

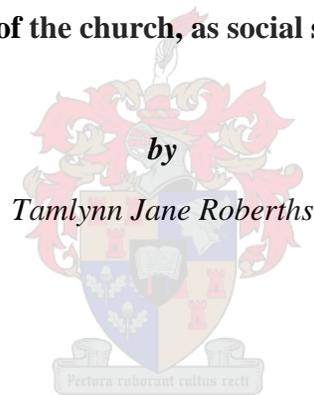
**Stellenbosch University**

Theology Faculty:

Department of Practical Theology & Missiology

Masters in Practical Theology

**‘Exploring trust and loyalty within grandparent-headed families on the Cape Flats and the  
Impact of the church, as social support.’**



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**March 2020**

## **DECLARATION**

### **UNIVERSITY OF STELLENBOSCH**

**By submitting this thesis 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.**

## **Abstract**

This exploratory research study investigated trust and loyalty within grandparent-headed families on the Cape flats, and the impact of the church as social support. The study draws on the dialogical intergenerational pastoral process as a theoretical framework, which allows one to better understand the complexities and perplexities of relational ethics and the importance of people within the networks of relationships. It especially focuses on relations between the past, present and future generations. The dialogical intergenerational pastoral process is a theory advocated in practical theology and family pastoral care, even though it is not limited to focusing on family. This theoretical framework captures the essence of this research study and preferred population approached, which were grandparents who are primary caregivers to their grandchildren. The research methodology which undergirds this thesis is Osmer's four tasks of practical theology. This practical theology research methodology speaks to the structure of this empirical study yet also serves as a clear reminder of the field of importance within this study which is practical theology with a specific focus on pastoral care. Osmer offers guidance for practical theology researchers on the journey of conducting an empirical research study by looking at the four tasks, 1.) the descriptive-empirical 2.) the interpretive task 3.) the Normative task and 4.) The pragmatic task. These tasks were all fitted to specific research aspects within this thesis.

This study was conducted in two church congregations established on the Cape Flats. Although congregants approached come from different areas on the Cape Flats, this means of conducting research is considered a case study format, as it only relies on the perspectives of participants within two churches. The participants included 14 grandparents who are primary caregivers in a grandparent-headed family. The two focus groups conducted at the two consecutive churches, occurred after ethical clearance was approved, informed consent was received from participants and recruitment letters were signed by church leaders involved. Data was gathered using semi-structured open-ended interview questions in the focus group setting. Thematic analysis was used to analyse audio-tape data. Participation from grandparents were voluntarily and participants remain anonymous. In the write-up of this thesis, participants were given

pseudonyms and were referred to as participant A-N at the start of all their interview responses. Findings were discussed in relation to the literature review, and the theoretical framework utilized. The goal of the research was not to determine or predict a hypothesis or to solve a problem. The purpose of the study was to explore trust and loyalty within grandparent-headed families, and to reflect on how these families view the impact of their local church on their significant family relationships within their immediate grandparent-headed family. The objectives and main goals were to investigate the empirical findings of the study by using the dialogical intergenerational pastoral process. The study further aimed to create awareness of grandparent-headed families, provide practical recommendations and to lead the church and its leaders to better assist grandparent-headed families relationally and through pastoral care. The findings divulge the different perspectives and experiences of trust and loyalty which exist between family members of grandparent-headed families who reside on the Cape flats. The study further relays how grandparent-headed families perceive, receive and experience the church as a haven of support- spiritually, relationally, pastorally- and also how they hope to be understood as a unique family type.

### **Dedication**

*I dedicate this thesis to the past, present and future generations of my family. A special dedication goes to my own grandparents both maternal and paternal, who have passed. Your love and legacies have carried me through many of life's lessons and challenges. Though you are no longer with us your encouragements, wisdom and love continue to give.*

## Acknowledgements

- To God who has given me the strength and provided me with an abundance of grace to be able to complete this thesis and to fulfill my purpose in all spheres of life. To God be the glory, honor and praise.
- To my supervisor Prof. C.H Thesnaar, my sincere thanks and gratitude for your guidance, wisdom and encouragement. Without your knowledge, compassion and supervision, I would have not had the courage to pursue this master's degree or complete this thesis.
- To Nel Van Doorn, thank you for being an encouragement and co-supervisor in the structured part of the Master's degree. Your tenacity and knowledge are truly admirable to me as a young woman pursuing academia.
- To my parents who have birthed, raised me and continue to love me unconditionally. I have endless gratitude for your encouragement and provision while completing this thesis. To my mother, Karen Gertrude Lotta Roberths there is not enough words to express my love for you and for the fact that you've instilled in your children that education is key and cannot be bought. To my father, Charles Norman Roberths, thank you for raising me to believe that as a woman I can achieve anything and more in this often-male dominated world. Your belief in me has often gotten me to see beyond my insecurities. Ek is baie lief vir Daddie, dankie vir alles wat jy opoffer!
- To my sister and best friend Chandre'-Morgan Roberths, thank you for being my role model and for always making me bottomless cups of coffee, it was appreciated more than you would ever know. Thank you for being my sound board and for taking on the daunting task of editing my work, your degree in journalism, communications and language has truly come in handy.
- To Myles Roberths, my nephew and the little boy who holds a special place in my heart. Aunty Tammy loves you beyond all of life's challenges. Thank you for making me smile and laugh in times when I thought I couldn't.
- To my close friends Ashley, Firdous (Daisy), Jaun-Roche', Natrisha and Rowen thank you for your love, encouragement and patience. Expecting nothing in return but my friendship. Each of you have individually inspired me through witnessing the passion you hold in your own fields of academia and work.

- To the rest of my extended family who have played a role in being there for me through thick and thin while completing this thesis, words cannot describe my appreciation. A special thank you to the Matthee family, my God mother Wilma and every other family member who has never failed to ask me: “so how is the thesis going?”
  
- To the grandparents who partook in this thesis. Your efforts do not go unseen. Your strength and the love you have for your families and grandchildren have taught me more than anything I could’ve read in a book.

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## Chapter 1: Setting the stage

### 1.1 Introduction & motivation

The immediate family unit is often held together by the loyalty, trust, and prominent values shared with each other. In the instance of households where grandparents accept the role of parents or primary caregivers, the function of the family and raising of children is more strained than usual because of numerous challenges and often unexpected responsibilities. In the South African context, grandparent-headed families have been the norm in certain cultures, more specifically the African culture, while in others it has never been a practice (Mtshali, 2015:79). This has rapidly increased due to social challenges and unforeseen circumstances. Today, the household consists of grandparents and grandchildren, or grandparents who support both their own children and grandchildren. Additionally, grandparents face numerous socioeconomic challenges related to legal, financial, school-based, parenting, and other related issues. The family structure phenomenon of grandparent-headed families has especially increased in the Western Cape in areas such as the Cape Flats. In the past- especially in the time before the group areas act and forced removals- areas such as District Six were family focused communities. Although households were never wealthy or economically stable, communities clung to intergenerational relations, trust, communal living and hope established in families. Families- especially Coloured and Black families- experienced the home as a safety net amidst challenges, and in the face of discrimination perpetrated by the apartheid system (Trotter, 2009:51,52). However, on the Cape Flats today, families live in fear and mistrust, while chaos tears communities apart on a daily basis- leaving very little room for healthy family relations. The <sup>1</sup>Dialogical intergenerational pastoral process will be used as the theoretical framework in this study. This pastoral approach allows for a deeper understanding of trust and loyalty as these are key concepts within this approach. This study hopes to explore the trust and loyalty of grandparent-headed families on the Cape Flats and the impact of the church as social support for these families.

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<sup>1</sup> Dialogical intergenerational pastoral process will alternatively be referred to as DIPP, which is the acronym.

The importance of how family members interact or experience their relationships within their homes are not aspects or topics often discussed on a daily basis, even in a nuclear family. Living life as a family and being in the surroundings of our own homes and communities are often just accepted as is. However, this could lead to wondering how aspects such as trust, loyalty and support is experienced by grandparent-headed families. Surely how these families experience trust between members could either be strained or perhaps stronger than a nuclear family? Is loyalty experienced with clarity or is it often conflicting or split? And does a spiritual institute such as the church, which serves as a spiritual family provide the needed support for a social family, such as a grandparent-headed family? In the South African setting, it often seems as though we underestimate the power of the family system. It takes a village to raise a child and often it is family which turns a house into a home. More importantly, what happens within a household flows out into society and what occurs in society or our communities flows directly back into our households.

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

Sufficient understanding and information concerning how grandparent-headed families' function in the Western Cape is not easily accessible in the form of academic research. There is a palpable gap in research pertaining to lived experiences of grandparent-headed families and their relationships amidst the environment of the Cape Flats. There is also a deep need for pastoral caregivers to better understand intergenerational family relations, and be able to address it both in ministry and in pastoral care interactions. Ultimately, grandparent-headed families display on going intergenerational relations within their family type and further complexities which often need to be assisted with proper awareness and sensitivity. The study hopes to contribute towards pastoral care for grandparent-headed families; specifically on the Cape flats.

Therefore, the study will focus on what many studies based on the communities in the Western Cape have chosen to bypass- namely investigating the relational well-being of families guided and guarded by grandparents. More specifically, the relational well-being as it pertains to loyalty and trust within these families. Trust and loyalty are of great significance within family relationships and are key constructs within the DIPP. Krasner and Joyce (1995:12) says that: "Trust is the dough in the bread of relationship, kneaded by the energy and efforts of visible and invisible hands" which means that external factors contribute to whether or not there is trust shared between

ourselves and others, especially in the context of a family. Loyalty is also a strong building block in our relational realities. Before we begin to understand family as a unit, we first need to understand and recognise the concept of loyalty which flows from the existence of a family. Loyalty is a fundamental force and bond which shapes both the individual and the family. The study also hopes to find out how these families are supported and impacted by the churches they attend, as the church serves as a very strong influence especially within our social relations. In this instance the impact referred to is not financial or economic. The impact and social support referred to, relates to how the church influences these grandparent-headed families views and relational understandings about loyalty and trust within their families. By exploring how grandparents perceive the church to be an impact as social support, it will leave room to address social relations, lived experiences and pastoral care issues, and formulate practical recommendations which will assist grandparent-headed families. There is a need to create a stronger platform to better understand and address relationships within grandparent-headed families and the strain placed on this family type; often caused by living conditions and lack of social support.

### **1.3 Research questions**

The study will be guided by the following research questions:

- How are the relational engagements of trust and loyalty experienced in everyday family life between members of grandparent-headed families on the Cape Flats?  
The secondary questions were formulated to gain further information and provide clarity regarding the primary question.
- How can the DIPP assist in an improved understanding and interpreting of the empirical findings on grandparent-headed families, in the study?
- How is the support of the church concerning family relationships being perceived by members of grandparent-headed families?

## 1.4 Aim & Objectives

- The study aims to explore the loyalty and trust within grandparent-headed families on the Cape Flats.
- The study further aims to reflect on how these grandparent-headed family members view their local churches impact on the significance of family relationships.
- The broad objective is that the study creates awareness of grandparent-headed families.
- Another objective is to empirically explore the study topic while employing DIPP as pastoral care framework, in order to formulate practical recommendations.
- Finally, the objective of the study is also to lead the church towards better assisting grandparent-headed families, relationally and pastorally.

## 1.5 Methodology

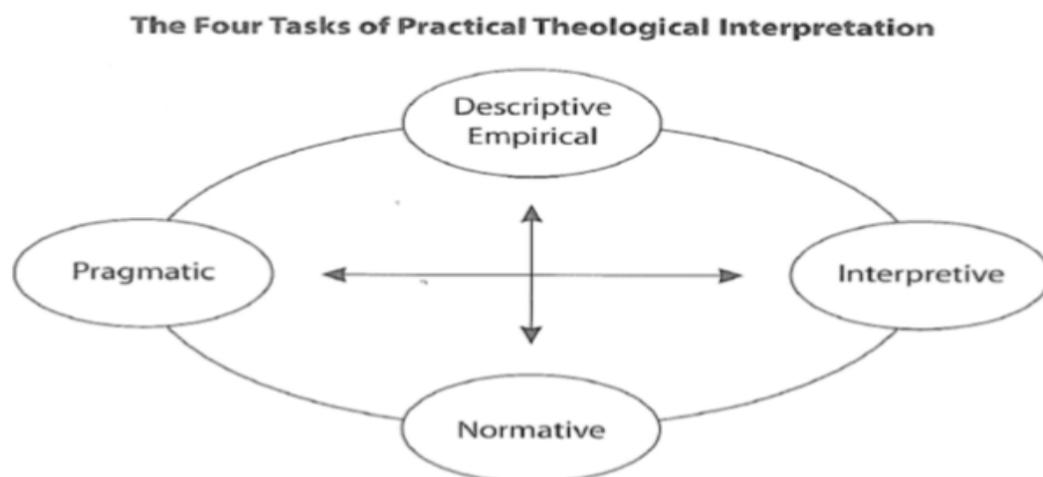
### 1.5.1 Research Methodology

Practical theology is a holistic discipline and each practical theologian needs to reflect on what the core identity of practical theology is and what theological methodology speaks best to the subdiscipline they find themselves in (Roots, 2014:3,4). By subdiscipline it is a reference to the various disciplines which form part of Practical theology as a whole such as; applied theology which makes reference to missiology, evangelism, religious education and other related practical theology fields such as homiletics, pastoral theology, spiritual formation or even political theology. Practical theology can be used to apply theology in all its forms to the contemporary context; in order to transform the community of God into the image of Jesus Christ. Practical theology is often reflected on as the theology which leaves behind the isolating walls of a library in order to practically move, serve, and formulate theological knowledge in the field of ministry, communities, or broader society (Roots, 2014:4).

A leading scholar in the field of practical theology who has spotted the fact that practical theology often lacks a clear definition and therefore falls prey to misinterpretation, is Richard Osmer. Practical theology is to be formed by theology and informed by other disciplines such as sociology, anthropology or psychology. Therefore, Osmer's four core tasks of practical theological interpretation assists in offering clarity on what practical theologians do and how to go about doing practical theology, both in academia and ministry (Osmer, 2008:18,19). Osmer has defined practical theology as consisting of four core tasks. These four tasks formulate what practical

theology is and how it is interpreted and done. Osmer's tasks also assist theologians from making their fields of interest come across as 'sociology lite'. One can so easily take off your theological coat when exploring certain fields within practical theology, which use other fields as part of what informs it. A good example of this is Pastoral care which often reaches for texts on in-depth psychology, family systems, cultural anthropology or other forms of sociology to inform its theoretical perspectives. Osmer's tasks often re-orientates the Practical theologian to remember that they remain rooted in a theological identity. Also, allowing them to theologically investigate or conduct research in a way which is flexible yet focused on what is necessary (Osmer, 2008:12).

That said, I will be making use of Osmer's paradigm of Practical theological interpretation as a hermeneutical and practical theological methodology to undergird and hold together the structure of this research study. This research study is rooted in practical theology with a specific focus on pastoral care. Osmer's tasks will be applied not as a step by step model but as a procedure which undergirds the study and offers traction in order to hold fast to a practical theological perspective. The study focuses on exploring trust and loyalty within grandparent-headed families and the impact of the church, as social support. Though one can easily construed the research topic as merely sociological or related to family therapy, the research study finds its purpose in the need to better assist and inform families and ministers in a relational and pastoral care sense. Therefore, Osmer's four tasks not only gives theological guidance but it provides the researcher with the tools and insight on how to do so theologically. The four core tasks highlighted are suggestive of a particular paradigm for contemporary practical theological interpretation (Figure 1).



**Figure 1. 1 Osmer's four tasks of Practical Theological Interpretation**

Osmer's paradigm integrates four tasks which formulate a basic structure of practical theological interpretation. Each task speaks to the broad field of practical theology and how research and literature is interpreted in a field which is often interdisciplinary (Osmer, 2008:10). The interconnectedness of the four tasks of practical theological interpretation is apparent in the context and episodes of this full-thesis. The four tasks encompass the descriptive-empirical, the interpretive, the normative and the pragmatic.

➤ The descriptive-empirical task poses the question, what is going on? It focuses on gathering information to better understand particular episodes, situations, or contexts (Osmer, 2011:2). This task attends to the matters of what is going on in the lives of individuals, families and congregations. Although he acknowledges informal and semiformal gathering of information. Osmer focuses on the formal attending which he defines as investigating particular episodes, situations and contexts through empirical research. He argues that qualitative research methods don't treat people as objects, and are thus consistent with priestly listening. (Osmer, 2008: 38). Priestly listening is important in ministry, preaching, and pastoral caregiving. Its focus falls on the attending of others, even while conducting research. In this study priestly listening and adhering to the descriptive-empirical task meant truly gaging participants about trust and loyalty in their grandparent-headed families and how they perceive the impact of the church as social support. It is imperative to perceive this task as more than just gathering information from people on their circumstance and situation. It deals with gaining lived experiences and exploring the quality of attentiveness of church leaders or researchers. Within the descriptive-empirical task Osmer also discusses how to conduct empirical research. This task was largely undertaken in chapter two; in order to describe the context of the study. Thus, chapter two disseminates and investigates literature and relays the empirical findings gathered.

➤ The Interpretive task poses the question, why is this going on? Entering into a dialogue with the social sciences to interpret and explain why certain actions and patterns are taking place. This usually hones in on the literature you may use when researching and exploring a certain topic of interest. In this case it would look at the literature consulted in the research study (Osmer, 2011: 2). The interpretive task or sagely wisdom, looks at reasons for the phenomena that is observed in the descriptive-empirical task. This task emphasises the theoretical knowledge and interpretation and designates the ability to "draw on theories of the arts and science to understand and respond

to particular episodes, situations and contexts (Osmer, 2008: 83).” This task could be viewed as a map to guide the researcher when reflecting on the empirical information gathered (Osmer, 2008:61). Chapter 3 reflects an interdisciplinary focus and attends to the work of Ivan Boszormenyi-Nagy, Martin Buber and Emmanuel Levinas. This is done in order to gain an understanding of relational ethics and the relational resources, trust and loyalty which are main aspects explored in this study.

➤ Normative: this task addresses the question ‘what ought to be going on?’ Raising normative questions from the perspectives of theology, ethics and other fields. This looks at ethical norms which guide our responses and the ability to be guided by good practice (Osmer, 2011:2). This task is an attempt to address the theological questions ‘How is a worldly wisdom of the arts and sciences appropriately related to the Wisdom of God?’ How do we meet the present situations with what ought to be happening, with the assistance of pastoral counselling, social values or ministry? (Osmer, 2008:93). Chapter 4 undertakes the normative task as it addresses both divine disclosure and theological interpretation. This chapter reflects on pastoral care as a practical theology, DIPP as the essential pastoral care focus within this study and facets which serve as theological guidance.

➤ Pragmatic: this task poses the question ‘how might we respond?’ Forming an action plan and undertaking specific responses that seek to shape the episode, situation, or context in necessary directions. This looks at what we might do to move from the current situation to a preferred situation (Osmer, 2011:2). The pragmatic task is in essence the product which is formulated out of the compilation of all that is done in chapter 2-4. Without the research and empirical work conducted in the other chapters of this thesis it would not be possible to offer any concrete recommendations or make a contribution with this study. Chapter 5 hopes to offer clear recommendations and discussions concerning the findings made. Therefore, chapter 5 undertakes the pragmatic task as it tries to answer the research questions of this study and provide clear interpretation of the empirical findings.

The four core tasks could be perceived as a spiral and not a circle moving chronologically and the empirical research of this study can address all four tasks of Osmer’s theological interpretation. It often circles back to tasks, reintegrating or reexploring tasks that have already been explored as

new insights emerge. These four tasks are interrelated and the interaction of these four tasks distinguishes practical theology from other fields. (Osmer, 2008: 11).

### 1.5.2 Research design

The aim of the study is to explore the loyalty and trust within grandparent-headed families on the Cape Flats and to further reflect on how these family members view their local churches impact on the significance of family relationships. Flowing from these aims is the purpose of the study which is to create awareness about grandparent-headed families from a subjective stance, and to lead the church towards better assisting these families socially, pastorally and relationally. The DIPP is used to better explore trust and loyalty within grandparent-headed families on the Cape Flats and the impact of the church, as social support. The researcher decided on qualitative research and made use of in-person semi-structured focus group interviews. The focus fell on detailed and in-depth information rich data gathered from grandparents who are primary care-givers to their grandchildren.

The reason for the use of qualitative research is because it's predominantly focuses on the subjective views and lived experiences of the participants recruited and involved in the study. Researchers benefit from this as they can use this subjective views and information rich data in order to present findings in writing. That said, qualitative data is in-depth and it is an intensive process for the researcher to recruit participants, record data, analysis and code data into the necessary information. Thus, it was important to be vigilant and thorough when linking the lives of the participants to appropriate themes and then analysing this information. Within qualitative research it is also important to keep focus on the meaning that the participants hold about the issue or problem at hand and not the meaning the researcher brings to the study or what is expressed in literature (Creswell, 2014: 235). When conducting qualitative research, the researcher makes the effort to understand the participants, build rapport and investigate the issue, phenomenon or problem within the natural setting, where the participant experiences the issue under investigation (Creswell, 2014: 234; Kumar, 2011:103,104). Despite efforts made on the part of the researcher, participants cannot be forced into being entirely open or feeling comfortable enough to share everything about themselves or circumstance; this needs to be respected. In the case of this study, the interviews were conducted in the familiar surroundings of their church. Qualitative studies make use of more than just in-person answered interview questions, qualitative researchers also

make use of participant observation. The journey of this study was not one embarked on with rigid views on how things ought to be or how participants ought to respond within interview sessions. One of the main reasons the study suits a qualitative research method, is because it was not interested in finding statistical outcomes or data to prove or disprove something. The study focused on obtaining an in-depth understanding and perspective of how humans respond to their household circumstances, relationships and the support they receive.

### 1.5.3 Population & sampling

The population of a research study is usually a larger collection of people or objects with similar characteristics that is the main focus of a scientific investigation or research study. However, researchers often do not have access to the large sizes of populations and neither do they have the time or expenses to base their studies on these large groups of people (Creswell, 2014: 205). The small sample of grandparents recruited for this study is only but a sample of the larger population of grandparents who are the primary care-givers in their grandparent-headed families. The sample is simply stated the subset of the population. The function of this sample is often to allow the researcher to conduct a study and draw findings and conclusions which could be applied to the general population (Creswell, 2014: 205). However, though this is often the aim when conducting research on a sample, it needs to be kept in mind that generalizations drawn from sample and applied to the much larger population needs to be done carefully and assumptions cannot be drawn on all counts. Therefore, there are different selection processes and sampling techniques to ensure that we do not just assume or generalize all findings to the broader population. In the case of this study purposeful sampling was made use of, it is a form of random sampling (Creswell, 2014: 238). The primary goal of purposive sampling is the researcher's judgement as to who can provide information to achieve the objectives of the study. Thus, in this study the objectives were to create awareness of grandparent-headed families as unit of analysis and to lead the church to be of better assistance and support system. Therefore, it was important to approach people who are likely to be in a specific context and who are willing to share their context and experiences.

The sample of the population in this study consisted of +- 20 grandparents. The grandparents were all primary caregivers to their grandchildren which meant that their collective household was considered a grandparent-headed family. As mentioned before the criteria which was focused on was the fact that these grandparents came out of the same context in this case the specific context

was the church. Thus, these grandparents were recruited out of two different churches from the same denomination. The United Congregational church of Southern Africa (UCCSA) was the common denomination and the churches were two churches on the Cape Flats. Namely, The Blue Downs Presbyterian United Congregational church and the Delft United Congregational church. These churches were also specifically approached because they are found on the Cape Flats. The participants approached for this study were expected to be either two grandparents as primary caregivers or single grandparents as a primary caregiver. They were also expected to be preferably 45 years and older, in order to meet the sampling criteria for this study.

After the participants were recruited and data was collected the overall sample which arose out of the churches approached were 14 participants all together. Within the first focus group there were 7 participants and within the second focus group conducted there were 7 participants. The male, female ratio between participant was non-existent as all participants which showed up for the focus groups were all grandmothers both married or single and primary caregivers to their grandchildren. Although the absence of grandfathers created a sense of incompleteness and perhaps even hampers gaining a better understanding from a male perspective. The woman shared openly about the support of their partners as grandfathers and their involvement in raising their grandchildren. In essence, the topic of the research study didn't merely focus on grandparents it emphasised the grandparent-headed family and exploring this family type by drawing from the valuable experiences and perspectives of the grandparents themselves. Overall, the focus group process was a reminder that the researcher cannot entirely control the recruitment process, the interview process and what participants are willing to share in this data collection procedure.

#### 1.5.4 the Cape Flats: Study location

This current study and research conducted is limited to the Cape Flats, the flat lying area in the Western Cape. This specific area displays a wealth of beauty, land, people and cultures; but is also notorious for its horrific crime rate, harsh living circumstance and socio-economic issues. John Western (1981) was one of the first to describe the Cape Flats in his work 'Outcast Cape Town.' This area is situated on a series of lakes and marshy spaces; it includes the sandy wasteland between the Atlantic Ocean in the north and False Bay (Western, 1981: 99)

Many of the communities and residential areas which came about on the Cape Flats were people and families removed from the inner city of Cape Town. This occurred because of the Group Areas Act instated in 1968 by the Apartheid government at the time. These new communities were a mixture of people mostly coloured and black people, with different cultures, religions and customs (Western, 2002: 711; Abel, 2015:7). The areas on the Cape Flats were often named after areas where these people previously resided in, before they were forcefully removed (Western, 2002:117). Well into the 1980's the communities were synonymous with violence, gangsterism, and crimes of every kind. Areas such as Manenberg, Bonteheuwel, Lavender Hill, Belhar, Delft, Guguletu and Nyanga -only to name a few- are communities known for turmoil, injustice, fear and unrest. The media and the rest of South Africa has labelled the Cape Flats as nothing more than what is seen in these areas; often disregarding any good which arises from these communities.

When the National Party came into governance in 1948, the regime of segregation seemed to be at the verge of collapse and the nationalists then set about to entrench South Africa into the evil ideology of Apartheid. In doing so, the NP also found it logically sound to impose racial zones, dividing the country and eventually leading to the group areas act of 1968 as mentioned before (Mabin, 1992:405-407). What they didn't foresee, was that this divide of land and people would cause more damage than growth or good once Apartheid were to come to an end. By trying to keep black South Africans disorganized, disorientated with suffering and economic dependence they also created communities who are in constant survival mode and trauma (Abel, 2015:16).

It is therefore important to explore the living experiences of communities on the Cape Flats not only because of their often-unique circumstances but also because creating awareness is of grave importance for everyone in our South African context. Especially for those who still directly suffer from the horrific traumas and realities of Apartheid. Family as a social system is also, a core element and at the heart of many residing on the Cape Flats today. According to literature, for many families the dysfunction of both the past and the present state of the Cape Flats have infiltrated their households, family structures, relational dynamics and social interactions (Bowers-Du Toit , 2014; Trotter, 2009; Salo, 2006; De Iannoy, 2018; Richter, et al., 2018). For many grandparent-headed families this is not only observed but experienced daily. The formulation of many grandparent-headed families occurs because of socio-economic issues and dysfunction.

The above relates to the specific research site where the empirical research is conducted. The ideal research site would probably constitute both participant and researcher easily having access to this site and feeling fairly comfortable in the chosen environment. The researcher chose to conduct the research at the consecutive churches which the participants belong to and are recruited out of. As mentioned before, these churches are Blue Downs United Congregational Church and Delft United Congregational Church. The researcher also felt comfortable in both research environments because she previously served in ministry at both Christian congregations and has therefore previously interacted with both church leaders and congregants of these churches. The focus of the study involuntarily fell on the Afrikaans-speaking coloured participants since this group constitutes the membership of the Churches approached for participation in the project. However, when there were participants within these congregations who were not Afrikaans-speaking Coloured participants, whether migrants or of different racial or cultural background they were still considered suitable to partake in the study. As long as he/she met the age criteria of 45 years and older and is a grandparent who is the primary caregiver to his/her grandchildren.

As an overview of the demographics of the areas approached for this project. Delft is situated approximately 34 km east of Cape Town, and approximately 7.5 km from Bellville. It was established to be one of Cape Town's first mixed race township including coloured and black residents. In 2000, it had a population between 25,000 and 92,000 inhabitants. According to the 2011 census, Delft was 51% Coloured and 46% Black African with 3% "other". The dominant first languages are Afrikaans and isiXhosa while English is widely used as second language. The majority of residents have not finished their matric and fall within the low-income bracket. Official unemployment levels are at about 43% (although unofficially, this might be much higher). Much of Delft consists of government housing projects, but there are also so-called Temporary Relocation Areas (TRAs) such as Tsunami and the Symphony Way TRA. Delft is a big township. It is divided into 7 places (divisions) namely Delft South (also known as Suburban), Voorbrug, Leiden (Delft Central), Eindhoven, Roosendal, The Hague and the new Symphony section. Delft South is predominantly populated by isiXhosa-speaking people, Leiden (Delft Central) is a mixed community of both isiXhosa-speaking and Afrikaans-speaking people. Voorbrug, The Hague, Roosendal and Eindhoven are predominantly populated by Afrikaans-speaking coloured. The proposed project will concentrate on the latter areas (Frith, 2011; Brinkhoff, 2013). Blue Downs is another suburb in the Cape Town Metropole, situated on the Cape Flats. It covers an area of

24.57 square kilometres, has a population of 92330 in 22162 households. Inhabitants are 51% female and 49% male. Like Delft, Blue Downs is a mixed-race township with so-called Coloureds making up 75% of the inhabitants, Black Africans 22% and “other” groups 3%. Afrikaans is the first language of 64% of the residents, isiXhosa 18% and the rest English or other languages. In both research site areas inhabitants also fall within a low socio-economic bracket (Frith, 2011; Brinkhoff, 2013).

## **1.6 Data collection method**

### **1.6.1 Data gathering techniques**

The Data collection method used in this study was in the form of two focus groups and the participants who made up these focus groups were grandparents. A focus group is a made up of individuals with certain characteristics. A focus group is usually a group of six to nine individuals in number and are gathered to discuss a common topic or issue pertaining to them personally. Focus groups are brought together by a researcher to explore attitudes, feelings, ideas or phenomena about a topic (Dilshad & Latif, 2013: 191). A focus group interview provides a setting for participants of a study to reflect on questions asked by the interviewer. In this research study grandparent participants were recruited to form focus group interviews and the two consecutive focus group interviews were conducted by means of in-person semi-structured interviews in order to gain subjective lived experiences of grandparent-headed families. There were 6-10 participants in each of the focus groups conducted and the focus group interviews took up a maximum 2hours with a break in between these sessions. The questions posed in these semi-structured focus group interviews were in-depth open-ended questions. These semi-structured focus group interviews were recorded using audio-tape and notes will be taken where necessary.

Focus group interviews provide a more natural setting than individual interviews; because participants do not feel alone in the interview process and participants are both influencing and are influenced by others (Dilshad & Latif, 2013: 192,193). This allows for a more real-life experience and can promote being at ease when sharing common understanding and circumstances in the presence of others. This form of data collection aims to collect high-quality data which allows both participants and researcher to better understand specific viewpoints of the participants partaking in the research. Focus group interviews are useful when researchers need more information about

the unit of analysis or research topic. Focus group interviews are also beneficial when the researcher wants to investigate or explore what people's perceptions or experiences are in a specific situation, or patterns of specific issues. Focus groups are also of good use when exploring sensitive issues or lived experiences and it is also common to use this form of data collection when addressing marginalised communities or sectors of society (Dilshad & Latif, 2013: 193). Focus groups are of course a suitable option for data collection if the study is qualitative research.

In this study the above-mentioned purposes were taken into account before considering focus group interviews as an option for this research study. There was a need for a data collection technique which allowed participants to be comfortable discussing their family life, produce information rich data, and reflect that they are not alone in their circumstances. Focus group interviews was therefore a suitable option as it not only addressed the needs for this research study and the participants but also held to the topic and objectives of the research which deals with the support of the church and creating awareness about grandparent-headed families. Furthermore, semi-structured interviews allowed the participants to guide the researcher by means of their responses. This enabled a relaxed atmosphere where participants felt open to share their lived experiences.

#### 1.6.2 Interview schedule

The focus group interview was semi-structured interview questions and all participants were granted freedom and flexibility to respond as they felt comfortable. There was also no expectation for all participants to answer every question within the focus group interview session. Participants answering interview questions voluntarily allowed for them to share their life experiences and values in an authentic way. There were two focus group interviews conducted and the participants were grandparents who were primary caregivers to their grandchildren, in the age range of 45 years and older. The first focus group conducted took place at the Delft United Congregational church and the second focus group interview was conducted at the Bluedowns United Congregational Church. In the initial recruitment process of participants from grandparent-headed families the researcher approached both leaders of these churches and sent them each a letter of recruitment in order for them to give permission to recruit participants for this study. With each church the researcher had chosen to be present in at least one of the congregation's gatherings and invited participation from congregants who comply with the selection criteria. The researcher then

supplied contact details to possible participants via the church administration office to connect her if they were interested in partaking in the study. It was also arranged that the church announce the invitation for participation in the study at the Sunday morning service.

Once interested candidates had contacted the researcher or the church leader or secretary indicated that there were interested candidates the researcher either sent through consent forms and information sheets which included possible questions. A mutual date for focus group interviews to take place was also agreed upon between researcher and consecutive church counsels. Both churches were willing and cooperative in organising the logistics for the focus group interviews and was open to availing the church buildings for this endeavour.

Furthermore, both focus group interviews were conducted in English and questions were translated in Afrikaans where necessary. There was also a translator present and assistant to assist with further translations and taking notes where necessary. The focus group interviews were voice recorded and participants were given pseudonyms and were assigned codes to differentiate between them. This made it easier to maintain confidentiality and was necessary in order to have control when finally transcribing and analysing the data. During the interview sessions the researcher would pose a question and when a participant indicated that they were interested in answering the question, the researcher would respond by mentioning the code assigned to the participant. This process seemed tedious at times and if discussions become free flowing it could get tricky but it was easier for the researcher to respond with the assigned codes because it made it easier for the participants to just focus on their responses and be comfortable with responding to the interview questions. Overall, participants were very helpful and by observation of body language and the way they responded it seemed that they were comfortable to share their lived experiences. I also spend time building rapport with participants both before the focus group interviews began, during the short lunch break provided and at the end of the focus group interviews ended when the researcher allocated 15 to 20 min for debriefing. The researcher realised that spending extra time with the participants outside of the interview sessions allowed for open authentic relations within the interview sessions with participant grandparents as individuals and as collective groups.

### 1.6.3 Pilot Study

Pilot studies are usually associated with quantitative research methods and techniques in order to test particular instruments or to run trial experiments. Pilot studies are usually a data collection process done on a smaller scale than the full-scale study conducted and used within a thesis. The importance of pilot studies also expands to qualitative studies and with good reason, as it allows for the full-scale study or actual data collection experience and interviews to run smoother especially if the researcher has chosen to make use of focus group interviews (Kinchin, et al., 2018:2,3). Pilot studies assist the researcher in determining the initial flaws or limitations within the interview guide and procedure. In the case of this study a pilot study allowed the researcher to see how data collection instruments could be better utilized and also how keeping time constraints in mind was important. After the pilot study the researcher also has the opportunity to determine which of the interview questions could be used in the full-scale study and which of the interview questions proved to be less useful for open ended answers (Kinchin, et al., 2018:3).

When conducting the pilot study, the same selection criteria was used to recruit participants but the 4 participants did not arise from the churches approached for the full-scale study. An information session explaining the research study and what it entails were also discussed with the participants. The participants were made aware that the data collected will remain confidential and that it will not be used in the full-scale research write up of the thesis. Nevertheless, the participants were still willing to sacrifice their time and effort to partake in this pilot study. The pilot study focus group interview lasted approximately 1 hour and 30 minutes and this allowed the researcher to see exactly where participants might spend more time discussing certain questions and how a time schedule should be organized for the full-scale data collection. The pilot study was also not recorded other than taking notes where necessary because the purpose of the pilot study was to address logistics of the interview schedules and rework the interview questions for the full-scale research study.

## 1.7 Data Analysis

In qualitative research the researcher is often seen as the main data collection instrument as far as the researcher's ability goes to understand, interpret and describe the data collected from participants. That said, it makes it extremely complex to depend on the researchers unguided perspective and interpretation of data collected. Thematic analysis as a form of qualitative analysis

which assists researchers to code and analysis data and provides core skills that is useful for conducting forms of qualitative analysis. In this study thematic analysis was made use of too analysis data and one of the reasons for this is because that this form of data analysis is flexible in nature. Thematic analysis is the process of identifying patterns or themes within qualitative data and then reporting on these themes or patterns while also reflecting on specific conceptual frameworks or theoretical perspectives. Thematic analysis is perceived as a method rather than a research methodology (Braun & Clark , 2006:4,5). Unlike other qualitative methodologies it is not bound to specific theoretical perspectives and affords the researcher the opportunity to be flexible, when making use of diverse theoretical perspectives which suit the study best.

The aim of a thematic analysis is to identify themes or patterns in the data that are important or interesting, and use these themes to address the research (Braun & Clark, 2013:1). This is more than just summarising the data as a through form of thematic analysis makes sense of the data collected. A common drawback is that researchers often use the main interview questions as the themes and this only reflects that the data was merely summarised and not analysed (Clarke & Braun, 2013:1). There are two levels of thematic analysis namely, semantic and latent thematic analysis. ‘...within the explicit or surface meanings of the data and the analyst is not looking for anything beyond what a participant has said or what has been written.’ (Braun & Clark , 2006: 84). The second form of thematic analysis is, the latent level which looks beyond what has been said and ‘...starts to examine the underlying ideas, assumptions, and conceptualisations that are theorised as shaping or informing the semantic content of the data’ (Braun & Clark , 2006:84). This study was considered a theoretical thematic analysis as the analysis was driven by the specific research questions and further theoretical assumptions of the DIPP. The data analysis was done from a top-down approach rather than a bottom up analysis, always first reflecting on the research questions and the information linked to it.

Thematic analysis provides a 6-step guide, which is very useful when analysing raw data. However, these steps don't need to be followed in linear arrangement. When the data within this research study became complex at times, the researcher moved back and forth between these steps in order to conduct clear and concise analysis of the data. These steps are presented as follows.

Step 1: Become familiar with the data.

The first step in any analysis, specifically in qualitative analysis is familiarising yourself with the data. This means reading and re-reading the transcripts or moving from listening to the audio recorded interviews and writing them out. This could take hours and is often time consuming and tedious but necessary in order to get to know the transcripts which often seems unfamiliar despite the fact that as researcher you are present in the focus group interviews (Delahunt & Maguire , 2017: 3354). Writing down impressions and taking notes is of importance at this stage. Even writing down observational aspects which was noticed when conducting the interview.

Step 2: Generate initial codes.

In this second stage you start to organise the data in a logical and systematic manner. Coding reduces an overreaching amount of data into smaller chunks of meaning. There are different ways to code data and it is often determined by the researcher's objectives or research questions. This was a theoretical thematic analysis rather than an inductive thematic analysis (Delahunt & Maguire , 2017: 3355). Therefore, the research questions, aims and objectives and the overall theoretical perspective was taken into consideration when deciding on codes and themes. If this analysis was inductive every line of the interview would have been coded without considering more than just the responses made by participants (Delahunt & Maguire , 2017: 3355). The researcher made use of open coding so as not to restrict themes and codes. The researcher developed codes while working through the coding process. The process of formulating codes only began once step 1 was complete. In the initial coding process, the researcher made use of approximately 15 codes.

After working through the data and applying these initial codes it was easier to formulate themes in the next stage of data analysis. It is also valuable to know that for this analysis process the coding process was done both deductively and inductively. This means that I focused on both the explicit wording to determine what matched with the codes and I depended on latent messages within the data to determine whether certain data matched with certain codes.

Step 3: Search for themes.

A theme is a pattern which is formulated from the codes of data gathered that captures something significant about the data or research questions. The codes are thus organised into the broader themes and subthemes of the study and the themes formulated also links back to the research

questions of the study (Delahunt & Maguire , 2017: 3355). This way your themes and subthemes are not just drawn from nowhere but from the researcher’s initial research questions or aims and objectives. This process was clear and concise because the researcher depended on the already established research questions and aims and objective to formulate the themes and subthemes for the data analysis. The initial codes used also assisted in how to formulate and group themes according to data which was already coded. Though this process was not difficult it could be time consuming and tedious because there is a need to constantly move back and forth between themes and the data.

#### Step 4: Review themes.

At this stage the researcher reviews and develops the preliminary themes formulated in step 3. At this stage it is also best to get together all the data that is related to each theme formulated (Delahunt & Maguire , 2017: 3356). For this study the researcher merely ‘cut and paste’ the relevant data under each relevant theme or subtheme in a Microsoft Word document. Each theme was also colour-coded to indicate which data was matched up with each theme. Reading and rereading to determine whether the different sets of data supported the themes formulated occurred right through this process. Below is a table reviewing the themes and subthemes which have been used to thematise the empirical findings gathered.

Themes & subthemes	Participant responses
<b>1. Family life &amp; experiences</b>	<b>Participants A-H (Focus group 1)</b> <b>Participants I-N (Focus group 2)</b>
1.1 Family membership & meaning	Participant <b>A, C</b>
1.2 Household circumstance	Participant <b>D, F</b>
1.3 Relationship between biological parents & children.	Participant <b>J, C</b>
1.4 Relationship between grandparents & biological parents.	Participant <b>D, M</b>
1.5 Involvement of biological parents.	Participant <b>E , M</b>
1.6 Generational differences in child rearing	Participant <b>D, E, M</b>

1.7 Safety, support & discipline.	Participant <b>D, F, M</b>
1.8 Married and single grandparenting	Participant <b>C, E, G</b>
<b>2. The community &amp; socio-economic concerns.</b>	
2.1 Community experiences	Participant <b>J, F</b>
2.2 Financial circumstance	Participant <b>C, B, M</b>
2.3 Health & well-being	Participant <b>G, B</b>
2.4 Government support	Participant <b>C, J</b>
2.5 Other systems of support	Participant <b>J, F</b>
<b>3. The church &amp; spiritual support.</b>	
3.1 spiritual life	Participant <b>M</b>
3.2 The church	Participant <b>E, H</b>
3.3 Pastoral care for family.	Participant <b>A, F</b>
3.4 Other forms of support received from the church	Participant <b>C, H</b>
<b>4. Trust as a relational resource.</b>	
4.1 Perspectives on trust	Participant <b>B, J</b>
4.2 Experiences of trust & communication.	Participant <b>A, B, F</b>
4.3 Joys, rewards & family strengths	Participant <b>F, J</b>
<b>5. Loyalty both visible &amp; invisible in grandparent-headed homes.</b>	
5.1 Raising grandchildren: an obligation or loyalty?	Participant <b>A, F, L</b>
5.2 Conflicting loyalties	Participant <b>B, C</b>
5.3 Split loyalties	Participant <b>L</b>
5.4 Perspectives on loyalty	Participant <b>C, B</b>
5.5 Legacy & life lessons passed on.	Participant <b>K, N</b>

**Table 1.2 List of Themes & Participant responses**

Step 5: Define themes.

This final step determines whether the themes formulated support the overall essence of the analysis and research study. Defining the themes typically means identifying the essence and meaning of what each theme is about (Braun & Clark, 2006: 92). The researcher reviewed what the themes within the analysis for this study represented and voiced in relation to the full-scale study. The researcher also reflected on whether the subthemes formulated, interacted with the main themes and whether all of the subthemes had purpose. This step in the analysis questioned whether the themes relate to one another and whether the themes relate to the overall aims, objectives, goals and significance of the study. This was necessary because any miscellaneous themes which did not coincide with the overall study had to be reviewed or redeveloped in order to create clarity.

Step 6: Writing-up.

The last step is writing up the analysed data into a report form. In this case the analysed data was used to in chapter 5 in order to discuss findings and report back on the research topic, problem, aims, objectives and how the findings link up to the theoretical perspective undergirding this thesis which is the Dialogical Intergenerational pastoral process. The analysed data was also used in chapter 6, when discussing recommendations, further contributions and studies.

### **1.8 Ethical consideration**

Ethical considerations are concern with the moral behaviour of the researcher throughout the research study and especially when engaging with participants. De Vos et al (2005: 57) discusses the fact that by definition ethics for research: *“is a set of moral principles which is suggested by an individual or a group, is subsequently widely accepted, and which offers rules and behavioural expectations about the most correct conduct towards experimental subjects and respondents, employers, sponsors, other researchers, assistants and students”*.

The ethical principles emphasised and carried out through the processes of this research study was- amongst other ethical principles- respect, beneficence and responsibility towards participants and people involved. Respect for privacy and confidentiality of participants by requesting informed consent in both the recruitment process and for permission to conduct the actual focus group interviews. Beneficence and not to bring harm to any participants was practiced, as the study did not aim to solve a problem or to report on any prejudged ideas but merely to explore and create

awareness in order to lead the church towards better assisting grandparent-headed families (Fouka & Mantzourou, 2011: 5). This was relayed to the participants and the church leaders who consented to recruiting participants out of their congregations.

The research for this study was conducted by means of two focus groups and the participants were all grandparents who are primary caregivers to their grandchildren. By definition a household where grandparents are the primary caregivers to their grandchildren the family is considered to be a grandparent-headed family or household. Before the research commenced the researcher had to apply for ethical clearance and had to wait for it to be approved by the research ethics committee.

<sup>2</sup>Project number received from the research ethics committee was **10402**.

In the meantime, the researcher approached the churches considered to assist and serve as gatekeepers in order to recruit participants. The researcher provided the consecutive churches with recruitment letters in order to receive written permission from the church leaders and church counsels. With each church the researcher had chosen to be present in at least one of the congregation's gatherings and invited participation from congregants who comply with the selection criteria. The researcher then supplied contact details to interested participants via the church administration office. It was also arranged that the church announce the invitation for participation in the study in the Sunday morning church services. Once interested candidates had contacted the researcher or the church leader or secretary indicated that there were interested candidates, the researcher sent through <sup>3</sup>consent forms and information sheets which further explained what the study entailed. The participants were also expected to provide informed consent as individual participants by means of completing and signing a consent form; provided by the researcher and approved by the research ethics committee.

A mutual date for conducting the focus group interviews was also agreed upon between researcher and consecutive church counsels. The church also gave the researcher permission to conduct these interviews on the church premises, in order for the participants to feel comfortable in their natural setting. Before each focus group interview was conducted an information session was held in order to discuss confidentiality, ethical aspects of interest. Participants were made aware that

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<sup>2</sup> Please refer to pg. 143 Appendix D: Ethical clearance. Notice of approval.

<sup>3</sup> Consent forms: "it means that a person knowingly, voluntarily and intelligently, and in a clear and manifest way, gives his consent (Fouka & Mantzourou, 2011: 4)"

participation in the study was done on a voluntary basis and that they could withdraw from the study at any time. In order to maintain confidentiality, the participants in this study were assigned pseudonyms and codes and their real names were not used during the interview process or in the written thesis. They were also treated with respect and dignity throughout interview process and were encouraged by the researcher to speak up if they needed to voice any feelings of discomfort.

The researcher also informed participants of counselling facilities and further help which could be provided if participants felt it necessary after the focus group interviews were conducted. Each question posed during the focus group interview sessions was handled with sensitivity. When the researcher saw that participants were not willing to answer a question or when they had nothing further to add to a question, participants were reassured that it was their right and choice not to do so. At the end of both focus group sessions there was a 15-20 min debriefing session and participants were also encouraged to voice what they found was useful or insightful during the interview process or what they found didn't serve them in anyway.

### **1.9 Theoretical framework: Practical Theology**

The pastoral care framework which is used as the lens of this research study is the Dialogical Intergenerational Pastoral Process. This theoretical basis is a pastoral care framework which offers a vast contribution to the pastoral care process and the understanding of ministry and practice. DIPP allows for ministers and pastoral caregivers to make use of theological perspectives, interpretation of scripture, and to address relationships. It makes use of mutual trust between people and the promotion of dialogue in order to enhance care and make healing possible. That said, within the DIPP, the pastor often approaches 'the other' in a contextual way. This means that he/she takes his relational network into account.

The DIPP focuses on filial relations and broader relational networks but also emphasises relational ethics and beliefs. Relational ethics is a present-day approach to ethics that places ethical action openly in relationships. If ethics is about how we should live, then relational ethics is about how we should live together. In the DIPP, a great focus is placed on the understanding of humanity and God, but more importantly how these understandings are apparent in our relationships. This is what guides our assistance of others in pastoral caregiving and is the focus in our lives as pastoral care givers. The DIPP focuses on the intergenerational system of family ties and the relational

balances of giving and receiving. The reference to give-and-take is not a reference to tangible objects but refers to aspects which form part of relationships such as, trust, loyalty, fairness, responsibility, dialogue and other relationship resources. This Pastoral care lens will be used as a means to investigate and define the research problem, which is exploring the trust and loyalty within grandparent-headed families on the Cape Flats, and the impact of the church. The DIPP will be utilized when reflecting on the contributions made by participants of the study and to discuss the findings.

### **1.10 Key concepts & Themes.**

**Grandparent-headed families:** A family where grandparents provide full-time parental care in the absence of the biological parent(s) or households where Grandparents are the primary caregivers.

**Loyalty:** Preferential attachment to relational members who are entitled to a priority of bonding. It is more than a mere attachment, it is an internal unwritten expectation to one's family of origin (Boszormenyi-Nagy & Krasner, 1986:418).

**Trust/Trustworthiness:** This is always earned over a period of time by balancing of the consequences of give-and-take between reliable partners. Trust can be broken but can also be restored. Trust is an essential priority of relationships (Boszormenyi-Nagy & Krasner, 1986:418).

**Church:** Smit (2007) in 'Essays in public theology' narrows down the definition on 'church' in South Africa to at least three different forms. Firstly, the church is a local congregation of Christian people (Smit, 2007:61). A congregation sharing in common worship, organized to belong to each other and support one another. Secondly, the church is an institution and ecumenical body. More focused on denominational life and ecumenical church life in South Africa (Smit, 2007:64). Thirdly, the church can also be thought of as believers and followers of Jesus, who are the salt of the earth and the light of the world (Smit, 2007:68).

**Social support:** Social support as referred to the thesis title and the rest of the thesis can be defined as, the emotional, and relational support that one receives, provides and expects from one's church as religious community. Social support can also refer to tangible support but in this specific

research it is narrowed down to the support related to relational or social networks (Barrett, 2013:1).

### **1.11 Outline of Chapters.**

**Chapter 1: Setting the stage.** This chapter includes an introduction and motivation, problem statement, research questions, aims & objectives, research goals, methodology and research methods, theoretical framework; as well as key concepts and themes. This chapter is guide for the reader to familiarise themselves with the rest of the content within this research study.

**Chapter 2: Disseminating the context & drawing closer empirical findings.** This chapter reviews and discusses existing literature in order to investigate the context of the study and imparts the empirical findings gathered through the data collection process of this study.

**Chapter 3: An interdisciplinary focus on relational ethics with an emphasis on trust & loyalty.** This is a very broad chapter which provides a vast look at the most significant scholars and works in the field of relational ethics. This chapter is important as it emphasises and discusses the importance of trust and loyalty. The main scholars discussed are Boszormenyi-Nagy, Buber and Levina's.

**Chapter 4: The Dialogical Intergenerational pastoral process as pastoral framework.** This chapter focuses on the pastoral care framework of DIPP which is employed and discussed in most of this study. This chapter emphasises the theological perspective of this research study as it is rooted within the field of practical theology.

**Chapter 5: The pragmatic discussion.** This chapter imparts a discussion on the findings made by trying to answer the original research questions decided on. Integrating empirical findings, the DIPP as theoretical framework, practical pastoral caregiving techniques and previous literature addressed in the study into discussion in order to reach practical recommendations and contributions.

**Chapter 6: Recommendations & Conclusions.** This chapter provides a summary of the study. The recommendations for the church and for further research are discussed. It also provides the limitations of the study.

## **Chapter 2: Disseminating the context & communicating empirical findings**

### **2.1 Introduction**

Chapter one renders an overview of the research study and also sets the stage for what is to be expected in the rest of this study. Chapter two now moves on to discuss disseminating the context through literature and reporting on the findings of this empirical study. This chapter undertakes Osmer's first task of practical theology, the descriptive-empirical task. It attends to priestly listening or spiritual presence and reflects the nature of the church congregation to listen to one another as a form of support and care. This is important in ministry but equally important when investigating circumstances or cultural context of others in more formal or academic ways (Osmer,2008:31). Empirical research such as this, is a disciplined means of attending to others in their specific context. Thus, this chapter embarks on addressing "what is going on?", by being attentive to what the participants have shared and organising these findings into main themes and subthemes. While further, relaying what various scholars and disciplines have discussed and researched in literature, concerning grandparent-headed families, and trust and loyalty within families.

### **2.2 Grandparent-headed families.**

This section hopes to explore the characteristics and structure of grandparent-headed families to accentuate exactly what the dynamics of a grandparent-headed family encompasses. It also discusses the relationships within grandparent-headed families or the relational well-being witnessed within this family type. grandparent-headed families are typically families where grandparents provide full-time parental care in the absence of the biological parent(s) or households where grandparents are the primary caregivers. The term 'grandparent-headed family' is frequently used interchangeably with terms such as, 'Grandfamilies', 'Skipped generation family' or 'grandparent caregivers.' According to the collective investigating of literature in this section, it is clear that this family type is constantly increasing.

#### **2.2.1 The characteristics and structure of a grandparent-headed family**

In the *Journal of marriage and Family*, the article '*Understanding Grandfamilies: Characteristics of Grandparents, Non-resident parents and children*' discusses the fact that Grandparents raising

grandchildren show similar characteristics as disadvantaged single mothers (Pilkauskas & Dunifon, 2016: 623-624). It could be said that the academic and socio-emotional well-being of grandchildren are also below average in these families. Further results in this study show that Grandparents who are primary caregivers are generally better off in terms of educational attainment, marital status, and economic well-being than the Grandchildren's biological parents. However, the academic and socio-emotional state of the Grandparents were poorer than children being raised by single mothers. This study mainly focused on questions such as; 'What are the characteristics of individuals in Grandfamilies, including grandparents, non-resident mothers, and non-resident fathers, and how do they compare to other economically disadvantaged families?' 'How does the well-being of children in Grandfamilies compare to that of children in other, similarly economically disadvantaged households?' The significance of the study therefore falls on the importance of enhancing the knowledge of this family type.

In the '*Contemporary Journal of research, practice and policy*', a special issue has recently been added; namely, '*Global phenomenon of Grandfamilies*'. This journal focuses on the worldwide issue of culture and grandparent caregiving. Discussions such as '*Grandparents as foster parents: Psychological distress, commitment and sensitivity to their grandchildren*' are discussed in order to emphasise the state of well-being of Grandparents and Grandchildren (Poitras & Tarabulsky, 2017: 2-7). It further looks at how and why children are placed with grandparents to begin with and how this affects family life. This Special Issue of Grandfamilies brings together six articles emphasising the issues of culture and grandparent caregiving. This journal highlights discussions surrounding the diverse nature of middle-aged and older persons, who take on the responsibility of protecting and raising grandchildren under often adverse circumstances. These articles mainly focus on an international understanding of a grandparent-headed family, whereas many other publications focus on grandparent-headed families in Western society. The former of the two is important because it looks towards the cultural experiences which impact these families, and the reality of grandparent-headed families in developing countries as well.

One specific article which stood out in this journal was '*Grandparents as foster parents: Psychological distress, commitment and sensitivity to their grandchildren*.' The study addresses the importance of the characteristics of grandparents who care for their grandchildren under a foster placement system. In its findings, it indicates that there are no differences between non-

grandparents and grandparent as foster parents pertaining to parental sensitivity and commitment. The study further found that parental sensitivity varies considerably across foster parents and grandparents. Moreover, Foster grandparents were expected to show higher commitment due to previously established emotional and physical ties with the child/children (Poitras & Tarabulsky, 2017: 143). However, the results show no differences in commitment between grandparents and non-grandparent; suggesting that intragroup differences related to individual characteristics may be more important than being biologically related to the foster children. It is also confirmed that some foster grandparents assume their new role with a positive attitude, whereas others cannot cope with this major life change, this also contributes to both the sensitivity and commitment which grandparents have towards grandchildren (Poitras & Tarabulsky, 2017: 144). These findings are of importance especially to policy makers for grandparents raising grandchildren. It also sheds light on what happens within the grandparent-headed household. This research article contributes to a better understanding of the relational reality of grandparent-headed families for this current study interest, as it focuses on the lived experiences of grandparents as primary caregivers. The focus on commitment towards foster grandchildren in this study, gives perspective on the loyalty within these families and the characteristics which come into play when reflecting on this type of family.

### 2.2.2 Understanding the family relationships within grandparent-headed families

Another theme of importance which arises out of the research topic of interest, is the relational well-being of grandparent-headed families. The understanding of family relationships and exploring the state of those relationships whether healthy or unhealthy plays a pivotal role in this current research study. Thus, the contextual constructs of trust and loyalty is used as a looking glass to identify healthy relations. One of the few South African studies which focus on grandparent-headed families, is a dissertation written by Karen Scheneider, which explores '*How a grandparent headed family expresses family resilience.*' This study discusses how grandparent-headed families who are affected by HIV/AIDS in South African urban-residential areas-townships -express family resilience (Scheneider, 2015:2). Another South African study focused on '*The influence of grandparent-headed families on the academic performance of secondary school learners in Port Elizabeth education district*' this study draws on Family systems theory and Role Theory allowing for a understanding of the organizational complexity of families, as well as the interactive patterns that guide family relationships (Plaatjies, 2013:1-4). There are various

other research contributions which investigate the Grandparent-headed family unit. That said, there seems to be a limited amount of research done on grandparent-headed families in the South African context, yet this phenomenon is rapidly increasing. The consensus remains the same in both South African studies; there is a need for better assistance from social well-fare and the government when it comes to grandparent-headed families. Whether exploring the resilience or the performance of school learners raised by grandparents, assistance and intervention by significant parties would help with the holistic development of the children and the relational well-being of the family. How grandchildren cope in their educational environment, and whether there is a sense of resilience within the family life, gravely impacts the well-being of the individual and the broader family relationships within the household.

grandparent-headed families are extensively researched in the USA and other parts of Europe. There are pros and cons to this- the upside is of course that there is previous research done and results found concerning the different characteristics which come into play within and surrounding the family dynamics of grandparent-headed families. The disadvantage is that the cultural understanding of grandparent-headed families is limited to a Westernised perspective. When investigating this family type within the South African context, there are considerable differences which deserves attention, such as culture, socio-economic circumstances, and political history. Even though some of the literature discussed does not cater for the South African context, it still allows for researchers to lay a foundation for possible South African studies and research in the present and future.

Furthermore, In the research article “Health and Grandparent–Grandchild Well-Being: One-Year Longitudinal Findings for Custodial Grandfamilies” the study explored relationships among grandparent caregiver physical health, wellbeing, and adjustment, as well as with grandchild well-being across a 1-year period. In general, this longitudinal data indicates that better perceived health may assist grandparent caregivers and their grandchildren in adjusting to the life within a Grandparent-headed family. The study simultaneously emphasised the potential causal role that proactivity in the face of adversity plays in the maintenance and improvement of grandparent-caregiver health over time (Hayslip, et al., 2014: 559). In exploring the overview of custodial Grandparenting, the authors discuss the fact that understanding the potential impact of health on well-being among custodial grandparents requires an appreciation for the context in which such

caregiving takes place. Unfortunately, grandparent caregiving is usually linked to negative circumstances such as divorce, drug use, imprisonment, unemployment, or death of the Grandparents adult children. In other circumstances the parents abandon or abuse their child and these children are then placed with their Grandparents as they are the immediate available caregivers (Hayslip, et al., 2014: 560). These circumstances also make it difficult for Grandparents to receive the needed support from the government because they are raising their biological Grandchildren, thus it is not by choice but obligation. This not only affects the personal well-being of family members, but also the relationships which are shared in these households. These experiences are of cause some of the main causes of strain and hardship within South African Grandparent-headed households especially on the Cape Flats.

Other research studies examine the family well-being concerns of grandparents in skipped-generation families. Articles such as, '*Family Well-Being: Concerns of Grandparents in Skipped Generation Families*' the purpose of this exploratory study was to examine the concerns held by grandparents in skipped-generation families regarding the social forces that influence their families' well-being; it draws on the perspectives of grandparent caregivers and social support services. The authors were able to explore the concerns of Grandparents families and their impacts on a variety of levels of society; from their interpersonal health and family experiences to social policies. This confirmed that there is significantly high prevalence of developmental health and behavioural issues amongst grandchildren being raised by grandparents (Shakya, et al., 2012: 41). Two aspects which stood out in the findings discussed were the findings of level 1: interpersonal. Choice but no choice. Many of the Grandparents participating in this study expressed deep conflict towards their situation and typically didn't expect to care for their Grandchildren, as parents. This of course impacts their relationships with their own adult children, but also invariably affects the parenting of their Grandchildren and their daily relationships within the household. A second aspect which the authors focus on, is the level of society and what these Grandparents and children experience. (Shakya, et al, 2012:51) mentions that "*Grandparents were sensitive to the generational differences between themselves and their grandchildren, and between what they were accustomed to when they parented their own children and what is acceptable parenting now.*" This also, greatly affects the well-being of relationships and well-being within these family types. These findings are pivotal to understanding the purpose of the current study, for one would need to comprehend how aspects such as interpersonal and societal realities come into play within

Grandparent-headed family relationships. It creates an ease when trying to gain perspective on the different challenges and truths within this specific family type. The challenges faced by grandparent-headed families has an unavoidable impact on the relational well-being of its members, and how they perceive one another in the confines of their household.

### **2.3 Understanding trust and loyalty within families.**

This theme reflects on the relational building blocks trust and loyalty within family relationships. The literature concerning these relational resources are not explored in a free-standing sense but reflected on with relational ethics as the backdrop and considered within the field of Contextual therapy. Contextual therapy is considered a trust-based therapy which is nondirective in nature. It makes use of mutual trust between family members and the promotion of dialogue in order to enhance and make changes possible.

#### **2.3.1 The need for a Relational Ethics.**

Relational ethics is embedded in a perspective of human relations, reciprocal care and genuine dialogue. This approach provides an understanding of the immediate state of a relationship and allows for perspective on which goals and aspects form part of our relationships with others. Literature discussing specific characteristics of relationships are few because the individual building blocks such as, trust, loyalty, fairness, forgiveness, communication etc. are often intertwined and overlap. General principles for developing caring, respectful relationships with family members and those we engage with are outlined in relational ethics. Therefore, when exploring grandparent-headed families it is important for there to be a reflection on literature focused on relational ethics. The purpose of this literature reviewed is to gain clarity on existing research and to reflect on how the Dialogical Intergenerational Pastoral Process (DIPP) views loyalty and trust.

In the book 'The unexpected third' the theologians Meulink-korf and Van Rhijn deliberate on the views of ethics from both their own understanding and that of Nagy the psychiatrist and the philosopher Emmanuel Levinas. Their understanding places emphasis on a relational ethics and that our existence depends on the 'being for the other'. To be ethical, is to be free to truly see and meet the other as other, relinquishing preconceived or stagnant notions of a person (Meulink-Korf & Van Rhijn, 2016:93). By 'ethical' it is meant that a human being is a subject and from the start

has a relationship with an/or another. From the beginning we have a mandate to take responsibility for those we share in humanity with. The core of our existence is found in the life of the other. This realization of humanity also makes 'me' conscious of my contributions and accountability. 'I' become aware of my natural injustice and how I contribute to justice in the relations I share with others. Moreover, ethical relations are never equal but a relation between two unequal's, always perceived as asymmetrical. (Meulink-Korf & Van Rhijn, 2016: 93-95). Relational ethics is of course not the only subject discussed within 'The unexpected third' but it is certainly a fundamental hinge which holds the rest of its contents together.

The much earlier philosophy and writings of Martin Buber also makes a major contribution in the book the 'unexpected third' but more importantly makes a substantial contribution to the broader field of Relational ethics. First Published in German in 1923, His book I-Thou has been widely translated but it denotes the importance of relational attitude and the orientation of how the 'I' regards the 'Other'. Kaufmann's 1970 translation of 'I-Thou' allows for a clear reading of what Buber promotes in his writings on a relational ethics. Buber's focus on the 'I & Thou' allows for one to realise that it is from one person to another that our self-being and growth is determined. His dialogical view permits a relational ethics which speaks to humanity moving towards a more collective and empathic relationship with others- a relationship which reminds us that no human being is an island or an object but a relation of 'I and Thou.' He of course contrasted this desired 'I and Thou' with 'I-It' in which ego and self-interest is dominant (Buber, 1970:111-112). The I-It entails seeing others through one's own needs and distortions. I-Thou therefore, emphasizes dynamic mutuality and an intersubjectivity where the true humanity of individuals meets.

In line with the understanding of Buber, his dialogical view and his philosophy surrounding humanity and his understanding of a relational ethics which is inclusive and collective. Emmanuel Levinas's in many instances reiterates that ethics begins with the appearance and acknowledgment of the other person. In the article '*Violence and the Vulnerable Face of the Other: The Vision of Emmanuel Levinas on Moral Evil and Our Responsibility*' by Burggraeve, he discusses the philosophy of Levinas's concerning his writing Totality and infinity. An emphasis is placed on the coined phrase the 'face of the other' which has very little to do with the physical existence of the other and more to do with the countenance of the other, that which calls us into responsibility and accountability for those around us. Burggraeve also, discusses that the face of the other and the

vulnerability of the face is not only a call to responsibility when considering our relational responsibility, but we are also tempted by the face of the other to do injustice. Burggraave does an analysis of Levinas's philosophy by applying it to circumstances of violence and degradation which takes place in society. The strong sense of relational ethics that rings through is that for Levinas subjectivity and who 'I' am is a welcoming of the other; the self is formed by taking responsibility for the other and the relation with the other, despite the fact that 'I' already exist. Another distinguished philosopher of the twentieth century who offers deep convictions on the relational interactions of humans is Paul Ricoeur. In his book '*Oneself as another*' Ricoeur expresses from the onset of his book that as individuals we cannot exist without the other and that our very selfhood is rooted in that of those who we share this earth with. He writes: "*Oneself as another suggests from the outset that selfhood of oneself implies otherness to such an intimate degree that one cannot be thought of without the other, instead one passes into the other. (Ricoeur, 1992: 4)*" This notion on relation and sameness is not the only thinking addressed in his work but it most definitely plays a role in how Ricoeur expresses selfhood and how we perceive the happenings around us. There is a constant interplay with language but also, a dialectic analysis which takes place in the literature of the book as it moves between understanding the subject of selfhood- *ipse* and sameness- *idem*.

A well-known Author which basis his work on relational Ethics is <sup>4</sup>Boszormenyi-Nagy, often considered to be the founder of Contextual theory. In the book 'between give and take' by Nagy and Krasner, relational ethics is expressed as the notion which drives Contextual theory and therapy<sup>5</sup>. In this clinical guide to contextual therapy: Between give and take; relational ethics is discussed as a fragment of ethics which is rooted in the nature of being and relating to others, which forms part of who we are as living creatures (Boszormenyi-Nagy & Krasner, 1986). Our existence and life are owed to our forebearers and is passed on to posterity. An individual's life is a chain interlocked to the interdependence between parent and child generation and for this reason Nagy and Krasner emphasise the mandate we have as humans to take responsibility for relationships with others. Also, bearing in mind the accountability for the consequences which flows not only from our human existence but our relations with others. In 'Between give and take' ethics implies the standard of earned merit and justification. The book hones in on the fact that

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<sup>4</sup> Ivan Boszormenyi-Nagy will alternatively be referred to as Nagy in the rest of this thesis.

contextual therapy looks at four dimensions when trying to understand the actions and reactions of humans. It namely looks at material facts, psychological needs, transactional patterns and the ethics of due consideration also known as merited trust. Simply stated for Nagy and Krasner relational ethics comes into play in all relations and human existence. As the final dimension it enfolds and encompasses all the other dimensions discussed in this clinical guide (Boszormenyi-Nagy & Krasner, 1986).

The understanding and history of relational ethics, especially within the history of contextual therapy serves as an important anchor for this current study on loyalty and trust within grandparent-headed families and the church as support. A solid reflection on the literature concerning relational ethics speaks of the actions and interactions within family life and grants a better understanding of the impact and importance of human relations<sup>6</sup>. More importantly, discussing the literature contributions made in relational ethics places both reader and researcher at the core of understanding relationships and the dynamics which often present itself in grandparent-headed families as push and pull. Relational ethics reminds us that there is deeper reasoning, responsibility and instinct which forms part of our family relationships and human relations on a broader spectrum.

### 2.3.2 A glimpse into the Contextual understanding of trust.

In the book *'Balance in motion: Ivan Boszormenyi-Nagy and his vision of individual and family therapy'* the authors discuss the theory of Contextual theory and the work of Nagy. It not only discusses trust and loyalty as an unavoidable bond but also sketches scenarios and illustrates case studies about family trustworthiness and loyalty which serves a deeper perspective on what these concepts are (Van Heusden & Van Den Eerenbeemt, 1983). A book which uses a similar approach and serves to engage with the field of contextual therapy and the understanding of trust is *'Truth, trust and relationships'* by Krasner and Joyce. As it explores a dialogical way of addressing the essential means of healing in relationships, especially in families. Krasner and Joyce bring to the table the notion on 'direct address'. They build on the works of Martin Buber and his focus on injured relationships and the decay of organic forms of life. They also, openly point towards the importance of intergenerational family and how it impacts the life of the individual, the family and

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<sup>6</sup> This section is a brief review of relational ethics and Contextual theory, Chapter three indisputably explores the field on a broader spectrum.

generations past, present and in future. The chief resource promoted in this book is ‘residual trust’ which evidently is at the heart of the dialogical processes, focused on the healing of relationships, the maintaining of dialogue and fairness and justice which stems out of a relational ethics. Trust and trustworthiness are formed out of mutual commitment and a multilateral understanding in relationships and does not only depend on the psychological aspect of the individual. Krasner and Joyce push themselves beyond the mere work of the family therapist or psychologist and look towards the dialogical process of people, the interactions within the relationship and not purely the surface reality which is usually unveiled between the clinician and client. This understanding and literature is important within this specific study. It encourages looking beyond the emotional or psychological understanding of trust within grandparent-headed families and address the relational realities which they live and face with each other daily. Truth, trust and relationships is concerned with the give-and-take between members of a family or relationships. It speaks to the connection within family, how it is maintained and often healed if injured.

(Herreros, 2015:335) investigates the relationship between trust within the family and social trust. There are long standing debates concerning family relationships and social trust. The first is that the degree of intensity of family relationships makes it problematic for family members to be socially interactive with others. The second argument is that trust within a family spills over into trusting strangers. Herreros clings to the former argument in the article ‘Ties that bind: family relationships and social trust’. He maintains that it is not the sheer trust that negatively affects social trust, it is the intensity in a family which causes indifference towards those outside of the family household. In turn this has a negative effect on community development. Furthermore, Herreros considers trust as an expectation one has about other people and a form of interaction which holds the strong sense of reciprocity<sup>7</sup>. This plays a critical role in understanding the different perspectives on trust in literature and the significant role it plays both in the family as an ingroup form of trust and social trust in communities. Within grandparent-headed families the trust and trustworthiness in the family relationships is not mere fascination for the sake of research but is

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<sup>7</sup> “I consider trust as an expectation about other people’s ‘type’. By ‘type’, I mean whether they are conditional co-operators (people who will cooperate as far as the trustee does so as well), strong reciprocators (a combination of conditional co-operation and altruistic punishment), unconditional co-operators, unconditional defectors or any other preferences toward co-operations (Herreros, 2015: 336).

pivotal to the growth, sustenance and survival of this family type. Therefore, literature in this research area contributes to what will be explored in this study.

### 2.3.3 A glimpse into the Contextual understanding of loyalty.

Catherine Ducommun-Nagy reasons in her detailed speech- on Loyalty and solidarity and its relevance to migratory crisis- that unlike commercial relations where justice is measured objectively, in our close relationship's fairness is measured by reciprocity. This reciprocity can also be based on expectation of loyalty and deciding to be there for someone because it is reciprocated. Loyalty is based on our indebtedness to the people who offered their commitment to us. Ducommun-Nagy further argues in families' loyalty starts with the commitment of our parents to be available when we are young. Our filial loyalty is the result of our genuine indebtedness towards them. This will be the case for other people in our lives as we grow older as well and at times will lead to loyalty conflicts. However, as virtuous as this loyalty may be in the confines of our family Ducommun-Nagy argues; that this loyalty could stand in the way of our solidarity towards others in the world around us; in the case of the topic discussed it would be an obstacle to us when trying to understand the migrants who flee to our country for safety (Ducommun-Nagy , 2016:2). This literature and reasoning within this speech creates a clearer picture of the strong influence loyalty has on both family and society. Although loyalty is a construct many claim to understand the literature on this construct is very little. (Leibig & Green, 1999:90) writes on the development of family loyalty and relational ethics. Reasoning that loyalty and compliance are two social concepts that children frequently make use of especially in their parent-child and teacher-child relationships. The study addresses how children aged 5 to 10 years of age intellectualise and understand family and filial loyalty. The purpose of this is to argue the importance of loyalty but also connect it to the developmental and cognitive trends of children.

Loyalty, as used by (Boszormenyi-Nagy & Spark, 1984:37-51) in the book invisible loyalties directs the reader to the belief that loyalty is a conscious, preconscious, and unconscious feeling of attachment and commitment. It comes about in our relational interactions as experienced in a system of reciprocal expectations in a nuclear or extended family group. They argue that the Contextual therapist's most important task is often to make invisible loyalties visible, thus freeing family members to build healthy relationships. The theory tries to explore both the individual and the family group and therefore also carries a dialectical outlook on relationships. Loyalty turned

out to be one of the key concepts which refers to both systemic (Social) and individual (psychological) levels of understanding (Boszormenyi-Nagy & Spark, 1984).

The themes under this section is of importance for the rest of this study and the literature reviewed offers clarity on the broader field discussed and also provides an interlude to chapter 3.

## **2.4 Communicating the findings**

In this section the researcher will define each theme decided on and then move on to share the different findings which link up and speak to these themes. The themes were developed out of the research questions, and the 15 broad codes used to sort the transcribed data had been compressed and formulated into 5 main themes with 23 subthemes. The themes decided on and the true reflection of the empirical data or findings voiced by participants, as well as the true reflections of previous academic works will be considered and truthfully discussed.

### **2.4.1 Theme 1: Family life & experiences.**

By definition, family life and experiences deal with the relationships and relational interactions between different family members within a grandparent-headed family. These family members may or may not reside in one household, but still have a significant role in the family unit. In all cases the children and grandparents live under one roof, and the presence or absence of the biological parents in the household may vary depending on the different circumstances of the families. Furthermore, family life and experiences also deal with the discipline and protection of the children, and the safety and support experienced in the homes of the participants. This theme also deals with how grandparents experience being married or single, and how that affects family life. The 8 subthemes reflect what is mentioned in the above definition of family life and experiences.

#### **Family membership & meaning.**

While opening the focus group by posing questions such as “tell me more about yourself and your family?” one could see that all the participants found family important. This importance was also not referred to as something that is momentary.

*Participant A (Focus Group 1): To me family means strength. It means support and it means communication. And despite what happens...it means that you are always there for each other.”*

Their personal understandings and their experiences pertaining to family life spoke volumes about the way they saw their own families. Certain participants perceived family as more than just an everyday circumstance but an existential reality.

*Participant C (Focus group 1): "Family is very important to me and we as family we are lent on this earth. I feel we must love one another and be there for one another. Death can come so unexpectedly you don't even have to be sick for long. Anything can happen you don't know what tomorrow holds. I feel family must show interest in one another's lives"*

### **Household circumstance.**

Household and family circumstance deals with the conditions you live in, and the members which reside in a home, or have strong links to the family. Each participant had unique living conditions, and shared openly how this affected them and other family members in the household. The question that evoked the discussion pertaining this was: 'Tell me a bit about your family?' Specific Participants felt comfortable enough to explain what their household and immediate family dynamics were.

*Participant D (Focus group 1): "We are a household of 6 people. But luckily my sons still live with me but Kelvin my grandson, he is 16 and he also lives with us. His mother just decided at a stage to come and see me and say she raised him long enough now. Richard my son who is Kelvins father must ma raise him further. But she doesn't realise that Richard works...who's going to. Who's going to uhm look after him. Luckily his school is nearby and so on."*

For certain participants, the main concern in their household was the children and making sure their needs were met despite underlying circumstances. Discussing the family dynamics meant sharing who was in need, and also the tragedies experienced.

*Participant F (Focus group 1): "At the moment I am looking after four grandchildren in fact it is my great grandchildren because it's my grandson's wife children. So, I have to provide for these four grandchildren of mine. and their mother has passed away two weeks ago and has been buried not long after that. The reason why she passed away was the cause of drug abuse."*

### **Relationship between biological parents & children.**

grandparent-headed families often consist of intergenerational relationships which are all interconnected, often influencing the overall filial relationships and interactions. Participants openly shared experiences and their realities concerning relationships between themselves as grandparents with their grandchildren, and the relational interactions between biological parents and children. The latter especially came to the fore in discussions when asking about conflict or interactions between the grandchildren and their parents. The question linked to discussions concerning the relationship between biological parents and children was: *‘if you have conflict with your grandchildren’s parents, do you share this with your grandchildren openly? Do you say, okay, me and your mother or father had a misunderstanding, or do you keep it to yourself?’*

*Participant J (Focus group 2): “Their mother also told their father that they are not his children. so, his really not close with them and he doesn’t really want anything to do with them. I just don’t want them to be estranged from their father. The other one, the older one, when his father is around and says hello or asks him how he is doing? then he has a big smile on his face. Then I think yesis, you see, your parents stay your parents no matter what. We as grandparents can just try to fulfill that emptiness but it won’t be the same.”*

*Participant C (Focus group 1): “She (Daughter) recently came to fetch her (Granddaughter) for a movie...but she (Granddaughter) came back the evening and never went to go sleep over there again. So, I told my granddaughter, if you don’t want to go don’t tell me, tell you mother how you feel about this. Because if you don’t, then your mother thinks I’m turning you against them. You must tell your mother yourself you don’t want to go there and the reason why. I can’t do it you need to tell her yourself.”*

Discussing the relationships between biological parents and children was often conveyed by sharing experiences and occurrences between these family members. The above contributions made, was the closest it got to participants really stating what the relationship between biological parent and child is.

### **Relationship between grandparents & biological parents.**

Another relationship which runs parallel to that of children and biological parents, is the relations between grandparents and their children as the grandchildren’s biological parent. Along with their

own unique circumstances, they each also shared their specific take on their relationships with their children as biological parents of their grandchildren. The question which elicited answers pertaining to this, was: “*And their own parents? How is your relationship with your grandchildren’s parents?*”

*Participant D (Focus group 1): My son is around but I can always get through to him about things. But when I feel like I must speak to him about something then I do it. With my grandsons’ mother I don’t really have a relationship. She will only come to me if she needs something. The last time I heard from her was in April when she asked me how Kelvin (grandson) is doing. Other than that, I have heard nothing from her. I asked her to make a contribution. And she promised she would but unfortunately, she lost her job. And then they had to move and I understand all of this. I also tell my grandson that what we do, we do for him. And he must just focus on finishing school. Because it is for him.*

*Participant M (Focus group 2): I wouldn’t say that the way I raise my grandchildren really affects my relationship with their parents. Even if it affects our relationship, its fine with me. As long as I know I do my best when raising my grandchildren. So, for now it doesn’t affect my relationship because I’m supporting her raise them.*

In the overall responses concerning this theme, grandparents shared that their relationships often prove to be indifferent, conflictual or often based on minimal interactions. Yet, for some, relationships are healthy according to the grandparents, and they consider the help of raising grandchildren as something they needed to do for the sake of the family. Thus, it doesn’t influence their perspective on the relationship between them and the biological parents.

### **Involvement of biological parents.**

Another subtheme which emerged out of family life and experiences, was the involvement of the biological parents in the life of their children and in the grandparent-headed household. Often the involvement of biological parents was not explicitly or directly discussed but the responses given by grandparents painted a clearer perspective on the biological parents’ involvement and contributions.

*Participant E (Focus group 1): “I was speaking to my sister over the phone and she ask me what I’m doing for the day and I told her I’m going to church to take part in an interview study about*

*grandparents who look after their grandchildren. and then my sister told me oh yes, but you also look after your grandchildren. and then I told her but my daughter still there for her child it's not that she threw her daughter away I just look after my granddaughter and provide for them both."*

*Participant M (Focus group 2): "Uhhh. I am also a mother of 4 grandchildren. My daughter is not married so ja I have a very difficult task. I'm from Mitchells plain and the fathers of my grandchildren are not as involved as they should be, in the children's lives. Which means, uhm how do you deal with children where you know there is a lack? There is a, an emptiness. You know because there should be a father."*

Participants discussed the difficulty which comes along with the absence of biological parents for the children. Situations where the father was not present in the lives of their children were especially discussed. The disinvolvement of biological parents also affects the grandparent-headed household, because both children and grandparents share mixed emotions and experiences about this.

### **Generational differences in child rearing**

Furthermore, grandparents also shared how raising their own children and raising their grandparents differed in many instances. Others shared that there is inevitably no difference between how they raised their own children and how they are currently raising and rearing their grandchildren.

*Participant D (Focus group 1): "There is a difference because when you were raising your own children you were still working. So now you have more time. At least for me that's how it is. So now you are more peaceful and you have more time to spend. And you can keep watch over everything."*

*Participant E (Focus group 1): "my daughter always tells me "mummy you raise my child like you raised us."*

*Participant M (Focus group 2): "I would say uhm...just yesterday I told my son when you grow up times change." And with the dispensation that we are in now it's more wicked than it was before. 15 years ago, or 20 years ago I could leave you and then go to church and then I would leave you at home. But in this dispensation, you need to spend time with your children, you need*

*to love them more. So ya I raise them differently because I put more in now. I'm more involved in their life. I ask them how is school or who made you angry today? Which with my children I didn't really do that."*

Discussing the perceived differences between how grandparents are raising their grandchildren, and how they went about raising their own children, cemented the fact that with different circumstances and in a different period of time comes unique experiences and decisions.

### **Safety, support & discipline.**

Participants expressed how safety, support and discipline were cultivated and experienced in their families and homes. These responses allowed for a closer look at how daily life is experienced by family members. It also emphasized the aspects which influences both an individual and the overall family.

*Participant D (Focus group 1): "In the case of my grandson when he stayed with his other grandmother he could come and go as he wanted. Now that he is with us, I had to set boundaries and rules. There are times where I feel he wants to go to his other grandmother and I tell him I won't stop you from going to your grandmother. But I noticed that he takes chances when he comes back home. Like I tell him if he goes then he must be back before dark or at 6. But then before he must come home then he will phone and ask grandma can't I stay here. But then I tell him but I gave you a time to be home."*

*Participant F (Focus group 1): Yes, respect should be all round. I always say if you leave my house then you behave yourself and you greet people and you show that you have manners.*

Setting boundaries and discipline was openly discussed by participants and they found it important to mention that these rules were to be upheld within the confines of the home and outside of it.

*Participant M (Focus group 2): "ja for me trust is very fundamental in every household. Because if one of my grandchildren have problems at school then he must feel safe to come talk at home. So, it is important for me as a grandmother because many times children go to their parents and they don't get the attention they need. They go to their parents and tell them something and then they tell them ag its nothing. So, the parents don't listen to the children. Because whatever the*

*parents are busy with is so important, so what happens now is the child won't feel safe to come back and speak up if they have a problem. Because they don't get listened to. so, trust is fundamental in every household...let us listen to our children. Even when I don't have energy, I take the time to listen."*

Discipline within grandparent-headed families and homes seem to be important; especially with reference to grandparents and child rearing. However, safety and support amongst family members were also fervently discussed and are equally important to participants.

### **Married & single grandparenting.**

Whether participants were married, single or divorced was never directly addressed by the researcher. However, participants brought this up while discussing their families. Often those who were married could share what their partners role is in the family, and how they assisted and contributed to raising the grandchildren. Similarly, single participants shared their sentiments about not being married.

*Participant C (Focus group 1): "Just like my mother who was never married, I was never married either. We were six children three daughters and three sons. My two brothers have passed away and we also adopted another one."*

*Participant E (Focus group 1): "I am married and my husband's name is Kevin I have three daughters and my eldest daughter has a baby. the little girl is 7 months old and I always wanted a lot of grandkids but it's really nice having a granddaughter. I take care of my granddaughter full-time. but I'm mother also lives in the house uhmm. So when her mother goes to work I look after my granddaughter on a daily basis and we; me and my husband provide for my granddaughter. my daughter does contribute though."*

*Participant G (Focus group 1): "Not long after we moved, I found out my husband was having an affair. Then I told him you should leave and you shouldn't come back. Because I wasn't looking for troubles or problems. When my daughter passed away, I was very heartbroken. then I met someone new and he works and support me. So, now I look after my granddaughter."*

Discussing marital status arose when discussing family life, and participants never really pondered on its significance more than they did the relations between other family members which form part of their grandparent-headed families.

#### 2.4.2 Theme 2: The community and socio-economic concerns.

This theme deals with participants perspectives, concerns and experiences which occur in their communities and social or economic surroundings. There were four subthemes which emerged from this theme. It also reflects on the financial circumstances and experiences that the participants and their families have to go through. The researcher never deeply enquired about the financial circumstances of the participants, and in the discussions, it was a topic which was dealt with, with sensitivity. However, the participants freely shared things concerning their financial circumstance, their employment circumstance or whether they received government grants. Health is another subtheme which emerged under this theme as one's health is often affected by the socio-economic circumstances you find yourself in or vice versa. Health dealt with discussions concerning illnesses or whether they discuss well-being concerning their health or the health of the family. Finally, government support is also considered under this main theme, government support deals with what is offered by the government for families or for grandparents raising grandchildren or any form of social support.

##### **Environmental influences and community experiences.**

Environmental factors are important for both child and adult in a family, and participants expressed this from their individual perspectives. They also discussed their community contributions and how socio-economic circumstances affect their families and the broader community which they reside in. The question posed concerning this was: *“What are the challenges outside of your home that impacts the family at home? Things from your community and so.”*

*Participant J (Focus group 2): The children are smoking and dealing with stuff or dagga. And we can't control it as much as we try. We can only tell our children this is what happens and you need to try to stay away from those wrong things. The times we live in is very different to how it was when we were growing up. We see every day how children get bullied and we see how they fight. There's gangsters and we see how they fight. our children aren't even scared anymore because*

*they just want to see what's going on and I just keep wondering when they going to take out a gun and start shooting on them. And then what if our children get shot.*

*participant F (Focus group 1): There were always gangsters in our community but they were very quiet back in the day and they never they never bothered people as much as I do now. but nowadays these gangsters live behind high walls and use the children. And last night there was another murder and it's the third murder in almost a month. and it took place on the same place. and it always happens near the park or at the park near my house. and as a community, especially the older people who were here first feel like we need to do something about this. but we are not sure what to do to stop these horrible things that are happening. we need to take our community back it can't go on like this. you would Suma get shot in front of your mother's gate. Is that right? and then it's people who were just partying together now. my biggest fear is... what is going to happen to my own grandchildren? they are so used to the sound of gunshots that they don't even hear gunshots anymore. this becomes part of their life. it will be Christmas soon and it just seems to be getting worse whenever that's Christmas. and when the children get shot then the parents all the mothers don't even come and look for the children.*

Reflecting on their environment and communities' participants also revealed that their concerns and fears run deep. Participants couldn't reflect on their communities without reflecting on their family as a unit or household in relation to their communities and concerns.

### **Financial circumstances**

Financial circumstances or economic well-being is a very sensitive topic but participants openly shared their struggles and strengths in this regard. They divulged about their employment status and how being second time parents to their grandchildren impacted their individual financial circumstance and their life plans. The question posed which was linked to this was "*How does raising your grandkids affect your lifestyle? Financially, your health?*"

*Participant C (Focus group 1): Further, I have to help my daughter by sharing my pension money. So, I ma provide for her (granddaughter).*

*Participant B (Focus group 1): It has affected our savings because my one grandchild had to go to varsity and is now at SA school of law. And you as a grandparent, you just want to give your*

*grandchildren the best. And I believe you invest in education. That's the best investment you can make. Because I didn't have that chance...so you want to give your grandchildren and your children the best.*

*Participant M (Focus group 2): Financially their father does support them so it's not so bad for us. And I work for the city so I do work and get paid but financially there is no heavy obligation.*

Despite the financial burden which goes along with being second time parents, participants also express that they do so because they want the best for their grandchildren. Which truly emphasizes the sacrifice which goes into raising their grandchildren.

### **Health & well-being**

Because participants were grandparents over the age of 45 years old, health was a very important factor to them. Though the positive aspects of their health never really arose in the focus group interviews, participants found it important to share the health status of themselves and other family members.

*Participant G (Focus group 2): "Yes, I was looking after her already and I had three Strokes already. But the Lord has just been getting me this far. I'm just worried about her safety in our area. She's all that I have. There nobody that I can go to for help?"*

*Participant B (Focus group 1): "Anyway, and uhmm...Something happened last year. My husband is very upset about it and he is a heart patient. Actually, my son in-law was standing in my face like this (Participant points) and then he went to go fetch something outside he wanted to hit me."*

When discussing health, participant grandparents also expressed fears of how this may affect the raising of the grandchildren and their own future as well as their grandchildren who depend on them to be there. Health as a topic also came up in discussions while merely relaying occurrences.

### **Government support.**

Government support is often related to financial support and although participants did not broadly share concerning government support received. Many discussed government funding such as *Sassa*, all pay, pension or other social grants received. Very little was mentioned concerning

options where raising grandchildren were concerned or the options provided by the government or social support systems.

*Participant C (Focus group 1): The only support I get, is the Sassa grant which is R420. My granddaughter is a girl of fifteen. And out of the R400 she has to eat, her toiletries and everything that I provide for her. At the moment if the mother has a work she will probably contribute. She contributes when she works but she doesn't work at the moment. So, everything has to come out of that R400. And we have to add to it. Because R420 will not be enough for the month.*

*Participant J (Focus group 2): I would say financially it does affect you and because I'm not working, I do volunteer work. It has affected us financially but I'm also glad that the social workers told me to adopt them. So that I can receive money for them to raise them and it comes in handy. Because every day there is something else. I don't expect anything from their mother because I want her to sort out her life. Uhm financially it is a challenge but it is a choice which I have made.*

When discussing government support there wasn't many positive responses made, and neither was there anything mentioned about direct assistance to grandparent-headed families. This was seen as a concern for participants because no support- specifically from the government- means no dependable help, which in-turn means even more worries and challenges which these families need to face.

### **Other systems of support.**

Other forms of support were also discussed, along with the willingness for certain organisations to co-operate. One of the participants also mentioned the disinterest which schools give towards children who need extra support. She is a community worker and discussed her experiences as one of the support systems to children in her community.

*Participant J (Focus group 2): Sorry can I just add that the past Saturday we had a sport against crime event and it was actually for delinquent children but I can tell you the schools also don't usually give their help and support. They don't get the children to get involved in the sports. The principles don't give their co-operation. I know because I do awareness talks at the schools and we have a problem with our school principles. They don't put their everything in and we had a youth day and we didn't have a lot of children involved and they tell us that its exams and the children can't take part.*

Participants also discussed what kind of support they would like to see in their communities, and how residents within the community should stand together not only to receive support, but to be the support for one another. This was especially in reference to the children and younger generation.

*Participant M (Focus group 2): "I would say...we cannot deny the challenges outside and the challenges of our communities and our youth. Its maybe the course of absent parents or because there isn't a father present. Or the fact that the children grow up in a dysfunctional home...or you know so. In our community for instance there isn't a lot of activities or programs for the children. How can we help our children by programs or basketball or football? You know just things for children and also motivational programs. So, they can get guidance and be told don't get involved with such friends or that wrong. Like preventative programs. How to stay away from drugs and cigarettes and to help children with bad behavior. There is a problem so if we can maybe start doing more in our communities with programs and projects to help our children. Because the thing is this if we do nothing now over ten years then with what are we gonna sit? If we can just take each other's hands and say okay let's try this thing. We must start when they are small. We cannot deny the small children and say no they alright they okay. If we lay the proper foundation then over ten years then we can be at peace knowing we tried to make a difference."*

#### 2.4.3 Theme 3: The church & spirituality.

This theme deals with 4 subthemes: spiritual life, the church, pastoral care for grandparent-headed families and other forms of support from the church. Spiritual life by definition deals with beliefs, practices and how participants and their families perceive their spirituality or religious lives. The church refers to the Christian church as religious institution and place of worship. Pastoral care for families were also discussed in order to reflect on the pastoral and relational support or circumstances in their churches. Lastly, this theme also deals with other forms of support offered to these families from the church.

##### **Spiritual life**

Besides reflecting on the support of the church, participants also discussed the importance of spirituality and belief for their family. Often participants discussed religious rituals such as prayer as something which strengthens their family or is seen as a protective factor from life's struggles.

One participant shared the following. *Participant M (Focus group 2): “in my house we have 1 night in the week where we have a family bible study time. So, I have the two boys and the one girl. The youngest one is four years old but he also gets an opportunity to pray. Everyone gets a chance to pray. I just think one day when I’m not there anymore then they have to be able to pray. Because praying is the ultimate and there is no remedy that can help like prayer. So, I depart that to them. I’m very involved in church and I always encourage people to pray.”*

### **The church**

Family involvement in the life of the church was also something which was significant for participants. Church attendance and involvement was not seen as merely an individual choice but a family endeavor. When the question “*is it important to you that your family are involved in the life of the church?*” was asked. Participants responded with the following.

*Participant E (Focus group 1): “Yes, of course...I told my daughter you can’t just baptise your child and not go to church. You made a promise to raise the child in the way of the Lord. Now my children mos don’t like it when I talk to them about things like that. I’m like a broken record.”*

*Participant H (Focus group 1): “You must go to church and serve God because if something happens then you know God is there. The devil is always trying to get you down so you need God.”*

According to the above participants responses, involvement in the life of the church also meant drawing closer to God and in-turn experiencing His presence no matter what happens or what troubles they may face as a family.

### **Pastoral care for grandparent-headed families**

Participants made it clear that the church might not have in place everything it needs to assist with family pastoral care, but it is also their duty to reach out to the church for assistance. The responses concerning receiving assistance from the church were often positive. Yet, very little was mentioned about pastoral care provided within the church concerning family life or family relationships. The question was posed: “*How do you think the church assists you to better understand your family relationships?*” to which participants responded with the following.

*Participant A (Focus group 1): “I wouldn’t say the church doesn’t care. But there isn’t an awareness from the churches side, where grandparents and single parents raising children are concerned. I feel maybe it should then come from the grandparents or parents. To make the church aware of their problems. There are so many other organizations but maybe a support group could be needed but I think from the churches side the support given to grandparents in this situation is non-existent.”*

*Participant F (Focus group 1): I know the Reverend always says also when he does house visits... if we need anything then we must just talk. Or whatever or just tell your ward deacon and then he can just come and tell me. I guess you would make an appointment with the reverend and speak about your problems.*

There was a reassurance that church leaders could be reached and that there is help if needed. However, this help often needs to be requested first and then the required procedures would be followed in order to alert the reverend.

#### **Other forms of support received from the church.**

Moreover, participants mentioned that even concerning other forms of support from the church members had to make a concerted effort to reach out and ask for assistance.

*Participant C (Focus group 1): “And I take her (granddaughter) with me to church. We don’t receive any other kind of support. Our church is a smaller congregation and they also say you must say if there is a need. Then they will help. With groceries and so.”*

*Participant H (Focus group 1): “This church is very supportive for instance we have a soup kitchen. We feed about 300 children every Thursday or Wednesday. Which is a good thing and a lot of times if they know there is a need then they give and the church is there for that purpose. But I don’t know about anything further.”*

For certain participants they shared how they help with social action within their church and proudly mentioned their involvement and the projects which the church run.

#### **2.4.4 Theme 4: Trust as a relational resource.**

Trust as a relational resource refers to trust being something which is a foundation or fundamental building block that forms part of relationships, in this case especially within grandparent-headed

families. Trust as a concept refers to reliability, responsibility and giving or receiving between members of a family. This giving and receiving is not necessarily referring to tangible items or monetarily but refers to the giving and receiving of caring, compassion, safety and protection, family members adhering to rules and boundaries for the sake of everyone in a household. Trust could also refer to sharing in emotions with one another whether it is positive or negative emotions, having empathy or sympathy. Additionally, it refers to how participants discussed their experiences pertaining to communication and dialogue between the members of their family and in their homes. The subthemes which emerged out of this theme is 'perspectives on trust'. This reflects on how participants perceived trust within their households. Experiences of trust and communication deals with experiences shared concerning trust or mistrust. The last subtheme explores joys, rewards and family strengths, which dealt with reflecting on how participants perceived and were attentive to the positive experiences within their families. This also deals with trust, as trust often involves the ability to care and show compassion or experience joy with those, we have relations with.

### **Perspectives on trust.**

Trust means different things for different participants. Certain participants shared that to them trust means being truthful, to others it meant being open in communication, and to others it meant taking responsibility. Grandparent participants also shared that they often taught their grandchildren the importance of trust as a fundamental life principle.

*Participant B (Focus group 1): Sorry, and if you as the mother...or say for instance my daughter if she doesn't have that open trust with her partner then she won't have that with her children. So, am I right? If you can't trust yourself then you can't trust others. So, so it's very difficult.*

*Participant J (Focus group 2): I teach my grandchildren what doesn't belong to you, you mustn't take and we as a household need to be able to trust one another. if we can't trust each other then what's the point.*

Once again, like their different experiences and families, they held unique yet strong perspectives concerning trust between family members.

### **Experiences of trust & communication.**

Participants also chose to share experiences and stories about trust which involved their family lives and members. Personal thoughts and experiences were openly shared in order to ring through the importance of communication as a form of trust.

*Participant A (Focus group 1): “Trust in a family means that if I want to establish that trust then I must be open. And I must let the child know that in any circumstance you can be open with me and speak to me. You can trust that I will have an understanding. You can trust that it is okay if you don’t agree with how I feel. And then open up to me. For the 5 or 6 years that he was living with us that was a difficult thing to establish that trust. Because even though he wasn’t with his parents, most of the time it was difficult for him to trust me. Because I just came into his life yesterday. Now I must make sure everything is right. So, there was that division where trust is concerned. And it is a thing that grows as time goes by. As the years go on. And you will see that he will still try to catch on nonsense because he is always trying to push the boundaries. Just to see how far I can take it with you. But then after everything then he must come back and say this is how he was thinking about something. Trust is something that really needs to be worked on. You have to be open as a parent and say to your children it’s okay if you don’t agree with me on something as long as you open with me. Trust is a thing that grows and develops as time goes on.”*

*Participant B (Focus group 1): “Yes, sometimes you must go to their level to just build trust and then we build communication also. But it is difficult but we get there with Gods help and grace.”*

*Participant F (Focus group 1): “it actually reminds me of recently when my granddaughter came to me and trusted me to tell me she started menstruating. And then I told her now you see that when you open with me then I can help you with what you need like hygiene or problems. And so that’s how trust is seen.”*

Trust and truth dealt with more than just principality; trust as experienced by these grandparents involved intergenerational interactions, the well-being of family members, caring for one another in a household and the significance of understanding each other and being understood.

### **Joy, rewards & strengths**

Participants also discussed what evoked joy and strength within their homes and families. For many joys stemmed out of the achievements of their grandchildren despite circumstance. The fact

that their grandchildren rise above the adversities faced by the family and achieve scholastically or otherwise, brings them pride and hope for better circumstances.

*Participant F (Focus group 1): What makes me happy is when the children go to school and they come home with a certificate or award. And there were Stellenbosch students that came to the ones school and then she was chosen for a program that they gave. So, she got a certificate when they were done. I always tell them to study and work hard in school and pull up their schools. With the death of their mother the eldest girl didn't do as good as she usually does and yet she didn't do bad but I could see that it wasn't her best. So i could see how it affected them when their mother passed away. But ya...when they come with stars in their books or this and that then you feel good about it.*

Family strengths were also brought up and the fact that being a close-knit family didn't mean there were no obstacles or challenges.

*Participant J (Focus group 2): "I would say it's good. Their mother is there but I just have them with me permanently and my younger daughter that is still with me treats them like her own. So, there isn't really anything for me to say. Our family is very close".*

#### 2.4.5 Theme 5: Loyalty; both visible & invisible in grandparent-headed homes.

In a household, loyalty is often a preferential permanent tie, or devotion and commitment. This is especially the case between children and their parents. Loyalty is strong but often not as obvious or visible between family members as we would hope it would be. This leads one to wonder how this loyalty is perceived in grandparent-headed families, considering the fact that parental roles are exchanged between parents and grandparents. Grandparents are expected to be second time parents to their grandchildren, and there are often other conflicting circumstances around families becoming grandparent-headed families in the first place. It is often both confusing to the grandparents and the children because where do their devotions and loyalties lie? Thus, this theme discusses subthemes such as 'raising grandchildren: an obligation or a want?', 'conflicting loyalties' which are often a form of loyalty which places strain on filial relations. Another subtheme is split loyalty often an extreme disruption of loyalty. Where a member of a family- often children- has to choose between people or parents. Legacy and life lessons passed on was another

subtheme. This has a closer look at family bonds and whether present generations have hope and positive want for future generations.

### **Raising grandchildren: an obligation or want?**

There were many interesting responses which arose out of the question posed concerning whether grandparents raising their grandchildren was a choice or obligation. Grandparents may find their circumstance complex or even difficult but there was never really a response which revealed that these grandparents couldn't bare what they are experiencing. If anything, grandparents discussed the obligation or choice to raise their grandchildren as the best for their children and grandchildren. The question which probed answers concerning this subtheme was "*When you decided to take care of your grandchildren did you feel it was something you wanted or was it an obligation?*"

*Participant A (Focus group 1): "I was obligated because uhmm because of the situation the child would've landed up in the system. Because the father refused because he already has children. Once I was driving with my husband and then I thought a person doesn't want history to repeat itself and maybe you weren't there for their parents enough in the past. And this is an opportunity to make it better. To make a difference with the grandchildren. But uhm there wasn't really much of a choice."*

*Participant F (Focus group 1): "Yes, an obligation but I also didn't see that they would be able to go and stay anywhere else. So, I just have to push through. But now I can't really live the life I wanted to live at this age like I can't go travel."*

*Participant L (Focus group 2): It was wanted. Mostly wanted because we just want the best for our grandkids.*

Participants discussed their circumstances and family life with ease and never blamed or portrayed themselves as martyrs just because they were now second time parents to their grandchildren.

### **Conflicting loyalties**

Participants also shared that they don't always see eye to eye with parents when it comes to opinions about child rearing or family matters and this leads to indifferences in the household or

family. In some instances, these disagreements are shared with another member which could cause further struggles. One of the participants shared the following concerning this:

*Participant L (Focus group 2): "Sometimes me and my son's girlfriend we don't see eye to eye about how to raise my grandchildren. So, say my grandchild is sick then I say she must use that ointment or that medication and then she would say no. Then I get so upset because I'm a mother, I'm a grandmother I know what he needs. And especially with my youngest grandson and then I would phone my son and tell him how I feel about it."*

### **Split loyalties**

In grandparent-headed families, members often face the reality of having to side with one member over the other or one member is asked to side with one party rather than the other. Participants shared these experiences openly and shed light on how this specifically affected the children involved.

*Participant B (Focus group 1): "Now this incident that happened with their father. The youngest one said to me I heard by my other granny that my daddy was so rude to you. Then I said, well how would you feel if you were in my shoes? But he didn't answer me on that one but the older one Johnny said, I don't like my daddy, I hate my daddy. So now you can imagine, he is sitting there but slowly...he is getting out of his own corner. Then he will tell me sometimes ma I don't want to go to my parents. And I can't tell him but you need to stay here or do that."*

*Participant C (Focus group 1): "Ya like this guy that my daughter has he takes a drink and she also takes a drink...and then she used to fetch my granddaughter for a weekend and bring her back on Sundays because Monday is school. Then my daughter would say did Kelly say I'm going to fetch her and then I would say no she didn't tell me. Then my daughter would say but Kelly must pack her clothes because I'm going to fetch her. Then I would tell Kelly "why didn't you tell me that your mother is going to fetch you?" then she would say but Ma I don't want to go."*

Through the responses of participants, it was made clear that certain experiences made it difficult for family members to share how they feel or what they expect. Strain and confusion are created when certain family members are expected to choose sides. When there were disagreements between other family members, children are often caught in the middle and indirectly required to decide who was right or wrong.

### **Perspectives on family loyalty**

Similar to trust, participants had their own perspectives concerning what loyalty meant to them and their family. They often discussed the fact that loyalty was an intergenerational experience and principles.

*Participant C (Focus group 1): “I always say you must be loyal to your family. And my grandmother always used to say I don’t live for myself I live for my children. And long after she was gone it stayed with me and I always welcome children into my home and help them. So tomorrow I’m not there then other people can tell my children your mother always had a good word for the next person or always had for the next person. You must always live in a way that other people look up to you and care for you and your children. I always teach them never to be rude and to teach them right from wrong. And how you must treat other people.”*

*Participant B (Focus group 1): “for me too family means being together and being there for one another. see that nobody gets left behind. And to remind one another of the morals that you’ve been taught as a family. And to instill the morals and the values which you’ve been taught in your grandchildren.”*

Even concerning their perspectives on family reflected on their understanding of loyalty and family being a unit which considers and has a responsibility as members.

### **Legacy and life lessons passed on.**

When discussing legacy and life, participants enjoyed discussing what their contribution and legacy would be to the future generations in their families. They even discussed how legacies were passed on to them from their previous family generations.

*Participant K (Focus group 2): “From my side prayer is one of the things. But you know there is a legacy in my family background. We love to sing. And we put that in that in our children. It came from my great grandmother to my grandmother. And even now all my children and my grandchildren. I believe singing is also a prayer and you express yourself through singing. To sing and to praise and worship and that is our loyalty and legacy in my family. There is a song like a lullaby that I sing to my grandchildren now and my grandparents use to sing it to me and my*

*parents sang it to my children. So, through singing there is a legacy for us. So, I tell them one day when ma is not there please sing it to your children.”*

*Participant N (Focus group 2): “from my side its prayer but the other thing is...it is the things you can't buy with money. It is the things that are unseen like integrity and uhmm. Your yes should be your yes and your no should be your no. I do not compromise at all and other things too, like forgiveness and love. The things that are unseen that is the things I want to leave behind for my children and grandchildren. And for the generations to come.”*

Participants discussed the life lessons they would like to leave behind and the legacies which are more valuable than the tangible things in life or things of monetary value. It also, evoked a sense of hope to discuss future generations, what they deserve and how these lessons and legacies should help preserve generations to come.

## **2.5 Conclusion**

There were themes and subthemes which emerged from the focus group interviews conducted with participants. Five main themes were identified namely, family life and experiences, the community and perceptions on the socio-economic concerns, the church and spiritual support, trust as a relational resource and loyalty both visible and invisible in grandparent-headed households. Out of these themes many subthemes emerged as well. Participants openly shared their views and experiences concerning the themes of the study and the questions posed. The empirical findings voiced by participants, as well as the various interdisciplinary academic works have been reflected upon to draw the reader closer to ‘what is going on’ in the research field of interest. Following this, chapter 3 sets forth to discuss the interdisciplinary academic works and scholars who contribute to understanding the relational resources of trust and loyalty which forms part of the main focus of this study. Chapter 2 briefly discussed the relational ethics as it forms part of contextual therapy. Chapter 3 takes this further and looks at a deeper, more interdisciplinary perspective of trust and loyalty. Having discussed the literary findings of other scholars and sharing the empirical findings made within this study; sharing further interdisciplinary works concerning relational ethics and the relational aspects of trust and loyalty in chapter 3, will provide a clearer understanding of the overall study and empirical findings.

## **Chapter 3: An interdisciplinary focus on relational ethics with an emphasis on trust & loyalty**

### **3.1 Introduction**

Chapter 3 undertakes the interpretive task or sagely wisdom of Osmer's four core tasks. For this task there are two distinct aspects which fall on a continuum, the first is thoughtfulness. Thoughtfulness addresses having insight into the particular situation or circumstance of people, even leading to kindness. On the other end of the continuum is theoretical interpretation, which is concerned with the ability to draw on theoretical perspectives in order to understand and respond to situations or contexts. Keeping in mind that all theories fall short and are subject to other considerations. This task whether applied within Christian spirituality or research puts aside the need for only one truth or theoretical perspective. Herewith, chapter 3 imparts an interdisciplinary perspective on relational ethics with a focus on the main aspects of interest which is trust and loyalty. Chapter 3 first reflects on the scholars, Ivan Boszormenyi-Nagy, Martin Buber and Emmanuel Levinas's. The chapter then moves forth to theoretically explore relational ethics as it is theorised in the contextual approach. The chapter also discusses the contextual approach within the arena of therapy, trust and loyalty as the main aspects explored in this research study and lastly, this chapter imparts a range of concepts which strongly relate to trust and loyalty. This chapter is important to the broader study as it deals with the theoretical interpretation of specific disciplines and trust and loyalty.

### **3.2 The three influential thinkers.**

#### **3.2.1 A closer view of Boszormenyi-Nagy and his academic contributions**

Contextual therapy evolved as a by-product of dialogical intergenerational therapy which was part of Boszormenyi-Nagy's early works. He initially focused on family therapy with individuals diagnosed with schizophrenia. Ivan Boszormenyi-Nagy was a Hungarian psychiatrist. He was born in 1920 in Budapest, to a family who were predominately judges and lawyers by profession. He was one of two brothers, he spent much of his childhood life with cousins, aunts, uncles and grandparents, in a supportive crowd of extended family that later formed the basis of his scholarly thinking. He graduated from Peter Pazmany University with a degree in psychiatry in 1948 in Budapest. In 1950 he moved to America, where he completed his medical residency and hoped to find key understandings and to cure serious psychological illnesses but was not successful.

However, this led him to a reorientation of his of his research inspired by Gyarfás and his focus on interpersonal relationships in psychiatric patients, of cause leading Nagy closer to other scholarly inspirations and finally to his own works on contextual therapy. He was a founding member of the American Family Therapy Academy and founded the Institute for Contextual Growth, a private family clinic now run by his wife Dr Ducommun-Nagy (Boszormenyi-Nagy & Krasner, 1986: ix).

He had an interest in broad-based family relational theory and scholars of other schools of thought. In later years, around 1955 he focused on close relationships and depth psychology which led to his connection with the work of scholars such as Martin Buber and Ronald Fairbairn. However, he only focused on Martin Burber's writings which dealt with relationally-based existential understandings of life. Some of Nagy's most influential writings are *Intensive Family Therapy: Theoretical and Practical Aspects* (1965, 1985) with James Framo; *Invisible Loyalties: Reciprocity in Intergenerational Family Therapy* (1973, 1984) with Geraldine Spark; *Between Give and Take: A Clinical Guide to Contextual Therapy* (1986) with Barbara Krasner; and *Foundations of Contextual Therapy: Collected Papers of Ivan Boszormeyi-Nagy* (1987). These publications are amongst other published books and journal articles.

What led Nagy to Contextual therapy was not merely engaging scholarly works in academia but physically engaging and working with families. He became the founding director of family psychiatry of Eastern Pennsylvania psychiatric Institute of Philadelphia (1957). One of the earliest and most active exploratory and training institutes focused on family therapy. The development of the Contextual approach was at the heart of Nagy's need to contribute to family therapy. The contextual approach really highlights the ability to acknowledge the 'Others' efforts. For Nagy when efforts or past injuries of an individual are acknowledged, he/she acknowledges the efforts and contributions of others in their family (Boszormenyi-Nagy & Krasner, 1986: ix-xii). Giving credit to people in order to help them give credit to others in their family relations. It is strategies and principles such as this which really solidifies what Nagy tried to achieve with the Contextual therapy approach. He found the importance in not merely theoretical expressions but practical contributions.

Nagy was best known for his establishment of the contextual approach and the contextual model in family therapy. This model proposed four dimensions of relational reality for therapy and

understanding our relational existence in everyday life. These dimensions were 1.) Objective facts 2.) Individual psychology 3.) systemic transactions/ interactional or transactional and 4.) relational ethics. The overarching dimension is relational ethics and focuses on the concepts and roles of trustworthiness, loyalty, fairness, accountability, guilt, legacy, reciprocity, multi-directed partiality as a methodology and other aspects often coined by Nagy and related to relational resources within and between generations.

### 3.2.2 A closer view of Martin Buber and his philosophical contributions.

“Man wishes to be confirmed in his being by man, and wishes to have a presence in the being of the other...Secretly and bashfully he watches for a YES which allows him to be and which can come to him only from one human person to another.”

#### - ‘Martin Buber, Distance & relations (1965:61)’

Buber's early childhood was in Vienna, then still the cosmopolitan capital of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Buber's parents, Carl Buber and Elise née Wurgast, separated when Martin was four years old. For the next ten years, he lived with his paternal grandparents, Solomon and Adele Buber, in Lemberg- now Ukraine (Zank & Braiterman, 2014:1). The experience of living with his grandparents and not knowing where his mother was had created a lot of grappling and struggles in his life. Despite this his grandfather's reputation opened the doors for Martin when he began to have a growing curiosity in Zionism and Hasidic literature. The wealth of his grandparents was built on the Galician estate managed by his grandmother and enhanced by his grandfather through mining, banking, and commerce. It provided Martin with financial security until the German occupation of Poland in 1939, when their estate was expropriated. He was home-schooled and was a bookish, lover of art with few friends his age, his major pastime as a child was the play of the imagination (Zank & Braiterman, 2014:1). Buber's scholarly voice is best perceived by many as personal while consistently seeking communication with others, he diverged the path between East and West, Judaism and Humanism, national particularity and universal spirit. Buber's best-known work is the short philosophical essay *I and Thou* (1970), the basic views of which he was to modify, but never abandon. In his work, Buber gives expression to the fact that we should not give into the temptation to reduce human relations to a simple romanticized idea. We are beings that can enter into dialogic relations not just with human others but with other animate beings, such as animals,

plants etc. Buber made <sup>8</sup>many other literary contributions in his time, in the form of books, journals, poetry, letters and even a German translation of the Bible. Buber called himself a philosophical anthropologist. <sup>9</sup>His most influential works on the distinction and philosophy pertaining to I & Thou is based on a distinction between the modes of I- Thou (Ich-Du) and I-It (Ich-Es). He characterises I-Thou as dialogical and I-It as monological. His further philosophies and literature were a rare mixture of political and intellectual influence. Another philosophical contribution by Buber broadly discussed in his work is genuine dialogue. By definition dialogue is a dialectical rule of relational balance which finds its foundation in mutual commitment between relations. The concept is more than just the exchange of words or communication, as it is often understood and Buber expresses its importance in politics, human interaction and theology. Similar to Emmanuel Levinas's, Buber's life experiences had influenced much of what he thought, expressed, practiced and wrote.

### 3.2.3 A closer view of Emmanuel Levinas's and his relational expressions.

“To approach the Other in conversation is to welcome his expression... The relation with the Other, or Conversation, is a non-allergic relation, an ethical relation; but inasmuch as it is welcomed this conversation is a teaching. Teaching is not reducible to maieutics; it comes from the exterior and brings me more than I contain. In its non-violent transitivity the very epiphany of the face is produced.”

#### – Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality & Infinity: An essay on exteriority* (1979:51)

Many have called the works of Emmanuel Levinas the ethics of ethics. Yet, it is in the tensions of his Jewish religious writings or interpretations, his philosophical traditions or engagements and on the other hand his phenomenological- existential thinking on ‘the other’ that one really witnesses Levinas's authenticity. One can with confidence say that his works are more than just the ethics of ethics, it is intersubjective, humanitarian, relational, ethical and philosophical in nature. A pandoras box overflowing with the human existential reality.

Born January 12, 1905 in Russia-, Lithuania. He was the eldest child in a middle-class family. In the wake of the War, Levinas' family emigrated to Ukraine. The family returned to Lithuania in

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<sup>8</sup> Refer to reference list for further literary contributions by Buber.

<sup>9</sup> Refer to sections 3.6.4 Genuine dialogue as relational resource and 3.6.5 Guilt & guilt feelings for further reflection on Buber's philosophy on I-Thou.

1920, two years after the country obtained independence from the Revolutionary government. In 1923 Levinas went on to study philosophy in Strasbourg (France). In 1930 he published his thesis in French, '*The Theory of Intuition in Husserl's Phenomenology*.' In 1934 he published a philosophical analysis of "Hitlerism", *Reflections on the Philosophy of Hitlerism*. In 1935 Levinas published an original essay in hermeneutic ontology, *De l'évasion* [On Escape], in Émile Bréhier's journal *Recherches philosophiques* (Meskin, 2000).

In the year 1940 he was Captured by the Nazis; he became a prisoner of war at a concentration camp in Maagdenburg, a labour camp for officers. His extended Lithuanian family was murdered. His wife Raïssa, and daughter Simone were hidden by religious nuns in Orléans. Despite the awful conditions at this concentration camp he continued to read and study in the prison library and in 1947 he published the work *Existence and Existents, Time and the Other*. Levinas also became the Director of the *École Normale Israélite Orientale*, Paris. In 1961 he Published his doctorate, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*. He also obtained a Position at the *Université de Poitiers*. Considering the painful experiences, he had suffered while being imprisoned one can understand why he vowed never to visit Germany again (Meskin, 2000). Moreover, Emmanuel Levinas's had many other published scholarly writings and contributions made in the varying fields which he was drawn to. Many of his own life experiences both the virtuous and the deep anguish had contributed to his thoughts and academic rigor.

### **3.2.4 Concluding thoughts**

Discussing the above scholars, their lives, and academic contributions creates a guide as to who the major thinkers are which I will be focusing on in this research study and how they contribute in their specific fields of interest. We often become so far removed from the scholars themselves and only focus on their theoretical contributions. Yet, can this be so if we are discussing a field such as DIPP, relational ethics or works which deal with the practical realities of humanity? The lives of the scholars discussed has largely contributed to who they were and what they eventually decided to contribute within academia. One can truly appreciate that Ivan Boszormenyi-Nagy, Martin Buber and Emmanuel Levinas's all have one trait in common. They never wrote on merely what was developed through thought but always drew their theoretical perspectives out of the realities and lived experiences of humanity. For the sake of this research study their works are important when considering the focus of this thesis. A clearer perspective on the work and lives of

Nagy, Buber and Levinas's allows for a clearer understanding of the empirical findings, analysed and discussed in this study.

### **3.3 Relational Ethics a thread that runs through.**

Whenever Nagy uses 'context' in the contextual therapeutic approach, he means: "The organic thread of giving and receiving that weaves the fabric of human reliance and interdependence. The human context extends into a person's current relationships as well as into the past and future. It constitutes the sum of all the ledgers of fairness in which a person is involved. Its dynamic criterion is rooted in due consideration, not in a mutuality of give and take." (Nagy & Krasner 1986: 414). When reflecting on the scope and purpose of Contextual therapy, it is clear that this approach emphasises and heavily depends on the understanding and practice of relational ethics. Although Nagy perceives the four dimensions of contextual theory as undivided. The other three dimensions which form part of the foundation of the contextual approach are, firstly objective facts. Facts are aspects which are part of one's life and experiences which have taken place in the past. These facts create a picture for the observer and person receiving help. The second dimension is psychology; this includes affects, emotions, drives, needs or passions. The third dimension is the interactional and the transactional. The final dimension is of course an ethic of due consideration or 'relational ethics.' Although Nagy believed that one cannot simply look at someone's situation or circumstance by only exploring the previously discussed dimensions, he held the highest regard for relational ethics. Relational ethics is the strongest notion within the contextual approach as it places the individual's responsibility and freedom alongside the rest of the aspects which make up the life and circumstance of an individual. Contextual theory integrates rather than opposes different valid approaches. Though its main concept -which cannot be changed or reinterpreted- is the understanding and acceptance of the Ethics of due consideration (Botha, 2014: 10). Relational ethics described in the contextual approach, is perceived as an action which is inclusive of both relational and individual realities (Buber, 1970: 111).

Relational ethics is embedded in the notion that humans depend on relations with others; in order to experience self-awareness and confidence. If we do not experience relationships as giving and receiving from others, we would lack the foundation to experience emotions, a sense of reality and thought. Relational ethics according to Nagy emphasises fairness and justice. Justice emphasises the need for balance in relations with others. This balance is determined by what an individual is

entitled to receive and what he/she is obligated to give, in order to maintain the relationship (Boszormenyi-Nagy & Krasner, 1986: 6-8).

Relational ethics looks towards a balance of trustworthiness, loyalty, justice, merit and entitlement between subjects in a relation with one another. It puts forth the mandate of responsibility for others and consequences which occurs when we act. It strives towards a fairness in human order and equity in the continuous movement of giving and receiving. In this ethical dimension you are always aware of the other. According to Nagy, the relational ethic has to do with justice within existential relationships. It sheds light on the balance between giving and receiving in both families and other relations. This movement between give and take plays out in what Nagy calls the invisible big book, known as the ledger. In this is subconsciously recorded the balance of credits and debits between parties (Boszormenyi-Nagy & Krasner, 1986: 6-8). Relational ethics allows the opportunity to be consciously aware of the pitfalls, destructive behaviours or injuries in our relationships. This reality leads to the ability to restore relations through patterning new connections of trust, fairness and justice. One can then begin to understand the motives or actions of the other and consider how we give and receive in our daily relationships. Ethics is not merely something added on or a mechanism in order to mend relations; ethics is fundamentally present in every relationship, at every moment. It is based on an honest realization of rights and responsibilities in the movement between relations (Botha, 2014: 5,6).

The contextual framework is founded on the understanding that human relationships are intrinsically ethical. We do not only have transactions with others, there is a deeper meaning. One which is referred to as 'Justice of the human order.' This understanding of ethics has nothing to do with values or norms, as that which society often emphasises. Nagy is very careful with what is known as 'being moralistic' or morality. For morals require a calculated way of life. Nagy's ideas on ethics is not very broad, because he is not trying to define the common usage of the term ethics. His perception of ethics is both relational and deals mainly with the unbiased distribution of the benefits and burdens of all partners in a specific relationship.

In their book 'The unexpected third' Meulink-korf and Van Rhijn discusses a view of ethics from both their own understanding and that of Nagy and Levinas. Their understanding is that our existence depends on the 'being for the other' and not merely 'being with the other'. To be ethical, is to be free to truly see and meet the other as Other, relinquishing preconceived or stagnant notions

of a person. By ethical it is meant that a human being is a subject and from the start has a relationship with an/or another. From the beginning we have a mandate to take responsibility for those we share in humanity with. The core of our existence is found in the life of the other. This realization of humanity also makes me conscious of my responsibilities and accountability. I become aware of my natural injustice and how I contribute to justice in the relations I share with others. Ethical relations are never equal; it is a relation between two unequal's which is always asymmetrical. (Meulink-Korf & Van Rhijn, 2016: 93-95)

This perception of relational ethics is always accounted for in all Nagy's writings. Relational ethics could be considered the thread that runs through the whole contextual approach and is reflected upon when working with families, individuals and social dynamics. It is considered both the question and response when working towards genuine dialogue. This perspective on ethics establishes the 'relation' in the relationships we partake in.

Nagy is quick to clarify two aspects of relational ethics. Firstly, ethics as expressed in the contextual approach is not to be mistaken for moral codes or the judgement between what is right and wrong. In the therapeutic arena the contextual therapist works towards helping families with seeking fairness and not a code of ethical conduct. Fairness does also not refer to a rigid practice of making sure everyone involved gets what they want or that the individual who has injured the relationship has to be persecuted for their actions. Fairness is determining the balance of due consideration and ensuring that the basic interest is taken into account for both the family member giving and the other receiving. Thus, merit also plays a role; when a family member contributes to the well-being of others and trust is established the individual giving receives merit. Maintaining of balance in the interest of the whole family, whether present or not is of great significance in relational ethics. Boszormenyi-Nagy's stance on ethics is confusing when reflecting on it theoretically; as he claims that fairness should guide our actions but in the same breath reminds us that relational ethics is not concerned with what is right and wrong.

Nagy and Ulrich (1981:160) states that: "Ethics carries no implications of a specific set of moral priorities or criteria of right or wrong. It is concerned with the balance of equitable fairness between people". Whether trustworthiness and fairness within relationship therapy is enough, has been debated by scholars (Fowers, et al.:1997:153,154). There have also been debates on whether relational ethics as Nagy embraces it, doesn't perhaps limit the good within family relations and

that Nagy might be contradictory in his claims on moral expectations. Yet, as contradictory as it may seem to some, fairness is the ethical code to which the contextual approach clings to. Perhaps it seems contradictory within modern society because equality and fairness are taken for granted. The world around us is so often experienced as a world obsessed with individualism. Nagy's theoretical works on relational ethics tries to remind us that ethical codes are often less constructive and selfish. While in the same breath advocating for the fact that the relational reality, we share with those around should be inclusive and a trust building effort via genuine dialogue.

### **3.4 Contextual approach within the arena of therapy.**

The goal of contextual theory is to liberate families in their dialogue with each other and to make sure entitlement is earned. There is a constant need for interpersonal trust achieved through caring, trustworthy deeds, and communication. Contextual therapy emphasizes ways in which family generations are bound to one another; also taking into consideration interpersonal elements and psychological aspects. People cannot be seen separately from their generational roots or from their relationships or dialogue with others. Contextual therapy as an approach assumes that every individual has an instinctive sense of justice and feels intuitively called to serve this justice within interpersonal relationships. The tendency to care for others is part of our core humanity and this unlocks the need to have balance within our relations with others, especially family. This need to establish balance impacts the development of trustworthiness between related individuals.

In practice the complexity of contextual therapy can be assessed by means of looking at four dimensions. These dimensions are, 1) Objective facts 2) Psychology 3) Transactions and 4) An ethic of due consideration/Relational ethics. It should be taken into account that these four dimensions is in no means a rigid list of compartmentalised aspects which merely come into play within contextual therapy. These dimensions are all held together and considered within the ongoing process of contextual theory. These dimensions were previously reviewed in short when discussing relational ethics within this chapter. This following section explores these therapeutic dimensions used within Contextual therapy, even further.

#### **3.4.1 Objective facts**

These facts about an individual or family is not an exhaustive amount of details. Relevant objective facts are concerned with the strengths, vulnerabilities, and personal aspects connected to both the

history and present state of the person/people in question. These objective facts would usually include the social and economic circumstances of an individual or family, the genetic factors which come into play, the health concerns or strengths. The ethnic or racial identity and culture of families are especially important when considering facts within a South African background because it could add to things one may have to be sensitive towards. It could also be used to gain perspective on how families may perceive one another. Furthermore, these shared facts could be events that cannot be changed, e.g. loss of parents or significant people in an individual's life who have passed away. Everything which naturally comes to mind for the individual or family which forms part of their background and lives. These facts cannot be entirely pried out of an individual or family, it needs to be shared willingly.

#### 3.4.2 Second dimension: Individual Psychology

This aspect focuses on the affects and emotions which come to the fore in both the individual and the family. Various psychodynamic models can be useful in this dimension. If one were to look at this from a filial perspective, the therapist would consider the history of mental health within the family involved. Many times, mental health history has a lot to do with an individual's life experiences and the relational balances and imbalances experienced within the broader family or household. The biopsychosocial formulation is an example of a means to do case formulation. Within a general clinical or psychology setting this would be referred to as determining the 5 P's for case formulation; the presenting problem, the predisposing, perpetuating, precipitant and protective factors of the individual or family's mental status. A means to understanding an individual as more than just a diagnosis. The biopsychosocial formulation combines the psychological, biological and social factors linked to an individual's mental and affective status. This is used to formulate cases, to create treatment guides or diagnosis (Ingram, 2006:4,5). Another way of stating this would be determining the individual's affects, emotions, passions, needs and even defence mechanisms. This is merely one dimension according to Nagy and although he reflected on many psychodynamic theories and theorists it was not the bases of his work in the Contextual therapy approach. This dimension is of course very intriguing for those who find themselves in the therapeutic field or the arena of psychology because they could easily get stuck at this point. For Nagy (1986:50,51) he welcomed reflecting on different theories but still clung to a relational ethics both in practice and theory as he believed that psychology is not enough.

### 3.4.3 Third dimension: Systems approach & theory. The Interactional and transactional dimension.

This dimension or sphere is often depicted within classical systems approaches or systemic family theories. Power dynamics and interactions or hierarchical order is explored and is often the focal point within understanding systems theory or approaches. Systems theories often gives perspective on groups and how their behaviours come into play but also patterns of communication. Group dynamics between members and group structures are key in understanding families and how interactions take place. When reflecting on systems as pertaining to families they usually interact and have dynamics which work within their perceptions and standards of rules, values, beliefs, worldviews or culture. A system like a family never operates without prior influences or imprints from past or present influences or generations. Thus, the third dimension observes behaviour and mutual conversation between the individual and group. It tries to scope out where the individual positions him/herself in the system. Each system also has a homeostasis or balance which comes into play and each member is in motion relative to the other and each member also contributes to this balance in motion. In certain instances, this balance in motion creates a safe space for both the members and the system. In other cases, the homeostasis is dysfunctional, or the system lacks balance between members, and this has the opposite effect. The system then becomes toxic or the relationships within the system is injured and the system either keeps moving in disfunction or becomes stagnant. Furthermore, aspects such as rigid rules or traditions could present itself as an obstacle when trying to implement positive change in a system; or in this case family. When considering everything that comes into play within a system, we also need to consider the role each member plays, the sub-systems, the bias of certain members, the coalitions or alliances and as mentioned before the powers or labelling evident in the spaces of the system and its members. One of the theories which Nagy found perspective within when considering interactions, transactions and systems was the Bowen theory which was one of the first comprehensive theories on family systems functioning (Meulink-Korf & Van Rhijn, 2016: 12,13). This theory looks at patterns and interactions within family functioning and systems. Although this dimension forms part of Nagy's focal aspects within Contextual theory it is not the main perspective and similarly to facts and psychology has an interplaying role within the four dimensions. The rest of this section also links these four dimensions with the concepts used within the Contextual approach.

#### 3.4.4 Fourth Dimension: Relational Ethics/ Ethic of due consideration

In the article 'resourcing trust in a fragmenting world' relational ethic is defined as the motivational layer in which hope resides for repairing the hurt human justice. This understanding sets in motion Nagy's incorporation of relational ethic within the Contextual approach and as a fourth dimension (Meulink-Korf & Noorlander , n.d.:2). Relational ethic is often the pivot which sets the human system to motion and motivates an individual to be part of a unit. This fourth dimension concerns itself with the objective facts, psychology and transactions. Relational ethics envelopes and enhances the purpose of the other dimensions of contextual therapy.

Relational ethics allows us the opportunity to be consciously aware of the pitfalls, destructive behaviours or injuries in our relationships. It allows for the restoration of relations through weaving new connections of trust, fairness, justice and giving and receiving. Nagy's conceptual framework of the four dimensions within contextual theory is founded on the understanding that human relationships are intrinsically ethical. Nagy believes that one cannot simply explore the situation or circumstance by determining the bare facts, the psychology or interactions of a group. Relational ethic as the strongest dimension, places the responsibility of the individual and freedom alongside the rest of the dimensions, thus embracing the rest of the dimensions. The contextual approach integrates rather than opposes different approaches. Yet, its main concept remains the understanding and acceptance of an ethic of due consideration.

Perhaps one could reflect on the four dimensions of the contextual approach like a funnel, it is a process and not a rigid movement from one stage to the next. This process is fluid and the dimensions explored cannot be forced to light, though all four dimensions come into play and often integrate with one another. The fundamental element which is present in every relationship, in every moment is relational ethics. Thus, it trickles down the funnel enveloping all the other dimensions bringing to light what is needed to offer a contextual approach and to practice contextual therapy.



**Figure 3. 1: The 4 Dimensions of Contextual therapy**

Flowing from the four dimensions of contextual therapy there are many key concepts which form part of the broader contextual approach. These terms form part of Nagy's theory but also play a distinctive role in the conceptual pastorate of Contextual theory. A feature of these key terms is that they all have a legal or accounting connotation. As an intergenerational approach contextual therapy emphasises relational ethics as imperative. There are many concepts which are embedded in the dimension of relational ethics such as trustworthiness, fairness, entitlement, accountability, responsibility, dialogue, loyalty, legacy, revolving slate, multilaterality, guilt and guilt feelings and multi-directed partiality.

### **3.5 Trust and loyalty as the main aspects explored & a further look at related concepts**

In this section of chapter three, there is a main focus on the concepts trust and loyalty, in order to provide an understanding of their consecutive meanings and also to emphasis their importance in this research study. Following this, the chapter will move onto discussing related concepts which are interlinked with trust, trustworthiness and loyalty. Each concept- including the main concepts discussed- displays the thread of relational ethic. The purpose of this section is to determine how these concepts relate to the topic of this thesis, which explores trust and loyalty within grandparent-headed families. The need to explore the other concepts interlinked and related to trust and loyalty is necessary, as it implicitly and explicitly provides a deeper understanding of the explored

concepts within the research topic and leads to a better understanding of the theoretical framework as a guiding framework for this thesis. In chapter 5 which discusses the empirical findings and discussions pertaining to the research topic, it also becomes clearer why having a clear understanding or at least reflecting on these concepts are important. Although trust and loyalty are the main concepts explored in grandparent-headed families, concepts such as fairness, balance between giving and receiving, accountability, entitlement, dialogue, guilt, and legacy is embedded and unavoidable in the empirical discussions had with participants when discussing their family, support systems and relations.

### 3.5.1 Trust/Trustworthiness & truth.

By definition, trustworthiness flourishes in the presence of reliability, responsibility, reciprocity and realistic trust between two people. Moreover, trust experienced by another person is no guarantee that the trusted partner is ethically virtuous (Boszormenyi-Nagy & Krasner, 1986: 422). A victim of crime or a relationship between child and parent where they are estranged from each other due to past hurt is no proof of the perpetrator's trustworthiness. Trustworthiness is earned over a period of time and is the balancing of give-and-take between two fairly reliable individuals. Thus, trust broken by a perpetrator by means or actions of mistrust, malice or dishonesty does not mean that there was no initial trust between the victim and perpetrator before the injustice had occurred. This is often complex to grasp as we tend to assume that once trust is broken, we could probably not have relied on the next person in the first place or that it is only logical that filial trust is determined by us, through the conscious choice to trust. In the contextual approach this doesn't prove to be the case. Trustworthiness flows between two people and doesn't simply reside in each of them. Trust and trustworthiness are a direct consequence of give-and-take. It has little to do with the liking or disliking the next person and everything to do with reliability built over time, experiences, encounters and years.

Although we often reflect on trust within relationships at grassroots and on the micro-level, we also experience trust on a macro-level. One of the most embedded issues within society, the political climate and global economic circumstance is the problem of mistrust and broken or fragmented trust. Mistrust and the imbalance created by injured relations has often started wars, political uprising and economic downfall. A good reflection on how mistrust interweaves itself into the micro, meso and macro-level of society is the article by Meulink-Korf and Noorlander. As

they unpack how mistrust runs through the different levels of society and rears its emotionless face in financial crisis, the free market economy, political injustice and eventually flows into our households and relations with others (Meulink-Korf & Noorlander , n.d.:2-3).

If we consider trust and trustworthiness to be the manifesting of reliability, reciprocity, and genuine dialogue over a period of time. Then it would be logical to assume that mistrust is the absence of these resources, yet this is not entirely so. Mistrust amounts to more than the lack of relational resources; it is the absence of all resources which reside in trust but also includes the fear of trusting. This fear frequently prevents us from ever establishing trust with others. Often leading to responses such as; *'if you do not trust me and I do not trust you, we will not speak directly and our dialogue and relation will be stagnant but will I not continue to wonder what you could do to harm me?'*

Moreover, this is why trust is imperative within our societies, communities and relationships both filial relations and friendships or partnerships. A relationship of mistrust is an injured relationship, and there remains a need for re-union of the relationship and a restoration of relational resources. Furthermore, trust is of major importance for client-therapist relationships or within the pastoral care relationship between pastoral caregiver and client but also in order to work a long side the client in addressing relational issues and circumstances within his/her family.

Trust holds the dynamic of the giving and receiving of care. An individual, benefits from the care of others and from this flows the obligation to offer due consideration in return. This relational justice leads to interpersonal trust with others. The Contextual approach and DIPP are based on the notion that trust among people is grounded in the degree of interhuman justice that exists between self and others and vice versa (Boszormenyi-Nagy & Krasner, 1986: 37). Within the literature of this thesis and while discussing the findings and analysing the data the concept of trust will be constantly reflected upon. Trust within family is something always focused on, imperative for balanced relations between family members but also a relational construct easily disturbed when there is hurt, injury or imbalance.

The importance of exploring trust as one of the main relational resources and concepts in this research study is considered because trust is present in all relations. Whether it presents itself as a lack of trust, mistrust or is visibly established in the form of reliability, reciprocity, responsibility or accountability. Trust cannot be ignored as a relational resource that determines the state of

relationships especially in a household or family structure such as, a grandparent-headed family. Exploring trust allows for a deeper understanding of the lived experiences between family members of grandparent-headed families and addresses the balance between giving-and-receiving between member of this unique family type with their individual circumstances or dynamics.

### 3.5.2 Loyalty: a commitment and relational bond.

Another concept which Nagy introduced to the psychodynamic approach is loyalty. Loyalty is based on a preferential commitment to filial relationships, mainly focused on our indebtedness born of earned merit (Boszormenyi-Nagy & Krasner, 1986:418). When looking at loyalty with others who are not blood related such as a partner, or lifelong friendships, loyalty then stems from a commitment to life options towards a common endeavour and to this extent they merit loyalty to one another. Here we think especially of relations between husband and wife (Boszormenyi-Nagy & Krasner, 1986: 15). By definition “loyalty is a preferential attachment to relational partners who are entitled to a priority of bonding. Loyalty in most instances is seen within a triadic relation. It usually plays off between a preferring party, the preferred one and the one who is not preferred. It is not solely focused on one individual being attached to another.” It is therefore tricky to understand at times but nevertheless plays a strong role within our relational reality (Boszormenyi-Nagy & Krasner, 1986: 418).

Loyalty is an indestructible and permanent tie between parents and their offspring. It can also not be chosen and although one can deny the connection between yourself and your parents you cannot be disloyal and it is irrevocable. Loyalty is in ones’ blood and firmly established in who we are and part of the human order. Loyalty is described in contextual theory as a ‘multi-personal fabric, it is interwoven in the structure of the members which make up a family and their commitments towards one another (Botha, 2014: 13). Loyalty is associated with trust, commitment, merit and our actions rather than our feelings. Loyalty is in essence existential and a dimension of relational ethics. Loyalty is often the strong yet, invisible fibres which holds the different pieces of a relationship together both in families and in the broader society we share with others. Often to understand the dynamics of relationships one should determine the invisible loyalties and who is bound to one another in loyalty and what loyalty means to each individual. The invisible loyalties in a family truly reveals a bookkeeping of the past, present and future balances of giving and receiving as well (Botha, 2014: 14).

Moreover, the irrevocable loyalty and connectedness parents share with their children is known as vertical loyalty or existential loyalty and this same loyalty is what connects siblings to one another as it derives from the relation with their parents. The relationships we share with close friends and partners is based on a choice and is revocable and therefore is known as horizontal loyalty. The value we place on horizontal loyalties are strongly influenced by vertical loyalties. The quality of our connections and loyalty we share with our parents determines how we express trust, care and support with those we share in horizontal loyalties (Meulink-Korf & Van Rhijn, 2016: 16). Many times, when parents are accepting of the people their children allow into their lives as friends or spouse there will be a freedom and conflicting loyalties are alleviated. When parents do not give their blessing and are hostile towards the relationships we have with others or the decisions we make, it creates conflicting loyalties. It is usually a question of being caught between two objects of loyalty. This can also be seen within communities and societies especially when there is a lack of understanding between people considered natives and those seen as outsiders; even differences in political opinion could cause conflicting loyalties in relations.

The question posed when dealing with conflicting loyalties is often: 'If I support this proposal, whose beliefs will I be honouring and against whom will I be disloyal?' In certain instances, it needs to be remembered that what may seem disloyal is not necessarily so, especially when the so-called disloyalty is merely a constructive change or transition which is beneficial to the future. We often see this in the church, old traditions are changed by the current generation, in order to safe guard and better a future generation but an older generation or member within the congregation refuses to see this in a positive light and this creates disparity and conflict in loyalties.

Another conflict of loyalty is split loyalty, which is an extreme disruption of loyalty and occurs most often between parents and children. An obligation is put before the child to choose one parents love above the other or if a child shares a connection with the one parent it is seen as betrayal of the other; this is especially seen in cases where parents are divorced (Meulink-Korf & Van Rhijn, 2016: 19). Split loyalty has consequences for the child involved, as the child struggles to express trust, experiences the foundation for destructive parentification and could also be faced with personality problems both in the present and future.

Conflicts of Loyalty is not something which should be avoided but should be seen as an opportunity to search together for a balance between give and take within our relational reality

with others. From this perspective one can also see why Nagy emphasised the importance of dialogue in relations, especially in families. Invisible loyalties within a family should be brought to light in order to assist families in reflecting on their ethical relations, their balances of giving and taking and how to restore relationships in order to move forward. This is why loyalty is considered an imperative construct within this thesis when investigating family relations within grandparent-headed families.

### **3.6 A range of related concepts & notions.**

In this section a range of concepts related to trust and loyalty are discussed. These concepts will also further be reflected upon along with trust and loyalty, when integrating the literature and theoretical framework into a discussion on the empirical findings, later in this thesis. Furthermore, the concepts and notions discussed are related to the work of the scholars previously addressed in this chapter.

#### **3.6.1 Fairness & the balance of giving-and-receiving.**

The concern for interhuman justice or fairness allows for a healthy basis for each member in a family or each partner in a relation. Fairness is preoccupied with a subjective understanding and the courage to assert respective entitlement. Fairness is the basic notion of give-and-take but also, goes beyond this including suitable giving and appropriate receiving between people. Within the undercurrents of give-and-take in a relationship, there are moments or periods where this movement falls short. There are experiences within a relationship where an individual may feel as though they are not being given to adequately and that the other receives in abundance. Yet, it needs to be noted that giving and receiving differs from relationship to relationship and even differs from moment to moment (Boszormenyi-Nagy & Krasner, 1986: 417). Giving-and-receiving is not always tangible and is reflexive in nature.

Fairness in relationships are of utmost importance and along with this understanding of being fair, is the broad concept of give and take, as well as a sense of entitlement and indebtedness in relationships. The overarching question which a contextual therapist or dialogical intergenerational pastoral caregiver would always pose is “is it fair?” Fairness influences the movement of give and take between parties when entitlement is earned in a relationship. The functioning of fairness will not only be experienced but also seen in relationships. Fairness and the

balance of fairness within relationships is an undercurrent always at play within healthy relationships. Without fairness there is no balancing give-and-take and without fairness there is no clear entitlement to be claimed within the relationship (Boszormenyi-Nagy & Krasner, 1986: 5-6). Thus, flowing from the understanding of fairness is entitlement.

### 3.6.2. Entitlement, more than just what 'I' get.

Entitlement is a deserved and ethical guarantee which can and should arise in relationships where contributions are made. Entitlement cannot be transferred from one relationship to the next, similar to fairness, indebtedness, responsibility and the establishment of give-and-take in a specific relationship. It influences the movement of give-and-take when entitlement is earned in a relationship (Boszormenyi-Nagy & Krasner, 1986: 12-13).

Entitlement is especially experienced between a child and his/her parents. In fact, one could say that the first encounter with entitlement as a justified and deserved claim is first experienced between parents and their offspring. The conception of a child and the arrival of the new born baby itself means entitlement. The relationship of give-and-take has already begun because the mere joy and receiving of the news of pregnancy already raises emotions within the lives of the parents.

Entitlement or 'to be entitled' means that one has a claim to something, in this sense not merely materialistic objects. This concept is one which was a contribution of Nagy's in psychotherapy; it refers to a justified right and the merit one receives when giving and caring for others (Boszormenyi-Nagy & Krasner, 1986: 13). But also, one which is there from the very beginning as mentioned above when experienced by children. A child as little as they may be, already gives by who they are and how he or she has the right to be taken care of. Nagy considers points contributing to the understanding of entitlement, namely that children have the right to give to their parents. Thus, giving is something we are all entitled to. A child also gives confidence and trust and this needs to be acknowledged. An individual can also acquire entitlement by caring for those he/she forms relations with or how he/she cares about the world and environment around them. This leads to a right to be cared for and to receive that which he/she is entitled to (Meulink-Korf & Van Rhijn, 2016: 20-21). When grasping the understanding of entitlement, it is also realised that when an individual's entitlement is not fulfilled especially in the instance of a child whose entitlement of being taken care of is not realised and he/she is neglected this entitlement often

leads to destructive entitlement (Meulink-Korf & Van Rhijn, 2016: 20). Because the child cannot claim the rights anywhere, he/she builds a large but destructive right by not being able to trust others or taking as much as possible from life. If a child does not reserve what is due to them by their parents this would often lead to the want to claim this right from others- often from partners, society, God, their own children or others they may share in relationships with (Meulink-Korf & Van Rhijn, 2016: 21).

Entitlement is not only realised within families or between a child and his/her parents, entitlement can be experienced both on a group level and a national level. In every relation we have there is an expectation of being treated with fairness and we also expect the injustices we may experience to be addressed. When someone treats us unfairly, this realisation forms part of relational ethics. Destructive entitlement occurs especially when those who have committed injustice do not want to acknowledge it or do not try to restore things when there have been injuries. As mentioned before, when parents do not fulfil their duties or are never available to their children but do not acknowledge this, the downward spiral or the want to claim rights from others especially alternating from generation to generation is known as a revolving slate (Meulink-Korf & Van Rhijn, 2016: 21). On a national level when a specific group previously discriminated against does not get recognised a revolving slate can also be part of a destructive entitlement. This is especially true in many instances in South Africa; in the time of apartheid black people were exposed to racism in both openly vile and subtle ways and in many instances -despite the end of apartheid and the beginning of an inclusive democratic society- the remanence of racial discrimination still continues over twenty years later. This causes a lot of disruptive and painful consequences in our societies and country at large.

In her speech entitled '*understanding the interplay between loyalty and solidarity and its relevance in today's migratory crisis*' Ducommun-Nagy, (2016) discusses the trouble and effects of destructive entitlement with clarity and tries to address the very question: 'what can we do to address the negative consequences of destructive entitlement?' She mentions that if injustice and unfairness is not repaired or dealt with, those turning towards destructive entitlement tend to stop caring about their fellow human beings because they realise that nobody cared about them, so why should it be of importance to care about others? Also, destructive entitlement could lead to seeking justice from those who had nothing to do with the injustice experienced (Ducommun-Nagy, 2016:

4,5). Hoping that someone else will make up for the wrong doings done to them. In both cases destructive entitlement has destructive results on relationships, because it leads to those who previously experienced injustice committing injustices themselves. Destructive entitlement makes one blind to the relationships we may injure and the injustice we may commit, specifically because we see them as merely trying to seek fairness for what had already been done to us (Ducommun-Nagy, 2016: 4,5). Whether the injustice was experienced in our families or in our society, destructive entitlement numbs one from realising the vulnerability and the needs of those around us.

Moreover, when giving is perceived as a right, it also becomes a means to overcome destructive entitlement. The giver receives constructive entitlement through gaining merit, it also allows for the growth of self-worth and self-esteem. Giving in this instance is not necessarily giving of material goods but involves giving of oneself within our relations with others.

Once an individual realises that his destructive entitlement causes injustice against others it is an opportunity to end the behaviour. Taking account of the entitlement of others contributes to the giver receiving indirectly and thus destructive entitlement is not only realised but transformed into constructive entitlement. Furthermore, respecting and contributing to the rights of others and being fair in our relations with others is beneficial and creates space to reflect on ethical and relational rights for justice (Meulink-Korf & Van Rhijn, 2016: 21,22). Entitlement is offered through care and flows from the ability to accept responsibility for our relational reality with others. This is especially important in families but in a pastoral capacity can also be very important when working and dealing with congregants in the life of the church. Realising what it means to be entitled to rights and how one should be treated, but also acknowledging destructive entitlement and the ability to transition to a constructive entitlement in our relations with others.

### 3.6.3 Accountability.

Fairness or human justice is established by individuals being aware of their accountability and not by feeding revenge or reckoning. Accountability is a word which is both ethical and existential in nature. As people we bare liability for the consequence of our actions. Without accountability there can also not be fair provision of entitlement; entitlement in itself is offered through care and is rooted in the ability to accept responsibility for how we give within our relations (Boszormenyi-

Nagy & Krasner, 1986: 413). Accountability also holds a psychological connotation as it relates to a person's willingness to accept responsibility for dialogue which in itself deals with commitment and mutuality. Accountability addresses aspects of dialogue, such as polarization. This aspect of genuine dialogue offers two opportunities for individuation, and these options of individuation often cement the mutual definition of how we perceive ourselves and how we perceive others. The first is self-delineation; by definition it is when we make use of relationships in order to define who we are and those who we have relations with become the ground or basis from where this is established. This is necessary in order for us to set boundaries and recognise the give and take between ourselves and the other clearly. Delineation of the self is when we set ourselves apart from the world and from others around us; this of course does not mean isolating oneself from others. This allows for one to develop personal meaning in life. Individual identity is influenced by your own psychological stance and product. It is also influenced by circumstances like family, gender, religion and other factors (Boszormenyi-Nagy & Krasner, 1986: 73-93).

The second aspect in polarization is self-validation; by definition, "the validation of one's self-worth through entitlement earned by offering due care" (Boszormenyi-Nagy & Krasner, 1986: 421) when the other offers us entitlement for the care or recognition we give them this creates one to become aware of our self-worth. Self-validation concerns both relational ethics and psychological well-being. By showing and offering care to those we have relations with, we satisfy an innate psychological need within ourselves and we also enhance and address our self-worth and our merit which forms part of our relationship ledger of give-and-take. Self-validation thus has an impact on the balance of claims and obligations in relations (Boszormenyi-Nagy & Krasner, 1986: 77).

In the relationship between parents and their children, self-validation is a healthy means to encourage genuine dialogue in the future relations of the child. A child whose acts of care and contribution- no matter how small- are recognised will also allow them to choose constructive entitlement and will understand the benefits of caring for others. However, a child whose care is being exploited leads to a situation of parentification and could then lead to destructive entitlement. In Parent- child dialogue, the Parent needs to be aware of the vulnerability of the child and the importance of their contribution to the child's autonomous individuation. Our ability and need to care for others will allow for us to choose self-validation in our relationships. Sincere care about

the rights and needs of others contribute to who we are as human-beings but also to how we perceive ourselves and others. Thus said, if the care towards the other is not genuine and is only expressed to fulfil our own needs this can have an opposite effect and create more harm than good. It can also deteriorate the dialogue in relations- especially because it is a motivator in the process of earning entitlement. Self-validation creates self-gain and assists in dealing with conflicts in relationships, realising the value of care in injured relations and taking accountability in one's relationships and for one's actions (Boszormenyi-Nagy & Krasner, 1986: 75-80). In this we realise the importance of accountability for not only the sake of our own consequences and conscience but for the sake of the Other in our relations.

#### 3.6.4 Multi-directed Partiality & multilaterality

By definition, multi-directed partiality is the chief attitude and method used and acknowledged in Contextual theory. It consists of the guidelines whereby the counsellor is to take account and be accountable of everyone who is involved in the intervention process. Inclusiveness is the emphasis linked to the goal of discovering the humanity of all participants within a family. Even the individuals who are considered to be the perpetrators of caused injury in a relationship are considered. It also focuses on the fact that any disregard of fairness in relationships should be dealt with through means of justice (Boszormenyi-Nagy & Krasner, 1986: 418). The pastoral care giver or therapist tries to credit everyone for their contribution within the family relations. Closely linked to multi-directed partiality is multilaterality. Multilaterality recognises intermember issues of trust and fairness. There is an expression of interest in each individual's subjective perspective and there is not just a focus on the psychological facet but the inherent ethical claims, obligations, rights, entitlements and merits of the individual members. This is often not the focus of many other models even within family therapy. The development of the multilateral perspective challenges the reductionist application of many other psychological theories or transactional explanations of human behaviour of individuals and within family relations (Boszormenyi-Nagy & Krasner, 1986: 418).

#### 3.6.5 Genuine Dialogue a relational resource.

In this section the focus moves from the concepts and constructs introduced by Nagy, to the work of Martin Buber. Buber's work and perspectives has vastly contributed to the approach and

practice of contextual therapy. His philosophies on 'I and Thou' and his work on dialogue plays a major role in relational ethics. Buber believes that the world is two-fold; it is both 'I-Thou' and 'I-It'. His focus on this allows for one to realise that it is in our relations with others that our being and growth is determined. His dialogical view allows for relational ethics which deals with a humanity moving to a more communal reality with others. Buber portrays this desire by means of the 'I-Thou' and 'I-It' relationships. 'I-It' entails seeing the other through one's own needs, distortions and tangible characteristics. However, at times a subject-object relationship is necessary; such as in a doctor-patient relationship. In order for a doctor to remain in his/her professional capacity they need to address the biological, genetic or physiological characteristics of an individual; especially when a diagnosis is to be made. 'I-Thou' on the other end of the spectrum, emphasises dynamic mutuality and an intersubjective relationship. Where true humanity of individuals is met and the relationship is based on subject-subject encounters and experiences. In 'I-Thou', the focus is no longer on gender, race, further outward appearance, or materialistic status; it rather hones in on direct dialogue. The true encounter cannot be staged, the only way it can occur is when we are aware of the challenges and obstacles that come between the 'I-Thou' or the dialogue (Buber, 1970: 111-112).

Buber is especially concerned with what occurs between 'I' and 'You'. Genuine encounters happen in the 'between' of the time and if we are not capable of letting go of the world of objectivity or I-It then we will never enter into genuine dialogue with the other. The relational world is made up of three spheres. Our relationship with creation, our relationship with Others, and our relationship with the spiritual Being. Furthermore, dialogue happens when we no longer cling to our own perspectives, if we do then the other becomes an 'It'. The encounter is then made out of power and mistrust and expects no sense of reciprocity, which is often necessary in dialogue (Friedman, 1989: 402-403). From this understanding, Nagy embraces relational ethics and without a reflection on Buber's dialogical philosophy and contribution, it is difficult to grasp the purpose of relational ethics. For Nagy all four dimensions of contextual theory either assists dialogue in flourishing or floundering between subjects. If we pose the question: what is disturbing the dialogue between a family or between individuals? We listen to these four dimensions in order to determine or assist the establishment of dialogue (Friedman, 1989: 402-403). By definition, dialogue is defined as a dialectical rule of relational balance which finds its foundation in mutual commitment between relations. The concept is more than just the exchange of words or

communication, as it is often understood by laypeople. The equitability and accountability of dialogue is more complex in asymmetrical relationships- especially between parents and children. The quality of relationships is based on trust; it is established upon the genuine dialogue. The root of dialogue also hinges on the reciprocity of responsible care shared in relations. Dialogue is the heart of the relational reality that becomes the context of mature individuation as human beings (Boszormenyi-Nagy & Krasner, 1986: 415).

### 3.6.6 Guilt & Guilt feelings.

When trying to understand and explore guilt feelings or, guilt in the context of psychology or simply humanity, Martin Buber stands firmly in a completely different understanding of guilt as both Freud and Jung. He even established the term existential guilt. In his written work 'guilt and guilt feelings' Buber emphasises the fact that an individual experiencing guilt because of a specific situation cannot perceive this guilt through means of analytical science; only seeing it as a means of repression or the development of the conscious, as Freud and Jung express it to be. The person carrying the guilt is aware of what has caused this guilt and repeatedly remembers the event that has caused it. The individual could try to avoid the reality of this guilt, but the truth will eventually overwhelm him or her (Buber, 1988: 116). Thus, to Buber real guilt or existential guilt does not arise from personal failures or misbehaviour. Our existential guilt rises out of the core of our being and the injury caused in our relations with others. Guilt incurs because of injuring a relationship with our fellow man and from this explanation Buber creates clear distinction between guilt as merely a feeling and existential guilt. Existential guilt is guilt taken on by a person in a personal capacity, in his or her situation in relation to others (Buber, 1988: 115). According to Buber, guilt is not within the person rather the reality is that guilt envelops the person (Friedman, 1989: 3). Thus, the repression of guilt and the mental pathology or neurosis which results from repression- which Freud often clings to- is not simply a psychological occurrence but real events between human beings. Existential guilt as explained in the article 'guilt and guilt feelings' represent the fact that we are relational beings and that real guilt happens when we allow injuries or ties between us to sever the order of the human world. Buber believes that we belong to systems and foundations in our existence and we share the reality of common human existence. All of us, at some point in time have experienced or perceived dysfunctional or injured relationships in which we or those around us share. Whether this social reality takes place in a family, friendship, romantic

relationship, marriage or even in a community. Existential guilt and the causes thereof are a known, raw experience of human relations, part of our very existence. Moreover, guilt is seen as often necessary and at times even constructive. It is authentic to human relationships which is never without flaws. It is a constructive reality to realize one's existential guilt amidst or after admitting injury, because it could lead to the restoration of the human order of justice. It could also be the path to the undoing of the damaging effects of failed responsibilities created by lies, hate, and other emotionally destructive behaviour. Our relationship and dialogue with others enable us to be truly human, to exist in social environments, but also to participate in them and face the often-grievous reality which occurs when human relations face times of turmoil.

#### 3.6.6.1 The journey towards the relief of existential guilt according to Buber.

There is no purpose in the admitting or recognition of our guilt, if there is no navigated road ahead to overcome this reality. An injured relationship is injury to the broader human order; only the perpetrator or perpetrators of the inflicted injury can pursue the healing process. He or she knows what has caused the guilt and, with those involved or with help, can heal the relationship that has been wounded (Buber, 1988: 117). It is made very clear that no therapist can convince one to confess the reality of existential guilt which lurks in our conscience. According to Buber there are three spheres that need to be faced and put to action for reconciliation to be fulfilled and only one of these spheres- the one most emphasised by Buber-can be directly addressed by a therapist, spiritual mentor or helper. (Buber, 1988: 125)

The first sphere is the law of society. This pertains to the action or demand which the justice system or society places on the guilty party. The situation or event of fulfilment calls for confession of guilt, followed by penalty or punishment imposed by breaking societal norms or laws. The last action taken is indemnification, which typically includes the obligation of the perpetrator providing compensation for the loss experienced by the victim. Society or law in this case determines whether the accused party is guilty or not. Also, in most cases reconciliation or restoration is forced upon parties involved leaving little room for genuine reconciliation or assistance with it.

The second sphere, which can be directly addressed by a therapist is the conscience. The action required by the conscience faced with guilt is also overcome in three events. According to Buber these are namely, self-illumination, perseverance and reconciliation. The conscience points to the

past and future actions both approved or disapproved. (Buber, 1988: 124) It is undeniable that our disapproved actions tend to receive stronger negative emotions or implications in our conscience, than our approved often positively enforced emotions provide. Our conscience is determined by many things; the things we disapprove of, the commands we live by, moral beliefs, faith, tradition, personal worldviews, personal decisions and many other aspects. Our conscience is no closed construct and is never determined or embedded in only one aspect.

The third and final sphere which determines the overcoming of existential guilt is faith or spiritual support. This sphere is embedded in the relation between the guilty individual and his/her God. Also, dealt with in three events of action, these are typically, the confession of sin, repentance understood as sincere regret or remorse about ones wrong doing and penance which eludes to punishment usually inflicted on oneself. These Concepts are usually understood in a theological capacity.

The true reconciliation and importance of dealing with existential guilt falls on the second sphere which is conscience. Therefore, it comes as no surprise when Buber expresses that Existential guilt dealt with in the sphere of conscience is truly an awakening to ourselves and our relation to others. It is an admittance which starts with I-the individual facing the guilt-. It cannot be a fake it to make it process (Buber, 1988: 125). The first step which is self-illumination directs one to the 'I' which illuminates the guilt. It is the revealing of the realization that 'I who am a holistic being consisting of both good and bad did this'. Secondly, one has to persevere in this illumination, not as some form of constant self-punishment but as an intense light which illuminates the way forward. A continuous move forward, yet never forgetting the event which caused injury. If the guilt only had to do with ourselves, we might be able to leave it at merely self-illumination. However, we are indebted in our relation to others, always guilty in relation to our fellow human beings. Inevitably, 'I am identifying myself with the other (Buber,1988: 124).'The third step toward repairing is reconciliation, a transformative restoration of a broken relationship. This only occurs when we have an active devotion to others in this world and our existence. If we have caused harm and injury, only we can restore it and restoration occurs in open and constant dialogue. The truth of restoration and reconciliation is only so when it is spoken, when broken communication is restored. It is also not a once off or one-sided journey; all parties need equal involvement, both perpetrator and victim (Buber,1988: 124). Furthermore, there are circumstances which often hinders direct

reconciliation with the victim; perhaps death or distance. However, there are many places where we can restore the damaged order. Justice doesn't only have to prevail in one instance or place. No relation with another is isolated, therefore reconciliation does not have to be isolated either. Reaching a stage of reconciliation is also not a step by step activity. The steps offered by Buber to overcome guilt feelings is not a linear endeavour and this process can move back and forth as many times as it may need to. A linear step by step process towards reconciliation would also mean that the reconciliation itself is pretentious and cheap. The understanding of existential guilt and the overcoming and restoration of relations; is something which is central to the understanding and principles which guides the contextual approach.

<b>Law Legal system &amp; Society</b>	Confession	Penalty	Identification
<b>Conscience Points to past &amp; future actions. Directly addressed by therapist</b>	Self- Illumination (‘I’)	Perseverance (‘I & Thou’)	<b>Reconciliation</b>
<b>Spiritual Support Religion &amp; faith based.</b>	Confession Of Sin	Repentance	Penance



**Figure 3. 2: A Chart Illustration of Guilt & Guilt feelings chart**

### 3.6.7 Legacy- passing the baton.

Transgenerational mandates of certain relationship dynamics may be repeated or inherited both consciously or subconsciously, by definition this is known as a legacy. One's responsibility to preserve posterity is part of relational realities especially within families. Legacy is what we receive from past generations. Legacies could be beliefs, norms, cultural beliefs or religious worldviews.

A legacy which is negative in nature is considered a delegation. A legacy is by no means an obligation that needs to be carried out and it is certainly not the obligation to repeat past errors. An example of a delegation which holds no obligation and carries negative errors is that of an

obligation to perpetuate substance abuse because it is seen and experienced in earlier generations (Boszormenyi-Nagy & Krasner, 1986: 418). Legacy is passed on to the present generation and it is an ethical imperative, in the sense that the present generation is mandated to determine what is life affirming for the future generations and to take heed of what is beneficial for the posterity's quality of survival. That said, legacy is not only shared within a family but in communities, religious practices or culture. Within a democratic South Africa legacy is especially important for people of colour and their perception of freedom, liberation and reconciliation with their nationality, communities, and even within rebuilding racial identity and relations as a country. We cannot move forward if we do not realise what has been passed on to us by those who have fought for racial equality and we cannot move forward without feeling mandated to work towards making a difference, despite the socio-economic and political climate we find ourselves in. An example of a philosophical legacy which many still strive to embrace is that of black consciousness. In the article 'The legacy of Black consciousness: its continued relevance for a democratic South Africa and its significance for theological education', it discusses how the legacy of black consciousness is not dead (Dolamo, 2017:1-2). The works and philosophies of Stephen Bantu Biko and other activists still live on in how many South Africans perceive themselves and their country. The same black conscious philosophy valued and activated in the 1960s still influences the political and economic perspectives of people today (Dolamo, 2017: 1). The legacy of values and principles such as solidarity in the face of struggle and political adversity, the emphasis on self-reliance and self-resilience in the face of unemployment. The principle of self-understanding and Africanism and the importance of education as a weapon of liberation for the people. Are philosophies previously practiced by apartheid activists but are still implemented in our society today in order to ensure the preservation of liberation (Dolamo, 2017: 1-7).

Furthermore, Contextual family therapy, embraces the concepts of indebtedness and entitlement. Members within family relationships keep subconscious 'ledgers' that encapsulates the merits, debts and entitlements of these relationships. In order for relationships to be satisfying, there needs to be a balance between the debts and entitlements of both or all parties involved. Imbalances within filial relational 'ledgers' may eventually be passed down to future generations and affect further family interactions, dialogue and relations. Thus, similar to family loyalties, legacy plays a major role in dialogue, family experiences and occurrences within a generation.

### **3.6.8 Concluding thoughts**

This chapter thoroughly discussed and theoretically interpreted interdisciplinary scholarly works and literary contributions which pertain to relational ethics, trust and loyalty. This is important as it imparts scholarly wisdom needed to further explore the research topic and discuss the empirical findings. Having dealt with the theoretical interpretation of literature within chapter 3; chapter 4 will move on to discuss the central focus of pastoral care, the dialogical intergenerational pastoral process as a theoretical framework for this study and the theological aspects of importance.

## **Chapter 4: A closer look at the Dialogical Intergenerational pastoral process as Pastoral framework.**

### **4.1 Introduction.**

Chapter 3 undertook Osmer's second task of the interpretive wisdom reflecting on the literature and scholars which contribute to a deeper understanding of relational ethics, trust and loyalty. Chapter 4 undertakes Osmer's normative task. There are two ends of the spectrum within the normative task; the first addresses the prophetic discernment and how humans shape God's word. On the other end of the spectrum is the theological and ethical interpretation. This is concerned with ethical norms which have the ability to guide our responses and shape our good practice (Osmer, 2008:93). The Normative task poses the question "What ought to be going on?" Chapter 4 shares the Practical theology, pastoral care perspective, the main theoretical pastoral care theory which is DIPP and how DIPP is used to interpret situations, context and Biblical scripture.

### **4.2 Church-based social support & transformation.**

For some, the church is the only form of social support; while for others the church does not provide the adequate support hoped for- especially in households or communities faced with crisis. In a research study conducted by (Ngenye, 2018:45), the emphasis is to understand the role of the Christian church as social support and how it contributes to the overall well-being of its members in modern times. The church is perceived as a family of families, a place of hospitality (Ngenye, 2018:46). Krause's (2011) '*church-based relationships and how it affects social relationships in the secular world*' looked at how the church as social support system contributes to our communal relationships. In the journal article of Molobi (2014:195), he indicates a deeper theological perspective concerning the contribution of the church and Liberation theology is discussed, as it explores the agenda for the Black church and Black families in South Africa after apartheid. It reminds the church that there needs to be a programme to improve the lives and address the social struggles of people.

In an article written not too long after the end of the reign of the apartheid regime, Mpanza (1996:965) discusses the role of the church in the struggle against poverty. The church as the

essence of love has a responsibility not only to God, but to its fellow man and the world which God Himself loved first. Two appeals are presented in this literature- that both rich and poor churches should play their role in combating poverty amongst its members, and that the church should shift roles from charity work to development. Mpanza is brave enough to offer three recommendations for the church in their journey towards addressing poverty. The first is allowing the church to identify their priority needs, to consider what resources they truly have available to them; and lastly, to involve the poor in decision making when being of assistance (Mpanza, 1996:967). Though his notions in many instances may be valid for some, considering the time it was published in and the wounded reality of poverty in South Africa it seems overly ambitious for its context.

According to Pillay (2017: 11) *“The Christian church has always been involved in the transformation of society, especially as it took sides with the poor and oppressed. At times it seemed to have lost this focus. Today, more than ever, given the increasing poverty, violence and injustices in the world, the Christian church is called upon to embrace, engage and continue with its task of being an agent for transformation and change.”*

Pillay states this, but also reminds us of the intricate struggles of the past in South Africa and its influence on how change and transformation should come about. He argues that the church has always been involved in social change, but its contributions were not always positive. This contributed to both oppression and poverty. Thus, change will only come about after we both acknowledge the harm done, and live out the gospel to transform society and enhance the quality of life of both the poor and oppressed (Pillay, 2017:1,2).

There is a myriad of ways in which church-based support is discussed in literature, whether the focus is on the future of church transformation or how church-based support affects and influences members. The latter of the supposed literature is an important focus in the sociological study of religions. According to Krause (2011) in a study conducted on the nature of church-based support and how support was received, with relation to the use of religious coping methods, it was found that people are inclined to use positive religious coping responses when receiving church-based support. The study was attentive to the social and emotional support for individuals provided by the church. Although there was a positive connection between the support from church leaders and

members, it disclosed that there was no concrete or long-term impact produced by emotional support received.

#### 4.2.1 Spirituality as a resource, Religion as a protective factor & the church as a sense of belonging.

When considering church-based support we also need to keep in mind that, how families and individuals perceive spirituality, religion and the church environment, are not the same. (Mahoney, et al., 2003:220) However, they impact family life and relations with others, for the individual. Spiritual beliefs are said to provide a sense of stability and sustenance. Consequently, many families adopt some sort of expression of faith or spirituality, either within or outside of a formal religion. According to, Walsh (2012:4,5) when people seek help emotionally, psychologically, interpersonally, or physically they are usually in spiritual distress as well. Researchers in the field of spirituality, religion, and sociology often interpret faith to be inherently relational and argue that our most basic beliefs about life are moulded within caregiving relationships (Buber, 1970; Marks, 2006; Fishbane, 1998).

In Vermeer, (2014:402,403) there is again the reminder that religion plays a significant role in family life. Though religious affiliation varies and is often not prioritized in places such as West-Europe, the influence of religion can still not be undermined as it largely impacts family life, family structure and social community. It even goes as far as to explore how family relationships are considered sanctified or said to have spiritual character.<sup>10</sup> By studying the implications of this cognition they attempt to create awareness about the unique way in which religion affects the family as a social unit. Findings suggest that sanctification is interrelated to a stronger adaptive functioning in marital relationships and parent-child relations. This adds to the debate that religiousness is correlated with stronger desirable family dynamics.

According to Gallet (2016:1-9), amongst the many significant roles that the church plays, one which is of specific importance is the building up of the community. Developing social capital and empowering people stems from a Christian theological worldview, and the desire to reflect the

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<sup>10</sup> The definition for sanctification in the work of (Mahoney, et al., 2003) is different to that of Christian theological perspective and is explained as follows: (Mahoney, et al., 2003, p. 221)“In contrast, our definition of sanctification is not theological. We define sanctification as a psychological process through which aspects of life are perceived by people as having spiritual character and significance. Thus, we conceptualise sanctification as a **‘psychospiritual construct’**.”

presence of God in the world. There is of course the longstanding reasoning that churches have the traditional role and responsibility in creating a sense of belonging. According to literature, the church is the environment where people find value in both themselves and others; an environment where developing trusting relationships should take place. This is especially echoed in literature on social capital (Dixon, 2010; Norris & Inglehart, 2004; Schneider, 2006). The above theme is of relevance when considering the current research topic. Essentially because it also explores the impact of the church on grandparent-headed family households and relations.

#### **4.3 Pastoral care a practical theology.**

Practical theology is often known as the ‘doing’ theology concerned with praxis within the broader community. The ‘doing’ usually pertains to caring or involvement in contemporary social situations. Instead of focusing on the religious perspectives, institutes, sacred texts or doctrinal aspects, the interest of a ‘doing’ theology is the everyday lived experiences, cultural and social practices of the regular person, family or community (Ganzevoort & Roeland, 2014:93). Practical theology seeks meaningful and deliberate actions which enables healing of individuals, families or communities. It is also an umbrella concept which includes many subdisciplines. This was previously discussed in chapter one, when reflecting on Osmer’s theological tasks of interpretation and what practical theology encompasses.

This specific study fits into the field of pastoral care which is a discipline within practical theology. The purpose of pastoral care is to reach out and help those in need, those who face both everyday problems and deeper existential dilemmas. Pastoral care is solution focused but more importantly it is growth orientated as it doesn’t always offer solutions to our problems but it assists in spiritual growth despite our problems or within our circumstances. Pastoral care is concerned with the holistic well-being of people. Though pastoral care is not limited to Christians, it is formed by Christian theology.

Patton (1993:6) discusses pastoral care while considering the following; “ *God created human beings for relationship with God and with one another. God continues in relationship with creation by hearing us, remembering us, and bringing us into relationship with one another. Human care and community are possible because of our being held in God’s memory; therefore as members of caring communities, we express care by also hearing and remembering others.* ”

This speaks to the fact that God is involved in the praxis of pastoral care but in-turn we as the people of God are also part of this spiritual journey with others. In reference to the current study being located in the field of pastoral care, the topic focuses on exploring trust and loyalty within grandparent-headed families and the impact of the church as social support. It strives to guide church leaders to better supporting grandparent-headed families pastorally. The theoretical framework used as a lens to describe the theory that explains the research study under investigation is the dialogical intergenerational pastoral process. DIPP is essentially the pastoral care focus of this study focused on grandparent-headed families and it is also a subdiscipline within pastoral care.

#### **4.4 Dialogical Intergenerational Pastoral Process, the bridge between Pastoral theology & the Contextual approach in South Africa.**

The DIPP is underrated within the broader field of practical theology and as a subdiscipline of pastoral care. Yet, it deals with many grassroot and systemic issues which is witnessed in our current era. It encompasses the principles needed to address issues of justice, morality and relational ethics, while simultaneously maintaining a relational focus, transgenerational perspective and systemic insight. Many forms of therapy and pastoral care emphasise family dynamics, interactions and transgenerational patterns but often fail to include the pertinent constructs of posterity, fairness, trustworthiness, accountability and more importantly relational ethics (Boszormenyi-Nagy & Krasner, 1986:8-9). The DIPP never strives to fix relations between family members but aims to achieve greater balance in these relations. The attention is often placed on enhancing relational resources and stimulating growth for both present and future generations. The dialogical intergenerational pastoral process is fitting for the desire to extrapolate exactly what the relational reality is for grandparent-headed families in this study. By exploring the familiar concepts related to DIPP, we are given the opportunity to draw closer to the unit of analysis.

DIPP lends itself to finding clarity on the topic, while allowing the research participant, researcher and reader to grasp the interactions which occur within grandparent-headed families. This conceptual framework lays the perfect foundation and provides guidance when wanting to explore this specific topic and create awareness in a pastoral capacity. The DIPP has been moulded and shaped by psychology, philosophy, relational ethics and theology in order to be considered as a theoretical and pastoral process within a caregiving pastoral capacity and ministry. That said, the

DIPP continues to be an ever-developing field especially when considering the fact that it is embedded in a South African setting. The dialogical intergenerational pastoral process is constantly trail blazing towards its precipice of acceptance in theology and growth within a South African context despite contributions already made.

It is important to discuss both the history, theology and philosophy of the DIPP within the field of practical theology and the scholarly background of South Africa. Moreover, many of the scholars (Van Doorn, 2007; Thesnaar, 2019; Botha, 2014; Meulink-Korf & Van Rhijn, 2016) who offer major contributions towards this paradigmatic framework within pastoral theology are concerned with the interplay between Theology and the human sciences, within the face of challenges which arise in the Christian congregation and broader humanity.

The decision to adopt and translate the <sup>11</sup>contextual approach into pastoral ministry came about because of concrete reasoning. Reasoning which speaks to the theology and concerns of pastoral theology, ministry and the broader post-apartheid South African society. Pastoral caregiving within the church and community is a theology which engages with human interaction, and the ability to address the humanity within all as prescribed and evident within the Gospel. Healing, inclusivity and being spiritually whole was imperative to the ministry of Jesus. Therefore, pastoral caregiving as a ministry is rooted in Jesus Christ. According to De Gruchy (1989:39), healing in the Bible reflects understanding humanity and reality holistically and inclusively. Concepts such as *'Shalom'* or *'Missio Dei'* is about more than just a spiritual and physical state of being or fellowship, but also addresses other dimensions of humanity and its interactions such as social wellbeing, relational wellbeing, and even political circumstance. Similarly, the contextual approach voices and emphasizes the reality of human encounters, wholeness and relational interactions. Furthermore, Pastoral care has the task of supporting the spiritual and existential processes of individuals. Pastoral care focuses on enhancing dialogue, moral deliberation, justice and addresses oppressive and dehumanising practices. The contextual approach values a dialogical understanding within the ontic dynamics of humane encounters and addresses the order of human justice, while also reflecting on the existential concerns of individuals and families. Finally, both pastoral caregiving and the contextual approach appeals to the human responsibility towards the

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<sup>11</sup> Refer to chapter 3 which discusses the contextual therapy for further perspective on this approach. Note that: the work of Nagy, Buber and Levinas informs the dialogical intergenerational pastoral process framework.

other. The acknowledgement that our existence as humans are not only shared with others but is intertwined with the Other. This implies a metaphysical truth and portrays the God given reality that we all experience relational needs and invisible loyalties. We all experience an innate internal ‘divine discomfort’ as Emmanuel Levinas’s often reminds us in his relational ethic writings. ‘Divine discomfort’ is often expressed as, responsibility as the image of God in man (Kosky, 2001: 211). For these reasons and many others, pastoral theology and ministry found it complimentary and necessary to consider the dialogical intergenerational pastoral process as a worthy pastoral process or theoretical framework.

According to Daniel Louw (1999:120), empirical working within practical theology should be perceived as more than just observation. It should portray the role of relationships and the existential process of understanding, interpreting and guiding generations. In his later writings (Louw, 2004; Louw, 2017), he also divulges on the meaning and function of pastoral care and what spirituality means to human beings both for the physical body and the soul. Pastoral care deals with the praxis of God as it interrelates with the praxis of faith within the constructs of the social, cultural and contextual experiences between God and people. Louw also, discusses the fact that pastoral care and counselling addresses aspects of healing, guiding, reconciling, liberating, empowering and interpreting humanity (Louw, 2004: 75-77). That said, Louw also goes on to say that pastoral care and counselling is more than just the human experiences, it is the embodiment and identification of a suffering Christ that understands our vulnerable human condition (Louw, 2017: 5,6).

Within the South African context, dialogical intergenerational pastoral process or as previously known, the ‘Contextual pastorate’, has not been around for an extensive time. However, the Contextual pastorate pioneers namely, <sup>12</sup>Dr. Henneke Meulink-Korf and Dr. Nel Van Doorn, have in the past established the field of contextual pastorate in the Netherlands. They also brought their expertise to South African soil in order to make use of it in training ministers. This approach was welcomed especially in the unique post-apartheid South Africa. From 2004 they ran many workshops in order to establish this approach amongst South African ministers and students. By the year 2017 they had started the first Master’s degree program in Practical theology with a focus

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<sup>12</sup> Dr. Henneke Meulink-Korf and Dr. Nel Van Doorn are both scholars and authors within the field the Contextual pastorate. Many of their publications are used within this dissertation (Meulink-Korf & Noorlander, n.d.) (Meulink-Korf & Van Rhijn, 2016) (Van Doorn, 2007).

on contextual pastoral theology, later to be renamed the Dialogical Intergenerational Pastoral Process.<sup>13</sup> There have been many contributions made within the South African theological field towards this growing approach. Previous African scholarly works and perspectives have also been integrated into the DIPP. The contributions both great and small, hopes to make a difference both academically and most importantly pastorally within ministry, church congregations and communities at grassroots.

#### **4.5 Contribution of DIPP to scriptural exegesis.**

The DIPP introduces the truth of individuals who form part of relationships, it addresses the relational reality of individuals and groups. The fundamental attitude of ministers or pastors who employ DIPP is to activate people's responsibility for the well-being of the next generation. By taking up the responsibility within relations, individuals take care of themselves and the 'other'. Relationships in which people partake encompass loyalty and by nature loyalty is connected to the consequences of our actions. In relationships which are satisfying everyone acts responsibly towards the other and there is a need and want for accountability. By doing so, trust is gained; thus, one gives, one receives, and one is aware of the balances within relations. This practical reflection on DIPP leads to wondering what the contribution of DIPP is when working with the interpretation of the Biblical text. If DIPP speaks to the reality of people within lived relations, then how are relations perceived in the Bible through the lens of DIPP. Inevitably Pastoral care acknowledges the authority of Biblical scripture for the healing, and caring of people. According to Van Doorn (2007:1) "The DIPP will only enlighten the text, after the text itself has spoken. It is only then that text and pastoral care interact completely." The interaction of DIPP with the Biblical text is especially important when considering trust and loyalty. Thus, we need to consider the interaction of DIPP with the Biblical text in both the Old Testament and the New Testament. One such example is within the Old Testament in the book of 2 Samuel 13:1-22 as it reflects on loyalty and trust within filial relations.

The story of Tamar's rape in 2 Sam. 13:1-22 is fixed in familial relational ethic and reality. Maacah, birthed "Absalom" while David was reigning in Hebron. He was David's thirdborn.

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<sup>13</sup> Refer to **section '3.8. African cultural perspectives and the relation with the DIPP.'**

"Amnon," his first-born, was also born in Hebron but by Ahinoam, David's wife from Jezreel. Both sons may have been in their late adolescences or early twenties at the time. "Tamar" was the full sister of Absalom, and was evidently born in Jerusalem (1 Chron. 3:4-9), so she was probably younger than both brothers (Constable, 2019: 91,92 ). David is king. Following all the wrongs he has committed, for one illegitimately taking Bethsheba as his wife. The prophet Nathan announces that evil will no longer depart from the house of David. After David and Bathsheba's first child dies. The adversity continues to spread. Amnon loves his half-sister Tamar to the point that it drives him crazy. He comes up with a plan, aided by a friend- Jonadab-, that Tamar should bake him bread in his house. King David gives permission for this. The atmosphere in the house turns sultry when Amnon sends everyone away and changes 'strengthening bread' into two 'heart cakes'. This results in the incestuous rape of Tamar by Amnon. After the rape, Amnon's love turns to hate and he sends Tamar out without a future. After she is thrown out of his house, Tamar mourns and cries until she meets her brother Absalom. He summons her to be absolutely silent, he takes her into his house, but she may not speak for the rest of her life. Absalom's hatred towards his brother remains. Two years later, he shall kill him cunningly. Indeed, evil doesn't depart from David's house. Touchingly, later in the text Absalom does justice to his sister by naming his daughter Tamar (2 Samuel 14:27). This is surprising because there is no mention of his sons' names (Van Doorn, 2007:2).

Relational ethics is brought to light in this text through exegesis and the guidance of the DIPP. Loyalty unfolds in its own way in this text and trust between family members also prove to be evident. The trust between Tamar and her brother Amnon is broken because, Amnon has perpetrated an act of injustice towards Tamar through rape. This act of deep injustice affects more than just the relation between Tamar and Amnon but also disturbs the relational balance and trust between Amnon and Absalom, who now hates him for what he has done to their sister. Absalom shows loyalty towards his sister and entitles her by naming his daughter Tamar and takes revenge by killing his brother Amnon. The text also points towards the reality that trustworthiness suggests that there is responsibility, reliability and accountability in a relation and thus creates solidarity between people. This is both in real life situations and the biblical text such as this (Van Doorn, 2007:4). Aforementioned may not be the complete relational picture between all of King David and his family, but by simply reading and reflecting on the text it is clear that there is an ethical

imagination which comes to life through the DIPP. When employing the DIPP you become vigilant to the ethical imagination within the biblical text and within lived experiences of pastoral care.

According to Van Doorn (2007:4) *“ethics cannot be seen as an added value, as a something that ought to be better, somewhere or somehow. With a human comes a relation and this is inherent to a movement of receiving more or less care. This has already begun before you even took your first breath. This makes human relationships from the beginning (principally) ethical.”*

Therefore, when we read the Biblical text, or consult it within pastoral care, the realisation remains that it is a relational text because it involves humans and their innate unavoidable humanity which they share with others in relationships. Relationships which always contain and regard trust and trustworthiness, and relations which hold within its fibres the loyalty woven, both visible and invisible. If we further consider New Testament texts specifically certain parables which Jesus shared, we are also drawn closer to the relational reality. One example would be Luke 10:25-37, the parable of the Good Samaritan. In trying to justify himself the expert of the law posed the question: “who is my neighbour?” (Luke 10:29), Here Jesus reveals the essence of caregiving by sharing the story of the good Samaritan, Jesus also shares that the neighbour is those who are in need, those who are hurt and vulnerable (Luke 10:36). Thus, when Jesus asks: “Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?” the expert had no choice but to admit what was true. (Luke 10:37) “The one who has mercy for him.” The ethical imagination in this speaks to the fact that our humanity is relating to and caring for the humanity of the other. In this way, by sharing in relations and giving and receiving with the other, we build trust and trustworthy interactions in our relationships.

#### **4.6 African cultural perspectives and the relation with the DIPP.**

The reality for both Buber, Levinas and Nagy are that, as human beings we are in constant connection with those around us or beside us. My humanity is never to be thought of as closed ended without any repercussions for the other. With this in mind, when we divert our eyes toward the African milieu, we realise that this relational and communal ethics of Buber, Levinas and Nagy is nothing new. However, amongst Africans it is believed that it is within the community of other humans that the life of the individual finds meaning, true existence and significance. In no way can we place a stencil on the African worldview and compare it to the contextual approach in its entirety. Yet, it is valuable for both the African and South African background to draw these

perspectives closer to one another. This is especially important when considering the environment which this thesis is conducted in. In a South African context, one cannot ignore that society and our communities are a melting pot of different cultures, religious faiths and traditions. Not discussing how the African worldview and values relate to the contextual theory would be disregarding the reader, the diverse participants who form part of this study and myself as researcher who holds dear to my own multifaceted roots.

When discussing African culture or African traditional culture, we should not assume that all African communities have the same customs, events, or mode of living. Rather, they share similarities as an African society but when contrasted with other worldwide cultures, the gap between these differences reveal to be even broader than it is when looking at different cultures within Africa. Our different cultures as people mark us distinctively and instinctively from other human societies in the family of humanity. Culture includes so many aspects of our existential human existence. Besides the customs and the tangible aspects, it includes norms, values, beliefs and how we perceive things as being right or wrong. How we perceive and interact with one another in a household, in communities and in society.

One overarching cultural value which is embedded in African traditional culture is 'interconnectedness'. This communal sense of being has been part of African culture since the time and existence of certain African communities. *Ubuntu* has its foundation in the Sotho and Zulu African traditional communities. It voices a basic respect and compassion for one's fellow human being and the importance of hospitality (Cilliers, 2008: 4). This communal way of living, thinking, and surviving has moved from time to time and is a worldview in all African cultures and traditions. In the African traditional culture, life is never compartmentalised or fragmented, but seen as a whole. There is a generational link and the individual knows that he/she is part of a greater whole; both in the past, present and future. From a Christian theological perspective, *Ubuntu* could be compared to *Koinonia*. The root of ubuntu is community, and the same could be expressed about Christian spirituality. Its emphasis is that we live and form as a body of people and its main focus is different systems of relationships and relational ethics (Cilliers, 2008: 4-5).

African traditional culture also adheres to the spirit of '*Ubunye*' which literally means 'we are one'. This focuses on the notion that life is an integration of everything- spirituality, social, behavioural, departed ancestors- is a holistic experience. It integrates both the cosmic and social.

The way we relate to nature and our interpersonal relationships are all part of a whole. Issues of morality, behaviour, family inter-connectedness, rituals, or life events of an individual are all connected. Furthermore, African spirituality is about power and empowerment and the disempowerment of enemies and the concept of 'Amandla' or life force is also of value and importance in the African mind. The unity of all life is kept in balance through power which functions within the community. Thus, *Ubunye* is guided by 'Amandla' and flows and operates within the communal life of 'Ubuntu' but also the life and personhood of the individual (Cilliers, 2008: 9,14).

As John Mbiti notes "*I am because we are, and since we are, therefore I am* (Menkiti, 1984: 171)" One's individuality is rooted in the existing community you form part of. Moreover, the sense of self-identity which the individual bears or comes to possess cannot be made sense of without being part of a collective. Thus, the obvious difference between African culture and western thought is that in African traditional culture the community defines the person as person. The identity and person of an individual is not isolated. Ubuntu doesn't only emphasise humanity as being with others but also, prescribes that humanity is relational ethics. It is a point of departure for living in an interconnected society. This way of communal living in African tradition also defines the individual in terms of relationships and portrays that as individuals we are part of the web of reciprocal relations. In essence, it is not as Rene' Descartes proclaims "Cogito, ergo sum...I think, therefore I am" but in African traditional culture it is 'I participate, therefore I am; or I care therefore I am.'

African culture also emphasises inclusivity, multilaterality and the balances between give-and-take as coined in contextual thought. A oneness or recognition of all involved. In brief discussion on African traditional culture, human values are based on both Ubuntu- a communal a way of living and being with others- and 'Ubunye' which means 'we are one'. They emphasise a way of life which considers everyone involved- everyone is mindful that every person has something to offer and so in both giving and dialogue or conversation people are recognised. There is no difference between who I am and my willingness to share in relation with you and vice versa. People freely discuss and express their problems or concerns and find solutions together. It is believed that when affairs are discussed openly and shared freely one hardly runs into difficulties or makes mistakes because it is not only the issue of the individual and therefore it should not only

be solved or dealt with by the individual (Cilliers, 2008: 10). The requirements to be considered a respectful human being in African traditional culture is respect for humanity, respect for the dignity of others, collective sharing, humility, solidarity, caring hospitality, interconnectedness, and communalism. All these values truly echo what contextual theory tries to implement with inclusivity when considering multilaterality as an aspect of dialogue. We cannot meet with the other in dialogue if we do not truly accept who the other is and what they have to give or are entitled to receive. It is unavoidable that when discussing dialogue Buber reminds us that when we are in contact or conversation with another person, we are never only in conversation with that person we are also in conversation with other people whom this individual has relations with. Multi-sided engagement is the ability to not only give another a fair chance to tell their story, but it also means listening without judgement. Each individual forms part of the same life we live, and deserves a fair chance to be a human being without being labelled or judged, and African traditional culture in many instances perceives living in harmony with one another in this exact way.

As discussed, the Contextual approach as a school of thought and African traditional culture as a worldview is respected in their own right and own space. Yet, the importance of this section of Chapter 4 resides in the fact that just as we emphasise the DIPP as a pastoral care perspective, we deserve to recognise and account for the multicultural belief systems of both ourselves and others. The acceptance and understanding of different cultures are especially important in the South African context, as mentioned before. Customs and cultural traditions are often not recorded in a textbook but part of who we are as human beings, part of our oral history, part of our family life and part of our households. We don't realise how our traditions or cultures resonate with others and influence how we share in dialogue and relations. Acknowledging and accepting the differences and similarities we share as human beings, can be the foundation we need in order to realise who we are as individuals, and in the process of dialogue, individuation, multi-directed partiality, trust, loyalty and the balances of give-and-take in our relationships. As Buber states in his article 'I and Thou' (1970: 69), "In the beginning there was relation" a clear reminder that despite the very person-centred society we find ourselves in, our origin and humanity is rooted in the ability to form part of a communal whole. I am more than just me; I am because ultimately, *We are.*

#### **4.7 Conclusion.**

Chapter 4 discusses a deeper theological perspective and how it has a normative purpose in this thesis. As it discusses church-based social support, Pastoral care as a practical theology, DIPP as the subdiscipline employed within this study, it also reflects how DIPP is used as an interpretive and ethical guide within Biblical text, and finally this chapter addresses the African culture in relation to the DIPP. This chapter sheds light on the pastoral care framework employed, and the fact that people cannot be reflected upon as mere objects but are relational beings driven by ethical imagination, both in reality and the sacred text. Chapter 5 moves forward and undertakes the pragmatic task, which is the discussion and recommendation section and in essence is formulated out of the culmination of chapter 2-4.

## **Chapter 5: The pragmatic discussion.**

### **5.1 Introduction**

Chapter 4 discussed the theological perspective and undertook the normative task focused on ethical guidance and theological interpretation. Chapter 5 now moves forward, and undertakes the pragmatic theological task of interpretation. This task works towards creating and enacting strategies of action (Osmer, 2008:12). It focuses on strategies of action that will influence situations positively and entering into a thoughtful discussion (Osmer, 2008:120). Addressing the question; ‘how might we respond?’ Practical theology often hopes to provide help, by offering practical recommendations. In this chapter, the empirical findings will be interpreted by reflecting on literature discussed in previous chapters and the DIPP framework. The discussion is formulated into an integrated debate.

### **5.2 Reflecting on the addressed research questions**

The study fills the gap in grandparent-headed family literature concerning pastoral care and relational realities in the lives of these families by exploring trust and loyalty and reflecting on how grandparent-headed families perceive the impact of their local church on their family relationships, as a means of social support. The above was investigated by conducting two focus groups with 14 grandparents who are primary caregivers to their grandchildren and are 45 years and older. In these focus groups participants were asked semi-structured interview questions and answered by discussing family life, community experiences, the experiences and meanings of trust and loyalty and the spirituality and their perceived church support.

The theoretical framework for this study which is the DIPP, firstly provided a lens through which to view family life and relational ethics of grandparent-headed families. It also assisted in distinguishing and identifying experiences, and meanings of trust, loyalty and church support in the data and further assisted in conducting data analysis.

In this section of chapter five the researcher will discuss the findings in relation to the literature reviewed, and the theoretical framework set out to be used as a lens when reviewing the findings.

The purpose of this is to answer the research questions and further reach the objectives of this study. The research questions which the researcher set out to answer was:

1. 'How are the relational engagements of loyalty and trust experienced in everyday family life between members of Grandparent-headed families on the Cape Flats?'
2. 'How can the DIPP assist in better understanding and interpreting the overall findings concerning grandparent-headed families?'
3. 'How is the support of the church concerning family relationships being perceived by members of grandparent-headed families?'

The analysed data findings categorised in 5 themes, allowed the researcher to emphasis trust and loyalty and answer the first research question. Trust and loyalty were investigated both by means of literature and empirically. The second research question is answered by reflecting on the DIPP in most of this discussion, and employing it as framework while sharing the empirical findings made. The third research question was answered by making use of the empirical and literary findings which focused on the church as social support. More importantly, the empirical perceptions and voices of participants concerning the church was imperative to practically understanding how families perceive the church in this respect.

### **5.3 Discussing the results**

In the next section the empirical findings will be discussed in an integrative manner, reflecting on the empirical finds often correlating it to the literature and also making use of DIPP in order to interpret these findings. Because this chapter also appeals to Osmer's fourth task which hopes to answer the question "How might we respond?", this chapter tries to impart practical strategies directly and indirectly by means of this integrative discussion. According to Osmer (2008:12), reflective conversation or 'talk back' when dealing with the pragmatic task is equally beneficial in order to reach strategies or contribute to change. The reader should keep in mind that the study is not an attempt to solve a problem, but is focused on 'investigating and exploring' and thus originally doesn't set out to impart plans or strategies for problem solving. Nevertheless, any suggestions for pragmatic strategies will flow directly from DIPP as a pastoral framework which focuses on assisting families and pastoral caregivers. This discussion will be divided into sub-headings in order to guide the reader through the discussion.

### 5.3.1 Family life

The results obtained from grandparents who participated in the study suggested that family dynamics and living arrangements within grandparent-headed families proved to be complex and diverse in nature. Family size often differed and because children and grandparents either lived alone in a household or all three generations lived together while grandparents were primary caregivers, the circumstances placed strain on the relationships between family members and individuals. That said, despite the myriad of complexities and challenges grandparent-headed families face because of their unique family structure, dynamics and living arrangements. The participants who partook in this research study still positively shared what family means to them. Often referring to family as meaning ‘*strength, support and love*’. This reflects the resilience and endurance of the primary caregivers of this family type and therefore also sheds light on the strength of grandparent-headed families as a unit. According to the South African study regarding the expressions of resilience within grandparent-headed families by (Schneider, 2015:25-26) research found that grandparent-headed families hold fast to resilience processes and strengths in order to overcome or cope with life and family adversities. This realisation in both the empirical findings and literature could be used as an advantage within pastoral care. Perhaps reflecting on the meaning, resilience and strengths of grandparent-headed families can lead to openly facing family challenges, as it would relay to family members that they are more than just the struggles they face. As pastoral caregivers, the aim should be to encourage people to keep going and recover in spite of vulnerabilities and the discomforts of life (Meulink-Korf & Van Rhijn, 2016:36). Patience and hope in the good which already exists could be used to strengthen relational engagements and resources (Meulink-Korf & Van Rhijn, 2016:164). In the empirical findings made in this study, participants shared that raising their grandchildren was a reminder that family is important and despite it all, family means being there for each other. Research findings suggest that grandparents feel an increase of purpose and that second time parenting comes with a stronger sense of wisdom and maturity (Pilkauskas & Dunifon, 2016; Schneider, 2015). Imparting patience and hope for positive change by reflecting on family strengths and resilience is also based on trust-building between family members. As pastoral caregiver one should not sell cheap hope which might be unrealistic or promises of a perfect future. As caregiver there should be support in the hope reflected on and at the same time still facing the often harsh reality (Meulink-Korf & Van Rhijn, 2016:143).

In a multicultural diverse society such as South Africa, there is also no uniformed definition for family. The perspective concerning this can be related to the reality of how Africans view humanity as a communal way of living. Often embracing generational interconnectedness and regarding the individual as being part of a greater whole, in the past, present and future. <sup>14</sup>Concepts such as ‘ubuntu’ or ‘ubunye’ denotes that humanity in the South African context is often interlinked with relational ethics and family inter-connectedness (Cilliers, 2008; Makiwane & Kaunda, 2018). In many African communities and for several black South Africans, family is not limited to a westernised definition of a nuclear or even extended family or to space and time. Family is perceived in an intergenerational sense, including blood relatives near and far, adopted family members, relatives both alive or dead and others who form part of the community (Makiwane & Kaunda, 2018:2). Thus, when enquiring what family means or what family is, research participants definitions could not be pin pointed to a specific structure and was often referred to in an abstract sense. A reminder that as caregivers or when in relation with families or individuals we should be open to diversity and how physical and cultural context influences who we are and how we perceive the world around us.

Additionally, Household circumstances within grandparent-headed families differ depending on the size and its internal and external dynamics. According to the empirical findings made, participants in bigger households often reported having a stronger support system and participants who reported being part of smaller households- usually only constant of grandparent and grandchildren- often mentioned a lack sufficient support. This lack of support was in reference to emotional, relational and financial support. Moreover, smaller households where grandparents were single, divorced or unmarried also reported experiencing less support and often the need arose to depend on other family members or friends for support outside of the household. This correlates with the findings of previous academic which discovered similar results concerning the lack of support within grandparent-headed families where grandparents were uncoupled (Park,2006:285,286). Married participants were more at ease with the fact that they were not entirely alone in the role that they were expected to undertake and looked towards their partners for support in all spheres.

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<sup>14</sup> Refer to **Chapter 4 section 4.6 African cultural perspective & the relation...**

### 5.3.2 Relational interactions & intergenerational experiences

The well-being of the relationships between parents and children within grandparent headed families depend on many things. Often the relationship between parent and child is determined by whether the parents live in the same household, whether parents show interest in the lives of their children and whether parents had individual struggles, such as addiction problems or economic challenges. Participants who reported that their grandchildren's parents lived with them reported more involvement of the parent in the lives of their children. What was evident is that the participants reported that parents who reside in their household, still depended on their help and provision as grandparents, for themselves and their children. Grandparents who conveyed that they were the only parent figure within the household and parents were non-resident, further also reported a negative relationship between grandchildren and their parents. In-turn affecting not only the children but also those who live in the immediate household. Thus, if one were to address the relationship between grandparents and their children or biological parents of their grandchildren you would often find that a tumultuous relationship between parent and child would mean a tumultuous relationship between grandparent and parent. There are studies which correlate with these findings and reveal that relations between family members within grandparent-headed families is often one of the most stressful and intricate aspects of this family type (Shakya, et al., 2012; Adegboyea, et al., 2014).

This was not the case for all grandparents and often participants also alleged that what was most important was how they raised their grandchildren and the relationship between themselves and their grandchildren. This still relays the sad reality that as the most vulnerable and the least likely to completely understand the relational realities of their family, children frequently suffer the brunt of conflicting family relations and dynamics. Leaving the children with unresolved emotions and often even displaying behavioral problems, as some of the participants had reported. Though grandparents strive to put their all into raising their grandchildren, inevitably grandchildren still long for the validation and provision of their parents.

The generational gap between grandparents and children also creates difficulties for well-being of grandparent-headed families. Grandparents especially pointed out that there were differences in how they raised their own children and how they are raising their grandchildren. There were those who mentioned that there was not difference in how they raised their children and their

grandchildren but this could only be realized if outside parties or their own children had brought it up. For the most part, grandparents reported that there is a big difference and often the difference was positive. Grandparents admitted to having more patience parenting this second time round and that they are wiser and more mature. They also stated that they spend more time and paid more attention to their grandchildren. This allows for a stronger bond between grandparent and grandchildren, and often children feel a deeper understanding for the overall circumstance because of their grandparent's efforts. Whether this is the case for all grandchildren one cannot say and despite the fact that there are clear strong bonds between grandparents and grandchildren. Children still wrestle with the reality that their biological parents are not present or as involved in their lives as they would hope. This is a visible sign of invisible loyalty between parents and their children and a loyalty that can often not simply be replaced by the love, attention and support of a grandparent (Van Heusden & Van Den Eerenbeemt, 1983; Boszormenyi-Nagy & Krasner, 1986). Furthermore, grandparents also conveyed that they try to understand the generational differences between themselves and their grandchildren but it comes with difficulty because things they may have not had to deal with when raising their children is often an issue now. This was also a common reality within other research findings in the field of family studies focused on grandparent-headed families (Shakya, et al., 2012) shared that grandparents are sensitive to the generational differences between themselves and their grandchildren. What they were accustomed to when they raised their own children has changed and the current environment and society which they are expected to raise their grandchildren in is significantly different.

One participant mentioned *Participant B (Focus group 1)*: “*ya the the gap between generations makes it difficult.*” When asked the question ‘is raising your grandchildren different from raising your own children?’ clearly reflecting that it is not merely a matter of raising grandchildren and becoming second parents that affect grandparents and grandparent-headed families but the reality of grandparents now having to do so in a completely different context and social climate. The fundamental reality of relations between parents and children or grandparents, may remain the same but the times certainly change. This is especially apparent in the South African context; youth have so many more challenges and life lessons which they face. Grandparents who raise them now not only have to cope with raising their grandchildren but often also have to deal with the societal, social, psychological and emotional generational differences. It is obvious that very little can be

done about generational differences as it is a societal influence and with each generation comes differences and changes. However, from a pastoral caregiving perspective engaging DIPP the employment of <sup>15</sup>multi-directed partiality often leads to multilaterality in relationships. In turn individuals and families feel at ease in order to share their experiences, define their own terms, and respond to the needs and perspectives of others with care and without judgement. One way in which differences between generations can be faced in relations, is to openly communicate these differences but also actively listen to the other involved (Meulink-Korf & Van Rhijn, 2016:116).

Before focusing on the aspects of trust and loyalty which is vital to further answer the first research question, we should also reflect on the community life and socio-economic concerns which affect and influence grandparent-headed families and their everyday lives and relations.

### 5.3.3 Community life & socio-economic concerns

Another key theme that could not be ignored when considering the research topic is the environmental influences, community circumstances and socio-economic situations of grandparent-headed families who reside on the Cape flats. Although the participants were recruited out of two churches on the Cape flats and the findings cannot be used to generalize. It remains important to gain insight into what the participants in this study experience as families in their communities. The negative circumstances were brought up more by participants, along with the underlying fear concerning the fact that their family members are influenced or could fall prey to the wrong activities or bad influences. None of the grandparents were in denial about what occurs in their communities on a daily basis and because they had a strong sense of awareness, they often portrayed an even stronger sense of protectiveness when discussing the well-being of their grandchildren in this regard. Many grandparents reported that they made it their duty to discipline their grandchildren on staying away from the negative influences often seen in their communities, constantly reminding them to stay out of trouble. In most cases the negative influences referred to were gangsterism, drugs, underage drinking and bullying or fighting. There is no doubt that the exposure to these activities not only create tension for grandparents and stress within the household. Grandparents also reported that it seems as though their grandchildren grow accustomed to community violence and have grown numb to the trauma happening in their

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<sup>15</sup> Please refer to chapter 3 section 3.6.4 'Multi-directed partiality & multilaterality.

communities. According to academic literature specifically in the South African context, this is not uncommon amongst children who have been exposed to violence at a young age. However, getting used to seeing fights, gang violence, the sound of gun shots and being non-responsive to these occurrences is in no means a good thing. Exposure to community violence or criminal activity have grave mental consequences and could also mean that children experience extended periods of stress, post-traumatic stress, depression and feelings of helplessness. Furthermore, being numb to future violence could also lead to being uncaring towards others or in-turn portraying the violence which they have been exposed to (Richter, et al., 2018; Bowers-Du Toit , 2014;). This has an adverse effect on the individual and could then lead to a ripple effect as it impacts the family life and family bonds. When reflecting on the circumstances of communities on the Cape Flats we cannot ignore the fact that the now socio-economic circumstances and trauma is rooted in the result of passed trauma of apartheid and it continues to not only affect our youth or families but the relationships within these families (Thesnaar, 2019; Trotter, 2009).

Besides the community circumstances discussed, another extremely sensitive topic of discussion was the financial circumstances of grandparent-headed families. The financial circumstances of each participant and their family were different and because the focus for this research study falls on the relational experiences and the further relational support of the church. The researcher chose not to dwell on facets such as the employment of grandparents or whether they were pensioners. Grandparents still openly reported on their financial circumstances, the financial support they receive or don't receive and what they depend on for an income. The majority of the participants reported that raising their grandchildren affected their financial circumstance or that they had to sacrifice a lot financially in order to raise their grandchildren. This was a clear sign that grandparent-headed households don't receive adequate financial support necessary to raise children. Two aspects arose which also shed light on why these grandparents might not be receiving the financial support needed and how some grandparents dealt with this difficulty. Firstly, more than two participants mentioned that because their grandchildren were registered as the dependents of their biological parents, the parents often received the Sassa (South African social security agency) grants or child support grant for low-income households. This was despite the fact that grandparents were raising their grandchildren and not parents. This leaves grandparents in a difficult position financially because they often don't see any of the money from these grants provided. One participant mentioned that even when her grandchildren's mother

received Sassa and lived under the same roof as her and her grandchildren, who she cared for; as primary caregiver she still never received the money which was meant for the children because her daughter in law used it to feed her drug habits. *Participant f* “*When she was alive she didn't really work she just lived off Sassa. But she never used the all-pay money for the right things. Overall, she was a very nice person a good person it's just that when you are involved with drugs that makes you a completely different person.*”

Other participants mentioned that the R420 received from the Sassa grant was simply not enough to provide for a child. Many times, these grandparents also have other dependants within their households or even outside of their household, such as their children or the parents of their grandchildren. It is clear that despite the financial support received from the government there is often no winning financially within grandparent-headed families. For grandparents who still work and who are financially stable they still experience the difficulty of being second time parents and many had reported that providing for new dependents when they thought that they had already raised their own children and can now focus on other life plans, is a tough call. The reality of it all was that any grandparent raising their grandchildren without the proper help or financial assistance had to carry a financial burden despite wanting what is best for their grandchildren. Certain participants felt that it was their burden to bare and one which came with the reality of raising their grandkids. Most grandparents took their financial struggles upon themselves without expecting anything from anyone else or even the children's parents.

Participants also faced further concerns such as health problems of themselves or other members within their household. However, there was a sense of resilience despite this and for some it seemed to motivate them even more, where being there for their grandchildren were concerned. The fear of what would happen to their grandchildren if something were too happened to them, because of health reasons was however detected in how they reflected on their personal health. In the same breath family conflict or relational issues within the household also created further strain on the health of grandparents or family members who have health problems. Another aspect which might add to this was that many of these grandparents and grandparent-families do not have an outlet to their experiences and circumstances. When taking everything into consideration, perhaps lightening their load and addressing their individual well-being could start with speaking out about their situations. A closing question posed at the end of each focus group was, how discussing their

family situation and lives made them feel. One participant mentioned that “*Participant D: yes, it makes me feel lighter to talk about my family. Thank you.*” And others mentioned that “*Participant F: Yes, there are families who aren’t open about their problems and I think that could pose a problem.*” Conceivably the well-being of grandparent-families and addressing their often-complex relational dynamics could start by providing a proper outlet for these families to talk about their unique family circumstances or problems. Efforts to empower grandparent-headed families and their primary caregivers may lead to them being more open and proactive about their health as well (Hayslip, et al., 2014).

The above being a vital part of answering the research questions, there can now be a shift towards the aspects of trust and loyalty and the relational engagements and realities of grandparent-headed families which forms part of the first research question. For both trust and loyalty, the theoretical framework and articles related to the dialogical intergenerational pastoral process was extensively used to interpret the findings.

#### 5.3.4 Trust as relational resource

Trust is a vital relational resource which is experienced between people and is a certain reality between family members. Whether it presents itself in the form of mistrust or trust, its existence is inescapable. Participants in this study held varied perspectives of what trust means to them and how it is experienced in everyday life within their families. Certain participants reported that trust meant being open and transparent through means of communication. Others perceived trust as members being trustworthy with one another in the household and not stealing or lying about things. Participants also shared that trust meant cultivating an understanding between family members through constant communication and taking responsibility for the relationships which they share in. Overall, trust was deemed as a matter of giving-and-receiving between family members. Without a strong sense of trust, navigating and cultivating healthy relationships within a grandparent-headed household or family would be impossible (Krasner & Joyce, 1995; Herreros, 2015; Meulink-Korf & Noorlander, n.d)

Grandparents mostly made reference to the relationships between themselves and their grandchildren when discussing trust. Often depending on building trust between themselves and their grandchildren in order to openly cope with the intricacies and challenges which they faced

with their grandchildren's parents. Trust between grandparents and grandchildren served as a safe guard in the midst of injured relationships between grandchildren and parents. When parents were absent or neglected their relationships with their children, the children can depend on the trust, entitlement and understanding of the grandparent, even though this relationship could never replace the parent-child relation.

Furthermore, children who experience a lack of trust between themselves and their parents because there is an imbalance caused by parents being unreliable, irresponsible or inattentive to the needs of the child could result in destructive entitlement. This destructive entitlement experienced in grandparent-headed households by children, is often not openly directed towards the parents or the source who does not fulfil their entitlement but is directed to the grandparents or anyone else within their immediate surroundings which they have relationships with (Meulink-Korf & Van Rhijn, 2016: 20).

One grandparent shared that; *Participant M: "Sometimes my grandson sometimes has these behavioral problems and then I say just come her so I can hug you and tell you everything is fine. Because his father isn't there and then I tell him. Mommy loves you and Pa loves you and I love you. Because then I know his not in a good space."*

This reflects what children in grandparent-headed families may experience if there is a lack of entitlement from their parents. In the same breath it divulges how grandparents as primary caregivers and second time parents, try to compensate and build trust or show care as a means to try and relieve feelings of rejection and neglect within their grandchildren. The value of a relationship especially between parent and child is often based on trust and if there is a disruption or breaking of trust; the balance of giving-and-receiving in the relationship suffers and so do other relational resources. According to Nagy (1986:415) the quality of a relationship is based on trust and is established upon genuine dialogue. That said, the root of dialogue also hinges on the reciprocity of responsible care, commitment and reliability in relations. Dialogue is the heart of the relational reality that becomes the context of mature individuation for human beings (Boszormenyi-Nagy & Krasner, 1986: 415).<sup>16</sup>Therefore, the thriving or floundering of trust in the asymmetrical parent-child relationship within grandparent-headed families determines a child's

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<sup>16</sup> Please refer to section 3.6.3 & 3.6.5 on Accountability & genuine dialogue which defines self-validation and delineation and elaborates on the importance of parent-child relations.

individual well-being as it relates to aspects such as self-validation or self-delineation. A foundation of trust and genuine dialogue between parent and child determines the child's relation with Others, their relation with creation and their relation with a Spiritual Being or God.

Though grandparent-headed families often face a family lives flooded with challenges participants still shared experiences which brought them joy or hope for a better future concerning their relational realities. These experiences of joy, strength or pleasure was often related to the achievements of their children or their family strengths, such as being close knit family. Walsh (2012:413) discusses the fact that the sharing and celebration of positive connections and milestones or achievements within a family is a means of revitalising the human spirit. It is especially important to create time and space to acknowledge these experience in families who face continued stressful situations as it enhancements resilience, trust and connection between family members. This is a reminder that trust as a resource nourished overtime is built by dialogue between family members and dialogue can also be used as a pastoral care resource when being of assistance and guidance to individuals and families. According to Krasner & Joyce (1995: 10), the capacity for therapists or caregivers to tune into a families trust base or resources by focusing on self-reflective questions can lead to a stronger awareness between family members or looking beyond lifes challenges and towards building trust for more balanced relations. Reflective questions- open ended questions which evoke relational and critical thinking- refer to questions such as "Who is trustworthy in your family and life?", or "When I think about family and community, do I think in terms of trustworthiness, fairness, and resources? Or do my thoughts and feelings dwell mainly on pathology, unfairness, and mistrust?" Trust based self-reflective questions can even be directed towards the connection between family and the trust in communities (Krasner & Joyce, 1995:11). Dialogue between family members can be used to rebalance injustice, hurts or disagreements of the past through discussing constructive give-and-take in the present and future.

#### 5.3.5 Loyalty & related resources.

The second interlinked relational resource which holds deep connection with trust and is part of the research questions to be answered is loyalty within grandparent-headed families. This is a very broad concept and relates to more than just bonds between family members but also addresses feelings of obligation towards family, personal perspectives of relations, the often visible and

invisible balance of give-and-take between family members and even the posterity of family and legacies passed on to present and future generations within a family. This multifaceted resource is significant when exploring a family's relational realities.

When grandparents in this study were asked about whether they thought raising their grandchildren was an obligation most of them stated that they had no choice in the matter and they were both obligated but also wanted the best for their grandchildren and family. Even when divulging that they wanted to take up the task of raising their grandchildren it was still followed by the reality that it was the best choice for all parties involved. While none of the participants in this study were legally forced by social systems or child protective services to take in their grandchildren. They still experienced the filial obligation and irrevocable loyalty towards their children to take responsibility for their grandchildren when their parents could not. Grandparent-headed families could be seen as one of the most vulnerable family types as the legacy of childrearing needs to reconcile with the relational realities of a 'skipped' generational family (Brown-Standridge & Floyd, 2000: 185). Furthermore, bonds of loyalty are especially visible between parents and grandparents, as grandparents are willing to take on the often-unexpected burden of raising grandchildren in the hopes that someday parents will be stable enough to resume the task of raising their own children. The often-reiterated phrase "I want what is best for" either my grandchildren, children or overall family is an indication of irrevocable loyalty which is unavoidable and instinctually part who we are as human-beings. This notion is a reminder of the relational ethic which argues that our existence and life is a chain interlocked with the interdependence of posterity. As humans we feel mandated to take responsibility and accountability for our relations with others, even more so when we share in <sup>17</sup>horizontal loyalty with the other.

One participant even stated: *Participant A (Focus group 1): "Once I was driving with my husband and then I thought a person doesn't want history to repeat itself and maybe you weren't there for their parents (children) enough in the past. And this is an opportunity to make it better. To make a difference with the grandchildren. But uhm there wasn't really much of a choice."*

Expressions of trying to reconcile the past by doing right in the present could also be a connotation of feeling a sense of guilt or shame towards how grandparents previously raised their own children

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<sup>17</sup> Refer to section 3.5.2 'Loyalty: a commitment and relational bond' for discussion on horizontal and vertical loyalties.

or weren't there for their own children. 7 of the 14 participants which partook in the study reported children- biological parents of grandchildren- having substance abuse problems or failing to take care of their children because of negative life choices. Often this leads to feelings of shame and guilt within grandparents and feeling as though they failed as parents to their own children. They now try and make the best decisions for the grandchildren which they are raising. Perhaps grandparents also feel this way due to the current state of relations they have with their children which may be injured. Whether the above is merely inferred from the findings presented or not. Buber (1988: 124) states that, the truth of restoration and reconciliation is only so when parties involved speak about what has gone wrong or how their relations have been injured. If there is harm and relational injury between members of a grandparent-headed family only those involved can restore this through constant dialogue.

Keeping in mind the argument regarding the role which loyalty plays in the formulation of grandparent-headed families and the perception on the human instinct of taking responsibility and accountability within our filial relations. Beyond mere loyalty bonds also exists the reality of obstacles of loyalty within grandparent-headed families, often arising in the form of conflicting or split loyalty. This is due to the exchange in roles where parents and grandparents are concerned and most of the conflicting loyalties within grandparent-headed families seem to be related to child rearing or children who are caught in the middle of the disagreements or conflict between grandparents and parents. Although conflict of loyalty shouldn't be avoided and should be used as a means to search together for a balance between give-and take or a resolution to these conflicts (Meulink-Korf & Van Rhijn, 2016:19). It is often difficult to find a platform to do so in grandparent-headed families because there are no one size fits all circumstances where these families are concerned. For instance, if parents are non-residential and do not share the same home with grandparents and children it makes searching for healing or mutual understanding even harder. Participants shared their understandings on what loyalty means to them and how loyalty is experienced in their grandparent-headed families. To an extent being aware of loyalty and the invisible loyalties that exist in our filial relations can motivate and create grounds for better understanding and moving towards addressing the unique loyalty conflicts which are experienced in families.

With this in mind, Pastoral caregivers shouldn't be afraid to guide families towards openly addressing the invisible loyalties within their families and between family members. Techniques which can be useful in this instance could be relational genograms and assisting these families in clearly expressing their family relations in written or drawn form. Genograms or family trees can visually display family facts, relationship patterns and three generational relations. This exercise has the ability to assist a family to collect intergenerational information and create physical distance between themselves and the tangible challenges they have, and relational experiences to gain better perspective for the road ahead. (Macleod, et al., 2014:5) In this case grandparent-headed families can then reflect on their loyalties and trust with ease and with assistance.<sup>18</sup> The use of the Biblical texts can also be of assistance as reflecting on narratives of families in the bible can help when reflecting on our own life stories.

Finally,<sup>19</sup> Legacies and shared life lessons between generations also prove to preserve posterity and reflect on the hopes and positive connections between family members. Participants reported what legacies they hope to leave behind and are striving to instill in their grandchildren but they also shared the legacies passed on to them from previous generations which they had received and continue to live out. Participant N (Focus group 2) shared that: *“from my side its prayer but the other thing is...it is the things you can't buy with money. It is the things that are unseen like integrity and uhmm. Your yes should be your yes and your no should be your no. I do not compromise at all and other things too, like forgiveness and love. The things that are unseen that is the things I want to leave behind for my children and grandchildren. And for the generations to come.”*

Legacy can often serve as a positive form of connection and bond between family members. As perceived from what grandparents had shared, legacy creates a warm sense of trust between grandparents and grandchildren within grandparent-headed families. Discussing family legacies in pastoral care with family members can also provide hope for what lays ahead as mentioned concerning resilience and family strengths.

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<sup>18</sup> Refer to chapter 4.5 section on 'Contribution of DIPP to scriptural exegesis'

<sup>19</sup> Refer to chapter 3.6.7 section on 'Legacy- passing the baton.'

### 5.3.6 The church as social support

The third research question dealt with the social support of the church concerning family relations and how the church is perceived by members of grandparent-headed families. This is also focused on as a main theme in the empirical findings. Spiritual beliefs and spiritual practice are said to provide a sense of stability and sustenance to families. Consequently, many families adopt some sort of expression of faith or spirituality. According to, Walsh (2012b:347,348) when individuals or families seek help, the spiritual dimensions also need to be healed and restored. Researchers in the field of spirituality, religion, and sociology often interpret faith to be inherently relational and argue that our most basic beliefs about life are moulded within caregiving relationships (Buber, 1970; Marks, 2006; Fishbane, 1998). The empirical findings of this study is no different; participants discussed how sharing expressions and practices of faith draw family members together. Spiritual acts such as prayer were important to themselves and their families. Spiritual activities such as prayer, created a sense of mutuality and stability in relations, especially between themselves and their grandchildren. Some even seemed to consider faith as a form of legacy which they would like to be seen passed on from generation to generation. Involvement in the life of the church also meant a lot to grandparents and they made it their duty to remind their children and grandchildren that going to church was important. The importance of church involvement meant having a stronger relationship with God and by maintaining a stronger relationship with God-many participants believed and reported that- this leads to experiencing Gods presence as provider and a source of strength amidst life's challenges. It is clear that the importance of spirituality, religion and relational well-being of family is interlinked for certain families and it is not merely seen as an individual decision to attend church or to practice faith but it has to do with family involvement and filial interrelated connection.

Clarity concerning pastoral care of the family as a unit or household was not an extremely familiar occurrence for participants. Participants reported that if they needed to talk about their problems individually, they would have to reach out to the church Minister and this wasn't necessarily because the church doesn't care but because there is a lack of awareness concerning help for the family unit, specifically grandparent-headed families. This is quiet the concern because churches are in most cases made up of families who draw closer to a church congregation as a broader spiritual family. There are different forms of ministries within a church or denomination for

example; children's ministries, youth fellowship, social action committees but little is reported on family focused platforms which are there for members and their families for support and more specifically relational support or healing. An even stronger concern is whether the church doesn't perhaps compartmentalise the family unit to cater for their individual needs without laying a foundation for pastoral care for the family unit as a whole. Do families really feel free to seek pastoral care pertaining to family issues or do they just simply keep it to themselves or wait to be approached. If there is no concrete channel for families such as grandparent-headed families in some churches, how does the family unit who often see the church as a support system truly receive support?

None of the participants reported being approached by the church to find out what they might need in terms of relational support. Many reported that the church offered help by means of financial or material needs but nothing was mentioned about whether the church or pastoral caregivers looked beyond tangible needs towards psychological and relational needs of the family. They also never mentioned whether ministers or church leaders were equipped enough to offer family pastoral care. This is not to say that other churches don't have these facilities in place for family pastoral care or counselling. It is however, a reminder for those churches who don't have any concrete family pastoral care facilities or support in place to consider heading back to the drawing board and rethinking what social, relational and pastoral support means both within their church, outside of it and for the family unit. Overall, there is definitely a strong need for a clearer support system for grandparent-headed families in the church.

There are many academic contributions concerning church based support and transformation (Pillay, 2017; Mpanza, 1996; Krause, et al., 2001; Krause, 2011) but church based support specifically for the family unit in a practical sense does not seem to feature as much as it should and could. The churches influence on relational ethic within a family or family support is not as strong as one would hope and by reflecting on the answer of the first research question it is obvious that the church and its leaders are needed in this sphere. Especially when considering families such as grandparent-headed families. The fact that this study was conducted in two churches we cannot generalize the findings to all denominations or churches. Yet, we can guide the church to better understanding families specifically grandparent-families and lead them to be of assistance as far as possible.

### 5.2.7 Other support and related aspects.

There were also a few other miscellaneous aspects which emerged from the findings which could not be ignored. These aspects were other forms of support which was discussed by participants and the purpose of discipline, support and safety within grandparent-headed families.

An element which seems to put an ease on the generational difference and strain is the fundamental reality of discipline, support and safety within grandparent-headed families and households. For almost all the participants discipline and guidance was reported to be something which kept the family and household strong; without rules and regulations grandchildren and the broader household often struggled to keep everything running smoothly. Responsibility and respect were also discussed and were significant to grandparents. The aspect of discipline and responsibility is often things which relays the balance and movement of give-and-take between parents and children. According to research, guidance, nurturing and authoritative leadership established through being firm but flexible by parents or guardians is effective for family functioning and the well-being of children especially during stressful times (Walsh, 2012: 410). For grandparent-headed family's rules and discipline was reported as aspect which helps the family function in a manner that made them stronger and created a sense of mutual understanding.

## 5.4 Conclusion

Chapter 5 is a culminated discussion addressing and debating the empirical findings made in this study. This is a pragmatic interpretation as it offers concrete contributions and explanations of the empirical findings and the overall study. This chapter is the climax of this thesis as it integrates the different chapters and answers the research questions set out in the study. This chapter draws together the research from chapter 2-4.

## **CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **6.1 Introduction**

This chapter is made up of the researcher's own reflections and perspectives concerning this research study and its outcomes. The purpose of this chapter is to provide the reader with insight and offer practical and theoretical awareness concerning this study, which explores grandparent-headed families.

### **6.2 Overview of study.**

The main aims of the study intended to explore the loyalty and trust within Grandparent-headed families on the Cape Flats. The study further aimed to reflect on how these Grandparent-headed family members view their local church's impact on the significance of family relationships. These aims were attained through empirically researching grandparent-headed families with grandparents being the representatives sharing their experiences and relational realities within their grandparent-headed family. By investigating grandparent-headed families by means of conducting focus groups loyalty and trust as relational resources were addressed. The view on how the local church impacts on the significant family relationships within grandparent-headed families was also explored. A detailed discussion about the findings was produced in chapter 5 and 6 main themes emerged while practically discussing data. This allowed for a clear perception of how the aims of the study guided the research process. Exploring previous academic research, literature and practical caregiving techniques also assisted the researcher in answering the research questions.

The objectives decided on 1.) was to explore the study topic both, empirically and by means of literature, while employing DIPP as pastoral care framework in order to formulate practical recommendations. Furthermore, 2.) the objective of the study was to create awareness of grandparent-headed families. 3.) The study also hoped to lead the church towards better assisting grandparent-headed families relationally and pastorally.

The first and second objectives were reached through collecting data and knowledge from the specific population focused on. By addressing the question: ‘what is going on?’ we already grasp the reality of the topic of interest and shed light on the research. New findings produced by conducting empirical research creates room for generating new knowledge, in-turn creating awareness for the reader about the research participants and their lived experiences. The first and second objective was reached and can be observed in chapters 2-5 which directly deal with how the research was conducted and the importance of pastoral care in this study. Chapter 2 displayed a literature review concerning the context of the study and the empirical findings gathered. The second chapter appealed to the descriptive-empirical according to Osmer's methodology of practical theology and thus jumped right into divulging the empirical findings. While the discussion section which integrates empirical findings, DIPP, caregiving techniques and literature is found in chapter 5, with previous literature and theological framework and perspectives addressed in chapters 3 and 4. The first objective will also be reached by providing further recommendations for awareness regarding support for grandparent-headed families in this final chapter.

The third objective of the study concerns leading the church towards better assisting grandparent-headed families, relationally and pastorally. This objective was firstly reached when engaging church leaders and church members by means of the participant recruitment process. Information sessions and being present in at least one Sunday morning service to discuss the study with prospective participants who formed part of the church congregation and prospective leaders, contributed to guiding church leaders to better assisting and understanding this family type. This objective will be further attained by providing recommendations for church leaders and pastoral caregivers within this final chapter. The researcher has also vowed to go back to these churches and other churches to share the knowledge, findings, and what was investigated and found by doing this research study.

When considering the overall research study, it is clear that both trust and loyalty play a fundamental role in grandparent-headed families and households. These relational resources determine the relational well-being between family members. Moreover, these relational resources which often determine the interactions and interconnected relations between grandparents, parents

and children is never experienced or perceived in the same manner for each grandparent-headed family. The family type may have the same structure but the relational balances of give-and-take between them vary, and so do their experiences of trust and loyalty within their families. The dialogical intergenerational pastoral process was a vital lens which assisted the researcher in exploring and expressing the aspects which form part of this research. The church as support was also addressed and so was the importance of it for family life and relations. Findings within these specific churches suggested that pastoral care for the family unit is not specifically focused on. Yet, they also relayed the importance of church attendance and spirituality for grandparent-headed families. The final steps before concluding this research study is to share what the limitations of the study are, provide recommendations to churches and church leaders and the recommendations for further works.

### **6.3 Limitations & challenges of the study.**

The empirical results reported within this study should be considered in the light of some limitations. Due to the sensitive nature of certain aspects which form part of this study, building rapport with participants to ensure that they are willing to share their experiences and knowledge about family relationships within their Grandparent-headed family is important. It is crucial to find the appropriate time for rapport building with the grandparents partaking in the study. This is necessary but may be considered as time consuming.

Further limitations concern the sample size and selection or recruitment process. Given the small sample size utilized within this study, the lack of ethnic diversity and limited variability pertaining to economic background of participants are recognised. Therefore, generalised results from this research study would be unwarranted.

Moreover, expanding the recruitment process and selection criteria to other parts of the Western cape and even the broader South Africa would likely have revealed greater diversity in participants and findings. Unfortunately, the researcher had limited funding and time to recruit a larger number of participants.

Another limitation to the study is the fact that all participants which volunteered to partake in the study after recruitment was extended to the churches approached, were female. Meaning that all the participants who came to represent their grandparent-headed families were grandmothers.

Future research would be beneficial for expanding and including greater diversity concerning ethnic, cultural and economic status when exploring trust and loyalty within Grandparent-headed families and the impact of the church, as social support.

Lastly, the researcher struggled with time constraints when doing the write up for this thesis. As it took longer than expected to receive ethical clearance from the research committee. This too was a lesson of patience but it also gave the researcher extra time to build rapport with the grandparent participants through phone calls and meet ups in order to answer the personal questions they had about the data collection process.

#### **6.4 Recommendations for the practical work and awareness.**

The recommendations decided on and provided was both the contribution of the researcher and more importantly the research participants. The researcher found it imperative to know what grandparent-headed families expect and how they would like to receive better support from the church and other systems of support. A few quotes will be included to substantiate what was recommended by participants.

Previously mentioned in the discussion section, was the fact that participants shared that talking about their families and circumstances made them feel lighter. That said, most participants agreed with this, but some also held further concerns.

*“Participant E (Focus group 1): “I think the only worry about sharing in a group is whether someone else is going to gossip about it afterwards.”*

This taken into consideration, the majority of the participants never had an issue with sharing the life and family experiences in front of others. Thus, a support group within a church facilitated by a church leader or pastoral caregiver would be beneficial. However, what needs to be taken into account and relayed to the rest of the support group attendees would be that sharing with each other for the sake of support also means remaining empathetically confidential about stories and experiences shared and heard. Grandparent-headed families, just like any other family type, face

issues they may feel insecure about and a support group should be available as an outlet and a platform to voice how they feel. A space in their spiritual haven where they can receive emotional, relational and psychological support. These support groups can either be for primary caregivers or family's members willing to share and receive support.

Another recommendation for ministers, church leaders and pastoral caregivers would be to embrace working with families within the church, and seeking knowledge in order to be equipped when working with these families. This research depends on the dialogical intergenerational pastoral process, and this is only one pastoral care framework. Yet, making the effort to familiarise and gain further knowledge concerning this pastoral process, would be a start to being knowledgeable about how to assist family units.

Spiritual leaders should be attentive to the needs of grandparents who reach out to them. Demonstrating respect for values, family structure and dynamics and providing pastoral care or referring these families to resources of help in their communities, would also be a start for making sure support is in place for grandparent-headed families.

Promoting and nurturing the strengths and resilience which these families show is also important. A family of any type is not merely the problems or challenges which they face. They are also the strengths, joys, rewards, trust and loyalties which form part of their strong family ties.

One participant also shared that:

*Participant G (Focus group 1): "I also think that the weekly prayer meetings in your ward use to be good because then you can share in a smaller group about your family and then the deacon can report back to the reverend."*

Lines of communication for families and to the church leader always need to be open. At times grandparent-headed families may not be comfortable approaching the Reverend or church leader themselves, so their needs to be other channels of communication such as ward deacons. Smaller wards made up of families are also good support systems.

Lastly, some participants merely felt that the church should be more than just a place you attend on a Sunday.

*Participant H (Focus group 1): “You get the feeling like the church is only open for worship and things on a Sunday and then it is closed the rest of the week.”*

Perhaps churches in general should realise what spirituality and worship mean to families; especially if they find that other than the Sunday service, the doors are only open for other activities such as feeding schemes or social action. Spirituality is fundamental for most Christian families, and so is access and availability of the church to practice their faith.

### **6.5 Recommendation for further works.**

The field of pastoral care and relational ethics is in-and-of itself, not an extremely broad one. Researchers who are interested in understanding and building knowledge within the field of practical theology with a specific focus on the dialogical intergenerational pastoral process, should truly grab at the opportunity. There is so much that can be done in this field, and it's a dynamic field because it moves from mere literature or knowledge to the practical work needed to be done at grassroots.

Flowing from this study focused on grandparent-headed families, researchers could take it a step further and focus on aspects which relate to South African history, or delve deeper into the socio-economic circumstances of grandparent-headed families and how this further impacts their relational well-being.

Where conducting empirical studies are concerned, as researcher, I would have loved to collect data from individual family units. However, time and funding were not something I had much of. Other researchers who would like to further study grandparent-headed families, or other family types in the South African context, should really consider approaching families instead of representatives, as I believe it would enhance the research experience and the findings.

Lastly, time spent with grandparent-headed families to further provide observational research, could also be something researchers could consider. Also, taking the time to do genograms with grandparent-headed families would've truly enhanced the findings and discussion section. It

would've also provided a better understanding of families, because grandparent-headed families often have more complex family structures.

## **6.6 Conclusion:**

In closing to this thesis and chapter. This research journey was short, testing and yet enjoyable and insightful, and so I hope that as reader these experiences will be witnessed in this write up and empirical research study. In this last chapter, what was most important were the recommendations as it provides and creates a stronger argument for aims of this study which was to create awareness of grandparent-headed families. If nothing else, the reader should be able to gain insight by simply reading this final overview and recommendations for working with, better understanding, and supporting grandparent-headed families in a pastoral capacity and in the life of the church.

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## **Appendix A: Interview Schedule**

Below are possible questions which will guide and give direction to the focus group discussion. These questions will be investigated and rephrased in such a way that it is understood by all participants (Asked in English & Afrikaans). Because the focus group is semi-structured, not all the questions will be asked or answered. The different questions are linked to different subsections. More specifically, the questions will address the history of the family, family life and experiences at home. Questions focused on trust and trustworthiness between members of a Grandparent-headed family, loyalty between family members, the impact of the church in supporting families, and exit questions will be asked to end off the group discussion.

### **History and context of family**

- Tell me a bit about your family?
- Who is part of your family?
- In your own view, what is a family?
- What does family mean to you?
- What makes you a family?
- Who lives with you in the household, are they a part of your family?
- What makes your family different from other families that you know?
- What are the challenges you face living on the Cape Flats?
- What makes you proud to live on the Cape Flats?

### **Family life and experiences**

- Do you feel that there is a difference between how you raised your own children and how you are raising your Grandchildren?
- How has raising your Grandchildren affected your relationship with your own children?
- How do you feel misunderstandings or conflict with your children affect your relationship with your Grandchildren?
- What do you find challenging about raising your Grandchildren full-time?
- What do you find rewarding about raising your Grandchildren?
- What things/experiences outside of your family-in your community, area, social surroundings- is a weakness to your family?

### **Trust within family:**

- What does trust mean to you as a member of a family?
- What do you enjoy about your relationship with your Grandchildren?
- How do you experience the trust between the members of your household?
- If there is misunderstandings or conflict between yourself and your Grandchildren's parents, do you share this with your Grandchildren openly?
- What does being a Grandparent mean to you?

- What does the statement mean to you: A relationship between family members means giving and receiving?
- Why is being open about what you feel or think important in a family?
- When you are upset or angry, do your Grandchildren still feel free to come and speak to you?
- When your Grandchildren are going through a difficult time what do you do to reach out to them?
- What is your responsibility towards your family?
- How would you say your family members show responsibility for their relationships in your household?
- How do you speak openly to one another about misunderstandings or family problems?
- Do you think that your Grandchildren communicate openly with you about their lives and social experiences outside of the house? How often do they do this?

### **Church as family/social support**

- What kind of support does your family receive from, either the government, schools your Grandchildren attend or church?
- How do you think the church assists you to better understand your family relationships?
- How does your relationship with God, influence your relationships in your household?
- Do you feel like you can reach out to your church or church leader with any problem?
- Do you feel that it is important that your Grandchildren are involved in the life of the church?
- How does your life in the church or being part of the fellowship in a church impact how you communicate with your family at home?
- How regular do you receive house visits from your church leader or from your church council?
- Why do you believe that house visitations from your church leader is important for your family?
- How does the church impact how you understand trusting others and how trustworthy you are?
- What encouragement do you get from the church, as a family?
- What have you learnt within your church or faith that reminds you to stay together as a family or be there for your family?
- Is your church aware of the fact that you are raising your Grandchildren?
- How often do you get to discuss your family and household with your church leader?

### **Loyalty between family members**

- What legacy would you like to leave with your Grandchildren?
- What are some of the life lessons that you share with your Grandchildren?
- How does raising your Grandchildren affect your lifestyle? Health, aging, finance ect.
- As Grandparents how was it difficult for you to take care of your Grandchildren on a full-time basis?
- How does raising your Grandchildren feel like a burden at times?
- When you decided to take care of your Grandchildren, did it feel like it was an obligation or was it a choice you wanted to make?
- When you are experiencing difficult times, how do you as a family deal with your problems?
- Do you and your children ever have disagreements about how you raise your grandchildren?
- What makes you as a family stay together?
- How are your Grandchildren's relationships and understanding with their biological parents?

- Why do you feel it is important for your Grandchildren to spend time with their parents?

**Exit questions**

- How did discussing your life and family make you feel?

## Appendix B: Recruitment letters

Date:

Dear, \_\_\_\_\_ xx

This letter is a request to the \_\_\_\_\_ **Congregational church** to assist with a research study I am conducting as part of my Master's degree in the Faculty of Theology, Department of Practical Theology and Missiology at the University of Stellenbosch under the supervision of Prof. C Thesnaar. The title of my research dissertation is "*Exploring trust and loyalty within Grandparent-headed families on the Cape Flats and the impact of the church, as social support.*"

My study aims to look at how Grandparents of Grandparent-headed families experience bonds of loyalty in their families, and how trust is expressed and received between family members. With this it will also try to explore whether the church plays a significant role as support system when it comes to encouraging healthy family relationships, built on loyalty and trust. The purpose of this study is to create awareness of Grandparent-headed families on the Cape Flats, and to guide the church to better understanding and supporting these families.

It is my hope to connect with Grandparents who are the primary caregivers of their families or who play an active role as parent/s to their Grandchildren. I also hope that these identified Grandparents would be willing to avail themselves to participating in this research study. I believe that the families within this specific congregation have unique understandings and experiences which would richly benefit the purpose of this research study. If the identified individuals agree to take part in this study, they will be invited to partake in a focus group discussion. A focus group discussion is like a group interview, and will involve asking a number of questions about themselves and their family. In essence, them talking about their family relationships, how they view their family members, and what has helped them to be a strong family. They will also be encouraged to discuss some of the struggles they may face as a family, and how the church plays a role as support system to their families; additionally, whether the church impacts their relationships at home. The discussion will take about 2 hours and a translator will be present to make sure the questions are understood, and they have the opportunity to speak their own language.

To respect the privacy and rights of the \_\_\_\_\_ xx and its members I will not be contacting the families or Grandparents directly, without your permission. I will provide my contact details and request that this information be shared with your members. If Grandparent/s are interested in participating they will be invited to contact me or I will contact them in order to discuss participation. Participation is completely voluntary. I ask that each Grandparent approached by the church or called upon make their own independent decision as to whether or not they would like to be involved. Grandparents will also receive information letters including detailed information about this study, as well as informed consent forms. I also humbly request that if members agree to partake in this research study that you will also avail your church grounds for the day that the focus group interviews take place. The focus group interview will take no more than 2-3 hours and participants will be compensated for their time and effort. Names of Participants will not appear in the thesis or reports resulting from this study. There are also no extreme risks anticipated in this study. If you have any questions regarding this study please feel free to contact me or my research supervisor.

**Tamlynn Roberths** Cell: 072 676 1343 Email: [troberths@gmail.com](mailto:troberths@gmail.com)

**Prof. C Thesnaar** Office nr: 021 808-3257 Email: [cht@sun.ac.za](mailto:cht@sun.ac.za).

I hope that the results of my study will be beneficial to your congregation, broader church denomination and community in general. I look forward to speaking with you and thank you in advance for your assistance with this project.

Your Sincerely,

Tamlynn Jane Roberths

Masters Candidate in Contextual Pastoral care & Counselling

Faculty of Theology: Department of Practical theology & Missiology

University of Stellenbosch

We agree to help the researcher recruit participants for this study from among the families who are members of the \_\_\_\_\_ Congregational church.

- Yes

- No

**Signature of Church leader:** \_\_\_\_\_ xx

## Appendix C: Consent form

### STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

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**You are invited to take part in a study conducted by Tamlynn Jane Roberths, a Masters student in Contextual Pastoral Care and counselling from the Theology faculty at Stellenbosch University. You were approached as a possible participant because you are a part of a Grandparent-headed family who lives on the Cape Flats and experiences the relationships within a specific household where you are considered the primary caregiver to your Grandchildren. As Grandparents recruited for this study you are expected to meet the criteria of 45 years and older, be either male or female and either be a single Grandparent or be co-parenting with a partner who is also a primary caregiver.**

#### **1. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

**My study aims to look at how Grandparents of Grandparent-headed families experience bonds of loyalty in their households and how trust is expressed and received between family members. With this it will also try to explore whether the church plays a role as support system when it comes to encouraging healthy family relationships built on loyalty and trust. The purpose of this study is to create awareness of Grandparent-headed households on the Cape Flats and to lead the church to better understanding and supporting these families.**

#### **2. WHAT WILL BE ASKED OF ME?**

**If you agree to take part in this study, you will be invited to take part in a focus group discussion. A focus group discussion is like a group interview, and will involve asking a number of questions about yourself and family. There is no right or wrong answers. The discussion will involve you talking about your family relationships in your home, how you view each other as family members, what has helped you to be a strong family. You will also discuss some of the struggles you may face as a family and how the church you attend is a support system to your family or whether the church impacts your relationships at home. The discussion will take about 2hours and a translator will be present to make sure the questions are understood and you have the opportunity to speak your own language. The focus group will take place at the specific church which you attend.**

### **3. POSSIBLE RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS**

**As a researcher, I am required to follow an ethical code and to respect your rights and the rights of this specific church congregation approached. During the research I do not foresee that you will experience any harm or risk. With Permission the focus group interviews will take place at your church, which is a familiar and secure environment. Participation is voluntary and if you feel that you no longer want to take part in the research or feel uncomfortable, you have the right to end your participation. If any discomfort is experienced private debriefing will be provided or pastoral care can be arranged.**

**If necessary, Free counselling can also be arranged by contacting the following organisations:**

**Badisa Tell: (021) 940 7130**

**Badisa Dorothy Boesak Hall: (021) 951 4045**

**FAMSA Tell: (021) 447 7951**

### **4. POSSIBLE BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS AND/OR TO THE SOCIETY**

**Participants will not directly benefit from the study, because the goal of the research done for this specific study is to create awareness. The study will however, shed light on their specific family dynamics and allow them to receive better support in their own church communities. The results found will be used to enhance the pastoral care provided to Grandparent-headed families.**

### **5. PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION**

**Each Grandparent participating in the study will be compensated by means of a food hamper worth R100. This food hamper will be given to each participant on the day that the focus group is conducted.**

### **6. PROTECTION OF YOUR INFORMATION, CONFIDENTIALITY AND IDENTITY**

**Any information you share with me during this study that could possibly identify you as a participant, will be protected. This will be done by maintaining confidentiality, which means that when I write up the result of the study, your name will not be mentioned. Nobody will be able to trace the information gathered from you back to you or your family. The focus group discussions will be audio recorded.**

**We will also conduct a final meeting once the study is complete, so that you can read or listen to what I wrote, and/or provide me with feedback. This is done to make sure that what I wrote**

is a true reflection of what we discussed. If at any point the study is published or used publicly, you will be informed of this.

#### **7. PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL**

You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you agree to take part in this study, you may withdraw at any time without any consequence. You may also refuse to answer any questions you don't want to answer and still remain in the study. The researcher may withdraw you from this study if you fail to return this consent form. If you decide to withdraw from the study you will be expected to sign a form stating that you will no longer partake in the study. If your withdrawal occurs after data collection takes place, all data and information received from you will be deleted and discarded. There will be no need for you to explain why you have decided to withdraw from the study, your rights and autonomy will be preserved at all times.

#### **8. RESEARCHERS' CONTACT INFORMATION**

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please feel free to contact Tamlynn Jane Roberths at cell nr: 072 676 1343 Email: [troberths@gmail.com](mailto:troberths@gmail.com), and/or the supervisor Professor Christo Thesnaar at Office nr: 021 808-3257 Email: [cht@sun.ac.za](mailto:cht@sun.ac.za).

#### **9. RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS**

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, contact Ms Maléne Fouché [[mfouche@sun.ac.za](mailto:mfouche@sun.ac.za); 021 808 4622] at the Division for Research Development.

.....

#### **DECLARATION OF CONSENT BY THE PARTICIPANT**

**As the participant I confirm that:**

- I have read the above information and it is written in a language that I am comfortable with.
- I have had a chance to ask questions and all my questions have been answered.

- **All issues related to privacy, and the confidentiality and use of the information I provide, have been explained.**

By signing below, I \_\_\_\_\_ *(name of participant)* agree to take part in this research study, as conducted by Tamlynn Jane Roberths *(name of principal investigator)*.

\_\_\_\_\_ .....

**Signature of Participant**

**Date**

**DECLARATION BY THE PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR**

**As the principal investigator, I hereby declare that the information contained in this document has been thoroughly explained to the participant. I also declare that the participant has been encouraged (and has been given ample time) to ask any questions. In addition I would like to select the following option:**

	<b>The conversation with the participant was conducted in a language in which the participant is fluent.</b>
	<b>The conversation with the participant was conducted with the assistance of a translator (who has signed a non-disclosure agreement), and this “Consent Form” is available to the participant in a language in which the participant is fluent.</b>

\_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of Principal Investigator**

**APPENDIX D: Ethics approval notice****NOTICE OF APPROVAL**

REC: Social, Behavioural and Education Research (SBER) - Initial Application Form

30 October 2019

Project number: 10402

Project Title: Exploring trust and loyalty within Grandparent-headed families on the Cape Flats and the impact of the church, as social support.

Dear Ms Tamlynn Roberths

Your REC: Social, Behavioural and Education Research (SBER) - Initial Application Form submitted on 26 September 2019 was reviewed and approved by the REC: Humanities.

Please note the following for your approved submission:

**Ethics approval period:**

Protocol approval date (Humanities)	Protocol expiration date (Humanities)
30 October 2019	29 October 2020

**GENERAL COMMENTS:**

- 1) **The location of hard copy storage must be specified.[RESPONSE REQUIRED]**
- 2) **There is still the issue of using Blue Downs and Delft as a generalisation for the Cape Flats. The student should make it explicit early in the study that this is a case study. The student should be careful not to stereotype or make broad statements about people on the Cape Flats. The researcher should also be mindful of her use of categories such as ‘mixed-races’ which might not be appropriate.**

Please take note of the General Investigator Responsibilities attached to this letter. You may commence with your research after complying fully with these guidelines.

**If the researcher deviates in any way from the proposal approved by the REC: Humanities, the researcher must notify the REC of these changes.**

Please use your SU project number (10402) on any documents or correspondence with the REC concerning your project.

Please note that the REC has the prerogative and authority to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modifications, or monitor the conduct of your research and the consent process.

### FOR CONTINUATION OF PROJECTS AFTER REC APPROVAL PERIOD

Please note that a progress report should be submitted to the Research Ethics Committee: Humanities before the approval period has expired if a continuation of ethics approval is required. The Committee will then consider the continuation of the project for a further year (if necessary)

#### Included Documents:

Document Type	File Name	Date	Version
Data collection tool	Interview questions	05/06/2019	1
Request permission	for Recruitment letter to Congregation- Blue Downs	05/06/2019	1
Request permission	for Recruitment letter to Congregation – Delft	05/06/2019	1
Default	CURRICULUM VITAE 2019 final	19/06/2019	1
Informed Form	Consent consent forms	20/06/2019	1
Default	Academic CV	21/06/2019	1
Proof of permission	Blue Downs Congregational church signed recruitment letter	23/09/2019	2
Proof of permission	Delft United Congregational church completed & signed recruitment Letter	23/09/2019	2
Research Protocol/Proposal	MTH T Roberths Promoter Thesnaar - Resubmission	26/09/2019	2
Default	Letter to REC Final Draft	26/09/2019	1

If you have any questions or need further help, please contact the REC office at [cgraham@sun.ac.za](mailto:cgraham@sun.ac.za).

Sincerely,

Clarissa Graham

REC Coordinator: Research Ethics Committee: Human Research (Humanities)

*National Health Research Ethics Committee (NHREC) registration number: REC-050411-032.*

*The Research Ethics Committee: Humanities complies with the SA National Health Act No.61 2003 as it pertains to health research. In addition, this committee abides by the ethical norms and principles for research established by the Declaration of Helsinki (2013) and the Department of Health Guidelines for Ethical Research:*

*Principles Structures and Processes (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.) 2015. Annually a number of projects may be selected randomly for an external audit.*