prayed for one another, Paul singled the fathers out by asking them to kneel. This either pointed to the specialness of fathers or it could be seen as reversal of the gender hierarchies. I experienced it as supporting the hierarchy instead of undermining it.
- Praying for 'women who have to work' thereby supporting the discourse that women should stay at home.
- Mentioned the story about rape in the Scripture reading, skipped the reading of it, without any comment about the violence and injustice of rape, its prevalence in our society and the patriarchal society of the Bible. I experienced this as normalizing of violence on women and colluding with the silence around gender violence.
- The sharing of an 'interesting story' (no connection to the sermon) about the biblical practice where wedding guests would gather around the bridal couple's tent on the wedding night awaiting proof of the bride's virginity by inspecting a skin from the marital bed for blood stains. No mention was made of the injustice of patriarchy that demands sexual purity from women, but not from men. What about the injustice to virgins who did not bleed during the first experience of intercourse? This practice was degrading of women, supporting her image as a

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sex object and a possession of the man. It puts emphasis on the sexuality and the body of the woman as if her value as a person is defined by it.

- Acknowledged the caring and nurturing acts of women in a way that implied that this is a natural attribute of women and not of men – Paul Barnard said that men can learn from women. This is supportive of gender stereotypes.

It took me a while to figure out how to approach Paul with my experience. On the one hand I knew that I could not participate in the 'conspiracy of silence', the fear of speaking out against dangerous and damaging practices (Moore 2002: 39). But on the other I have a fear of 'the way in which women's analysis of society as patriarchal, and their commitment to change it, is so often cast as "strident", extremist and marginal' (Moore 2002: 39). I feared that discussing this with Paul might be offensive, stir things up and cause tension in our relationship (Wyatt 2008:7). I made an appointment to speak to Paul while holding onto my commitment so well summarized by Poling (1991: 185):

> Church and society must examine assumptions about the family, about the devaluation of women, and about sexuality and violence. We have seen that these assumptions provide the social sanction for sexual violence….The family can be a dangerous institution for women and children….Women are devalued in a patriarchal culture in ways that lead to sexual violence….We live in a society that confuses sexuality and violence.

I knew that in general the congregation responded appreciatively to Paul's teaching during that week and that my feedback would sound strange and discordant to what he heard from others. I thus started our conversation by positioning myself clearly as a feminist who is committed to the transformation of patriarchal structures, practices, language and discourse within the church and society as I believe that these pose a danger to women, children as well as men. I acknowledged that my voice definitely does not represent the majority of members of our congregation or of our society. I explained that there were other members who expressed similar concerns about his preaching, but that they were in the minority. Before discussing the list of specific concerns I invited Paul to decide whether he was interested in hearing it. I assured him that I was talking in my personal capacity and that this was not an official complaint, as I was aware that my position as chairperson of the church council impacted the power relationship between us. Paul assured me that he would appreciate my feedback and we had a very constructive discussion. Paul wrote me a long and detailed email, in which he thanked me for our conversation, reflected on his understanding of my concerns and asked for forgiveness. He also raised two very important issues with me.

Paul started with a detailed description of how he experienced the way in which I spoke to him:

What I experienced from you Wednesday was:
- *Sincere care*
- *Intense seriousness about your calling to represent women and their role in the church and community and to stand up where damaging discourses are supported*
- *A pastoral heart so that, even where you differ radically, you do it with love*
- *Openness to listen to the other side*
- *A desire to assist growth in others*
- *Leaving space for different understandings and interpretations*

This description of his experience of me draws attention to what Hardy (Wyatt 2008: 3) says about having 'will and skill' in these conversations which are so explosive and laden with meaning. I think that having prepared well in terms of what and how I wanted to speak was extremely important. Hardy (Wyatt 2008: 6) also refers to the ideology that we bring to these difficult conversations about diversity and justice and how it has to do with the ways we use privilege. Paul experienced 'care', 'a pastoral heart', 'love', 'openness to listen', 'a desire to assist growth' and 'space' from me. I think that I had managed to handle my privileged position as a psychologist who has expertise on gender justice and my position in the hierarchies of the church with care and responsibility.

In my response to his email I thanked Paul for his willingness to do self-reflection. I was touched and affirmed that he took our conversation so seriously that he went back to watch the DVDs of the sermons and managed to notice exactly what I had been referring to and explained what he learnt from it. Paul clearly did not say or do anything to harm intentionally, however he took full responsibility and never tried to give me explanations or excuses for what he did. He asked forgiveness for the *consequences* of his actions (Wyatt 2008: 3).

There were two matters that Paul raised in our conversation and email exchange which are important in terms raising awareness in the church setting. I would like to discuss these briefly.

1. *Christian women and patriarchal ideology*:

Paul pointed out that women form the majority of the team who assists the ministers in preparing sermons. The team was comfortable with his sermons and said that women suggested some of the things that I objected to.

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Pillay (2003: 148) points out that many women who are now part of the leadership structures of the church do not challenge the status quo, but accept it as the 'natural order of things.' The 'order model' of moral instruction presents a world order as originating at creation (Draper 1991:39). Social hierarchies and inequalities are seen as given by God in creation and thus must be obeyed without question so that religious women who are oppressed may feel that this is natural and proper. Women who have internalized the oppressive roles given to them by patriarchy are often 'proud of their station in life and they are the most vociferous voices against women who find their full humanity outside the allocated narrow slot' (Isherwood & Mc Ewan 1993: 21). Women might be the most outspoken supporters of all-male clergy and insist on the maintenance of male domination in the home. In instances where women clergy are not called to serve in congregations it has become evident that women have become oppressors of women in the church (Pillay 2003: 148). Ackermann (2003: 187) agrees that it is well known that the internalization of oppressive images and practices is very pervasive and that ignorance and fear of isolation conspire to keep women quiet. Paul suggested that I assist this team by raising awareness about these oppressive discourses and their effects, particularly because the voices of women are strong here and it might be a place to shift belief systems. Maybe what he proposed fits with what Bons-Storm (1996: 147) writes:

> But the church will stay the same and society will not change unless the belief system itself is directly confronted. Pastoral care and counselling in a feminist perspective goes further that dressing the wounds of women who are hurt or silenced, and adapting them to a patriarchal situation. This situation will have to change if we want women no longer to be ignored and hurt physically, psychologically, and spiritually. Women in their different positions need allies: other women and men who have been in the desert, tested their insights in conversation, and talked to women as equals. Women need rebellious pastors and counsellors.

2. *Leadership positions in church structures can inhibit prophetic voices*:

Paul mentioned that he had been missing the difficult and uncomfortable questions that he came to respect and appreciate from me. He wondered whether my participation in the DRC leadership structures had been inhibiting of my prophetic voice. As chairperson of the church council my critical voice had indeed been inhibited in the meetings. I had tried to facilitate discussions and felt that taking a strong stand could be silencing of other voices and could be experienced as abuse of power. A feminist ecclesiology recognizes that the circular New Testament model of church - with Christ at the centre and believers around Christ - had changed and the church had become more structured into a model comparable to a pyramid (Aguilar 1996: 43). I experienced the patriarchal pyramid model - where control is exercised by a minority over a majority - as exclusive and silencing. The feminist model that I would like to support is inclusive and caring rather than exclusive and controlling. At the

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time of my participation as chairperson of the church council I was also participating at synod level[125]. In the local congregation I was clearly associated with power structures; new perspectives on the complexities of the larger church structures had also definitely tempered my critical stance. I deeply regretted lacking the capacity, in terms of time and energy, to care for personal relationships in our congregation outside meetings.

Paul's reflections about his experiences of those women in the team who prepared the church services and of my participation assisted in raising my awareness about the position of women and of my own position within the structures of the church. It also challenged me to find empowered responses to these new understandings.

5.3.2. Regional Synod[126]

Member of the Moderature of Synod of Western and Southern Cape[127]

In 2007 I was co-opted as one of two women[128] serving as additional members on the moderature of the Synod of the Western and Southern Cape consisting of eight members. Our inclusion served to redress the gender imbalance in the leadership structures. The six men were very experienced pastors and leaders. Our embodied participation in monthly meetings of the moderature served to raise our awareness about *doing* participation in gender diversity in a previously exclusively male context. Just after I joined the executive, the URC put a moratorium on the joint meetings and discussions between the DRC and the URC leadership. My work regarding raising awareness of racial oppression was limited, although it formed an important part of workshops and talks on diversity, justice and reconciliation. It is not possible unfortunately to include all this material in the limited scope of this chapter. My reflections on the raising of awareness during this participation are done in the following ways:

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[125] In the following section I will attend to my participation on Synod level and whether or not this has enhanced a prophetic voice.

[126] DrBraam Hanekom wrote a letter of consent regarding the participation of the members of the Moderature.

[127] All members of the moderature received copies of the text for their approval. They each signed a Consent Form. A number of them commented that it would be important to continue our discussion of these research findings in the context of the wider church.

[128] Ds Franziska Andrag-Meyer was already serving after being elected as additional member by the Synod. At her election the Synod was made aware of the fact that the inclusion of at least one woman was important.

I wrote a letter to the members of the moderature[129] (See Appendix P) in which I asked for feedback on three aspects of my participation. I received feedback from all seven members.

In what follows, I state my question and then summarize the responses that I received. I then discuss these, together with reflections from the literature and from my own experience. Upon completing this section, I sent a copy of the text to all members of the moderature to ensure that they agreed that my work accurately reflects the feedback they sent me. I have made alterations to the final text, where necessary.

1. *To what extent did my inclusion as member of the moderature contribute to the redressing of inequalities and transformation of injustices in terms of gender as well as race and class relationships in the DRC and wider society? Describe specific contributions if you judge that there have been any.*

The members of the moderature referred to the following contributions:

- I brought a **prophetic voice** by actively criticizing the marginalization of people, challenging the ideology and practices of patriarchy and raising awareness about power relations and abuse of power while suggesting more respectful ways of relating (Nelis, Francois, Franziska, Monty, Hannes).
- I contributed to well-informed debate about patriarchy in the church which **enabled others to join with their prophetic voices** in these debates (Nelis, Franziska).
- Our presence as women alerted members to the **gender bias of language and assumptions** normally present in all-male meetings, thereby challenging the men to think and speak more tentatively and in more inclusive ways. Awareness was raised that the exclusion of women from decision-making leads to the establishment of faith communities that are irrelevant and un-evangelical in its public witness (Ben, Francois, Hannes).
- I raised awareness about **the silencing of voices representing 'the other'.** This might be one of the main difficulties in the efforts in uniting with the URC. We cannot ignore the discomfort of our diversity, but should engage it. By giving feedback I alerted members to experiences which indicate that the church is often not a safe place for women or other marginalized people (Hannes).

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[129] Members of Executive: Dr Braam Hanekom, Ds Monty Sahd, Ds Hannes Theron, Ds Nelis Janse van Rensburg, Ds Franziska Andrag-Meyer, Dr Ben du Toit, Ds Francois Cillié.

- My participation as a **woman who acted as agent for transformation** was important as some women might have participated in ways that did not challenge, but might have supported patriarchy (Nelis, Ben).
- All my colleagues expressed appreciation for the work that I did to **raise awareness in the wider church** which contributed to the creation of structures that enabled the continuation of discussion of a Christian anthropology, restitution and reconciliation at the level of the General Synod. My presentation at the moderamen raised awareness of the inter-relatedness of racism, homophobia and sexism (Hannes).

2. *What were the factors that, according to you, strengthened and/or inhibited contributions?*

My colleagues mentioned the following factors:

- My **position as outsider** to the power structures of the church as non-elected member was advantageous as I did not pose a threat (Nelis).
- My **interpersonal skills and compassion** for others contributed to a climate in which my critical voice could be heard (Nelis). The respectful and gracious manner in which I engaged with everyone, while at the same time asserting myself and the position that I represented (Francois). My 'sensitive' approach (Braam).
- My **determination and commitment** to keep on talking with honesty, listening to others and asking uncomfortable questions even when I had been silenced (Franziska, Hannes).
- Appreciation was expressed for the clearly motivated, well-prepared and **academic contributions** that I made, especially when I did the presentations of reports (Ben, Francois, Franziska, Braam).
- My **professional background** as a psychologist, a community worker in marginalized communities, a researcher of social justice and a Narrative practitioner was mentioned as serving to add authority to my voice and the wide impact that it had (Nelis, Francois).
- My **personal story of oppression** in the church was used effectively to lend further authority to my understandings of patriarchy and its effects (Nelis).
- The effort I made to commit myself to a **full participation** by learning about the church structures and attending meetings enabled meaningful contributions (Hannes, Nelis).
- The fact that the **majority of the members**, including another woman with experiences of injustices in the church, **supported my theology** strengthened my participation (Nelis).

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The following factors that inhibited my contributions were mentioned:

- At times some members **lacked tolerance and understanding** of the importance to listen to other voices (Franziska, Monty, Hannes).
- **Issues of justice did not always receive the priority** and time that these deserved. Unfortunately this led to a dismissal of important contributions and a loss of insights that would have had the potential to impact the life of the church (Nelis).
- The **unwillingness of some leaders to engage in critical self-reflection** about their contributions to discourses that undermine others and their tendency to act in self-justifying and defensive ways often inhibited deep theological reflection (Nelis).
- The church is **not always a safe environment** for the other (Hannes).
- I sometimes refrained from speaking up in an effort to **avoid conflict** (Hannes).

3. *Do you have recommendations regarding the future participation of women (or elders) on the moderature?*

- At least **two women** should serve and they should be included for their skills, abilities and talents (Nelis, Ben).
- At least **two elders** should serve in the moderature (Nelis, Francois).
- A **process of induction** should be devised to clarify expectations and familiarize new members with language, structures and procedures used in the church (Franziska, Hannes, Monty).
- Procedures should be put in place to ensure that all **members are heard** and experience safety (Hannes).
- The Synod has to actively seek the participation of at **least one person with a prophetic voice** to represent marginalized and oppressed groups on the moderature (Nelis).

Discussion of the reflections of my colleagues

I will respond to my colleagues' feedback by discussing it from a theoretical and personal perspective. The central theme of this chapter remains that of raising awareness about injustices within the church and society that are responsible for the injuries sustained by people as we encounter them in our participation as therapists, community workers, teachers and as members of the Body of Christ.

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- A prophetic stance raises awareness

My colleagues refer to my active and purposeful contributions to raise awareness about patriarchal ideology and the way in which sexism, racism and homophobia are interrelated. They concur that not all women would have acted as agents for transformation in the ways that Franziska and I did. They point out that my personal story, my professional experience and my academic research added authority to my voice. Isherwood and McEwan (1993:17) articulate my position well:

> Women on the margins of the church assume the role of prophets. They protest against the injustices emanating from the pinnacle because, from their position outside the power arena, they see how inequalities affect those on the margin – and in the ultimate analysis those at the pinnacle as well. They have nothing to protect as participation as equals is denied them. To protest is a way to survive. To protest is the way to deal with the situation, forcefully but non-violently, peacefully to enter into dialogue and to learn to understand phobias and fears.

For years my position on the margins had given me a position from where I could see the injustices more clearly; I had nothing to lose in protesting for survival. I had limited opportunity, however, to dialogue and be heard within the church structures. This changed when I started participating in the power structures of the church. As Isherwood and McEwan (1993:17) declare: 'Democracy means taking part, participating in the decision making process, having an opinion, speaking out and if need be, protesting.'

- Embodied participation raises awareness

Our male colleagues experienced that our physical presence in the male dominated meetings brought greater awareness about the use of language and the assumptions on which arguments and perceptions were based. Ackermann and Bons-Storm (1998:2) remind us that the male was the subject of modernity. The male was also the subject of the clergy where a male clerical paradigm excluded women from being theological subjects and actors. The result was an androcentric focus where male experience was viewed as normative and female is viewed as 'other' (Moore 2002: 102). This has serious implications for the church:

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> Hierarchies of power, a separation of the laity from the clergy, and preaching and teaching based on men's experience and insights in the world, all give rise to a clericalism which makes it difficult for the church to live out its prophetic calling.

(Ackermann 1994: 204)

Ackermann proposes new models of church and ministry that will acknowledge differences, but at the same time be inclusive and sensitive to patterns of injustice and discrimination. A social constructionist perspective acknowledges that language constitutes realities and also reflects our beliefs. Although it is true that we do not end sexism or racism by ceasing to use sexist and racist language, it does mean that we are acknowledging that these are issues of social justice to which we endeavour to respond in a respectful and caring way (Ackermann 1994: 204).

As an embodied participant within the power structures, I *experienced* most profoundly the pain, discomfort and challenges that confront the church when engaging in efforts to include the marginalized and oppressed:

> Awareness of contradictions is never the result of isolated intellectual striving. It comes from a process of concrete engagement, an entering into struggle against oppressive conditions that also involves being drawn into collective effort to overcome these conditions. Such consciousness takes hold only in concrete engagement, it is through the struggle that we acquire more profound awareness of the range of social oppression and its interconnectedness.

(Harrison in Ackermann 1996b: 43)

When Franziska and I joined the leadership structures through a quota system we experienced significant difference in power compared with the men. As women we found ourselves as a very inexperienced[130] minority who were not elected on an equal basis with the men. Right from the start I questioned the legitimacy of my participation, particularly when I was told that my attendance of meetings was voluntary. Did this mean that I was a 'token' participant providing a female name to improve gender equity on documents? If I did not attend meetings regularly, how was I expected to make meaningful contributions or were these not expected from me anyway? Even when, in an effort to participate in meaningful ways, I decided to attend all meetings and committed myself to study all documents I experienced the mixed messages. Becker (1996:30) describes how although women are invited into leadership positions in church but, because these remain fundamentally male hierarchies, women do not feel welcome at all. I experienced enormous impotence, frustration, anger and despair

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[130] I have limited theology training and am not part of the clergy. Franziska was at least 15 years younger than the rest of the group and far less experienced as minister. Neither of us had experience of church leadership.

at times. My experience in the church formed a particularly stark contrast to the level of participation, legitimacy, authority and congruency that I was used to within my profession as psychologist. In hierarchical systems the dominant group – white males in the case of the DRC – is the norm. This eliminates diversity and instead supports sameness, uniformity and control (Becker 1996: 67). In the process women experience the 'ungifting' of their gifts and of themselves as givers (Yocum in Becker 1996:68).

The recommendations by colleagues that at least two women, elected for what they have to offer, as well as two elders on the executive indicate an awareness and effort to challenge the hierarchies and to honour the gifts of women. A process of induction and clarity about expectations as well as recommendations about listening and safety indicate a greater sensitivity and awareness of the struggles that Franziska and I had encountered. I would like to add that the women elected should be gender-sensitive.

- Raising awareness through voicing

My colleagues report that I managed to raise awareness through voicing my prophetic stance and that this was done most successfully when engaging in 'well-informed debate' and when presenting training sessions or papers. It should not come as a surprise that I was heard most clearly and commended most strongly when I was invited to use my professional authority as psychologist and researcher. It fits with the white male paradigm of speaking with power and authority. A part of speaking up for women does mean speaking in a language which men understand (Becker 1996: 169).

In the feedback from colleagues the importance of using my prophetic voice in a gracious, compassionate, respectful and sensitive way was emphasized. Hardy and Lazloffy (2008: 234 - 233) point out that most people find it painful and difficult to realize that they have unintentionally supported pro-racist (or patriarchal) ideologies: this deeply challenges individuals' preferred views of themselves. The realization can invite tremendous defensiveness and anxiety and, if sensitization is not pursued in a thoughtful and gentle manner, it might have the opposite effect.

Apart from the structural power inequalities the patriarchal leadership model makes participation difficult for women. I felt like an 'immigrant in a foreign land' (Becker 1996: 95) where I did not understand the language or rules of the dominant culture. It was, therefore, in the context of meetings

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and discussions that it was most difficult to find the language and the courage to speak, especially about issues of justice. A number of my colleagues mentioned that their awareness was raised to the ways in which women's voices are silenced when these become discordant with the dominant discourse. This intolerance of the voices of others is reflected in the dismissal of critical voices, the denial of women's experience and the unwillingness to engage in critical self-reflection. There were many occasions when I experienced silencing, invisibility and a lack of safety in meetings. I found this extremely oppressive and it led to severe feelings of violation and rage. Frequently I did not speak up in meetings for fear of what others might think of me, fear of conflict or because I needed time for reflection to understand what it was that I was experiencing. At times I spoke up in a 'raw voice', the primitive unrefined voice that is often the result of having been mute and evolving your own voice for the first time (Hardy in Wyatt 2008: 5). While speaking in and listening to a 'raw voice' might be very uncomfortable, fear of using it promotes silence.

At those times of deep emotional turmoil and outrage after meetings there were always colleagues who were encouraging of my voice, willing to 'listen me to speech.' This took place in the private conversations that unfolded for weeks following these meetings. I suspect that these uncensored conversations were the most valuable in terms of raising our awareness to injustices. As noted in the feedback, because many members on the moderature shared my theology, the majority of my male colleagues thus showed the capacity for 'authentic conversations':

> Though celebration of difference is an appropriate part of conversation, authentic conversation is not a 'tourist's delight' where surface sharing takes place. Real conversation that highlights difference entails clash and conflict. When we 'celebrate' differentness, we must be aware that the exhilaration that can come from engaging others is often on the other side of pain and struggle.

<div align="right">(Hess 1998: 58)</div>

Checking my realities with Franziska and engaging in conversations with other women[131] assisted in strengthening our authentic voices. Writing down my thoughts and reflections after meetings became a useful way to gain clarity, develop my voice and assert my understandings. I spent hours and hours developing these documents. I often shared these with supportive colleagues who assisted me in finding ways to express the anger and outrage in more respectful and gracious ways before sharing it in the wider group. Becker (1996: 173), writing about being angry and merciful, quotes Schaper's suggestion that women should 'require the church and society to repent of their sins against us as

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[131] Therese Hulme, pastoral therapist and friend; Alinda Nortje, CEO of Free-to-Grow a corporate human development company and friend, as well as Michelle Boonzaaier provided invaluable safety-nets and sounding-boards.

women, while standing ready to forgive and receive the transformation that implies.' Being open to forgive while refusing to be abused again we can find new ways to move forward as leaders.

- Men's part in raising awareness about gender injustices

The first requirement from men to change sexism within the church is to admit that it exists and that it is subtle and insidious:

> It (sexism) causes the most damage when coming from the man who thinks he's not sexist. It is hard to get the issues on the table when there is denial or a masking of power at work.

(Becker 1996:148)

While some men just do not understand sexism at all, there are others who react swiftly and decisively: they want to hear all about it, fix and move on in typical male dominant style (Becker 1996: 149). Amongst my colleagues I have encountered a third group of men who display real courage. Upon hearing about gender discrimination or their participation in it, they pause and listen. They are willing to look inward and to learn. Some of my male colleagues report on their raised awareness about the importance of men listening to women. It takes a lot of listening. I was often deeply touched by the effort from male colleagues to make time and provide safe spaces to just listen - without pretending to understand or know - and to accept my experience as valid. I know that it has been very hard for them at times. Women have an advantage when listening is required. We already know the world of men: we have been required to listen to them (particularly in the church) for most of our lives. For men, it is harder. Becker (1996: 152) quotes clergyman Bruce Brunham:

> Through interacting with those whose experience of discrimination has been real, through hearing the fear, pain, and anger in their voices, I have begun to change who I am so that I am more conscious of 'riding the wave of privilege'. This change has come only against great internal personal resistance and also against resistance from others (both men and women) who don't like to share this part of my life's journey because of the challenges to which it calls them.

Once men have started undertaking reflective tasks of looking inward and listening to women they can start taking positive action. In my relationship with the men on the executive I encountered many of the actions that assist women's participation in the church leadership as listed by Becker (1996: 155 – 159). Male colleagues created an environment of safety for me to speak honestly when I most needed it. Their affirmation of my contributions and encouragement to voice my experiences assisted in growing my confidence and the authority with which I was able to participate. These men were willing to share power with me by valuing my opinion and entrusting me with specific tasks. It was through men's advocacy for women's participation in the leadership that I was co-opted in the first place and

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through men's constant creation of an atmosphere of acceptance for women leaders that opportunities opened up and my voice could be heard. I received consistent thoughtful and untiring mentoring from a number of my male colleagues. At times this implied sacrifices - like taking on more assignments in their already over-loaded schedules or by going way out of their way to be there and act as 'cultural consultants'[132] within the culture of male leadership. At such times their sole purpose was to help me succeed in a culture where I am an 'immigrant' or 'alien' so that they and others could learn from me.

- Awareness of what women can learn from men in leadership

It was not until my participation in the leadership of the church that I became aware of the complexity of my own response to power and authority. As chairperson of the church council I had become aware of a reluctance to claim authority. I resonate strongly with Becker's (1996: 162) suggestion that women have been oppressed and abused by power for so long that we come to reject authority as a bad thing: I feared that through claiming authority I might hurt others or be abandoned. Along with this I could claim that I prefer a collaborative leadership style. Another reason for not claiming power is the internalized oppression of sexism which makes me doubt my own abilities and power – especially in the context of the church where I do not have the authority that comes with being an ordained minister. In many ways it is easier and safer not to claim authority, but to hide behind the men and get them to take care of difficult tasks. Men can teach women to be direct and to be unapologetically ambitious (Becker 1996: 167). This requires women to speak frankly and unapologetically, to take on tasks and to do them really well. It is through working very hard that women can manage to break through the glass ceiling. This is as true in the secular world as it is in the church context.

5.4. Conclusion

A participatory pastoral praxis takes its prophetic task very seriously. Louw (1997: 24) points out that, within a Christian context, normativity refers to two basic moral issues: love and service. I have chosen the parable of the Good Samaritan as a biblical illustration of the norm of neighbourly love. In addition to this I hold the metaphor of the Shepherd - through which love becomes a sign of the presence of God - and the reality of eschatology within the reality of our human existence (Louw 1997:

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[132] I could not have done the gender and race awareness training in the context of the church if Nelis Janse van Rensburg had not been prepared to assist me with the selection of appropriate material, accompany me as cultural consultant during the workshops and add his voice to mine at times when men found it difficult to hear a woman speak critically, especially one who was not a church-insider.

22). In this chapter I show that it is not good enough for pastoral care to concern itself only with the victims of the robbers on the road from Jerusalem to Jericho: it is also important to do something about those who are responsible for the robber-problem. Louw (1997: 25) stresses that the biblical message is double message of judgement and hope. A Christian ethos should critique human behaviour (judgment); a Christian ethos should also bring transformation and change (hope).

I have explained how my profession (psychology) and my church (the DRC) represent the voices that are privileged in the formation of truth discourses in our culture. Both contexts also involve structures that are exclusive, marginalizing and oppressive for certain members of society. In South Africa psychology is guilty of racist ideology, has excluded black professionals and maintains skewed service-delivery on the grounds of race and class. The DRC has a terrible history of racial exclusion, oppression and ideology as well as patriarchal domination and ideology. I have given examples of my active participation within my profession and church in my effort to assist towards transformation of racist, sexist and classist practices and ideologies.

We cannot be prophetic without becoming 'other-wise'. In my profession, I had colleagues who allowed me to build close relationships with them and who shared their stories and lives with me in ways that enabled this 'other-wisdom'. They raised my awareness to past and present injustices. I was able to witness and experience some of the effects of power relations and power abuse through our friendships and joint experiences. In this chapter it becomes clear that in order to maintain a prophetic stance one needs to be committed to creating opportunities to participate with the other. In a South African society which is still deeply divided along racial and socio-economic lines, this requires effort and sacrifice. In my Narrative Therapy practice I opened up the opportunity for this kind of participation through the 'Other-wise Initiative'. In the DRC it has been even more difficult to find a diversity of members to participate with in order to develop and maintain a prophetic stance. Michelle and Igor Boonzaaier's participation with me personally, but also their participation on the Task Team for Diversity and Inclusively in the Helderberg congregation has strengthened my own voice as well as the prophetic voice of the leadership of the congregation. These kinds of partnerships - between women and men, black and white, those who grew up with privilege and those who had been disadvantaged – have provided invaluable opportunities for prophetic participation.

It is extremely difficult to claim a prophetic voice as a lay woman particularly in a context like the DRC which to a large degree is still trapped in a clerical paradigm and is so male dominated. Women in leadership find themselves in a minority and women who are prophetic form an even smaller minority. In such a pioneering position - where the prophetic stance is a radical position - it is the support of

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other like-minded women and men that assists in developing one's prophetic voice and in holding onto the courage to maintain a prophetic stance. Both in the context of the Helderberg congregation and the moderature of the regional synod I was blessed with people (women and men) who were open and supportive of my prophetic voice. Transformation cannot happen unless there is a joining of voices. I had the privilege to find myself in a 'chorus of voices' in both those contexts.

It is risky and difficult to speak with a prophetic voice and to invite the voicing of injustices by others, as illustrated in my conversation with Paul Barnard and in the example from the One Week Intensive workshop. A safe and caring environment is crucial. I have described what this entails in terms of the workshops and private conversations where one wants to raise awareness in order to support transformation of oppressive ideology and practices. I believe that the embodied participation with people - where relationships of trust become the context for prophetic participation - is important. Once again, the price may be high, as it has been with my embodied participation on the moderature of the Synod. A lot of time, energy and resources were made available with minimal visible progress at times. A prophetic participatory pastoral praxis is sustained through the reflections of participants in order to make the impact of this prophetic work visible. Such praxis would be too difficult to sustain if the voices of participants are not heard. In writing this chapter I have realised once again the powerful place that therapists and ministers occupy in the formation and maintaining of cultural discourses as well as in the maintaining of structures of power and privilege. I am more convinced than ever that prophetic work in these contexts can have powerful ripple effects in South Africa - a society which is desperately in need of healing and transformation.

Chapter Six

Participatory pastoral praxis and practical theology in post-apartheid South Africa

South Africa has been very successful with broad transformation….However, broad transformation in itself is not a panacea. At some point the realization emerge [sic] that it must be followed by deep transformation. The country must also seek a deepening of the transformation so that dignity is restored to those who struggle to make a living in the remotest village of our country. It points to the need for a deepening of equality so that the daughter of the farm worker would have the same opportunity to success as the son of the farmer.

(Botman 2003: 24)

The church of Jesus Christ is indeed a human church, a very human church, of failure and unfaithfulness, yet it remains the church of Christ, and precisely in such difficult times, the thought, speech and actions of the church may matter. Then being public church and doing public theology may be called for, not because it is perfect, but because it is obedient, living witness to the goodness and loving-kindness of the living Lord, who became flesh for us and for our salvation.

(Smit 2006:45)

6.1. Participatory pastoral praxis as public theology

David Tracy (1983:61) wrote that 'practical theology attains its public character by articulating praxis criteria of human transformation as well as explicitly theological ethic.' For Tracey (1983: 75) the notion of public is intrinsically connected to *phronesis* - practical wisdom. This exploration of practical wisdom is reflected in my central research question:

How does a participatory pastoral praxis contribute to social transformation in a post-apartheid South Africa?

This research fits with Tracy's (1983:76) definition of practical theology as 'the mutually critical correlation of the interpreted theory and praxis of the Christian fact and the interpreted theory and praxis of the contemporary situation.' The relation between critical theory and public and practical theology is explored in a publication edited by Browning and Fiorenza (1992). It is clear that public theology - with its concern for the relevance of Christian beliefs, doctrine and our being church within the realities of society and community - is an expression of practical theology.

In the reflections on my personal story in Chapter One I described the way in which I was brought up with the notion that personal salvation was of paramount importance. Smit (2007:28) points out what I have experienced, and increasingly experience within Christian and DRC circles in South Africa today,

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namely that: 'Faith is solely a private matter.' As products of Western modernism - where personal success, self-actualization and fulfilment are propagated and celebrated as the gospel - very religious people have become followers of 'self-secularism' (Smit 2007: 29). The conviction is that as faith and the gospel have very little or nothing to do with public life, public theology makes no sense. Smit (2007: 29) points out that secularisation might not imply a farewell to religiosity, 'but it does mean a farewell to the kind of religiosity that critically intervenes in public political and economic life.' For the purpose of this final chapter I would like to consider the relevance of a participatory pastoral praxis for practical theology as public theology.

Referring to Titus 3:4-7, Smit (2006: 22) summarises the motive for public theology as follows:

> In the specific context of Titus, the aspect that this historically revealed, totally surprising and unmotivated generosity and love of the Triune God, saving people who are totally unworthy and undeserving, should lead to the renewal of the lives of believers, should become active in Christian life based on, corresponding to and reflecting this divine goodness and loving-kindness, receives special emphasis.

Quoting Ridderbos, Smit (2006: 28) points out that it is the person and work of Jesus Christ as 'evidence and pattern' of God's unmerited, unconditional and universal philanthropy that act as motive for the existence of the church and lives of believers. For Calvin, being human involved living with others: without the neighbour we mutilate our own humanness as we cannot be human in solitariness (Smit 2006: 32). As Christians we find and experience this renewed society corresponding to the purpose of God first of all, however fragmentally, in the one, catholic and universal church. Only then does this solidarity become visible and concrete in other relationships – all of which can be torn apart so easily. This is why the church's witness to the new reality of being human in Christ is so important for the whole fabric of public life (Smit 2006: 33).

Smit (2006: 34) explains Calvin's position regarding the public witness of the church:

> So, whether in personal relations, families, the world of work and labour, the political sphere, the life of nations, the reality of races, or the economic terrain – the evangelical social humanism which becomes real in Jesus Christ and through the renewing work of the Holy Spirit binds believers together to serve one another and breaks down all forms of apartheid, separateness, division and discrimination. This is the truth about both the identity and the calling of the church, however fragmented. The church is called to proclaim, embody and witness publicly and actively to this Gospel, according to Calvin.

I work with an understanding of 'public' in its wider, more general descriptive sense, as a term describing the totality of life with others in the world. I work from the assumption that 'the gospel is in all aspects a message *about* the whole of the world *for* the whole of the world' (Smit 2007: 34). This is precisely what made the gospel so extraordinary and sensational right from its first proclamation (Smit 2007: 34). In Calvin we see the deep pathos that the gospel has implications for the fullness of the lives of people together and in God's creation (Smit 2007:35). The church and theology are called upon to discern in new and changing circumstances what their calling entails. This means that public witness always implies situation analysis based on a certain reading and interpretation of the society at that specific time (Smit 2007: 36).

In Chapter Three I did a situation analysis of South Africa seventeen years after liberation. It reveals a society that is deeply divided economically, with unemployment and poverty affecting the lives of at least half of the population (Statistics South Africa 2008:2). This economic divide is still along racial lines. Only a relatively small number of black people live as middle-class citizens and enjoy the privileges that the vast majority of white people have come to feel entitled to (Seekings 2007b:13). Tension is mounting as young black South Africans express an increasingly angry dissatisfaction about being unemployed, living in poverty and having no hope for the future. Despite a liberal constitution, our patriarchal culture is expressed in its most extreme form in the incidents of violence on women and children that are amongst the highest in the world (Ramphele 2008: 103). All around us the AIDS pandemic is devastating the lives of millions of people:

> The new situation requires new ways of public witness, greater social and economic justice, more real reconciliation, forgiveness and healing of historical wounds. It requires more living unity, tolerance, mutual acceptance and co-existence. In also requires new forms of freedom and liberation for all who are still trapped in servitude and fear, from systemic to psychological. It requires, in short, new forms of public theology.

> (Smit 2007: 38)

I have come to understand that what people envisage when they practise public theology is co-determined by their ecclesiological and theological reasons and choices as well as by their understanding of public life: public theology can thus take many different shapes (Smit 2007: 43). The participatory pastoral praxis as practical and public theology proposed in this research reflects an engagement with 'transformational justice' where we relate to each other in ways which open up new possibilities:

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> Transformational justice asks us to go deeper, as we ask difficult questions about why things are the way they are, and how we can change the cycles in which we operate so that we can reduce conflict and create new and equitable relationships.

<div align="right">(Foundation for Church-led Restitution 2011)</div>

Participatory pastoral praxis is born out of an awareness of the inequalities and a willingness to go deeper and ask the difficult questions about why things are the way they are and how to change them. Our painful past of colonialism and apartheid robbed people of resources such as land, education and the opportunity to live a dignified and meaningful life. It robbed them of the intangibles such as a sense of safety, self-worth, understanding of one's rights and a sense of belonging in one's own country (Foundation for Church-led Restitution 2011). Patriarchal culture – still a reality in all of our social and cultural contexts – ensures that it is women, particularly black women, who are the most vulnerable in terms of injustices like poverty, AIDS, violence and abuse (physical, emotional and economic).

We are a deeply religious nation, but our churches have been profoundly affected by our political past. The church remains largely segregated resulting in the perpetuation of segregation of resources. The church, in general, supports patriarchal ideology through its language, teaching, practices and structures (Tatman 1996:214). Practical theology has been dominated by white men until very recently. Within the field of both psychology and pastoral therapy, professional training and qualifications - as well as service delivery – have been racially skewed both historically and in the present. The training of psychologists and pastoral therapists is based on models developed from an intra-psychic Western world perspective where little account is given to context and social problems. The intra-psychic focus - and the individualistic world-view which these models reflect - requires many hours of individual psychotherapy (Swartz & Gibson 2001: 39-40). In poor communities this kind of service is neither economically sustainable nor practically accessible. This factor perpetuates uneven service-delivery as professional therapists struggle to make meaningful contributions in communities where poverty and social problems significantly impact clients' lives. Therapists might even do damage and deepen the injustices if they are not aware of the effect of unjust social factors on individual lives (Waldegrave 2003: 29). They could do this by imposing meaning-structures that label and pathologize people who suffer social injustices or 'blame the victims' and give up hope when people do not respond to interventions (Weingarten 2010: 11-12).

My raised awareness about the injustices and inequalities caused by apartheid - and the extent to which the Afrikaner and DRC are responsible for these - marked a significant turning point in my life. Even more painful has been the awareness of my own complicity as a passive bystander and a beneficiary of generations of injustices. I wanted to rectify the situation. Embarking on the journey of restitution has taken me to places that I could never have imagined. I keep discovering more and more layers of the effect of the injustices of our apartheid past and its deep interrelatedness with our patriarchal culture and theology. As I engage in what has developed into a participatory pastoral praxis, I keep uncovering the enormity and complexities of the challenges that we face. The personal sacrifices have been significant. Yet, after twelve years, I have also witnessed hopeful ripples and experienced the deep joy of participating in ways that fit better with my understanding of a loving God, as reflected in this research.

6.2. The implications of a participatory praxis for pastoral therapy and psychology

I have indicated (in Chapter One) how I was forced to examine critically both the theology from my DRC upbringing and the models from social sciences in which I had been trained. The reading of liberation theology, especially the work of feminist practical theologians, has guided me in developing my praxis. Narrative Therapy, with its emphasis on the social context of people's lives, provides a good fit in terms of practices and understandings for working in a context of social transformation and healing. The participatory pastoral praxis - which I have described in Chapter Two and illustrated with examples in Chapters Four and Five - is based on a combination of theory and practices from Narrative approaches to therapy and liberation theology. It is an interdisciplinary approach. Praxis involves *the ongoing integration of action and reflection* in such a way that theory and action are both constantly modified in the light of the other (Mc Bride 1996: 183)[133]. My tentative first steps in applying these ideas in practice were strengthened as I referred back to the theory to deepen my understanding. I went back to clients and communities and participated in actions, then documented these actions, together with participants' feedback and took this back to the theory. In the process of reflection between action and theory my colleagues in my training practice provided invaluable feedback and insights. Over time I modified my practice and integrated new knowledges into the theory that I was working with.

Although in this research document I have identified ten characteristics of a participatory praxis, yet it is almost impossible to separate the one characteristic from the other. Even though they need to be read together as they are so interrelated, I will now focus on the distinctiveness of each. I will bring

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[133] See discussion of praxis in Chapter Two.

them each under the spotlight and discuss their contribution to therapeutic work, both in the context of psychology[134] and pastoral therapy, in light of South Africa's deep need for transformational justice.

- The personal is the professional is political

According to Edwards and Sen (in Du Toit 2010a: 263) it is the personal transformation of individuals, often based on their faith convictions, to work against injustice that can bring about the more sustainable social transformation. They say that 'energies unleashed by serious and deep rooted personal transformation can fuel the search for more humane social and economic systems as little else can.' In a participatory praxis it is this personal transformation - which gets translated into personal and professional political action – that is at the heart of the work. It is crucial to understand that political injustices are not only related to structural injustices in society, but that these play out in the power relations and discourses that affect our most private lives. Personal understandings and experiences inform and motivate professional action. These might inspire professional changes that enable contributions to a wider society that will, in turn, be transformative of individuals and communities. My personal understanding of my own position - as both beneficiary of apartheid and part of the oppressing group - is a strong motivating factor for my acts of restitution. At the same time, my experiences of oppression as a woman in a patriarchal society act as point of reference when engaging with injustices: this awareness motivates me to work towards gender justice and equality. In his discussion of public theology, Smit (2007: 29) refers to the feminist rejection of the distinction between public and private. Feminist scholars point out that the opinions, values and actions that form part of public life have profound effects on people's most private lives. It is often women who are the victims of this. Feminists have thus pointed out that it is often those matters that are not allowed to be discussed 'in public' that most profoundly cry out for public attention and criticism (Smit 2007: 29). Experiences in our professional work for social justice also change us personally so that the way in which we participate in our personal relationships with friends, family and within our faith communities reflects our passion for justice. In this way we become a voice for the marginalized and oppressed, expand our social circles and take a stand against the ideologies that inform the injustices.

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[134] I believe that working in the field of psychology as Christian psychologist is part of my Christian call and that I also exert influence in that field that reflects my Christian beliefs.

- Participation with *the other*: Crossing bridges

For Calvin, salvation comes to all people. The specific emphasis on the inclusion of all classes of people implies that public theology:

> ...involves practising and demonstrating the same all-embracing goodness towards all people, including those regarded the lowliest and most degraded according to human standards and based on ulterior motives and considerations.

(Smit 2007: 24)

Denise Ackermann (1996b:34) describes how 'years of racist indoctrination within visible, rigid, legislated structures divided our country into "us" (the powerful, all-knowing, morally superior and God-called minority) and "them" (the ignorant, heathen masses).' It requires determined effort to cross these bridges that divide us even today as rich and poor, black and white. Otherwise our paths might never cross in our consultation rooms or in the congregations where we serve. This means that therapists must get out of the comfort of their consultation rooms to meet people that represent 'the other' in terms of social class, race, religion or culture in their own contexts. As reflected in the research, I have found schools and Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) to be good connecting points with communities in need from where to volunteer services and build relationships. Seeking to form relationships and share stories with black colleagues, friends and students has assisted me enormously in understanding the effect of racism and religious oppression. I have also had to confront my own prejudices that come from living in such a deeply divided society for so long. In a participatory praxis I propose that teaching contexts should be utilized as safe spaces to explore injustices like racism, sexism and classism with colleagues and students from the helping professions. This creates opportunities to raise awareness and sensitize us in terms of the language and discourses that support oppressive ideologies. I have indicated, through the feedback from colleagues who participated in training, how the values that inform a participatory praxis can also assist to provide safe spaces for the sharing and compassionate witnessing of personal stories in training contexts. This sharing often leads to personal healing and transformation. As Narrative Therapy is embedded in post-modern theory, the teaching of Narrative Therapy provides ideal opportunities for the exploration of language, discourse and power relations. While learning the theory and practising the skills participants also witness and share personal stories. Since both the professions of psychology and pastoral therapy are still dominated by white people, I had to make a special effort to encourage diversity in the workshops and consultation groups that I present: I have built up a data-base of black colleagues that I invite on sponsorships so that training groups can benefit from their participation. My supervision of colleagues who work in marginalised communities has created opportunities for me to

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be exposed to these communities and the social problems that affect the lives of people living there. Black colleagues have often participated with me as cultural consultants to my work in communities that represent their cultural groups (Waldegrave 2003:22).

- Participating *with* people: Power relations and dominant cultural narratives

Narrative Therapy provides a dramatic shift from those therapeutic models where the therapist is invited into a position of knowing *for* people what is *wrong* with them and finding solutions *for* them. This places the therapist in a very powerful, all-knowing and superior position, while clients are placed in a fairly powerless, ignorant and pathological position. Narrative practices assist us in taking up a therapeutic stance that enables a more equal power-sharing relationship. The therapist is invited into a position of 'appreciative ally' where we stand in solidarity with our clients (Madsen 2007: 23). This relational stance is characterized by 'a spirit of respect, connection, curiosity and hope' where we believe in the possibility for change and build on the resourcefulness of clients and communities (Madsen 2007: 23,28). By working collaboratively *with* people we honour the expertise of our clients as the best expert on their own lives and experiences. A participatory praxis wants to know and act *with* people rather than impose values and ideas onto them. A very useful practice in Narrative Therapy is the use of externalizing language to talk about the problems that people encounter in their lives (White 2007:9). By objectifying the problem rather than the person, the therapist is able to join the client in deconstructing the problem instead of labelling the person as the problem. Problems thrive on dominant cultural narratives that invite people and communities to believe in their 'truth status'. By deconstructing these 'truths' people are invited to consider alternative meanings and knowledges that might have become marginalized in their lives. In this research my conversations with Yvonne illustrate how we challenged the conclusions of being a failure in life by listening for accounts in her story that spoke of alternative possibilities. Following Foucault who spoke about power and resistance, narrative practitioners believe that whenever people experience the 'normalizing gaze' of dominant cultural narratives there is also a story of resisting the power of these dominant narratives (White 2002: 36).This is what we listen for and ask questions about, as illustrated in the participation with Yvonne and with the Drakenstein Hospice group who resisted the dominant ideas reflected in the performance appraisal. Following Calvin, Smit (2006: 23) explains that Christian doctrine is sound because of its *effect*. My understanding is that our accountability is not to some fixed scheme in our Christian lives, but that the church has to continuously reflect and discuss on how to practise sound doctrine in our lives and our changing societies. For public theology this implies accountability about the effect of our actions on those with whom we participate.

- Participating with *awareness*

Dominant cultural narratives also affect therapists and our belief systems. Thus if therapists are not being made aware continuously of the effect of these cultural assumptions on our own lives and belief systems we might participate in the perpetuation of their destructive effects on client's and community's lives. In the case example in Chapter Four where I consult with Yvonne, I might have been caught up, together with Yvonne, in the strong discourse that a woman in her thirties should find a partner in order to break her sense of loneliness. But, by resisting that dominant cultural belief as the only possibility, I am able to ask about other meaningful relationships in her life instead on focusing solely on 'how to find a husband.' Similarly, instead of accepting that the neighbourhoods or families of the children who were stealing that I met in the Muslim school are intrinsically bad or criminal, my awareness of the injustices of the past invited me to ask questions instead about the history of oppression and the resulting poverty and social problems. For many years I believed that the way my father looked after the coloured farm labourers was good Christian behaviour, until I started seeing their lack of prospects and hopes for the future, the social problems and the huge discrepancies between my life and theirs. My experience within a participatory praxis has been that as therapists we need to have our own cultural assumptions challenged in order to open up possibilities for deconstructive conversations with our clients. As therapists, we need to learn how to constantly challenge the 'truths' that guide our own lives in order to understand that there are many possibilities within the greyness of life. I have illustrated how I use the Narrative Therapy training sessions to assist therapists in developing an awareness of cultural discourses and their effect of the lives of our clients, but also on our own lives and the assumptions that we take with us to our participation with clients and communities. By striving for diversity amongst participants in the training activities, a diversity of world views, experiences and understandings is represented. This assists in raising awareness about cultural discourses and their effects. I have argued the importance of an implicit or explicit situational analysis for any instance of the church's public witness. As Smit (2007: 36) points out, this situational analysis will be based on a certain reading and interpretation of the moment, environment and society. The more voices we include, the better informed this analysis will be.

- Participating in *voicing*

A participatory praxis emphasizes the importance of voicing the trauma and injustices precisely because in contexts of abuse of power the voices and experiences of certain members of society become marginalized and silenced. The dominant voices are the voices of those who have power: the voices of men over those of women and children; the voices of white people over the voices of black people; and the voices of rich, educated people over the voices of poor, illiterate people.

Transformational justice will not be possible unless everybody's voices not only are heard but also carry equal weight and significance. In all therapeutic work we emphasize the importance of listening. While I agree fully that listening is crucial to all healing and transformational work, I do not take for granted that people will necessarily voice their experiences. The silences that surround sexual and domestic violence are examples where women might spend years in therapy for all sorts of ailments that result from being violated, but not necessarily voice these injustices or learn to speak about them as injustices so that they can act in transformative ways. I have indicated the three main benefits of voicing trauma and injustices. Firstly, there is tremendous healing power in speaking about these, especially in the presence of a compassionate listener (Herman 2010:1). Through the storying of our lives we can derive meaning that assists in formation of identity and agency which assists us in taking steps to live the lives we prefer. Secondly, the voicing of injustices assists us in reconnecting with others as a community of concern. Silence has an isolating effect, while voicing makes connection with others possible (Herman 2010: 63). Thirdly, the voicing of injustices provides the opportunity for action towards addressing the cultural practices and ideologies that support the injustices or violations. In this regard it might be helpful to consider the narrower, more specific meaning of 'public' in 'public theology' - a normative concept which indicates an ideal that developed together with Western democratic culture (Smit 2007: 39). 'Public' refers to the specific sphere of human life together where public opinion can be formed which has the common good at heart and which wants to promote human dignity and justice. The formation of public opinion for the welfare of society happens 'according to practices based on inclusion, mutual respect and procedural justice, by way of rational debate and persuasion, in space devoid of coercion' (Smit 2007: 39). I believe that the church and theology can give shape to the gospel by participating in such conversations.

- *Embodied* participation

A participatory praxis implies literally moving from being apart to taking part. When I made the shift from my former psychology practice to participatory praxis, the change that had the most dramatic impact on my life and my work was the embodied act of walking out of my consultation room in middle-class society, driving to and physically entering other communities. As a white South African, apartheid allowed me a very limited frame of reference about life in South Africa. Since liberation the economic divides between communities have remained or deepened. My initial invitation to people from poor communities to use my services at the private hospital where I had my rooms failed abysmally and eventually led to my depression. I was unable to begin to imagine and engage meaningfully with the cultural experiences and understandings, living conditions and the complexity of social problems that people were describing. The meaning systems and actions that worked so well for my middle-class clients clearly just did not fit. There was no hope as far as I could see. Narrative

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Therapy taught me that hope and agency lies with the people and in the communities. I learnt to give up on 'seeking white solutions to black problems' (Skosana in Foundation for Church-led Restitution 2011). Through my embodied participation in the Muslim school, home-visits with the Drakenstein Hospice staff, visits to Yvonne and visits to the homes and workplaces of my black colleagues, I have come to touch, taste, hear, see and smell cultural differences, but also the despair of poverty, illness, addiction, illiteracy, unemployment and shame. I have also witnessed courage, community, survival, faith, resistance and resilience that has inspired me beyond my wildest dreams. Through my embodied participation I have grown in my hope for what can be achieved when we participate in building on sparkles of hope, even in the most limited life circumstances. In this research I have illustrated how people are changed through embodied participation. The responses of my Norwegian colleagues and from our friends at the Bridge building function with the Muslim community bear witness to this. To read statistics, hear reports through the media or even read stories does not have the same transformative impact as the embodied witnessing of people's lives in direct contact with them as fellow human beings. As Sandra said in the intensive workshop – now that she has met Steven and Moses and has witnessed their stories she looks at black people differently. In the past twelve years I have become otherwise – a wisdom that I could only gain through embodied participation. Christina Landman (2007: 201) writes that public theologians should participate in the healing of hurts of the past and in opening up avenues towards the future. Public theologians should assist caregivers to consider the role of religion 'in providing community counselling, in restoring respect and fun in intimate relationships that are suffering because of gender inequalities.'

- Participation *together with* others: Joining hands

A participatory praxis poses a fundamental challenge to our individualistic culture. It was impossible to deal with the overwhelming and devastating social problems related to poverty and gender oppression from the 'lone-ranger' position in the privacy of my consultation room. While offering a caring therapeutic relationship indeed has benefits, these benefits are limited if clients have to leave the one hour a week consultation to go back and face their bleak life circumstances all on their own. Narrative Therapy challenged me to think about identity as a social project – as constantly being constructed in interaction with others (Weingarten in Freedman & Combs 1996:17). If this is true it means that the therapist's affirming voice and compassionate witnessing of the client is just one voice trying to confirm the client's preferred identity development in a few sessions once a week. Meanwhile, the rest of the client's life might be filled with disqualifying identity experiences. Narrative Therapy provides various practices that assist in inviting the voices of compassionate and appreciative audiences, witnesses and teams into the therapeutic work (White 2007:165). Through re-membering conversations these witnesses from the client's life can be recruited from the past or present to assist

in the construction of preferred identity descriptions (White 2007:129). I have illustrated how Yvonne's list of team members assisted in reminding her of her value in relation to others. I participated constantly as a compassionate witness to her work and relationships in Villiersdorp. I witnessed and subsequently documented in a letter how the Drakenstein staff members supported one another and, by reading the letter at the AGM, more people were called to witness and reflect on their work and relationships. We recruited audiences to witness the history of the Strand Muslim community and the Norwegians became witnesses to the work of the Drakenstein Hospice team. The documentation of these compassionate witnessing experiences in letters and other documents assisted clients and communities. It gave them lenses to hold onto through which to view themselves when disqualifying voices tried to convince them of failure to measure up. By joining clients with others in their lives, or strengthening clients' existing connections, the therapist becomes de-centred in the participation in therapeutic work so that power and responsibility become shared. In this way hopeful developments in clients' lives can be supported by others long after the therapeutic work has been terminated (Morgan 2006:72). Participatory praxis in communities does not always have to involve therapeutic work with people in the community; it could also be done through joining hands with individuals and teams working in communities. My participation with Yvonne serves as example. Similarly, my participation as a supervisor and a staff support person in the Drakenstein Hospice and as a compassionate witness and friend in the Strand Muslim community strengthened them in their lives and work. Smit (2006:43) reminds us that Christians are called to witness publicly to their faith. This public witness of faith involves both words and deeds. He concludes that the search for the characteristics of a public life of the church is the very nature of the Gospel itself.

- Participation in *social transformation*: Raising awareness

Participatory pastoral praxis is not just interested in the healing and transformation of those who have been or are subjected to injustices. Equally important for transformative justice is the participation in the healing and transformation of those who oppress(ed), benefitted or were/are bystanders. I have indicated how the DRC and the psychology profession played a big part in the production of ideology about the inferiority of black people and in supporting patriarchal ideology. Both psychology and the church are domains where knowledge is produced with significant power and influence in society. Participating in the deconstruction of racist, classist and patriarchal ideology within these domains of influence can therefore significantly reduce the damaging effect of these ideologies on the lives of individuals and communities in South Africa. In this research I describe and give examples of my participation as a Narrative Therapy trainer and as a leader in the DRC where I focus on raising awareness of injustices (of the past and present) and work towards deconstructing racist, classist and patriarchal ideology. By sharing my personal story I challenge colleagues to participate in acts of

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restitution. By raising awareness, providing training, offering supervision and being an active witness I encourage and support colleagues from psychology, pastoral therapy and from the church to participate in impoverished communities. Through my embodied participation as a woman and a feminist within leadership positions in the DRC I challenge patriarchal practices, structures and ideologies and draw attention to the interrelatedness of race, gender and poverty. A participatory praxis aimed at transformative justice seeks every possible opportunity to raise awareness and engage communities in acts of witnessing and acknowledging of injustices. I expanded my participation in the Strand Muslim community to include a Bridge-building function, where white colleagues and members of our congregation had the opportunity to witness the hardship, survival and culture of the Muslim community. My Norwegian colleagues were invited to become aware and empowered witnesses to the hardship of people living with HIV/AIDS in our context.

- Participation as *interrelatedness*

When a participatory approach challenges the Western individualistic self-understandings it also means that it acknowledges our interrelatedness – ubuntu – as humans. Tutu (1999: 31) articulates ubuntu as: 'I am human because I belong. I participate. I share.' Nobuntu Matholeni[135], a pastoral therapist, explained that the spirit of ubuntu means that the individual's pain becomes everyone's pain. In this dissertation I have indicated that the injustices of apartheid have affected and hurt our whole society. My body reacted violently to the impact of the full realization of the pain and trauma caused by a system in which I was part of the oppressing group and a beneficiary who continues to live a privileged life. My healing is bound up with the healing of the rest of our society. I cannot enjoy my privileges without being reminded of the suffering of others around me. I was struck by the way in which my Norwegian colleagues from their far-North country experienced the interrelatedness of their lives with those of suffering communities in this country in the far-South. Because we know that we are interrelated we participate and we share and we become changed people. Narrative Therapy taught me about 'taking-it-back' practices whereby therapists are encouraged to tell their clients about the ways in which the therapist's life has been touched or impacted through their participation. There are various examples of letters that I wrote about the way in which my own life was touched and changed by participating with various individuals and groups (for instance, letters to Yvonne, Mr Fanie, the Muslim community's Heritage Day committee and the Drakenstein Hospice staff group). The taking-it-back practices provide opportunities to acknowledge the interrelatedness of our lives and serve to equalize power relations as the therapist acknowledges that she or he also learns from the client or community. Both parties have something to offer. A participatory praxis is not charity whereby one

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[135] Perspective shared with me in a private supervision conversation in 2011.

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continually gives and the other continually receives. We participate knowing that we will learn, that we will heal and be inspired. Thus by naming specific meaningful experiences and what these contributed to our lives, those values are confirmed and strengthened in both parties.   In this way '[t]he lives of believers are renewed as part of their public confession and witness to this gracious God' (Smit 2007:43).

- Participating in restitution: Giving back

Therapeutic service delivery in South Africa is grossly uneven. There is a high concentration of psychologists and pastoral therapists in middle-class communities, while poor communities - where trauma is significantly more pronounced - are completely under-resourced. The only way in which this discrepancy in service delivery can possibly be addressed is when therapists from middle-class communities volunteer time and resources to work in poor communities. This implies a radical deconstruction of economic orthodoxy according to which time = money and money = success. It requires a passionate commitment to transformative justice and a commitment to restitution which involves financial sacrifice. When middle-class professional people serve in marginalized communities it also implies less time and energy to compete in mainstream professional endeavours with less visibility and reduced status in your profession and middle-class society. It might also require time and funds for training that will equip you better for the work in poor communities. My decision to volunteer time in impoverished communities and to offer sponsorships for training to black colleagues and those who work in poor communities challenged my family to embrace a counter-cultural value-system and life-style. I gave up a lucrative practice and used personal funds to do Narrative Therapy   training.[136] I spend more time away from home and work longer hours while I am earning far less money. Our home has become a place of work[137] and our family the hosts of numerous colleagues who come to teach. By making these sacrifices my family participates in and has become committed to restitution work.

6.3. Participatory praxis and transformative justice in the DRC

Eiesland (1998:103) articulates a feminist understanding of the role that practical theology could play in transformational justice. A participatory praxis as described and illustrated in this research reflects what she describes below:

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[136] I bought many books, attended workshops in South Africa and made trips overseas to attend workshops and conferences (see appendix P for list of books bought as well as list of workshops and conferences attended – locally and overseas).
[137] I have my practice at home and all four of my monthly meetings with consultation groups as well as the one week intensive workshops take place in our home. This enables me to charge lower fees for training in order to remain more inclusive.

> Practical theology can be a vehicle for pragmatic, socially informed moral and theological analysis. This type of practical theology shares such emphases from the sociological tradition of critical theory as sensitivity to power and power relations in all social situations; recognition of the situated character of the production of all knowledge; and advocacy for improvement in people's lives. Practical theology that underscores the particularity of our circumstances can also reveal the situated character of our struggles with God and as God's people.
>
> (Eiesland 1998:103)

Within the DRC I have experienced my 'struggles with God and as God's people.' Hendriks (2010:275) explains that the DRC, like other mainline denominations, is 'moving away from being an institutionalized church in the wake of the Enlightenment to **becoming a missional church** in the wake of an emerging ecumenical missionary paradigm.' This movement is based on the belief that theology is contextual and missional by its very nature and that it should be involved in addressing society's issues and problems (Hendriks 2010:276). Pointing out the enormous challenges that we face in Southern Africa, Hendriks (2010:275) emphasizes how the church is ideally situated to make a difference: it reaches more people on a weekly basis than any other organization and has a better infrastructure than even the government in serving, connecting and influencing people.

The paradigm shift which Hendriks (2010: 276) describes - from an ontological paradigm to a hermeneutic one - seems to move closer to the paradigm within which a participatory praxis is situated. There is the move away from a clerical paradigm which fitted the one-dimensional, rational, subject-object approach with its deductive style and positivistic triumphal attitude in doing theology. The move toward a hermeneutical approach implies a greater sensitivity to context and is more tentative: it understands that our viewpoints are limited in terms of greater realities. Such an approach can lead to a greater humility and dependence on God's grace and guidance. Hendriks (2010:276) points out that grounded theory and participatory action research are replacing top-down leadership styles and deductive theories and research methodologies.

I want to argue that a participatory praxis joins and supports the missional agenda of the church. It puts a particularly strong emphasis on the church's responsibility towards transformative justice both within society and also within the church. This means that the DRC has to take cognizance of its apartheid past where racial oppression resulted in gross economic injustices and deepening inequalities. It has to face the fact that its public witness is seriously compromised because it is still a racially segregated church. It has to account for its contribution to the oppression of women (both inside the church and in society at large) through its patriarchal ideology, structures, and practices.

In Chapter Three I described briefly how the **Belhar confession** - with its emphasis on the unity of the church, reconciliation in Christ, and justice of God - was born in and adopted by the DRMC as a fourth confession in 1986. Although the DRC has accepted that the content of the confession is biblical and in line with tradition, it has not accepted it as a full confession. As mentioned in Chapter Three the acceptance of the Belhar confession by the synod of the Western and Southern Cape in May 2011 was followed by a surprising vote at the General Synod meeting in October 2011in favour of the process to make the Belhar Confession part of the confessionals of the Dutch Reformed Church. At this meeting I was elected onto the Moderamen of the General Synod. My concern now is with the practices that will give 'hands and feet' to the words that we confess[138]. What does our acceptance of the Belhar confession mean? 'Treachery is the acceptance of Belhar in theory only. Obedience lies in the doing' (Naudé 2010: 103). If a participatory pastoral praxis is to have relevance to the DRC it would be important to consider how it could assist the church with *the doing of the Belhar confession* in post-liberation South Africa.

In this research document I have described various examples of a **participatory pastoral praxis** as it relates to the **DRC.** In Chapter Four I described and discussed the participation of Yvonne Barnard in the Villiersdorp community which involved participation with the local DRC congregation as well as the Brackenfell congregation. In Chapter Five I wrote about my participation in the Helderberg DRC congregation and reflected on my participation as a member of the moderature of the regional synod. I will now discuss the implication of each of the ten characteristics of a participatory praxis in terms of the DRC's call to transformational justice - to being a missional church - and will refer to its relevance in terms of the three central themes of the Belhar confession: unity, reconciliation and justice.

- The personal is the professional is political

Du Toit (2010b:432) explains how a dualistic spirituality with a 'spiritualized concept of salvation, which neglects social concerns' has been identified as a foremost reason for the church's weakness in being an agent of change in society. Holistic spirituality is a biblical spirituality where viewing life and living one's faith is an indivisible whole. Jesus Christ's life and teaching is a perfect example of this. In terms of eschatology this means: 'God's faithful are called to be living both a participatory lifestyle in living out the Kingdom in the "now" and an anticipatory lifestyle based on the hope of the future consummation of the Kingdom' (Du Toit 2010b: 435). If all believers can understand that their faith is not just a personal and private affair, their eyes might truly open to the many, many ways in which they might become involved in transformative justice in society. When referring to the public task of the

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[138] I have been appointed as the coordinator of task teams for human dignity on a regional as well as at General synod level and am hopeful about the possibilities that this will hold for the church.

church, Smit (2007:37) points out that the institutions of civil society 'call up individuals from their self-centred small worlds of private happiness to take responsibility jointly for the quality of life in the neighbourhood and environment.' Since white people in South Africa have benefited significantly from privileged educational opportunities, we can make skills and knowledge available and, through relationships, also open up opportunities for less privileged people. I have explained how the analysis of my own position in society - in the light of power structures and past and present privilege – has assisted me in taking a stand for justice in the church and in offering training, supervision and therapeutic skills to redress injustices. Most people have had some experience of injustice in their lives from which they can draw to gain empathy for people who are oppressed and marginalized. Smit (2007:39) challenges the church and every believer to reflect on the ways in which the gospel and Christian life is interwoven with everyday existence.

- Participating with *the other:* Reconciliation

Allan Boesak (2009: 44) emphasizes that Belhar celebrates the diversity that comes from being created in the image of God and sharing humanity in all its fullness. This includes the diversity of skin colour, gender, culture and sexual orientation. He makes it very clear that it is our calling, gift and obligation to live together as a reconciled community. Being a missionary church means just that – participation with a bigger community. The DRC struggles with becoming an inclusive and diverse community. I have given a number of examples of the exclusive nature of the church and the pain that is perpetuated through this. I have described examples of the healing potential when members of the church made the effort to participate with people from other races, cultures or religious groups. Crossing the bridge, meeting on the bridge or working together with others in a participatory way can assist the DRC in acts of healing and in building relationships of trust that might assist in the reconciliation process and ultimately to reuniting with the UDRC. Gender reconciliation has been pointed out as a complex and time-consuming process within the DRC. Within a participatory praxis we believe that as redeemed human beings the accidental features of our concrete existence (for example, as woman, African, gay, disabled, HIV positive, poor) 'are affirmed in Christ, become sources of joy, and are in the faith community no longer grounds for exclusion and marginalization but exactly seen as rich, diverse gifts, contributing to the building up of the church' (Naudé 2010: 182). Smit (2006: 35) explains that the contextual debates are real, difficult, controversial and unavoidable, but have to be continually argued in the Christian community as 'the authenticity of our faith hangs on the seriousness with which we see and address our own failures in these spheres of our being human together.' The questions we are challenged to consider in our public witness as churches are:

What will it mean – concretely, practically, in everyday reality- when Christ eliminates man's desires to consider woman as inferior, when Christians in the world of work meet their brethren without any kind of discrimination, when nationalism is no longer hostile to the faith and strangers are welcomed, when all divisions between races are abolished, when social bonds between rich and poor are restored, and when mutual gifts are conferred and the believers' goods and services are redistributed both within and outside communities?

(Smit 2006:35)

- Participating *with* others: Doing *with* rather than doing *for* or giving *to*

A participatory praxis respects that we cannot know for others what is good for them. It is therefore a people-centred approach: people are consulted about their needs and priorities instead of these being imposed from the outside. The church has a long history of works of charity. Du Toit (2010b:438) writes that 'the two most dominant forms of community involvement by congregations are in the form of relief and welfare or a so-called "first generation" approach.' The danger of this kind of involvement is that people do not develop or experience a sense of human dignity, self-worth or agency and that these actions might even be an 'assault on the dignity of the recipient' as it 'makes very clear who the giver and who the recipient is' (Foundation for Church-led Restitution 2011). In Chapter Four I described the way in which the lives of women and children on the farms in the Villiersdorp area were transformed when they started participating in training for and eventually taking over the responsibility for many of the Good News clubs on the farms and in schools. Yvonne's work is based on a people-centred approach where a lot of time is spent on building relationships and participating in activities with people. This sensitivity to the power-relations and for honouring people's wishes, cultural and religious beliefs is also reflected in the performance appraisal that the Drakenstein Hospice staff developed. It was emphasized in the feedback from the members of the moderature of the synod that respectful participation with women requires careful listening and respect for the fact that men would not be able to 'fix things' for women or tell women what is 'really the problem.' Once again, this is a reminder to the church and all believers that our doctrine cannot be rigidly imposed, but has to take its effect into account as we live in every changing circumstance and face those who live in ways radically different from ours.

- Participating with *awareness* of cultural discourses

Despite huge efforts the DRC and URC have not been able to reconcile. Although the offices are now officially open to women, the leadership in the DRC is still overwhelmingly male. This research has shown that women struggle to participate with equality within its structures. 'True reconciliation is not possible without justice' states Smit (1984: 55) in his discussion of the Belhar confession. In the stories from my participation with Yvonne I have described just how unaware we often are within the DRC of discourses of race and class. Yvonne kept on participating with awareness – the awareness of the shame of poverty and the risks involved in taking children from different communities to participate in camps together. Through her awareness she managed to facilitate reconciliation between communities in her area and beyond. In Chapter Five I described how our awareness - of our respective positions as coloured and white women within South African society as well as our awareness of patriarchy –has assisted Michelle Boonzaaier and me in negotiating a relationship of mutual learning and support within the DRC. A participatory praxis acknowledges that all of us are influenced by and live embedded in cultural discourses. We are encouraged to reflect constantly on our discursive positioning within these discourses so that we can participate with others with an awareness that would make just relationships possible. My struggle to participate in the DRC leadership illustrates that those men, like Paul Barnard and the majority of the men on the synod moderature, who are willing to reflect in this way are able to participate with an awareness that opens up possibilities for justice in the relationships between men and women. Some of the implications for public theology are that:

> If church and theology want to give public witness in typical modern societies, if they want to make a difference for the better, if they want to serve justice, peace, freedom and reconciliation, then their actions will always depend on how they understand the specific society. This is why churches and believers often ask what the challenges are that face the church today or what the calling of the church is in our situation today.

(Smit 2007: 36)

- Participating in *voicing*

How will the church hear the voices of 'the other' if they are not present? How will 'the other' be able to speak if they are always made to understand that they are inferior and lack authority? How will the church know and understand the pain of injustices, violence and violations if they are not spoken? How will the church heal if we do not get the opportunity to tell our stories? How will we be reconciled if we do not share experiences and build honest and equal relationships? I have described the history of how the DRC has oppressed women by keeping them out of academic theological discourse,

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church offices and leadership structures. In our church we are also living far removed from black people (who are often poor); moreover, congregations in the cities are seldom integrated in terms of social class. A participatory praxis emphasizes the voicing of injustices and trauma for the reasons given above. The healing and raising of awareness that happens when opportunities are created for the voicing of injustice were evident when the members of the Helderberg congregation participated with the Muslim community in the Bridge-building function. The male members of the DRC executive who invited me to voice my pain at the injustices gave feedback about the transformative effect it had on their lives. In my relationships with Yvonne Barnard, Michelle Boonzaaier and Franziska Andrag-Meyer the voicing had a strengthening and healing effect as we developed deeper understanding of our positions as well as language in which to voice it within the context of the wider church. South Africa is in a situation where tremendous challenges face the church and society in terms of public witness: the search for social and economic justice and the healing of historic wounds through real reconciliation and forgiveness (Smit 2007: 38). All of this implies opportunities to share stories, to name and voice injustices. Landman (2007: 204) states explicitly that the public theologian is the voice of the voiceless. She points out that after liberation many South Africans find themselves to be voiceless in the face of crime, violence in intimate relationships, economic oppression and fundamentalist intolerance.

- *Embodied* participation

Learning *about* people's suffering – through research, personal stories and theory – or speaking *about* people's suffering - from the pulpit, in meetings, at conferences and in lecture halls - will not establish relationships with those who represent 'the other' or introduce us to their worlds in the same transformative ways as our embodied participation *with* them will do. Visiting 'the other' in the townships, talking *with* them rather than *about* them, eating with them and sitting together at the Lord's table will be significantly more powerful in bridging the divides, creating understanding and transforming individuals and relationships. Koopman (2009:74) acknowledges Jaap Durant[139] for helping to develop an ecclesiology of embodiment. Durant emphasized that, in a quest for church unity, people who were previously separated should be brought together through deliberate efforts. He also argued that structural unity assists in addressing problems of attitude as well as practical problems among people who have been estranged for long periods. Smit (2006: 38) describes how Karl Barth viewed the church by saying 'in the knowledge of the humanity of God one must take seriously, affirm, and thankfully acknowledge Christendom, the Church. We must, each in their own

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[139]Prof Durant was a member of the commission which wrote the Belhar Confession.

place, take part in its life and join in its service.' This implies, that 'there is no private Christianity' and that 'theology cannot be carried on in private lighthouses' (Barth in Smit 2006: 39). Smit points out that when we confess that we believe in the Holy Spirit it also implies that we believe in one, holy catholic and apostolic church. In this research, the Villiersdorp community and the people at the Bridge-building function do this embodied participation in ways that have transformative effects. The task team for diversity at Helderberg congregation makes a significant contribution by developing a document based on the embodied participation of a diverse group of people. Through our embodied participation around the meeting table of the synod's moderature, Franziska Andrag-Meyer and I disrupt the male exclusivity that marked previous meetings. Through our embodied participation we significantly influence these meetings to think about gender and power relationships and the complexities involved in becoming more inclusive as a church. Landman (2007: 204) stresses that it is the specific task of women public theologians to embody the spiritualities of the voiceless in public places of worship, through changing sexist, racist, capitalist, patriarchal and hierarchical religious language and creating safe spaces in the religious community for the voiceless.

- Participating *together with*: showing solidarity and joining hands

What are the implications if we confess that God is in a special way 'the God of the destitute, the poor, and the wronged and that He calls his Church to follow Him in this' (Belhar art.4.1)? What is our theological response to a culture of economic marginalization and selfish individualism? Naudé's (2010: 213) response to these two questions is that our cue to being truly human lies in Jesus' example as he responded to the physical and spiritual needs of those marginalized by culture and his teaching that it is better to give than to receive.   Naudé (2010: 215-16) encourages the church to act at local and global levels by reminding us that churches have always been 'effective redistributive agencies, playing indispensable roles in the lives of the poor, the hungry, the illiterate, the sick, and the marginalized.' I have argued that this kind of care is best done by joining hands with others who have similar interests – and also with those on the receiving end of the care. I think that care for the poor in a collaborative and community way is best illustrated in this research by Yvonne Barnard's work in Villiersdorp. In this case example local congregations take hands and are joined by people from the farm workers' community as well as a congregation from the city. In terms of the gender transformation work in the church I have illustrated that men have to participate in solidarity with women: women cannot do this work alone. Nevertheless, women joining hands with women is particularly important: it is in relationship with other women that we develop our own voices and language to express to ourselves. Landman (2007: 202) reminds us that the majority of suffering bodies in South Africa are female and argues for the radical involvement of women theologians in embodying public theology. She bemoans the fact that so few women in South Africa are ordained

ministers, but stresses the way in which women public theologians can help heal the rainbow nation from past political and patriarchal oppression and present poverty and helplessness (Landman 2007:207).

- Participating in *social transformation*

The groundwork in a participatory praxis is that of challenging dominant cultural discourses which stand in the way of a just society. Many white South Africans feel that, since liberation, they have lost all power and have now become the oppressed. There are South Africans who want to believe that racism is no longer present in society and that we can just put the past behind us and move on with our lives. Thesnaar (2010:102) agrees that considerable time is needed and a great deal of work still needs to be done to sensitize the South African community as a whole, and more especially the members of the white community, with regard to the way in which apartheid injustices have violated victims' rights and disrupted relations within communities. The church is ideally positioned to assist in doing this sensitization. Conversations like the ones we had as a task team for diversity and inclusivity at Helderberg Church serve as ideal opportunities for this work. Skill is required to facilitate such conversations and the skills of the narrative approach, as well as the sensitivity that comes from feminist and other liberation theologies, serve well to assist in making these conversations possible. I cannot see how there will be unity and reconciliation within the church or society without such work around sensitization.

In a discussion of the third article of the Belhar confession, Naudé (2010: 186) points out the relevance of gender reconciliation in Africa's deeply patriarchal culture. Belhar speaks clearly about Christ's reconciliatory act so that difference (also gender differentiation) becomes 'opportunities for mutual service and enrichment within the one visible people of God' (Belhar art.2.6).

Following Belhar art.3.4 Naudé (2010:188) makes the following claim:

> When the Bible and theology are used against women in order to keep them, in the name of the gospel, from exercising their spiritual gifts of teaching or leadership, they show exactly the same structure as a racist theology. With the rapid rise of evangelical and Pentecostal churches and their television reach around the globe, the struggle for gender reconciliation will intensify in the years to come. Churches with a fundamentalist hermeneutic struggle to read biblical texts with a view confirming that women should have the freedom to serve God according to the gifts of the Spirit.

The Belhar confession calls the church to witness against 'any form of injustice' (art. 4.2) and against 'all the powerful and privileged who selfishly seek their own interests and thus control and harm others' (Belhar art. 4.3) as so often happens in male-dominated church structures. This also applies to gender justice (Naudé 2010: 189). It was perhaps easier to see apartheid as an ideology than it has been to deconstruct the patriarchal and heterosexual culture which is supported by a fundamentalist reading of Scripture (Naudé 2010: 189). Nevertheless it is indeed an equally vicious culture that needs to be resisted. My embodied participation in the DRC and my constant voicing of gender injustices and the discourses, structures and practices that inform and maintain this is my effort to work towards deconstructing and changing the patriarchal culture.

- *Interrelatedness* in participating

In Chapter Four I referred to the feminist practical theologian Miller-McLemore's (1996:17) use of the 'living human web' as a metaphor to refer to the connectivity of selfhood, religion and all life. Naudé (2010: 215) points out that the church can most effectively be the salt of the earth when ordinary Christians 'follow their vocations concretely in business and the professions, where the real decisions affecting the world are made.' Throughout this research I have argued that ordinary Christians should explore and use the interrelatedness of their lives in order to participate in transformative praxis in society and church alike. I use my own life and work as described in this thesis as an example. My profession as a registered psychologist provides me with expertise and experience[140] that I bring with me when I participate in the church or practical theology. As my colleagues on the executive of the synod explained[141], my experiences with clients who confide in me about gender violence lend authority to my voice when I assist the church to address gender oppression. My knowledge of and skills in Narrative Therapy, with its emphasis on the social context of people's lives, provides a good fit in terms of practices and understandings for working in a context of social transformation and healing. This has enabled me to take my work as a therapist beyond the confines of individual counselling in my consultation room to communities in need where I also represent the church. The participatory pastoral praxis which I have described in Chapter Two, and illustrated with examples in Chapters Four and Five, is based on a combination of theory and practices from narrative approaches to therapy and liberation theology. When I teach Narrative Therapy as an interdisciplinary approach to therapy and community work I pass on practices and theory that support transformative work. The thinking, values and commitments behind Narrative Therapy provide an excellent fit with an interdisciplinary and

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[140] The seven years that I worked in schools for children with special educational needs (hearing impaired and learning disabled) as well as the more than twenty years as a private practitioner have exposed me to a wide variety of problems in different contexts of people's lives.
[141] In their feedback to me in Chapter Five.

participatory approach: developed by family therapists[142], Narrative Therapy is practised by a variety of professionals including psychologists, social workers, pastoral therapists, clergy, psychiatrists and community workers.

My experience as a clinician and community worker is a critical part of what I offer when I teach. This also provides experience and frames of meaning for my participation in transformation within the church. I live and work in this world as a Christian – this is my identity and commitment, first and foremost. It is a commitment that informs everything that I am and do. As a Christian I embody and represent the church in my work as psychologist/therapist, teacher and community worker. As an ordinary woman of faith I 'do theology' when I engage in the care for and healing of people. In the census of 2001, 84% of South Africa's population declared that they are members of a religious grouping (Statistics South Africa in Nieman 2010:37). As faith is an important part of South Africans' lives, therapeutic work will thus often include conversations about the meaning that people make in terms of their religious beliefs. I include conversations about faith in all of my training activities – often to the surprise and delight of my colleagues[143] from psychology. Griffith (1995:124) points out that clients often feel that their private and meaningful conversations about God are unwelcome in the therapy context (proscriptive constraints) while others have the experience that 'God can and should be spoken here, but only in a certain way' (prescriptive constraints). I model ways of talking about faith and invite colleagues to participate in opening up conversations about their relationship with God in ways that are neither proscriptive nor prescriptive. I encourage colleagues and students to invite their clients to reflect on the meaning of faith and spirituality in their lives. Many of my colleagues have experienced formal religion as oppressive and have long turned their backs on it, yet in the workshops[144] they experience something of 'doing church/spirituality.' I view teaching as pastoral practice (Moore 2002: 3). By caring for my colleagues and providing a space and relationships where they can experience healing and growth[145] I strengthen them for their task in a context of overwhelming challenge. In Chapter Five, my colleague Moses speaks about the healing that he experienced when he confronted his past by talking about the abuse he was subjected to as a child. I researched the feedback received from colleagues to make visible the values and commitments that enable transformative training practice.

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[142] Michael White and David Epston both practised as family therapists within the social work profession when they developed this approach to therapy which is strongly embedded in theories from social anthropology and post-modern philosophy.

[143] See Appendix Q for examples of feedback from colleagues after workshops.

[144] The One week Intensive workshops are especially conducive to this as trust develops in the small group and there is time for reflection. In Appendix Q I have included some of the feedback from colleagues regarding doing spirituality.

[145] In Appendix Q there are quotes from colleagues' feedback about the healing and personal growth that participants have experienced.

- Restitution: *Doing sorry*

I have stated that the DRC has asked for forgiveness for the sins of apartheid. The Belhar confession was drawn up in 1982, when the inhumanities of the apartheid legislation were still a reality; now we are left to deal with the overwhelming legacies of this past. Naudé (2010:202) asks: 'How is justice realized for the "the wronged", the ones against whom oppression was unleashed and maintained through state force over many years?' The biblical tradition makes it clear that knowledge of suffering must lead to sacrificial acts in all their materiality (Naudé 2010: 209):

> If churches follow Belhar, attempting to stand where God stands and resolutely trying to 'witness against and strive against any form of injustice' (art.4.2), they will have to call for sacrifices that make restorative justice possible. This is normally not popular amongst those who benefited from an unjust past. But if theological reflection does not enable such deeds of sacrifices pleasing to God, it is part of an interesting, but ultimately worthless, religion before God….If there were ever a test case for *sola gratia*, this is it.

<div align="right">(Naudé 2010: 210)</div>

Within the DRC we will have to work towards raising awareness for the ways in which we as white people have benefited from the system of apartheid that oppressed black people: many of our members still do not acknowledge this. Acts of restitution imply sharing our privileges and making material sacrifices. Our members have so much to give in terms of skills, time, social capital, expertise, material goods and land.

The DRC has also asked women for forgiveness for excluding us from ordained ministry. My own participation within the leadership structures of the DRC and my relationship with Michelle Boonzaaier clearly illustrates that, although we have celebrated twenty years of women in ordained ministry and although women have been 'invited' into leadership structures, this certainly does not imply an equal and just participation within a transformed church structure! In order to get to a place of transformative justice it will imply that men within the church will have to make sacrifices of time, of self-reflection, of openness to criticism, of giving up certainties and developing a willingness to learn. I have pointed out that in the executive of the synod and in the local congregation there have been men who have made huge sacrifices to accommodate my lack of experience, my different and critical voice, my upset about unjust and insensitive treatment and supported me in raising awareness about gender injustices. This is how we can 'do sorry' about gender injustice within the church and enable women's participation.

It is clear from the discussion that I regard the various 'roles' that I fulfil (psychologist/therapist, community participant, teacher and leader/member of the DRC) as necessitating of and contributing to an interdisciplinary approach where boundaries between theology and theory from social sciences as well as the boundaries between the various 'roles' and contexts of my participation become blurred. Smit (2007: 39) writes about the 'inter-wovenness' of believers' lives in the wider society and asks whether Christian life has anything to do with this fullness of our everyday existence. I think the gospel does, indeed, concern every aspect of our lives as Christians.

6.4. Participatory pastoral praxis: A costly stance and ethic

Connected critics

The description of public theologians as '*connected critics*' (Thierman in Ackermann 2005: 69) is very useful. Such a stance:

> ...oscillates between the poles of critique and connection, solitude and solidarity, alienation and authority. Connected critics are those who are fully engaged in the very enterprise they criticize, yet alienated by the deceits and shortcomings of their own community.

> (Thierman in Ackermann 2005: 69)

My active involvement with social transformation has brought with it an 'outsider position.' I have moved to the margins of the psychology profession, the DRC and theology. Although Narrative Therapy is critical of traditional psychology models, I have managed to remain an active participating member of my profession[146]. I now practice and teach a marginalized model.[147] I practice both in a fairly exclusive private practice and spend time in extremely marginalized communities. In the same way I have become critical of the DRC and the theology that I was brought up with, yet through my participatory approach I have moved closer than ever before to theology and the church. My participation in theology, through this research, is definitely from an outsider position: I am not a trained theologian. However, my experience as a woman who had been oppressed by the church and my training and experience in the social sciences might bring critical contributions. Bosch (1991: 424) refers to Nietzsche's 'hermeneutics of suspicion' which needs to be applied to Western scholarship in order not to reproduce knowledge that was 'designed to serve the interest of the West.' I have had to

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[146] I have remained a registered psychologist with a private practice and my Narrative Therapy training activities are accredited for Continued Professional Development (CPD) points with the Board of Psychology of the Health Professions Council of South Africa.
[147] Although Narrative Therapy is recognized in most text books on psychology models it is relatively new, not well-researched from an evidence-based perspective and therefore not regarded as a mainstream model. Despite my obvious success as a practitioner and teacher and the fact that I am invited to teach in psychology departments at universities in the Western Cape, I have come across (sometimes public) dismissal of my approach within the elitist psychology profession.

be very selective about the voices that I include and how I listen in order to develop my own voice that serves my transformation agenda. Within the DRC my experience as professional person outside the church and the freedom of not being an employee allows for a critical and fresh voice. During my first term of office on the moderature of the regional synod this position of outsider-participant was fairly easy to maintain. In May 2011 I was elected as the first out of four additional members on the executive by the synod[148]. Becoming over-connected and invested in the power structures is a bigger danger: I am now an elected insider with experience. It is hard to position myself emotionally. I am deeply passionate about the transformation necessary in the church - this passion feeds my critical stance. But at the same time I have a long history of yearning for the acknowledgement of my gifts and a place of belonging in the church – this yearning might have a silencing effect. The two years of solitude from my profession and church life during my sabbatical in 1997-1998 did result in solidarity with people who were like-minded and supportive of the changes that I was making[149]. This solidarity remains a critical part of my personal, professional and church life. I know that the alienation that I experience when I listen critically and seek the voices of 'the other' assists a voice of authority when I speak on behalf of those who are oppressed and marginalized[150]. This is precisely why I cannot afford to become so deeply connected that I am no longer able to listen critically to those on the inside and compassionately to those on the outside.

Ethic of Risk

Does a participatory pastoral praxis contribute to social transformation in post-apartheid South Africa? I have described, in considerable detail, the dire need for social transformation and the praxis that I engage in when I am participating towards it. I have illustrated my participatory praxis with case examples from four different positions of participation – as therapist, community worker, therapy teacher and member of the DRC. How do I gauge the contribution of a participatory pastoral praxis? Does my work really make any difference? What kind of a difference is it supposed – or can it reasonably be expected - to make?

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[148] I went through absolute agony about my continued participation in the power-structures of the church. A mentor like Hannes Theron felt that it will be too demanding and that I serve the church more effectively when I do talks and participate as a specialist on invitation. Others agreed with me that my embodied presence in meetings brings opportunities for influence that would otherwise not be possible. Many ministers in the DRC have expressed their support of my continued participation, but warned against 'becoming part of the power structures.'

[149] My time of withdrawal from my practice as well as the DRC brought connection with colleagues within the Narrative Therapy community as well contextual theologians. These connections keep rippling out.

[150] When I refer to my participation with deaf people, Muslims, black colleagues, people living with AIDS, farm workers, parents of missing children on the Cape Flats, children who have been sexually abused, gay members of our cell group, women who experience violence and men who perpetrate violence it gives authority to my contributions that is often lacking when others discuss those people. I also carry the voices of colleagues, clients and friends who have been hurt and harmed by the church with me: their experiences inform my critical participation in powerful ways.

Sharon Welch (1990:15), feminist theologian and ethicist, has assisted me greatly here. Her writing on a *feminist ethic of risk* has enabled me to understand the despair of the middle-class woman who lives cushioned by privilege and who gives up on long-term social change when easy solutions cannot be found. In reading her work I saw much of my own despair when I was initially confronted with the depth of destruction caused by the structural evil of apartheid and when my sincere efforts based on my middle-class knowledge and experience of the world made so little difference. This despair is ideological - it has to do with a certain definition of moral action:

> Becoming so easily discouraged is the privilege of those accustomed to too much power, accustomed to having needs met without negotiation and work, accustomed to having a political economic system that responds to their needs.

Welch (1990: 15)

Welch (1990: 67) proposes an *ethics of risk* in which 'action begins where middle-class thought stops.' Within the ethics of risk there is a *decision to care and act although there are no guarantees of success* and where much too much has been lost for there to be any clear means of restitution (Welch 1990: 68):

> Within an ethic of risk, maturity means recognizing that ideals are far from realization and not easily won, that partial change occurs only through the hard work and persistent struggle of generations. Maturity entails the recognition that the language of 'causes' and 'issues' is profoundly misleading, conveying the notion that work for justice is somehow optional, something of a hobby or short-term project, a mere tying up of loose ends in an otherwise satisfactory social system. Within an ethic of risk, maturity is gained through the recognition that evil is deep-seated, and barriers to fairness will not be removed easily by a single group or by a single generation. Maturity is the acceptance, not that life is unfair, but that the creation of fairness is the task of generations and that work for justice is not incidental to one's life but is an essential aspect of affirming the delight and wonder of being alive.

(Welch 1990: 70)

I have become increasingly positioned within an ethics of risk. I no longer expect to measure success with my middle-class measurements that result from living and working in a context where people have reasonable access to privilege within which they can control many areas of their lives. This makes it much easier for me to participate in 'the face of over-whelming loss and the recognition of the

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irreparable damage of structural evil' (Welch 1990:67). From a therapeutic perspective Kaethe Weingarten's (2010) writing on *reasonable hope* has assisted me to maintain the work towards hope even in the grimmest circumstances. Weingarten (2010:7) explains that reasonable hope directs our attention more to what is within reach than what may be desired, but is unattainable. As we make sense of what exists now we believe that this prepares us to meet what lies ahead. Instead of waiting for the future, we work towards the future together with others. Instead of struggling against an uncertain, unknowable future we embrace it. Reasonable hope, with its limited horizon of expectations, helps us to work toward something better than we are living now even when faced with dire circumstances like poverty, violence or fatal illness (Weingarten 2010: 8-9). Reasonable hope is humble hope which accommodates doubt, contradictions and despair: it accepts life as messy and something we cannot control (Weingarten 2010: 10). In terms of assessing progress and sustaining effort reasonable hope offers useful guidelines:

- **Small actions need not be trivial.**

  Whether we work with a multigenerational history of abuse, extreme poverty or in the oppressive patriarchal structures of the church, these small actions may have ripple effects (Weingarten 2010: 19).

- **Accept proxy measures of success.**

  Although our actions might be viewed as very distant from exactly what we want to achieve, we have to accept that collective effort over time may produce synergies that solo action might not (Weingarten 2010: 20).

- **Register reasonable hope.**

  Notice and make visible the signs of reasonable hope (Weingarten 2010: 20).

- **Enjoy vicarious hope.**

  Allow ourselves to enjoy the hope that others experience and draw strength from that. Sometimes when I have lost hope, colleagues experience hope in similar work that I can draw from in order to continue my work (Weingarten 2010:21).

- **Embrace resistance.**

  We must resist what is unjust in order to realize what is just. 'Resisting what is not just and pursuing what is just activates and promotes reasonable hope' (Weingarten 2010:22).

Counter- Cultural practice

A participatory pastoral praxis is definitely a counter-cultural way of living and working. On a *professional level* it meant costly retraining as a therapist, two overseas trips, various training courses and purchasing books while I was not earning an income[151]. It was a challenge to embrace the new epistemological position: 'The claims of social constructionism violate fundamental cultural assumptions that permeate much of Western civilization' (Madsen 2007: 51). It was like learning a new language and viewing one's known world from a completely different (and often extremely uncomfortable) angle. I frequently found it demoralizing and often very discouraging to endure the discomfort of 'incompetence' while I was trying to embrace a new paradigm and acquiring new skills. The decision to decline returning to my lucrative practice - with its good infrastructure and high visibility in middle-class society - was a radical step at a time when white colleagues and friends were experiencing career uncertainty resulting from the restructuring of our new democracy. I was determined nevertheless to work in ways that would promote social transformation, despite serious doubts, pressure from colleagues and at times a tremendous sense of isolation and loss. The practice which I opened at my house in 1999 enables me to keep overheads low and to make two days per week available for work (mostly voluntary) outside my practice. It also means that I have to refer many clients away as I can no longer fit everyone in that contacts me for consultation. Engaging in acts of restitution by making time and resources available to go into communities[152] involves challenging economic orthodoxy and individualistic ideas of professional success. It also means stepping out of my consultation room and going way out of my comfort zone by physically visiting areas that have always been viewed as dangerous and outside of my world. Part of the 'intentional action towards social transformation' involves promoting Narrative practices amongst colleagues by making my work visible through presentations at conferences[153] and developing a teaching practice[154]. Through my

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[151]Refer to Appendix P for more details.

[152] In this dissertation I refer to my work in the Strand Muslim community, Drakenstein Hospice and my collaboration with Yvonne Barnard in the Villiersdorp community. I have also done work around bullying in schools, been involved in training of volunteers at Helderberg Hospice and am currently involved in mentoring and supervision of a black colleague who works for PATCH, an organization for children who have been sexually abused. I have supervised and trained four groups of MTh students for the Institute for Therapeutic Development and many of them have done work in communities which I have visited while supervising them, but also in an effort to support them as colleagues after their studies had been completed. For more information about this visit my website (Morkel 2011).

[153] I have done presentations at various local conferences, but also in the USA and Europe. In this way I make my work accountable to colleagues on an international level, but also promote my training work (Morkel 2011) while I stay abreast of developments in our field.

[154] The teaching and supervision of Narrative Therapy has become a big part of my professional work which also takes up a lot of my time and energy. Since 2000 I have been teaching seminars and workshops in four different masters' courses involving four departments at three different universities. Students of pastoral therapy (US and UNISA) as well as educational (US) and clinical (UCT) psychology have been involved in this training. I have a Narrative Therapy training programme involving monthly supervision groups as well as introduction, child therapy, couple therapy, community work and intensive workshops. Various groups and institutions like education departments have contracted me for training work in various places in South Africa over the years (Morkel 2011).

teaching work I developed relationships with the overseas trainers of Narrative Therapy [155] and an international community of therapists that support this work[156]. At times it is extremely challenging to hold these three big areas of professional commitment - private practice as psychologist, community worker and trainer of Narrative Therapy. As I have explained, however, these different 'roles' support and feed one another.

My theological positioning and my intentional actions towards social transformation brought huge discomfort in terms of my *continued membership of the DRC*. It was impossible to explain my career changes, my involvement in acts of restitution and the struggles with my faith without talking about our apartheid past and our patriarchal culture. As I grappled with my own guilt and accountability I experienced anger and outrage about the DRC's role in justifying and supporting apartheid. I became increasingly aware of the DRC's patriarchal structures and ideology and its implications. Very few DRC members were/are willing to acknowledge the extent to which they are beneficiaries of the apartheid system. As I became more 'other-wise', the racism, sexism, classism and homophobia within the church brought me in constant conflict with fellow-members and strengthened my sense of alienation and isolation. Ackermann (2005: 70) writes in relation to Beyers Naudé's experiences with Afrikaners and the DRC: 'Critique and the active seeking of change do not sit comfortably in a society that demands loyalty and baulks [sic] at change.' Moving our membership to a neighbouring congregation was a radical[157]step. Despite our ties with the ministers in the new congregation it was difficult nevertheless to adjust to the different members and different culture. When I started speaking about social injustices I experienced the tension Bosch (1991: 401) describes: 'the relationship between the evangelistic and the societal dimensions of the Christian mission constitutes one of the thorniest areas in the theology and practice of mission.' According to Bosch (1991: 403), the two different mandates of salvation - the one spiritual and the other social - are responsible for the division in the understanding of the mandate of mission. The first is said to refer to 'the commission to announce the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ' and the second 'calls Christians to responsible participation in human society, including works of human well-being and justice.' Within the DRC, with its evangelical focus on individual salvation, I was soon accused of engaging in a 'social

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[155] I try to host one workshop per year for trainers from overseas in order to keep the local community of narrative practitioners connected with the latest developments in our field and also to expose them to a wider range of practitioners.
[156] I collaborate with the Norwegian Family Therapy Offices in Trondheim and Stavanger – they have visited South Africa for training and I have also done workshops and consultations in Norway (Morkel 2011).
[157] I left many special memories and relationships in that congregation. They supported us through our struggle with infertility and celebrated with us when we adopted Hannes, our son. They witnessed his baptism and provided him with love, nurturing and teaching until he was twelve years old. For many years after leaving this beloved community my dreams at night were filled with longing for them.

gospel' to the extent that my faith in Jesus Christ was questioned[158]. Gradually my understanding of the goal of Christian transformation became more clearly crystallized:

> It is that of shalom, or the New Testament concept of the Kingdom, where harmony, peace and justice reign under the Lordship of Christ. Here, sin is viewed as that which distorts God's perfect intention, leading to oppression, poverty, injustice and the alienation of individuals, communities and nations. Sin, then, is not merely individual, but also institutional or social.

> Du Toit (2010a: 266)

I started understanding that a transformational ministry is involved in seeking the restoration of relationships within individual persons, with others, with the environment and with God. As Du Toit (2010a: 268) so aptly explains: 'There are twin goals of transformational development: the one is changed people and the other changed relationships.' I have described how the shift in my beliefs and commitment to intentional actions towards social transformation resonated with other people within the leadership of the DRC and that this led to invitations to participate more actively within leadership positions in the local congregation, but also in the regional synod and general synod. To be involved in the DRC in these ways requires radical steps – enormous sacrifice in terms of time, energy and resources[159] as well as positions of extreme discomfort[160] at times.

In my *personal life* the intentional actions towards social transformation required me and my family to embrace a counter-cultural value-system and lifestyle which had financial implications, as discussed earlier in this chapter. As our home became a place from where I worked and colleagues visited our conversations became very political. My political stand impacted our lives as some friends withdrew from us and, from time to time, we experienced tension with members of our extended family. Our circle of friends became more diverse. Jaco and I joined a gay-friendly cell group some years ago. At times my participation in the leadership of the DRC creates tremendous tension for me which exposes Jaco and Hannes to parts of church life that is not easy to understand or accommodate. Being married

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[158] This was really painful as I had to struggle not to be pulled in by these judgments. I realized how deeply I had internalized these very ideas of the importance of individual salvation that I grew up with and how easy it was to make me doubt whether my focus on justice and relationships with others might be a sign of disloyalty to or the betrayal of my relationship with God. An incident that illustrates other members' response to me comes to mind. I did a prayer in a church service and when I returned to my seat, a young woman tapped me on my shoulder and whispered in my ear. She said that she sensed my deep love for the Lord, but that she just wanted to warn me that my care for people might distract me from God …
[159] It does not only involve the attendance of meetings, but also many hours of preparation and reflection.
[160] Leadership participation in the DRC is far out of my comfort zone as I served in an office on a church council for the first time at the age of 49 and within the past five years served as chairperson of the church council, regional synod moderature as well as a task team for diversity of the general synod. I am often the only person who is not a trained or ordained minister and always the least experienced within the leadership structures – the culture and language is strange in a church where white men still dominate.

to a feminist with strong views and reasonably high public visibility is not easy as our marital relationship is often put under the spotlight.

6.5 Conclusion

The liberation of South Africa and the post-apartheid social reality have unmasked the confessional approach of practical theology in the DRC. This approach supported the dualism which blinded us from understanding the evils of the ideologies of apartheid and patriarchy and their interrelatedness to poverty and violence in our society. This research is about *doing* theology *in context*. It thus marks a radical shift - from a confessional to a public approach in practical theology. The hermeneutical task of theology is thus to interpret the gospel in terms of the context in which we find ourselves (De Gruchy1994: 9). The hermeneutic spiral described in this research challenges the church to witness in the world, then to reflect critically on that witness through reflection on the Scriptures and, through critical analysis of what is happening in the world then seek to inform the Christian witness. Such a spiral model supports a witness that becomes more faithful to the Gospel and more relevant to the needs of the world (De Gruchy1994: 10). I have selected my critical lenses and ethics in line with Tracy's (1983: 72) work. He insists that the principal praxis criteria for practical theology are criteria of transformation and the principal theoretical criteria are those of a theological ethics related to the praxis. I have attempted to show - using the lenses of feminist theology and the poststructuralist theory and philosophy within which Narrative Therapy is positioned - how the relationship between practical theology and social action proceeds through the discipline of ethics at both the personal and the social level. The guiding metaphors of the Good Samaritan and the Shepherd assisted me to focus on an ethics informed by the loving kindness of God as embodied through our acts of love, service and justice towards our neighbour. The church should promote democracy and abolish all forms of racism, sexism and classism, both within the church and in society (Louw 1997: 27). This implies a biased theology in favour of the poor and marginalized and the transformation of the existing order in the direction of a just society. Practical theology should assist the church to democratize its own structures. The therapeutic task of practical theology and of the church is to attend to healing, renewal and reconciliation. The ten characteristics of a participatory pastoral praxis – the personal is professional is political, participating with the *other*, *with* people, with *awareness*, in *voicing*, with our *bodies*, *together* with others, in *social transformation,* in *interrelatedness* and in *restitution* - described in this research make a significant contribution to the theory formation, ethics and praxis of practical theology with a transformative agenda.

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The transformative effect of a participatory pastoral praxis is empirically researched with case examples taken from therapeutic practice, community participation, Narrative Therapy training work and prophetic participation in the DRC. Pastoral counselling, one of the disciplines of practical theology, is challenged to consider the effects of a political approach to therapy as researched in this document through an empirical example of therapeutic work with a woman who suffered sexual abuse as a child. The participatory praxis that is researched in the empirical examples of this document can contribute significantly to pastoral work, outreach work, evangelism and mission work of congregations which want to participate in healing, restitution and transformation of South African society. In a rural farming community farm workers and farmers, rich and poor, black and white, English and Afrikaans, churches representing a variety of denominations locally and from the city, children and old people all networked together to teach and embody the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Inter-faith dialogue with story and memory as part of healing of past injustices – such as slavery, forced removals, racism and religious oppression - forms part of another empirical example. There is also the example of networking beyond the borders of South Africa when participating with an organization and communities that are affected by the HIV/AIDS pandemic. A participatory praxis challenges all of us to reflect critically on our own experiences and understandings as reflected in the personal story shared. As awareness of injustices is often raised within professional contexts amongst people from diverse backgrounds, professional training activities are thus ideally suited for raising awareness and for supporting healing as this research has illustrated. Because of the power of expert knowledge and relations of power in therapy such raised awareness is critical in transforming the professions of psychology and pastoral counselling. The expression of being an aware and empowered Christian professional illustrates the ways in which individuals can do restitution for those past injustices of which we are beneficiaries. It also shows how the church's transformative work can be carried out into the South African society through lay members – in accordance with the church's missional agenda. The importance of embodied contact between people from diverse backgrounds and experiences is well-illustrated in the research examples of the training practice as well as the examples of the transformative and prophetic work within the DRC. If practical theology wants to contribute to the transformation of the structures, ideologies and practices of the DRC, a participatory praxis - as researched here - provides the theory, ethics and praxis that would make a critical contribution at both a congregational and leadership level in the wider church.

I would like to end this research manuscript by joining in John de Gruchy's(2006:68) confession: 'that it took me a while to discover that "being born again" was not a ticket to heaven, but a way of becoming more fully human as follower of Christ in this world.' I now understand that the words 'God is love' inscribed on the pulpit of my childhood church means that I have to follow 'Jesus' approach to

people which was shaped not just by his love and compassion for them by also by his vision of God's purpose to restore humanity to its fullness' (De Gruchy 2006:144). I will keep working for a 'deepening of equality so that the daughter of the farm worker would have the same opportunity to success as the son of the farmer' in this beautiful land that God has given us all.

A participatory praxis challenges the 'theology' in practical theology to shift from a 'theistic view of God' (the remoteness of a God beyond) to a 'praxis view of God' (the God within and with us). Such a shift will have profound implications for theory formation in practical theology because it entails the move from understanding *ministry as practise* to *ministry as praxis.* Such an approach - a bottom-up praxis which reflects the viewpoint of the underdog, marginalized and stigmatized people of society - should form the heart of practical theology as public theology.

God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God and God abides in them.

(1 John 4:16)

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Appendix A

Effects of the sexual abuse as described by Yvonne:

- She carried a burden of secrecy as she was afraid to talk about the abuse for three years until she became a Christian and spoke to someone for the first time.
- The two men who perpetrated the abuse are still part of her extended family and make it difficult for her to visit her mother's home. During visits her brother-in-law ignores her; he doesn't talk to her or greet her.
- She feels that she cannot tell her mother or her sister about the abuse as they would be too shocked. This meant that she has to hide her discomfort, anger and resentment towards her brother-in-law and 'act a part' when she visits her mom.
- She feels guilty and responsible for what she perceived as her brother-in-law being unfaithful to her sister, his wife.
- She feels uncomfortable in the company of men, fears men and feels that they cannot be trusted.
- She has a fear of having sex, pregnancy and child birth. She believed that she would never find a man that would accept her as a wife.
- Yvonne said that she had a fear of blood and physical pain e g the pain of childbirth; this had real implications for her management of the bi-polar illness as blood-levels has to be done regularly and she tries to avoid it.
- She felt ugly and experienced shame and embarrassment about her body and never felt 'thin' enough so that she had to diet and exercise all the time.
- At the time of our initial contact Yvonne did not enjoy wearing feminine clothes and make-up as she preferred not to attract the attention of men.

Appendix B

The experiences of power difference between male and female that Yvonne noticed in the wider society:

- In Mozambique she witnessed the way in which women were oppressed by men. The women worked hard and served the men and boys who would just sit around idly.
- In Botswana she noticed that men would eat with spoons while the women had to use their hands and sit on the floor.
- In the coloured community the girls had to do housework while the boys were allowed to play.
- In the Free State, where she grew up, men would sit while being served by their wives or 'maids'.
- It was with bitterness that Yvonne observed that children follow the examples that their parents set for them. She said that her sister's sons were following the example of their dad (the man who abused Yvonne) expecting their mother to do everything for them.
- This brother-in-law gives her sister the 'silent treatment' when he is unhappy about something and he insists on driving her everywhere she has to go, controlling her movements and her money so that her sister has to hide money from him when she wants to send Yvonne a gift.
- Yvonne concluded that there are many injustices because she noted that women's work is also regarded as less important than that of men.

Appendix C

Yvonne's document of knowledge:

The things that will help when Sadness, Longing and Aloneness threaten to overwhelm me:

1. The knowledge that **Hesmarie** is still there to talk to even though it is by letter, email or phone – the advantages of technology!
2. A running partner, **Heidi,** who likes to train regularly and who is becoming easier to talk to. Her own struggles with difficult circumstances help me to find new ways of looking at life.
3. **Aunt Ciske** cares enough about me to make practical plans to help, like her offer to take me to the woman in Hermanus. (The woman wrote a book about bi-polar illness)
4. Knowing that **Dr van Heerden** knows how to draw blood without getting me anxious and he also shares Scripture with me that strengthens and enriches me.
5. Planning ahead of time for the long, lonely weekends.
6. The support and care of **my mother** helps me a lot and I will enjoy it even more if I start sharing the good things about my life with her.
7. My friends **Hendrina** and **Annabel** from Pretoria phone regularly. Hendrina has offered to leave her husband at home for two weeks and to drive down to the Cape to visit me.
8. **Petra** who, despite her own problems, finds the time to support me.
9. My friends from Bible Study, especially **Kotie** and **Mariette**, who cares for me. Kotie is coming to treat me to a facial when Hesmarie had gone.
10. My work keeps me busy and offers me relationships and **friendships with young people** who want to spend time with me and do things with me.
11. The weekly **horse-riding** where I can talk to **the woman** who takes me for individual lessons.

This list was compiled with the help of **Elize -** another person who wants to support me!

Appendix D

Emails from Yvonne reflecting the witnessing of trauma and the effect of that on her:

Yvonne writes (email 11 June 2002):

Yesterday at the one club my heart went out to a ten year old girl who shared with me that she often goes to bed hungry and also has to go to school hungry. Both she and her brother have the most terrible sores around their mouths; it got me to ask them whether they get any fruit or vegetables to eat. (I was hoping that that was the reason for the sores.) According to the girl they live on dry rice and potatoes, they get no other vegetables, and almost no meat. When they do not have any food in the house she would go to one of her friends homes where she would be given something to eat. She told me that her parents stopped drinking for a long time, but that weekend her mother started drinking again. I could see the disappointment in that child's eyes…I understand it so well. The parents earn a very meagre wage on that farm and live in terrible (haglike) conditions. Please pray with me for all the people on that farm.

Yvonne writes (email 29 July 2002):

I received sad news from Memry, the social worker, regarding a few of the boys from my club who raped a small girl while playing 'house-house'. I was so shocked. My dream for these children is that they would avoid criminal records and that they would rise above their circumstances. This incident happened on one of the farms where that people are the poorest. I love the children so much, but sometimes I really doubt whether I am making any difference in their lives.

Yvonne writes (email 11 September 2002):

I received very sad news tonight when I picked up a group of teenagers for the club. I asked them about one of the girls and then they said she would not come as she ate pumpkin pills.' I did not understand what this meant until they indicated with their hands over their stomachs that she was pregnant. She is only 15 years old and shows symptoms of Foetal Alcohol Syndrome. Despite the fact that she is unable to read she always brings her Bible along to the club and hardly ever missed a club. In the past this child had been gang-raped by two youngsters. They suspect that this time it was an adult man who raped her…. My heart goes out to this child…

Appendix E

Letter to the Heritage Day committee of the Strand Muslim community

Dear Mr Fanie and the Heritage Day Committee

I have seldom experienced something that has moved me as deeply as yesterday's Heritage Day celebrations held by the Strand Moslem community. Although I am struggling to find words which will give adequate expression to my experience, I will nevertheless attempt to do so.

Firstly, the invitation to be part of these celebrations was in itself an enormous privilege; especially when I realized how small the invited group was and how many other people could perhaps have been included in our place. Thank you very much for the invitation, Mr Fanie. In this invitation I experienced something of what Minister Rasool spoke about so movingly: the nurturing of mutual trust and respect, the possibility for repairing what has been broken in the past and the cultivation of attitudes of respect for and celebration of difference in place of oppression and enmity.

As a child growing up in Grabouw, the Hottentots-Holland mountains were also my beloved landmark and the Strand an extension of my known world. I have numerous childhood memories of buying fish at the jetty, watching movies (fliek) at the Rialto and shopping at Friedman and Cohen and at the Co-op. Like Dr Newton-King, I too am embarrassed and heart sore that I was also part of the group who, as carefree children, swam at the Strand totally oblivious of the injustices that my people were practising towards your community in the Strand.

What struck me particularly about yesterday's speeches was the way in which the spirit of celebration and gratitude prevailed, especially where bitterness and rage could so easily have gained the upper hand. In this your community is truly a wonderful example. Mr Rhoda, I am so impressed by the passion and dedication with which you are working to help your people reclaim parts of themselves. The way in which you ensured that the older people – your richest source of oral tradition and history – were honoured, was touchingly beautiful. One middle-aged man brought his mother, who was well into her eighties, and introduced her to us with such pride and appreciation that it warmed our hearts simply to witness this. I cannot imagine a more wonderful heritage than that which you are busy creating together with and for your people. I must also add that my experience of working with post-graduate students has taught me that a student like you (I listened carefully to the way in which Dr Newton-King described you) is indeed a very unusual and very joyous phenomenon!

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Jaco and I were very impressed by the programme. It was put together so effectively and performed with great precision and order: we enjoyed every single moment.   I think we must send you some of those long-winded people who frustrate us so much, so that Sedick Crombie can take them in hand! The speeches and songs were moving and inspiring. My only touch of regret was that there was so little Afrikaans spoken, especially when that which came through here and there was so rich and colourful! I suspect that there were still many more anecdotes, especially Afrikaans ones, which could have provided hours of enjoyment. It was wonderful for me to be sitting next to Mrs Daniels who explained things in such a friendly and patient way so that we could better understand what was going on. The eats were a feast! Many thanks to the women who must surely have spent hours preparing it.

And then the display ... I did not know what to expect, but I can assure you that it surpassed all expectations!   All the material you had gathered – the compilation of photos and information, the professional way in which this was displayed, the effective utilization of space in the hall – all this bears witness to the loving devotion with which this task was approached. I believe that this exhibition belongs in the heart of the wider community as a symbol of the remarkable capacity to survive, the anchor provided by your faith, the dedication of your community and the richness of your traditions and culture. Indeed, at last the first inhabitants of the Strand have been justly honoured.

I am deeply thankful that I, who for so long lived so far removed from your community and unaware of your pain, could have been a participant in this joyous celebration of history and community.

May God bless you richly
Elize Morkel

Appendix F

Excerpts from emails with feedback received from participants in the Bridge-building function with the Strand Muslim Community in 2005[161]

From white participants:

- A colleague, Yvonne Dobson, writes:

My heart felt proud (yet humbled) to be associated with the Bridge-building evening with the Strand Moslem Community through knowing you Elize and by our presence at the function. The element of humility and sadness came as I listened to Mr Rhoda's words on the history of the community and how little if any of that was documented, as well as about the needs in the community over the years and especially now.
It is incredible how I as a white South African, have taken so much for granted through my years of education and work. It is incredible how so many of us, including myself, have stood apart and ignorant of other community's needs, and I admire your graciousness and dedication, Elize, in connecting with this community. Thank you for being a pivotal part of opening this door for and to all of us.

- A colleague, Hildegard Malherbe and her husband Willem, a DRC minister:

Willem and I really enjoyed the function. It was so good to hear all the stories and study the pictures. I am sometimes overwhelmed by the realization that so much happened in our country of which I was unaware. It is especially the unnecessary pain and sorrow of people that get to me. How are we ever going to rectify the damage? Events such as this one gives me hope. At least there is a 'reaching out' from both sides even though a lot more 'bridge building' is still required before trust is restored.

- From Linda van Duuren, a colleague:

I am always, and without fail, uplifted and humbled by the capacity and willingness people from the previously disadvantaged population show to allow white people in....It makes it look so easy, but I hope that I am always moved as I was on Saturday, to be witness to when people have such magnanimity of spirit.

- Estelle Raymond, a colleague:

For me the highlights were undoubtedly Mr Rhoda's talk on the history of the Strand Muslim community as well as the photo display. It has changed the way I look at and think about the Strand. When I drive along Beach Rd (Kusweg) now, I find myself thinking about that first Muslim community of 27 people who lived and fished at Mosterds Bay and try to image what their lives must have been like. I am also not able to drive past Fagan Street without feeling sad when I remember the photographs of the homes that were demolished and that a whole community was removed and relocated under apartheid legislation. And I feel moved by the significance of this same community now building bridges (through a function such as this) with people who have committed some of these injustices towards them.

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[161] These emails form part of the public exhibition of the history of the Strand Muslim community and also includes photo's of the historic Bridge Building function.

- From Therese Hulme, a colleague:

I was deeply touched by Mr Rhoda's words of thanks to the DRC – for documenting the history of the Strand Muslim community. How does it become possible to give any form of acknowledgement to an institution that is responsible for so much humiliation and disregard in the history of our country? And yet, through your words, Mr Rhoda, you teach me the true meaning of generosity, reconciliation and forgiveness. You teach me that I can choose how I want to engage with our history and how I want to move into the future with it. It has been a privilege to attend your function as [a] white South African.

- From Yvonne Barnard from Villiersdorp:

Viewing the photos together with Mrs Rhoda and the other Muslim women was very interesting. What an amazing piece of research, interesting, but also very sad. I found the role of church in the photo display and in Mr Rhoda's story very interesting. That evening I felt as if I still need to learn a lot about 'being church'. Thank you for your example, Elize, the speeches of other participants was a testimony to the good relationships that you built up over the years.

From Muslim Participants

- Mrs Wesaal K. Baderoen writes:

When Zarina Baderoen and I walked into the hall we looked out for a table with familiar faces. We soon discovered that we had to mingle.
We thought that the best way to make this happen was to view the photos at the Photo Exhibition. Looking at the photos and witnessing the wonder expressed by the White community made me feel proud to be part of such a close community and proud to be a Muslim.
We were asked many questions regarding our dress code. (Why were we covered in such a way? Do we teach with the long robes and rags over our heads?)
It was funny for us to see people eat rooti and curry with a knife and fork. Allie Arnold went up to one of the tables and demonstrated the proper way and how the fingers are licked after eating.
We were told how difficult our religion seems to be. However we portrayed how very easy, simple and peaceful Islam really is.
We exchanged phone numbers, so we should be in contact very soon….Inshallah.

- Sadik Fanie, principal of Strand Muslim Primary School, writes:

The function was a huge success in more ways than one. We can proudly say that with you and your congregation's support we were able to raise a profit of R 22 663.24 for which we are very grateful. This money will most definitely contribute towards the completing of our Building Project.
The function also gave us the opportunity to break down barriers, make new acquaintances, share our cultural traditions, but most of all we were able to spend an enjoyable and relaxing evening in each other's company as citizens of our wonderful country.
This for me truly is very significant, that we as ordinary people could show that we can make a difference.
Once again our sincere thanks.

Appendix G

ACKNOWLEDGING CARING PRACTICES OF STAFF

1. Honouring cultural diversity and participating in religious diversity.
2. Responding to the challenges of multiple languages and participating in ways that are respectful.
3. Adjusting to social class.
4. Openness to diverse nursing/caring practices that may challenge comfort zones.
5. Innovative ways of stretching limited resources.
6. Acknowledging of and sensitivity to patients' needs beyond the medical.
7. Responding to patients' needs through flexible caring, counselling practices and referrals.
8. Sensitivity to social concerns and issues in community. For example, poverty, unemployment, substance abuse etc.
9. Linking to and creating of resources in response to wider social needs as participation in community transformation.
10. Willingness to work complementarily rather than competitively within team context.
11. Doing self-care as reflected in mutual support, sensitivity and acts of hope to counteract despondency, victimhood and helplessness.
12. Commitment to personal professional development and teaching of others.
13. Striving to honour the voices of people that we encounter in our daily practice.
14. Witnessing and acknowledging caring practices in others and taking these experiences back into our own lives.

Appendix H

Exercise: (A) hopeful or significant moment/s (work in pairs)

First, think of your experience yesterday and identify (a) particularly hopeful or significant moment/s that you can remember

Once such (a) moment/s has/have been identified, ask each other (taking turns to interview and be interviewed) the following questions:

1.   Where were you when this/these moment/s occurred? What exactly was it that happened? Who else was there? What were you or the other person(s) saying or doing?

2.   When did you first realize the significance of this event? What does it mean to you?   What in particular was hopeful or significant about the experience?

3.   Did this experience resonate with other experiences that you have had in your life?   What were those experiences and what is their significance? Do your experiences   yesterday in some way cast new light on any aspect of your prior life experiences?

4.   What does your response to this experience tell you or remind you of regarding the personal values and beliefs that you hold?

(How) Did your experience or your response to the experience lead to discoveries around the values that support community work?

5.   What about this experience (and the discoveries you have made) would you like to take with you into your future life and work? How do you **imagine** these discoveries could shape your practices? What effect might it have?

6.   Is there someone that you would like to acknowledge by writing a letter/poem or doing something else to 'give back to that person the effect that meeting (personally or through a story that you witnessed) him or had on your life? (We will give time at the end of the day for the writing of such letters etc.

Appendix I

- The stark **contrasts between rich and poor** – *"The enormous contrasts we witnessed in South Africa challenged us. We have no experience of dealing with this. The one moment we were staring at desperate poverty and sickness. The next, sitting in the lap of luxury. Yet this is something we chose ourselves to do, and something that we take responsibility for. We have many questions…"* and *"I also found it difficult to cope with South Africa's extreme contrasts. The one moment we were at the CTICC, then off to the townships, then suddenly sitting tasting wine on a wine farm…. Difficult!"*

- **Concern about an onlooker-position in relation to the people in the township** – *"I was a bit concerned about being a sort of onlooker at others' desperate poverty. However, the staff at Drakenstein created an atmosphere of safety and security, including me in their work. I wasn't an outside onlooker, but a partaker…."*

- **Being touched physically and emotionally** –*"I experienced narrative therapy in my head, my body and my soul!"* and *"I thought I knew most of the academic content we were going to cover, and this was in a way so. However most of my knowledge is in my head and based in my intellect. What we experienced in Cape Town had something to do with my emotions and seated deep in my stomach. I notice already that the conversations I have with my clients have changed. How I think about my work has changed."*

- **How their work has been affected** – "*I notice that this has affected the conversations I have with my clients. I am much more aware about the 'thin stories'. I am a lot less afraid and am more concerned about the context from which clients come: political, social, and cultural….I also see that I am coping with the heavy pressure at work differently. I think to myself, 'OK. I can only do what I can do'."*

- **The relationship of the staff with the patients** – *"I am amazed to see how my colleagues in South Africa do social work in the community. They are very professional, yet they manage to come so very close to their clients creating hope and love and respect."*

- **The values that they experienced and witnessed** – *"We have been witnesses and this places a responsibility on us. We have a lot in our country. But they also have so much in their country. Faith. Standing together. Warmth. This makes me think that our country is in the process of losing something very important …"*

Appendix J

Speech in Fairyland, Paarl, on the occasion of the Silent March on 29 July 2011

Dear friends

We have gathered today to express our love for and solidarity with the Norwegian people who have been deeply shocked and traumatized by the terrible acts of violence that shook their peaceful country last Friday 22 July 2011. First there was the devastation of the bomb that shattered government buildings in central Oslo and killed 8 people. While Norwegian citizens and the rest of the world were trying to make sense of this news, the senseless and cruel slaughtering of young people on the island Utøya took place – almost a 100 were shot of which 68 died as they tried to flee into the water. Shock, disbelief, devastation and helpless grief filled our hearts as we watched from afar. This is Norway – a democracy open to people from all over the world! The country of natural beauty, wealth, human rights and Oslo, the capital and city of the Nobel peace prize...

Here at Drakenstein Hospice, and specifically here in Fairyland at Butterfly House, we feel so strongly connected to the people of Norway. We have made so many friends who have come to visit, to work and who have generously contributed to make the building and day to day running of this facility possible. In this community Butterfly House, the gift to us from the generous hearts of Norwegians, is a beacon of hope, community, learning, care and healing. I remember how the first group of family therapists came from Trondheim in 2005 and gathered to sing Nkosisikilel 'iAfrika – a gift and blessing to us right within the first few hours of their visit. The way in which all the people from Norway who came to Drakenstein since then with open hearts to witness this community with such love and compassion certainly confirmed one thing: the people from the far away land of snow up north is part of the bundle of life with the people at the warm and sunny southern tip of Africa. Beloved Nobel Peace Prize recipient, Archbishop Desmond Tutu explains ubuntu as we experience it from the people of Norway:

Ubuntu [...] speaks of the very essence of being human. [We] say [...] "Hey, so-and-so has ubuntu." Then you are generous, you are hospitable, you are friendly and caring and compassionate. You share what you have. It is to say, "My humanity is caught up, is inextricably bound up, in yours." We belong in a bundle of life. We say, "A person is a person through other persons."

Today we acknowledge that in the bundle of life we feel your pain, your trauma, loss and sadness, dear friends in Norway. We stand in solidarity with you as you recommit yourself as a nation to love,

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peace and tolerance. We, here in Fairyland and at Drakenstein Hospice, are determined to teach love as Nelson Mandela (who received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1993) proposes:

"No one is born hating another person because of the colour of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite."

These terrible, terrible acts of violence, based on hatred and intolerance will serve to strengthen our commitment to practise and teach love. We will not allow these acts of one man to steal our peace, hope and joy. We will hold onto the hope for a world that will learn to understand what is so passionately expressed by Archbishop Tutu:

"We are made for goodness. We are made for love. We are made for friendliness. We are made for togetherness. We are made for all of the beautiful things that you and I know. We are made to tell the world that there are no outsiders. All are welcome: black, white, red, yellow, rich, poor, educated, not educated, male, female, gay, straight, all, all, all. We all belong to this family, this human family, God's family."

We hold you very close to our hearts and in our prayers, constantly, dear Norwegian friends – precious part of our bundle of life.

Email received on 4 October 2011 from Anne Solberg, psychologist in Stavanger:

Vigdis early told us about the march you arranged in Paarl. I was very moved by that. Anthony and I have worked a lot with the young people from Stavanger who survived at the island nearby Oslo. We spent many hours with them when they first returned home and met each other for the first time after the tragedy. As Anthony said, we never could imagine listening to such stories of violence and fear in Norway. Later we met many parents, we were together with the young people at the funeral of a girl, aged 16, and we have worked together with the team that coordinated the help in Stavanger. It has been challenging emotionally and professionally. We have listened, talked, laughed and cried.

Sitting together with many other therapists watching the pictures from your march was very moving. Tears were dripping seeing the children, the banners and also the glimpses of you. I am very impressed that you showed solidarity with us living so far away, and could use our national tragedy in your work in S-A against violence and crime. I have told some of the families I work with about you and your silent demonstration, and they all got very emotionally moved.

Appendix K

I explain the Other-wise initiative on my website (Morkel, 2011) as follows:

Living and working in post-apartheid South Africa with one of the most democratic constitutions in the world, unfortunately does not mean that the deep rifts that divided people in the past have disappeared. Despite the admirably peaceful transition to democracy and remarkable work done by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission our society will carry deep scars of our racist past for a very long time. We have not become an integrated society overnight; racism and other prejudices live on in many people's attitudes and actions. Apartheid has been very successful indeed in keeping people of different races apart and it has been my experience that unless I actively and consciously seek ways to meet and spend time with people from groups other than my own, I will continue to live in ignorance of their lives, their histories, their cultures and their experiences. Over the years it has been mostly colleagues within the fields of psychology and social work who made it possible for me to form relationships and, in many cases, friendships that brought me some understanding of the experiences of people that I would consider 'the other' in terms of ethical group, religion, social class, sexual orientation etc. Through my connection with them I started becoming 'other-wise' and this other-wisdom contributed much to my ability to work in cultures and communities very different to my own.

In an effort to make this other-wisdom available to other South African colleagues I decided to consciously pursue ways of ensuring the participation of a diverse group of colleagues in the training activities that I offer. I have done this by offering bursaries to colleagues from the groups that had been oppressed in South Africa in the past, but also to colleagues who work for organizations that provide services in impoverished communities or people living on the margins of society. In this way the voices of 'the other' are represented in the discussions and sharing as we work with examples from our own lives and work contexts so that all of us gain from the diversity of experiences, values and beliefs that are represented by participants.

One of the oppressive practices of the apartheid regime has been the poor education opportunities and facilities that have been available to black people in South Africa. I have made a commitment to contribute to the transformation of post-apartheid South African society by participating in ways that might add to the redressing of the imbalance of power and privilege from which I, as a white South African have benefited in so many ways. One of the ways in which I hope to 'do sorry' for the injustices of the past is by keeping fees for training activities as low as possible and by offering bursaries to participants who were part of oppressed groups in South Africa in the past.

Appendix L

Feedback from workshop participants as taken from feedback forms

1. Stories and memory as part of healing in participating with the other

- *Your decision to include the 'sponsored places' was a gift to us Elize. To have the opportunity to share with and connect to their stories of the pain and the hardships during the apartheid years, in an intimate and personal way, was moving.*

- *I have just returned from a visit to family who has lost their farm in Zimbabwe. I had time to reflect on the week with you and the special people of the Intensive. I am wondering whether opportunities like the Intensive would not be a way of preventing the kind of tragedies that happened in Zimbabwe from happening in South Africa. I am inspired and encouraged to continue my trans-cultural connections.*

2. Personal is political is professional

- *The way in which you shared who you are as a person facilitated the process. Your sincerity made it possible for us to share in the ways that we did.*

- *Your honesty about your own struggles as therapist and in your personal life was a precious gift as it made you more real and easier for us to share with others in the group.*

- *Your lifestyle clearly shows that the Narrative way has for you become a way of life.*

- *The honouring of other peoples' lives and the respect for the meaning they have made about themselves as a result of their lived experiences is a position I hold and want to confirm throughout my life and pastoral work. Thank you Elize, not for only teaching us about this core attitude but modelling it during the 'intensive' and also with your whole life.*

3. Collaborative training practices/ Participating *with* people

- *You shared your expertise and at the same time you encouraged and acknowledged our contributions*

- *I appreciate your sensitivity to the needs of the group and your willingness to be flexible instead of bulldozing ahead with a rigid pre-planned programme.*

- *(I appreciate) your willingness to learn from each of us, sharing power in that way*

4. Embodied care and hospitality

- *You are a truly gracious and generous hostess and it touched me deeply to be made to feel so welcome in your home, and in your family (Hannes, Sara and Belinda were all unfailingly gracious and generous, despite the sacrifices, sore feet and extra work). My attention was caught by your attention to detail in the area of hospitality – the flowers, the eats, the home-baked cakes, the comfortable space were a foretaste of your amazing attention to detail throughout the week. Everything was always there – the photocopies, the books, the tissues, the tapes, the thoughtfulness, the care, the encouragement.*

5. Generosity and interrelatedness

- *Your generosity of spirit was evidenced in the way that you share information and resources – I felt I drank deeply and long from the pool of your experience and expertise. Your willingness to recommend books and readings, and to have them readily available meant I came away able to continue to feed this thirst until we meet again!*

6. Voicing injustices and taking a stand for social transformation

- *I salute you for taking a stand against injustices. I share that platform with you and this is part of our connection, that we are not neutral therapists.*
- *I am inspired by the way in which you so casually integrate your deep faith and your commitment to the suffering of people - whoever they are - into all that you say and do.*
- *I appreciate your openness about the past and willingness to take action for change.*
- *The way in which you spoke about your concern for the poor communities of your beloved country touched me deeply. You taught me much by demonstrating the balancing of activist courage and therapeutic tenderness.*

7. Participating with awareness and deconstructing gender

- *the place for humour, the ok-ness of tears, the deep respect rather than the need for 'excellence', men who choose to venture to live this way in preference to the ways offered by overwhelmingly strong discourses that remain alive and well in RSA.*
- *I learnt that it is OK to be a sensitive man.*

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Appendix M

Letter to Hannes re Floyd McClung's teaching during Pinkster 2008

17 May 2008

Dear Hannes

I am writing my reflections in English because I would like to send it on to Floyd. Thank you for inviting Floyd to do the Pinkster here in Helderberg. It has been a very meaningful week for me. It has been a time in which I was re-connected with many of the values that I have held since I was a very young girl growing up in a family and community where the love of Jesus was central to my life. I have also been affirmed in the values and commitments that I have started embracing in more recent years – those values that have more to do with my relationship with other people, especially those people who are very different from me in terms of their life circumstances, culture and religion. I feel so strengthened and focused as a result. A client commented yesterday that I look different and asked whether I had a holiday – it was only afterwards that I realized that experiencing and being reminded of the love of Jesus and being deeply nurtured in God's Word must have the same effect as a holiday! Here are a few of the things that stood out for me this week.

Relationship vs Religion

I have shared with you, Hannes, how the question posed to me: "When do you find it the most difficult to be a seven-day-Christian, Elize?" puzzled me. Then I realized that the honest answer is: "Sundays when I am involved in Church and with Church people are the most challenging for me." What a relief to find a man of God, a world famous missionary, nogal, confess similar difficulties with church and religion! More significantly, though, has been the way in which Floyd illustrated from the Bible and with personal stories how the love of Jesus, when embodied by us, draws people to Him. I was challenged by Floyd to read and think more about the loving Jesus and allow myself to, once again, fall in love with Him. (The story of the Muslim-who-loves-Jesus will assist me here!) I am challenged to consider how my awareness of the way in which the DR church abused the Bible and Christian religion to oppress others invited me to emphasize the love for others and neglect the passionate personal involvement with Jesus that I once had. I am so excited about the possibilities that have suddenly become available to me in my work as a psychologist. I found myself looking at a man yesterday (he had been very, very abusive in his relationship with his partner and is filled with remorse and guilt about this) and just thinking "Jesus loves you so much" and then I experienced even more compassion and also much hope for restoration and healing for him. At the end of our session he asked about my studies and I could share with him some of my commitment as a Christian to contribute to the healing of relationships in the world. He was keen to learn more about this as he is

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also from an Afrikaner background, but has left the DRC and also his relationship with Jesus many years ago.

Multi-contextual experiences

I am a bit at a loss for words to articulate this, but I am going to give it my best shot. Apartheid was so successful in isolating me from others in this country. I was trapped in ideas of elitism and about who was really worth knowing and engaging with. Since I have made it my business to befriend people from other racial, religious and social groups my understanding and experience of the love of Jesus has changed drastically. I read the Gospel with new eyes. While I was listening to Floyd this past week I heard this same richness of understanding, this same liberation from 'RULES' and being 'RIGHT' as he shared stories of loving and caring for people in contexts such as the Red Light District in Amsterdam, wealthy Americans, even wealthier Muslims and the poor and destitute people from the Red Hill community. I heard him speak with the same respect and compassion for all and I heard him highlighting how Jesus did the same… I feel so encouraged and strengthened to recommit myself to doing more of this crossing of boundaries in my personal life, but also to promote it in the work of the church and Helderberg congregation.

Being witnessed as Afrikaners

I get choked up and can't see the computer screen very well through my tears when I allow myself to reflect on the gentle balms of healing that I experience when I look at us as Afrikaner-people through the loving eyes of Floyd and Sally. I am able to reconnect with the warmth and hospitality of our people through their experiences of us as strangers to our country. I can identify with the hard-working, God-fearing, sturdy and committed people that we are with pride and gratitude. I can allow shame and guilt to move out of the way when I listen to Floyd enthusiastically joining in our passion for rugby and pointing out the focus and single-mindedness with which we are capable of engaging in our world. For this gift that Floyd and Sally brought us I am truly grateful as I love my people so much and I am at times simultaneously so Proud and so Ashamed to be an Afrikaner. I was deeply moved by Floyd's expression of shame as an American and to hear him express his accountability for the war in Iraq. Being joined in our pain and lamenting before God is truly liberating. I have experienced God's loving father's eyes upon us through them.

Message of Hope

I felt a bit like jumping up and shouting "AMEN!" really loudly when Floyd did the teaching on hope. 'In all things God works for good for those who love Him' (Rom 8:28) he pointed out. The story of the young girl who decided that she wanted to contract HIV/AIDS so as to ensure that she will be dead at the age of 20 brought to my mind the desperate circumstances of so many people in our country, on our continent and in the two thirds world. I found the very clear guidelines of how people gain hope useful and practical as Floyd also illustrated it so richly with examples from his life and ministry:

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- Entering a person's world
- Listening to a person's story
- Sharing and showing the love of Jesus
- Discipling the person's mind to believe the Truth

The lovely metaphor of how the match is played on the field and not in the locker room will challenge me to get out there whenever the sacrifice seems too big and there seems too much risk involved. I think this is a challenge that we have to consider very seriously when we talk about our calling as a congregation, Hannes.

To forgive and be forgiven – a story of grace and belonging

The story of Floyd's dad who went out to find the young pregnant couple and insisted that they be welcomed and loved by the congregation will stay with me as powerful reminder of the grace and love of God. It will also serve as a reminder that the love of God, when expressed and practised by us, has transforming effects. What an inspiration to live and practise that love. What a gift to be on the receiving end of such love as God's children.

Loving hearts are essential to being servants of God

I cannot serve God or be used by God unless I have a loving heart. I was a bit gob-smacked by Floyd's story of how he felt that God called him to South Africa in the eighties and that he was then unable to come here as a result of his judgment of and prejudice towards Afrikaners!! Did God not understand that he was quite justified to be in that position? No, I realized that God cannot work (or live) from a prejudiced and unloving heart. This message really challenged me to search for those relationships that have been tainted with a (righteous, I would be able to argue!) judgment and condemnation. Earlier in the week Floyd spoke about such a personal relationship that almost kept him from going back to Afghanistan and I could relate to the limiting effect that such relationships have had on my life. How withdrawing from people because drawing close has been just too painful and destructive has had a limiting effect on living a life of love.

God's love for Africa

I have often experienced that having distance from a problem/context/situation adds hopeful perspective and I feel that, above all else, this might be God's most important purpose in calling Sally and Floyd to South Africa at this time. God has given them such a hopeful vision for Africa by putting His love for this continent into their hearts. I am extremely grateful for their clear vision and their loving commitment, but also for their testimony to how God provides the grace for us to deal with the situation that He puts us in. I am so excited about being in Africa at this time and to be reconnected to my love for this continent and its people. I feel so inspired by their example and determined to join in the sharing of the love of Jesus right here and right now.

So, Hannes, as you might have gathered by now, I have received a lot during this week that provides me with a renewed focus. I hope that some of this understanding and commitment will also find resonance in the sharing of vision that the church council will do together next weekend.

With gratitude

Elize

Appendix N

Composition of the task team for diversity and inclusivity:

Elize: White Afrikaner woman in her fifties, psychologist with experience in trans-cultural work and interest in contextual and feminist theology;

Hannes: White Afrikaner man in his fifties, leader–minister of the congregation with passion for justice and reconciliation and known bridge-builder in the community;

Michelle: Coloured English woman in her thirties, formerly member of URCSA, minister with feminist orientation at the time responsible in Helderberg congregation for the 'Alternative ministry' to people who find themselves on the margins of or outside of the traditional church for various reasons;

Igor: Coloured Afrikaans man in his thirties, formerly member of URCSA, historian and land reform consultant, at the time member of Helderberg congregation;

Johan: White Afrikaner man in his fifties, engineer with experience of transformation within the corporate world, member of church council;

Lizette: White Afrikaner woman in her twenties, M Div student doing her practical work in Helderberg congregation before qualifying for ordained ministry in DRC;

Werner: White Afrikaner man in his thirties, M Div student doing his practical work in Helderberg congregation before qualifying for ordained ministry in DRC.

Appendix O

Letter to members of the Executive of the regional synod requesting feedback and reflections

28 Maart 2011

Beste vriende op die Moderatuur

Kwalitatiewe navorsing vir doktoral proefskrif in PraktieseTeologie aan die Universiteit van Stellenbosch

My proefskrif (getiteld: *Pastoral participation in transformation*) handel oor 'n deelnemende praxis binne die transformerende Suid-Afrikaanse samelewing. Ek is tans besig met die finale gedeelte van my kwalitatiewe navorsing wat handel oor my deelname binne die NG Kerk. Ek beskryf my deelname in die NG Kerk as die tipe deelname wat daarop gemik is om by te dra tot die regstel van ongeregtigheid en ongelykhede tov geslag veral, maar ook tov transformasie van rasse- en klasse-verhoudings. Ek aanvaar dat daar met my benoeming as vrou op die moderatuur sekere verwagtinge tot my deelname was. Ek kan ongelukkig nie net op my eie beskrywing van my belewenis en indrukke van my deelname staatmaak om hieroor te rapporteer nie. Ek benodig ook terugvoer/insette/refleksies van julle wat my deelname betref vir insluiting in my navorsing.

Om tyd te bespaar, wil ek vra of julle dit asseblief skriftelik sal doen deur kortliks op die volgende vrae te reageer:

- In watter mate het my insluiting en deelname as moderatuurslid 'n verskil gemaak aan die regstel van ongeregtigheid en ongelykhede tov geslag as ook tov transformasie van rasse-en klasse-verhoudings binne die NG Kerk en groter samelewing? Beskryf asseblief spesifieke bydraes indien jy oordeel dat daar wel bydraes was.
- Wat het, na jou mening, die bydraes versterk en/of verhoed of geinhibeer?
- Is daar aanbevelings wat jy wil maak tov toekomstige deelname van vroue (of ouderlinge) op die moderatuur?

Ek onderneem om niks van bogenoemde te rapporteer in my navorsings verslag wat ek nie vooraf aan julle voorgelê het vir goedkeuring nie. My studie leier is Prof Daniël Louw. Indien julle meer inligting verlang omtrent die navorsing kan hy gekontak word by: djl@sun.ac.za of 021 8871703.

Julle bydraes sal vertroulik hanteer word totdat julle toestemming gegee het vir die gebruik van bogenoemde materiaal in die navorsings manuskrip. Ek sal julle samewerking en bydraes baie waardeer. Let asseblief daarop dat dit nie hier gaan oor positiewe terugvoer twv my persoonliknie, maar eerlike refleksies wat my navorsing en hopelik ook die kerk kan dien.

Ek sal dit waardeer as ek hierdie bydraes so spoedig moontlik kan kry – verkieslik voor Donderdag 7 April. Baie dankie vir jou aandag en tyd, ek waardeer dit.

Vriendelike groete
Elize

Appendix P

Books bought and training attended

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Epston, D 1998. *'Catching' up with David Epston*: A collection of narrative practice- based papers published between 1991 & 1996. Adelaide: Dulwich Centre Publications

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Morgan, A 2000. *What is Narrative Therapy?* Adelaide: Dulwich Centre Publications.

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Russel, S & Carrey, M 2004. *Narrative therapy: Responding to your questions*. Adelaide: Dulwich Centre Publications.

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Waldegrave, C, Tamasese, K, Tuhaka, F & Campbell, W 2003. *Just Therapy- a journey.* Adelaide: Dulwich Centre Publications*.*

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Winslade, J and Monk, G. 1999. *Narrative counseling in Schools Powerful & Brief.   Practical Skills for Counselors.* California: Corwin Press Inc.

Zimmerman, J L & Dickerson, V C 1996. *If Problems Talked: Narrative Therapy in Action*. New York: The Guilford Press.

Michael White, Dulwich Centre, Adelaide, Australia

- Two day workshop: Somerset West: Narrative therapy and trauma: the scaffolding of therapeutic conversations. (2003)
- One week workshop: Chicago, USA: Pre-conference workshop. (2003)
- One week workshop: Pretoria: Introduction to Narrative therapy. (1998)
- One week workshop: Pretoria: Intensive Workshop in Narrative therapy. (1997)
- Two day workshop: Cape Town: Michael White workshop. (1992)

David Epston, The Family Therapy Centre, Auckland, New Zealand

- Two day workshop: Somerset West: Putting the Narrative into Narrative therapy. (2002)
- Three day workshop: Cape Town: Narrative Therapy. (1999)
- One week workshop: Auckland, New Zealand: Intensive Workshop in Narrative therapy with Couples. (1999)
- One week workshop: Auckland, New Zealand: Intensive Workshop in Narrative therapy with Children. (1999)

Johnella Bird, The Family Therapy Centre, Auckland, New Zealand

- Three day workshop: Somerset West: Talk that Sings - Resourcing the People We Work With. (2005)
- Two day workshop: Chicago, USA: Pre-conference workshop. (2003)
- One week workshop: Auckland, New Zealand: Intensive workshop in Narrative therapy with Couples. (1999)
- One week workshop: Auckland, New Zealand: Intensive workshop in Narrative therapy with Children. (1999)

Kaethe Weingarten, Harvard Medical School, USA

- Two day workshop: Somerset West: Intercepting Intergenerational   transmission of trauma. Dealing with people with trauma histories, a relational and transparent approach (2010)
- Two day workshop: Somerset West: Witnessing, Wonder and Hope. (2002)

- One day workshop: Pretoria: Illness Narratives. (2000)
- One day workshop: Pretoria: The Personal is the Professional. (2000)
- One day workshop: Pretoria: Witnessing, Wonder and Hope. (2000)

Jill Freedman and Gene Combs, Evanston Family Centre, Illinois, USA

- One day workshop: Johannesburg: The Crafting and Composing of Questions. (2000)
- One day workshop: Johannesburg: Taking lives back from the effect of violence and abuse. (2000)
- Three day workshop: Somerset West: Narrative Skills: Questions, Documents and Listening with a poetic ear. (2008)

Vicky Dickerson and Jeff Zimmermann, California, USA

- One week workshop: Adelaide, Australia: Intensive workshop in Narrative Therapy. (1999)
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Kiwi Tamasese, Flora Tuhaka and Charles Waldegrave, The Family Centre, Wellington, New Zealand

- Two day workshop: Adelaide, Australia: Private Conversations and Public Issues. (1999)

International Conferences Attended

- Dulwich Centre Publications: Narrative therapy and Community Work. Kristiansand, Norway (2007)
- Narrative Therapy and Community Work. Chicago, USA (2003)
- Dulwich Centre Publications: Narrative therapy and Community Work. Adelaide, Australia (1999)
- South Africa Association for Marital and Family Therapy. 9th International Conference, Durban (2004)
- South African Association for Marital and Family Therapy. One Nations many Families, Cape Town (2000)

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Appendix Q

Reflections from workshop participants on attending to spirituality in training and therapy

- *I'm so glad we touched on the role of spirituality and religion in our work. I don't think we completely understand the value it has for ourselves and those who we work with. Thank you for showing me how important it is to you and that we don't have to compromise our own beliefs.*
- *I got to know you as a person with strong beliefs without criticism for those who believe differently. The way in which you talk about your religious beliefs is an example of this.*
- *Our conversation (*writing to another participant*) about structured religion and in fact how similar your Church and my synagogue are, and the struggles these have evoked spoke, I think, to both of us.*

Doing spirituality

- *This week was like a week of prayer to me, especially the closing ritual.*
- *Through your life and the way you are I see glimpses of the face of Jesus, living care.*
- *I experienced community, love and acceptance in abundance, maybe the church should reflect more of this kind of community?*
- *Much of what I witnessed and experienced this week feels like holy ground to me.*
- *I think it's time to name what you are promoting. Elize, I am sure that what you are busy with here is love. Love for your clients, and love for yourself. In a world where cynics all too often hold sway, may this form a groundswell of resistance against fear and despair. This way of working is about how we as equipped human beings can love our clients.*

Teaching as pastoral practice

- *You (the group) have shown me that there is another side to myself, one that I have forgotten, and one that gives meaning to my life and a new perspective on my contribution to the Big Narrative in and around us. Your gentleness and kindness taught me that it is OK to be the way I am….Your stories opened up my life once again so that I can continue writing my own story with new energy … refusing others to take the pen from my hand.*
- *Participating this week connected me with parts of myself which I seemed to perceive as inferior, now I am so grateful for being who I am.*

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