SPIRITUALITY AS DIMENSION OF INTEGRATED
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

by

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The cry from Africa to the poor of the whole world
is a call to dream together and to make it reach God …
It is not a cry of menace, but of justice and invitation to implode
the walls of exclusion, of privileges, of the denied alterity,
of the barns that store the superfluous riches of some,
which is the necessity of the most.

Agenor Breghenti, 2008:521

We have to find a way of living within the reality of the
impossibility to find total reconciliation.

Miroslav Volf, 1996:105

For

Thembi Mphokeng

Without whom these stories would never have been heard and
the indigenous wisdom not uncovered.

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ABSTRACT

Following the democratic elections in 1994, many South Africans are still suffering due to the country's inability to meet the challenges of peace-making, reconciliation and nation building, and dealing with socio-economic realities such poverty and inequality.

It is in this context where "personal problems [are] becoming public issues" (Sacco, 1999:3) that the researcher posed the questions: *What additional undisclosed/hidden resources can be uncovered to be utilised in meeting the challenge? How can we as practitioners in the field of community development contribute constructively to this process?* One such a resource is the untapped spiritual potential of people. A focus on people's spiritual potential will bring another dimension to people and community development and could proof invaluable in helping communities to better utilise their inner strengths and knowledge. Translated into practice, it would require an in-depth and research-based creative, non-prescriptive bottom-up approach to and knowledge of community development to prompt practitioners to acknowledge and utilise the spiritual dimension of the community development practice (cf. Weyers, 1991:130–149; Ife, 1998:xiv).

Inconceivably, notwithstanding the increased recognition of spirituality as an important dimension of working with individuals and communities, the dimension of spirituality has not been included or fully developed as an integral component of community development practices. A literature survey clearly indicated that, though traditionally the key role-players in the field of social development have been community and social work practitioners in faith-based organisations and churches alike, little or no attention is paid to spirituality in current community development literature and practice (Ver Beek, 2003:31). Confronted with this deficiency, in this study the researcher argued for a convergence of the three disciplines of (1) social work community development, (2) the newly emerging discipline of spirituality and (3) practical theology. Since practical theology recognises both the fields of spirituality and community development as basis for their praxis focusing on poverty and suffering, justice and liberation, it was further asserted that the field of practical theology offers a home for the development of an integrated framework for community development. Thus the goal of the study was threefold:

> To theorise the inter-relationship between spirituality, theology and community development, building a triangular theoretical construct between the disciplines of social work, spirituality and practical theology.

> To explore the practice of transforming people and communities through incorporating a spiritual dimension into an integrated community development approach.

> To propose a praxis framework for the incorporation of spirituality in community development.

An inter-disciplinary action research design was utilised to follow a cyclical process consisted or a preliminary literature search, and a field study which involved 'on site' visits (village walks) in the pilot and two sample communities, healing retreats and capacity building worksessions. Subsequently, an in-depth literature study on the topics of spirituality, community development and transformation as covered in the disciplines of social work and practical theology, was undertaken. The findings indicated spirituality as source of survival and hope; at the heart of community development (and therefore a legitimate focus of the action research project) and lastly as source of renewal for community development practitioners. Other key findings were the centrality of relationships and transformation; and the importance of a radical shifting of the focus from previous top-down problem-/project-/programme-centred models to unlocking the potential interconnectedness/relationship between God, people and creation as the core substance of participative, transformational development. These findings were utilised in the proposal for a relational praxis framework for community transformation.

OPSOMMING

Bykans twee dekades na afloop van die demokratiese verkiesing in 1994 is daar steeds vele Suid Afrikaners wat daagliks blootgestel is aan die uitdaging om te oorleef te midde van voortgesette armoede, ongelykheid, geweld en werkloosheid – hoofsaaklik vanweë die regering se onvermoë om die uitdagings met betrekking tot sosio-ekonomiese realiteite die hoof te bied. Dit is in hierdie konteks van persoonlike probleme wat oorvloei na die arena van openbare vraagstukke (Sacco, 1999:3) dat die navorser die volgende vrae stel: Watter alternatiewe, tans onontginde, bronne is daar wat aangewend kan word om hierdie knelpunte die hoof te bied? Hoe kan praktisyns (binne die ontwikkelingsterrein) konstruktief bydra tot hierdie proses?

‘n Voorlopige literatuurstudie het daarop gedui dat spiritualiteit (van individue en gemeenskappe) een so ‘n potensiele bron van onontginde energie en potensiaal is. Indien daar binne die verband van gemeenskapsontwikkeling op die spirituele dimensie gefokus word, mag dit van ontskatbare waarde wees om mense binne gemeenskappe te help om hulle innerlike sterktes en kennis ten volle te ontwikkel. In praktyk sal dit vereis dat praktisyns die potensiaal van die spirituele dimensie erken en oop is daarvoor om spiritualteit as dimensie van gemeenskapsontwikkeling binne ‘n kreatiewe, navorsingsgefundeerde deelnemede benadering te integreer (cf. Weyers, 1991:130–149; Ife, 1998:xiv). In die lig daarvan dat daar, veral binne die dissipiline van maatskaplike werk, tot op hede min navorsing gedoen is oor die insluiting van spiritualiteit as dimensie van gemeenskapsontwikkeling en -praktyke (Ver Beek, 2003:31), is geargumenteer dat ‘n inter-dissipliere benadering, met die insluiting van die dissiplines van (1) maatskaplike werk gemeenskapsonwikkeling, (2) spiritualiteit en (3) praktiese teologie die daarstel van ‘n geskikte teoretiese raamwerk sal moontlik maak. Aangesien praktiese teologie beide die dissiplines van spiritualiteit en gemeenskapsontwikkeling erken as basis vir die praxis-fokus op armoede en sosiale geregtigheid en bevryding, is daar van die standpunt uitgegaan dat die dissipiline van praktiese teologie die geskikte die ruimte vir die ontwikkeling van ‘n geïntegreerde raamwerk vir gemeenskapsontwikkeling is. Die doel van die studie was drieledig:

- Om ‘n multi-vlakkige teoretiese konstruk tussen die drie dissiplines van maatskaplike werk, spiritualteit en gemeenskapsontwikkeling daar te stel.

- ‣ Om ondersoek in te stel na die praktyk van transformering van mense en gemeenskappe deur die inkorporering van 'n spirituele dimensie in 'n geïntegreerde gemeenskapsonwikkelingsbenadering.
- ‣ Om 'n praxis raamwerk voor te stel vir die inkorporering van spiritualiteit in gemeenskapsontwikkeling.

Die inter-dissilinêre aksie navorsingsontwerp het bestaan uit verskeie siklusse wat 'n voorlopige en diepte literatuurstudie en veldnavorsing behels het. Die veldnavorsing het ingesluit: '*in situ*' besoeke aan die onderskeie gemeenskappe (wat deur die teikengroeplede verteenwoordig is); 'n 'retreat' vir elke groep; 'n reeks kapasiteitsbousessies en die ontwikkeling van twee gemeenskapsprojekte voorspruitend uit die navorsing. Die in-diepte literstuurstudie het gefokus op die integrering van spiritualiteit, transformering en gemeenskapsontwikkeling binne die dissiplines van maatkaplike werk en praktiese teologie. Die bevindinge van beide die veldwerk en die literatuurstudie het daarop gedui dat spiritualiteit 'n bron van hoop en oorlewing is, dat dit tot 'n baie groot mate 'n positiewe rol in die teikengemeenskappe speel en dat dit as 'n bron van versterking en vernuwing vir individue en gemeenskappe kan dien. Die sentraliteit van verhoudings en transformasie was ander sleutelbevindinge, asook die fokus op 'n totale wegkeer van tradisionele hierargiese benaderings na voetsoolvlak verteenwoordiging en inspraak ten einde die potensiële interverwantskappe tussen God, mense en die skepping as die kern van deelnemende transformerende gemeenskapsontwikkeling te kan erken en benut. Hierdie bevindinge is as riglyne vir die voorgestelde relasionele praxis raamwerk vir geïntegreerde gemeenskapstransformering gebruik.

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CHAPTER 1

CALL TO ACTION: TO SOCIAL WORK, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND PRACTICAL THEOLOGY

Today … this is a world in which the poor challenge the rich for the right to live as respected equals … [t]here are the markings here of a terrible struggle … [i]t is in this world in which faith will make a difference, one way or the other, shaping for the poor their challenge, shaping for the affluent their response (Marstin, 1979:7).

1.1   Introduction

"We are the hidden people – we are hidden behind the other people – we are not known, not seen … hidden in the plakkerskamp."[1] This lament of their invisibility and desolation raised by participants to a retreat offered as part of this study (see chapter 3), in a sense also reflects a condemnation of many contemporary community development practices. It challenges practitioners to listen closely and reconsider their understanding of what constitutes community development. From a personal perspective – arguably the most significant lesson learnt from years of working with people in communities – I am convinced that people want to be seen and heard. Rather than merely receiving handouts, they want to be acknowledged and treated as worthy and dignified human beings who are able (and ardent) to participate in community development interventions which directly influence their lives.[2]

The past decades have seen an almost universal acceptance of the dictum 'community development is about people' (referring to people-centred development)[3] and that it should be sustainable, encompassing the holistic well-being of this and future generations. Despite this, worldwide community development initiatives and

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[1] *Plakkerskamp* refers to a squatter camp or informal settlement.

[2] Having served a three-year sentence as a political prisoner on Robben Island in the early sixties and succeeding Bishop Desmond Tutu as South African Archbishop of Cape Town from 1996 to 2007, Archbishop Njongonkulu Ndungane can be seen to represent the 'previously deprived of South Africans'. In 1998 he co-chaired the National Poverty Hearings – an initiative of the South African non-government organisations. He came across people of hope and dignity, with resilience, who "…spoke with the same voice", proclaiming that they do not want handouts or charity, saying: "We have brains. We have hands. So give us skills; give us the resources; give us the capacity to work out our own existence in order that we might have dignity, that we may be fully human" (Ndungane, 2003:33).

[3] As the term implies, people-centred development places the 'person' at the centre of development and calls for a balance between all dimensions of existence, namely psychological, family structure, and religion, cultural and ecological dimensions (Coetzee, 1986a:5; Toffler, 1984:26). This is directly opposed to earlier models of community development with the emphasis on economic growth, often ignoring the impact of 'development' on those involved and on the environment (Green, 2002:52).

programmes have failed dismally to bring sustainable and hope-giving change. Recent South African research confirms an increased imbalance of the distribution of resources and a heightened incidence of poverty, disease, violence, accompanied by a growing sense of disempowerment and hopelessness (Van den Berg, Burger, Burger, Louw & Yu, 2007:1). Suffering the most, "…severely discriminated against in macro-social and economic policies", are poor and marginalised women (Haddad, 2001:6). Unexpectedly, however, keys to sustainable development are to be found in these women's self-derived strategies "…harnass[ing] the resources of both the spiritual and material realms" – practices as exemplified in the *manyano* movement[4] (Haddad, 2001:5).

The non-inclusion of a spiritual dimension is identified by Ver Beek (2000:31) as an important factor contributing to the failure of community development initiatives. In his view spirituality is "…a powerful factor in shaping people's decisions and actions," contributing to their sense of hope and power. Not providing spaces for people "…to understand, explore and ultimately to determine how development programmes should and will affect their spirituality, and in turn their society … [is] … anti-developmental" (Ver Beek, 2000:32). Contemporary current South African community development literature reveals a similar deficiency, with spirituality receiving surprisingly little attention, despite the fact that traditionally community and social work practitioners in faith-based organisations and churches alike have been key role-players in the field of social development and practice.

Arguably, this disregard for spirituality is partly due to the secularization of our society, resulting in viewing spirituality as personal and private: 'God talk' is not done in the public arena (cf. Cameron, Bhatti, Duce, Sweeney & Watkins, 2010:1).[5] Indeed, in the 'secular' mind, theology, faith and spirituality is "…something irrelevant and disassociated from human experience … cut off from the everyday business of living" (Cameron, et al., 2010:1). A possible further impediment with regard to the exploration of the phenomenon of spirituality in the community context could be the lack of effective research methodology – including the relatively unexplored (in

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[4] The *manyano* movement accounts for a very large religious grouping of indigenous African women. Churchwomen come together in prayer groups to "…find courage, strength, and resources of persevere in the face of near death". This happens by means of "…extensive use of prayer and preaching, the wearing of a church uniform and fundraising" (Haddad, 2001:6, 16–17).

[5] The work of the ARCS team under directorship of Dr John Sweeney at Heythrop College, University of London has been extensively used in reference to theological action research. Their publication *Talking about God in Practice: Theological Action Research* (Cameron, Bhatti, Duce, Sweeney & Watkins, 2010) depicts the theory and practice of this methodology in great detail and is seen as ground breaking work in theological action research and the collaboration of academics with practitioners.

community development) action research methodology (cf. Cameron, et al., 2010:1). Consequently, despite an apparent growing awareness amongst practical theologians[6] of the decline in the embodiment of faith and mission in the field of community development and the subsequent increased recognition of this field as an important context of theoretical and practical exploration in the discipline of practical theology (cf. Graham, 2009:6),[7] the dimension of spirituality has not been fully developed or included as an integral component of community development praxis.

Given then the evidence of, on the one hand, people longing to be treated as worthy, dignified and able to contribute to the well-being of themselves and their communities (cf. Ndungane, 2003:33); and the numerous examples of small groups of people (mostly women) acting in faith (e.g. the *manyano* movement described by Haddad, 2001:5) to directly influence their own and the lives of others for the better,[8] the insight derived at was that people's spirituality could be a powerful resource (as yet 'untapped') for the development of people and communities.

Yet, on the other hand, the growing secularization of our society, resulting in the notion that 'God talk' is superfluous; and the exclusion of a spiritual dimension from almost all community development initiatives – despite the ample evidence that spirituality is indeed a powerful source for not only surviving but actual thriving (or well-being) in people's lives – compelled further investigation into incorporating of the spiritual dimension in an integrated approach to community development (cf. Cameron, et al., 2010:1; Ver Beek, 2000:31). In addition, to enable the exploration of spirituality (a concept of such intimate and personal nature) as a phenomenal in the context of community development necessitated the identification and utilisation of flexible and innovative research design (cf. Cameron, et al., 2010:1).

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[6] Seen as the 'first line of defence' in this regard, since especially in South Africa, social workers and community workers do not have the theoretical training to adequately study the phenomena of spirituality in community development, whereas, as will be discussed in successive chapters, this area of study falls comfortably in the field of practical theology.

[7] Graham (2009:6) indicates a rising interest amongst theologians in the emerging field of 'social capital' development, including building of social networks, faith-based economics, and the ethical aspects of development and poverty reduction. She points out the potential link between these development issues and the question of human well-being, opening up the questions of meaning and value and thus the door for theological input.

[8] This is confirmed by the experiences and information gathered during the pre-study phase involving more that 4000 people in over 260 communities, resulting in the establishment of numerous initiatives, such as day-mothers, crèches, small skills and business projects – initiated by people of faith after attendance of the capacity building worksessions where faith was acknowledged as one of the building blocks of personal capacity development.

Therefore, the study's aim is to identify an alternative approach to community development: to include and expand on the personal/spiritual dimension.[9] The study's focus is on understanding the non-inclusion of a spiritual component in community development; and on the investigation into a possible reframing of community development by reflecting on the theological and practical desirability of/need for and way(s) to integrate a spiritual dimension in such development. This called for the utilisation of a distinctive research design in this practical theological study, namely action research or, more specifically, Theological Action Research.[10]

In the subsequent discussion of the background to the study, as well as in the motivation for the interdisciplinary approach to the study, the inter-connectedness of the community's need to be heard and the unfolding of the research design will be covered. The problem statement, research questions and goals of the study are depicted, and a brief outline of the multi- or interdisciplinary research approach and methodology is given. Following the discussion of the limitations and contribution of the research and the defining of key concepts employed within this study, an overview of the content of the study is given.

1.2   Background to the study

As will be reiterated in Chapter 2, the incentive for action research is most often connected to praxis experiences of the researcher. As such a short reflection on the background of the researcher, the research itself and rationale for this study will serve as an appropriate introduction to this chapter and the study as a whole. For me, as a social worker, the impetus for this study was the two conflicting and recurring themes that became evident during several years of conducting worksessions among lesser-privileged and -developed communities. On the one hand, I heard the mournful voice of extreme hopelessness and invisibility, a longing to be treated with dignity. On the other hand, as will be corroborated in Chapter 3, I found a voice that clearly revealed spirituality as a powerful resource towards survival, even amidst the most dire of

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[9] Emeritus Professor Jim Ife (formerly professor in Social Work and Social Policy at The University of Western Australia and Curtis), has a longstanding interest in community development and human rights. In his classic text, Community Development (Ife, 1998:132), he introduced the "personal/spiritual" dimension as one of the six crucial dimensions in his integrated model for community development. Cf. section 1.8.2: discussion of community development.

[10] Theological Action Research (TAR) was developed "…to overcome the problem of talking about God in practice", by setting up partnerships (between practitioners as insiders and academics as outsiders) to gather data systematically "…allowing practical theology to act as a gateway to the wider theological task…" – changing belief and action (Cameron, et al., 2010:64). Cf. Chapter 1, section 1.5 and Chapter 2, section 2.5: Discussion of the integration of TAR with social sciences action research as alternative design for this study.

circumstances.[11] Unexpectedly a third theme slowly emerged, namely the hidden wisdom ingrained in every community as to how to survive amidst their struggles. It seemed as if this wisdom is unlocked and expressed when people are given the space to be heard.[12]

With regard to community development, this immediately raises the question whether development – in a society where people are faced with hopelessness and meaninglessness – may (or perhaps should) also include the acknowledgement of humans as spiritual beings and the restoration of meaning, as suggested by Coetzee (1986b:106), even in development projects which are not overtly religious in character at all, as is often the case in social work projects of this nature. If so, this may be of great significance especially in the post-apartheid South African society characterised by political uncertainty, social unrest and violence, rising unemployment, poor health aggravated by the HIV and AIDS pandemic and imbalances with regards to wealth and resource distribution, to name but a few challenges.[13]

Investigation into possible new or alternative strategies for dealing with the development crisis, becomes even more urgent in light of evidence from the US suggesting that the investment of billions of dollars in social upliftment programmes and the involvement of experts "…have failed to stem the tide of alienation and disaffection…" and disconnectedness characteristic of most societies (Stringer, 2007:2; Palmer, 1993:x). Current South African research concurs with this finding. It highlights the very limited success of social upliftment programmes and projects, alluring to governmental failure to meet challenges such as health, peace-making, reconciliation and socio-economic needs, i.e. housing, job creation and equality in particular (Van der Berg, et al., 2007:1; Mundell, 2009:2–3). Furthermore, interventions proved to be

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[11] For example, when participants of the Moreleta Worship HIV and AIDS Project (Pretoria, 2003) discussed the setting up of community projects, they stated: *"We have to invite God to help us and to be with us in everything we do"* and, in answer to the question of what the first step in planning a project should be: *"... [f]irst we sit down, pray and ask God what His will is"*. Similarly, the most frequent responses to questions regarding what sustains these suffering communities in their struggle to cope with the adversities of life included praying, reading the Bible and singing or listening to gospel music (cf. Chapter 3, section 3.4.5.8; Appendix A5: Responses to the *Spiritual Map*-exercise).

[12] Hence, when discussing the keys to successful projects, one member said: *"We have to ask God to give us spiritual ears to truly understand people, to listen to and teach others. We also have to listen to God – like Noah"* (Kirsten, 2003a:20). Similarly, South African theologian Beverley Haddad (2001:5–19) on the survival strategies of poor, marginalized women, describes the *manyano* movement (women's prayer meetings) as "...an example of a hidden site of knowledge, which can no longer be ignored … [in social transformation]"

[13] Recent South African research indicates that wealth is far less equally distributed than income, portraying a stronger racial bias in its distribution, with inequality experienced mainly by rural Africans who constitute 70 percent of the poor. As such "…the rich have benefited disproportionately from economic growth since 1994" (Van der Berg, et al., 2007:1; cf. De Gruchy & Ellis, 2008:9; Odora Hoppers, 2002:x; Mundell, 2009:1).

piecemeal, often operating in isolation from other initiatives, and to focus on physical aspects rather than on building socially just, peaceful and secure communities (cf. Ndungane, 2003:20). This resulted in thousands of people – lacking efficient coping mechanisms and resources – experiencing hopelessness with regards to their future. Finding unconventional, internal resources to successfully deal with these challenges therefore, becomes imperative (Sacco, 1999:3). In this quest, people and community practitioners are especially confronted with the question: "Could the inclusion of a spiritual dimension provide a source to meet the challenges communities are facing?"

The opportunity to address this question presented itself when I was approached[14] to equip community facilitators/care givers with skills to deploy a poverty alleviation programme.[15] During the preliminary discussions it became apparent that there existed an even more distinctive need, namely to help these individuals find strategies to deal with their own overload – brought about by having to deal with the challenges of family life and being a 'helper' in the community[16] – and feelings of hopelessness.[17] The ensuing process of developing and implementing a holistic self-care and healing programme proved to be an excellent testing field for the reframing of community development by the inclusion of a spiritual dimension. However, since the current South African social work curriculum provides limited theoretical input on the aspect of spirituality, I had to turn to the field of practical theology for theoretical substantiation and the methodology of theological reflection and interpretation or spiritual discernment. According to Osmer (2008:137–138) spiritual discernment refers to the seeking of God's guidance with regard to the present circumstances, questions and

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[14] In my capacity as social work practitioner and facilitator at a non-government organisation (NGO) – The Institute for Psycho-Social Development (IPSO) – focusing on people and community development.

[15] In 2006 the Provincial Department of Social Services and Poverty Alleviation launched *The Community Care and Protection Plan*, an inclusive poverty alleviation program. The aim: to support families and communities to take primary responsibility for the care, health and protection of its vulnerable members. The goal: to enable community members to network and develop a 'safety net' for the vulnerable in their society. The target community: the greater Franschhoek district. Two sample groups (FH1/FH2) were selected for the purpose of this study (cf. Chapter 3, section 3.4.2).

[16] The following two statements made by members of the sample group (FH 2) give an indication of how their prior unmet needs were met during these sessions: *"As I was talking about the problems I have, for example, it is not nice to work with elderly people all the time...[something changed]. I now feel I can let go of this mask I am wearing all the time and I can think about leaving the job"* (Capacity building, December 2007). *"It [sharing her story] was difficult – I was afraid, and I have never, ever thought that I will speak about it. But now it is better – I have energy to go on"* (Retreat, November 2007).

[17] Ndungane (2003:20–23), stresses that the deprivations of poverty encompass not only low income, but include loss of human dignity and opportunities for advancement; retardation of education; limited access to technology and health care; and economical and political marginalisation – all contributing to the sense of overload, hopeless- and powerlessness.

material to be implemented and encompasses the sifting through, searching out and weighing of evidence.

Acknowledging our 'being-in-community', practical theology thus engages in reflective theological activity, seeking to relate (Christian) faith to the praxis of living in society, working towards *shalom* – human, societal and ecological well-being (cf. Cochrane, de Gruchy & Petersen, 1991:2–3, 67). Central to practical theology is a spirituality of empowerment and hope as the outcome of God's liberating power and purpose – implying an active involvement with issues such as social injustice, poverty and suffering, peace and reconciliation, and the exploration of strategies for social transformation – core issues of community development (cf. Cochrane, et al., 1991:2–3; Frank & Smith, 1999:2; Ife, 1998:132; Myers, 1999:85–86).[18] Furthermore, since practical theology works on the precept that all Christians – lay or trained theologians – are in faithful practice directed toward their community and society at large, it follows that Christian social work community development practitioners could benefit directly from the methodology. In turn, practical theology draws upon other disciplines (from the social sciences, amongst others), for its social analysis of the context as a means to see clearly, grasp reality, find the truth and read the signs of what is to come as a basis for theological reflection (cf. Cochrane, et al., 1991:80–83; Osmer, 2008:138–139).

1.3   Preliminary literature review: The need for an interdisciplinary study

As stated in background to the study, the impetus for this study emerged whilst working as a social work practitioner in the field of community development, embedding the initial exploration and findings in the practice of social work. However, as will be clearly indicated in this and subsequent sections on the motivation for this study and choice of research design, the need to find an alternative 'space' (and methodology)

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[18] Compare the work of Elaine Graham (2009:5–23) focusing on the link between practical theology and well-being of all, including those around us in 'community'; Douglas John Hall (2005:1–15) presenting a strong argument for Christians to act as stewards of their community and environment; Denise Ackermann (1998:19–27) sharing practical examples of the idea of communion – the practice of the Eucharist – as a way of enabling communities to live together in justice, freedom, peace and ecological responsibility; Celia Kourie (2000:19–29) reiterating that "…the totality of life is the spiritual life", therefore the spiritual transformation of individuals will lead to a more effective external life, which in turn will impact on the whole of society. Dirk J. Smit (2009:474–491) warning practical theologians against the danger of allowing those who suffer from poverty to become mere statistics, by reminding them that "…Christian ethics begins with the act of seeing" – this implies both *listening* to people's stories in order to *see* (i.e. perceiving the problem) and *acting* upon suffering/poverty. Practical theologians should employ their skills to interpret and describe what is seen and observed in such a way that others are confronted with the complex moral reality of suffering in the community context. This, in turn, should lead to acts of repentance, promoting alternative economic practices and a just society.

for this study within the discipline of practical theology was identified during the earlier stages of the research. Hence, the study was (eventually) informed by literature from the disciplines of social work, spirituality and practical theology, which also determined the theoretical underpinning of the research design and methodology. Theological reflection became central to the study, instructing and directing the development of the framework for integrated community development and the final conclusions and recommendations for community development practices.

As mentioned earlier, today, despite the rising levels of material prosperity in developed economies since 1945, there is ample evidence of greater social and individual distress, discernable in acts of crime, addiction, family breakdown and ill health (Graham, 2009:5, 9). Theologian Brian McLaren (2007:5) suggests that our plethora of critical global crises can be traced to four deep dysfunctions, namely the prosperity crisis; the equity crisis; the security crisis and the spiritual crisis.[19] This view is corroborated by Brighenti (2008:517) referring to the "…ominous logic of the globalized liberal-capitalist system" luring many into the belief that it can be humanized and reformed. What is needed is a re-writing of the global story – literally a spirituality for a new world order (McLaren, 2007:5–6). Building on the biblical grand metanarrative of "the story of God's romance with the world" individuals could be enabled to discover the transcendent meaning of everyday life in their work, relationships, the community and the world (Stevens & Green, 2003:x).

Considerably more than a 'framework' for human life, spirituality has always been an integral dimension of being human.[20] One important element of spirituality, as

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[19] The prosperity crisis refers to environmental breakdown caused by our unsustainable global economy, failing to respect environmental limits even as it succeeds in producing great wealth for about one-third of the world's population. This is comparable to Oliver James's term "selfish capitalism" that reflects the perception that "…prosperity has become to be perceived as a problem, a disease or disorder threatening social cohesion and inhibiting human fulfilment" (Graham, 2009:9). The equity crisis refers to the growing gap or inequality between the rich and the poor, promoting envy, resentment and hate in the poor majority and fear and anger in the rich. The security crisis refers to the danger of war arising from the intensified resentment and fear amongst the various groups at opposite ends of the economic spectrum. The spiritual crisis refers to the failure of the world's religions to provide a framing story capable of healing and restoring the previous three crises (cf. McLaren, 2007:5: Chapter 5, sections 5.2.4.2; 5.2.2 & 5.4, Table 2).

[20] Karin Armstrong (1999:3) expresses our inherent spiritual nature as follows: "Human beings are spiritual animals. Indeed there is a case for arguing that *Homo sapiens* is also *Homo religiosus*. Men and women started to worship gods as soon as they became recognisably human … not simply because they wanted to propitiate powerful forces but these early faiths expressed the wonder and mystery that seems always to have been an essential component of the human experience of this beautiful yet terrifying world … It seems to be something that we have always done. Like art, religion has been an attempt to find meaning and value in life, despite the suffering that flesh is heir to." A contemporary example of this notion of interconnectedness is reflected in African spirituality: "Religion [spirituality] in Africa continues to connect the divine and the human, through faith that is connected to life, to the body and to nature" (Brighenti, 2008:519).

defined by Armstrong (1993:3), concerns us directly in the context of this study, namely, that spirituality is "…an attempt to find meaning and value in life, despite the suffering that the flesh is heir to" (Armstrong, 1999:3). Therefore, the acknowledgement and incorporation of the spiritual strengths of people and communities in community interventions may have a crucial impact on their ability to participate in changing their circumstances and ultimately their future.[21]

The re-emergence of interest in the contribution of religion or spirituality to 'social capital'[22] or human well-being is evident in current social sciences literature, fuelling the debate about the relationship between global economic change, social capital, and human behaviour, political institutional and ethical and religious aspects (cf. Graham, 2009:6; Canda & Furman, 1999; Hugen & Scales, 2002a; Hodge, 2003; Derezotes, 2006). Across disciplines practitioners interested in finding strategies to improve the well-being and life conditions of thousands of fellow citizens, are advocating the deployment of multi-facetted, interdisciplinary approaches to deal with these crises.

From a social work viewpoint, Derezotes (2006:1) argues that "…science has learned that there are spiritual factors associated with the etiology of every possible bio-psychosocial-environmental problem or challenge". The inclusion of a spiritual dimension into professional helping practices (such as community development) will ensure a holistic approach, which in turn will significantly contribute to the effectiveness of interventions. The increase in 'first phase literature' on spirituality in the fields of psychology, nursing and education has created a theoretical and research foundation for the use of spirituality in practice (Derezotes, 2006:1). According to Derezotes (2006:2), a firm interdisciplinary foundation is essential to progress to 'second phase literature' – the construction of theory and researched based methodology. Thus, the utilisation of literature from disciplines of social work community development, spirituality and practical theology to develop a triangular theoretical construct for the inclusion of a spiritual dimension in community development denotes 'second phase literature'.

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[21] Cf. Haddad (2001:6, 13) stating that for poor, marginalised women their "...spiritual and material realities are intertwined in the struggle for life. Prayer and practical strategies go hand in hand", to such a degree that some even attribute their very survival to God.

[22] The World Bank describes social capital as referring to "…the institutions, relationships, and norms that shape the quality and quantity of a society's social interactions" – together forming the social cohesion critical for societies to prosper economically and sustain development. Social capital is about bringing people together, bridging the gap of diverseness and goodwill toward others; it is embedded in relationships and interaction between people – it is the glue that holds societies together (cf. Putnam, 1995:67; World Bank website accessed online on 23 October 2012 at external/topics/extsocialdevelopment/exttsocial capacity).

Strangely – since historically social development initiatives were initiated by the faith-based organisations and churches – literature on social work, the discipline which for long has been the basis of my professional life, has been almost completely silent on the topic of spirituality in community development. Clearly, the 'faith-basedness' did not reach the theoretical foundation or the praxis of social work community development. Apart from the inclusion of a "personal/spiritual dimension" in Ife's (1998:132) framework for integrated community development (cf. section 1.8.2), in a content analysis of three leading development journals over the previous 15 years, scant reference to the topics of spirituality or religion were found (Ver Beek, 2000:31). Ver Beek reports on his review of the policy of three influential development organisations, pointing to the fact that these organisations not only did not have policies on how to treat the area of spirituality but "…they consciously seek to avoid the topic in their programmes" (Ver Beek, 2000:31). Similarly, in South Africa the trend is to focus on the physical, emotional, economical, political and educational development of people, whilst ignoring religious or spiritual dimension of development (cf. Coetzee & Lichthelm, 1986:185; Davids, 2005a:23–27; Lombard, Weyers & Schoeman, 1991).[23]

To counteract this deficiency, a multi-disciplinary approach was deployed to include literature from disciplines of social work community development, spirituality and practical theology. Numerous examples of advancing along an interdisciplinary paradigm is to be found in practical theology such as Osmer's interpretative model (or hermeneutical circle),[24] encompassing a constellation of shared beliefs, values and techniques underscored by the intellectual pluralism of multiple paradigms in one field (Kinast, 2010). Such an approach implies inviting, engaging with and consenting to theoretical and practical input and/or involving practitioners from various disciplines, which could bring insights and relief to practitioners who "…often face recurrent crises that are outside their scope of professional expertise" (Stringer, 2007:2).

Endorsement of a multi-disciplinary approach is found in the work of public theologians Baker and Miles-Watson (2008:422, 456–464) who argue the concept of

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[23] Cf. Chapter 5, section 5.2.4: The unexplored spiritual dimension of community development.

[24] Rick Osmer's hermeneutical spiral or four tasks of practical theological interpretation: The descriptive-empirical task, focusing on "…the actual empirical state of some form of religious practice in a particular social context"; the interpretive task, seeking "…to place empirical research in a more comprehensive explanatory framework"; the normative task, focusing on "…the construction of theological and ethical norms by which to critically assess, guide, and reform some dimension of contemporary religious praxis"; and the pragmatic task, developing rules of art or open-ended guidelines that can assist participation in religious praxis (Osmer & Schweitzer, 2003:6; Osmer, 2008:1–29).

'secular spiritual capital', stressing the importance of partnership between religious and secular sectors in the areas of social planning, community cohesion and social care. TAR researchers (Cameron, et al., 2010:23, 29) emphasise the interdisciplinary character of practical theology – leaning on social sciences to read praxis in it's "…aim to speak truthfully and meaningfully about human realities". The ground breaking ideas and work of educationalist Paulo Freire[25] has influenced both the theory and practice of the strengths-based paradigm of social development and the praxis model (of contextual theology).[26]

In summary, for the purpose of this study, the practical theological endorsement was to be found in a number of areas. Firstly, practical theology literature provided the theoretical foundation for the concepts of Christian spirituality[27] and spiritual or inner healing.[28] Secondly, the positive correlation between well-being and spirituality and the impact of spiritual well-being on community well-being was underscored in reviewing practical theological literature.[29] Thirdly, the practical-theological hermeneutical circle or spiral became the instrument for practical theological reflection, adding an invaluable normative component for developing the underpinning theory, 'art rules' and framework for transformative community development.[30] Fourthly, the attention given to the role of the practical theologian as practitioner-researcher, especially the focus on ethics, was helpful in the light of the dichotomy of the 'centre-

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[25] Born September 1921 in Recife, Brazil, Paulo Freire (South American Christian educationalist) is world renown for his theories of education and liberation theology. He worked extensively on grassroots level refining his revolutionary educational practices. His major work is seen to be *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1987). In *Pedagogy of Hope* Freire sketches some of his early experiences: "It was a long learning process, which implied a journey, and not always an easy one, nearly always painful…" (Freire, 2006:16).

[26] Here, *praxis* is interpreted as co-constituting theory or "reflection based on experience and experience based on reflection" (Wijsen, 2005:114).

[27] Amongst others, the work of practical theologian Ray Anderson (2001:105) provided a much needed focus on hope (rather than on the hope-less-ness of enduring poverty), emphasising that the praxis of the spirit comes out of the future. From Madge Karecki's (2009:24–36) work helpful insights into spiritual practices and growth, as well as contemplative encounter were gained. The conceptualisation of (and discussion on) a spirituality of embrace was founded in the work of Miroslav Volf (1996) – especially his theology of embrace (or God's embrace) as the essence of the transformative (healing) experiences that enables us to meet life's challenges.

[28] Findings such as that of the Center for Spirituality, Theology and Health at Duke University (USA) suggest that there is a positive correlation between religion/spirituality and well-being (cf. Baker & Miles-Watson, 2008:459–460).

[29] Elaine Graham (2009:5–23) focuses on the link between practical theology and well-being of all (including those around us in 'community'). Johannes Banawiratma (2005:73–85) calls for *a spirituality of openness* in facing our current challenges (such as poverty, powerlessness, social justice). A spirituality of openness could be realised in a '*communion of contextual communities*', where people are united across boundaries, are open to acknowledge and respect the spiritual and moral truths, human rights and human dignity of others (:73, 76).

[30] According to Osmer (2008:10–11) "[t]he social sciences … do not develop normative theological perspectives to interpret research and often, do not attempt to shape the field they are investigating."

stage', yet 'open-to-learn-from' role of researcher, the centrality of the relationship between the researcher and the researched, and the question of subjectivity in action research.[31] Lastly, the Theological Action Research methodology (and to some extend the practical-theological spiral)[32] provided a 'bridge' for linking (social work) action research with practical-theological action research.[33]

Thus this study came into existence on the interface of three separate but related disciplines within the human sciences, namely social work community development, spirituality and practical theology. The design of the triangular construct and the contextualisation of the study within the field of practical theology are fully developed in Chapter 5. The problem statement, research questions and the motivation for positioning this study as qualitative research by applying two corresponding research designs (namely practical theological and social work action research designs), are discussed in the following sections.

1.4   Problem statement, research questions and goals

The exposure of the researcher as social work practitioner to the needs of the community, which led to the realisation that an inter-disciplinary approach is vital in

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[31] Both Wijsen (2005:118–121) and Sobrino (2005:ix–x) refer to the importance of the choice to be committed and engaged in action as a theological option, with Sobrino stressing that practical theologians (as researchers) should allow "…ourselves to be affected by the reality in order to analyse it properly". He identifies four dimensions of human intellectual activity that is of concern in (theological) action research: firstly, 'getting a grip on reality' which requires the practitioner to be truly and actively involved in reality, affected by things as they are; secondly, the praxis dimension – 'taking on the burden of reality', implying the taking charge of reality in order to transform it; thirdly, the ethical dimension – 'taking responsibility for reality', implying the acceptance of the demands of reality and hearing its hardships; and fourth, the dimension of grace – "letting reality carry us", implying to let oneself be enlightened by reality (Sobrino, 2005:ix–x). Cameron, et al. (2010:73–74) emphasise the need for 'robust' relationships between researcher (outsider)/researched (insider) teams to allow space for them to challenge one another without feeling disempowered. They also stress the need for humility, the willingness to listen and accept diverse opinions, to be committed to change, the willingness to be changed and trustworthiness as key qualities needed when conducting action research as theologians (Cameron, et al., 2010:72).

[32] Frans Wijsen (2005:108–123) renaming the 'pastoral circle' as 'the practical-theological spiral', suggests that participant observation should form an integral part of insertion, since this could contribute to the finding of the true reality 'out there' as perceived from *within* 'out there' (Wijsen, 2005:115). In the present study, participant observation was utilised, with the researcher becoming an insider, as in the classic form of action research. However, as Wijsen recommends, the research-through-action which stressed indigenous knowledge and spiritual power and the presupposition that development of change should be people-orientated and thus 'come from below and within', was augmented by what Wijsen terms 'research-after-action' in the sense that the intervention (actions) were observed and revised and re-'tested' (cf. Wijsen, 2005:120–121). Cf. also Chapter 2, section 2.6.4, Table 1; Chapter 3, section 3.5.4; Chapter 6, section 6.4: Accounts of revising and re-testing in this study.

[33] The interdisciplinary work of James Fowler serves as an example of linking empirical social science research (his work in the field of psychology) and practical theology (his work on the domain of 'faith') (Osmer & Schweitzer, 2003:1–3).

heeding the disregarded spiritual dimension in community development, were the causative factors dictating the following problem statement:

Given the apparent importance of the spiritual dimension in people's lives, this research investigates – from a basis of findings by way of action research within the context of community development practices in social work – the possible practical theological rationale for greater regard for people's spiritual needs and for the spiritual resources embedded in the community by the inclusion of a spiritual dimension in community development praxis, for practitioners in both the disciplines of theology and social work.

The increased recognition of spirituality as an important dimension of working with individuals and communities were suggested by the researcher's field and practice experiences and a preliminary literature search. Impelled by these observations, the following research questions were formulated:

▸ *What constitutes spirituality and community development and, explored from the basis of (theological) action research, to what extent do spiritual resources (spirituality) constitute an intuitive resource in communities in situations of adversity, specifically with regard to community development?*

▸ *If spiritual resources do constitute a resource towards community development, should it be incorporated into a framework for community development a) from the perspective of the community and b) from a Christian Practical Theological perspective?*

▸ *From an interdisciplinary perspective, how could a triangular theoretical construct between the disciplines of Social Work (and community development), Spirituality and Practical Theology contribute to the inclusion of a spiritual dimension in a framework for community development?*

▸ *How could spirituality be incorporated in the community development praxis?*

Based on these questions, the threefold aim for the study was determined as follows:

▸ To explore the practice of transforming people and communities through incorporating a spiritual dimension into an integrated community development approach.

‣ To theorise the inter-relationship between spirituality, theology and community development, building a triangular theoretical construct between the disciplines of social work, spirituality and practical theology.

‣ To propose a praxis framework and methodology for the incorporation of spirituality in community development.

1.5   Research approach, design and methodology

The most significant determining factor in the choice of an action research design was the impetus for this study, namely the request for help (to equip community members for their role as facilitators in a poverty alleviation programme) coming from within a (secular) pluralistic community/community development practice (as oppose to coming from a faithful practice or community of faith). Originating in the field of social sciences, action research has as its goal to rectify, change and improve practices or social circumstances (experience as problematic or unsatisfactory by the people involved) and to simultaneously further the goals of social science (cf. Wadsworth, 1998:7; Gilmore, Krantz & Ramirez, 1986:161). The dual commitment to study a system and to, concurrently, collaborate with members of the system in changing it, requires the active alliance of researcher and researched in a co-learning relationship. Given then the action research-focus on participative collaboration to bring about significant change, it is clear why the action research design would to a large degree sustain the meeting of this study's goals.

However, the transformation of practice requires a normative component, or what Osmer refers to as 'the spiritual wisdom'. The role of values and ethics in the enabling of (Christian) practitioners (social workers, community developers, practical theologians) to respond to concrete situations with faithful theologically informed practice, is increasingly recognised (cf. Osmer, 2011). Yet, as concurred by the findings of researcher's preliminary literature search and practice exploration, there is a seemingly limited interest in and a reductionist's preconception amongst social scientists of what Osmer and Schweitzer (2003:2) refer to as the key questions of greatest importance regarding the religious and spiritual nature of contemporary communities. Employing a practical-theological action research design that "…makes room for reflection on experience and practice and for dialogue with social sciences as it engages the normative resources of Christian faith" (Osmer, 2011), could meet both the need for a normative component and in-depth exploration of religion and

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spirituality in communities. Furthermore, reflective designs, such as TAR, acknowledge the pluralism of practices and the social contexts – a crucial factor in this study.

In addition to the above issues dictating the choice of design, a number of other factors contributed to the choice of research designs within a reflective paradigm. Firstly, the nature or the research questions and the expected outcome (i.e. transforming the situation of those being researched by the development – and implementation – of new theory and a praxis framework), required the freedom of a supple research process to gather data and to discover new insights for the formation of (new) theory.[34] Secondly, the entry point of the study (i.e. grassroots need identification and questions arising from community development praxis), required an unbiased,[35] reflective process enabling the researcher's immergence in the context of the researched (community) to learn from them, rather than entering into the situation as the expert.[36]

Thirdly, the need to provide a space for the active participation of those researched and to explore the impact of the research process and/or interventions over an extended period, required an accessible and flexible process allowing the researched (those who stand to benefit from the process) the scope to participate in finding and applying effective solutions.[37] Fourth, the multi-disciplinary nature of the study gave rise to multiple and diverse voices that needed not only to be heard, but to

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[34] Action research allows for the systematically unfolding of the process as it progresses; additional information (in the case of this study, specifically pertaining to aspects of practical theology) to emerge; and further needs to be uncovered by all involved (Stringer, 2007:6; Fouché, 2002:272; O'Brien, 1998).

[35] With regard to the first stage of the pastoral or practical theological spiral (*reflective insertion or immersion*), Wijsen (2003:113) refers to the work of early liberation theologians who were concerned that the social struggle of people should be safe guarded as a secular or autonomous reality. These theologians cautioned against the confusion of, for example, trade unions with basic Christian communities, since they were of the opinion that such a 'misleading' stance (e.g. dealing with 'secular issues' of liberation as if it were unfolding in a church or faith context), could cause the social analysis of their reality (a secular context) to be dictated by a hidden or overt theological agenda (Wijsen, 2003:113). Theological reflection could be entered into once the ('secular') analysis was completed – as was the case in the current study (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.6.4, Table 1). Thus, though practical theological involvement should be seen as a necessary step (providing the much need normative component), it does not necessarily have to be the first step. In the current study, the researcher experienced a similar apprehension with regards to the 'tainting' of the field research, which motivated the decision to engage in practical theological reflection only at a later stage of the research.

[36] The grassroots identification of a research problem and the subsequent direct interaction with the community to try and find solutions to their needs and issues, are in agreement with the gist of action research (Kemmis, 1985:38, Theron & Wetmore, 2005:160; Strydom & Delport, 2002:334; Stringer, 2007:6,10; Cameron, et al., 2010:34–35).

[37] Kemmis (1985:36–38) emphasises the participants' right to "…influence, if not determine, the condition of their own lives and work, and collaboratively to develop critiques of social conditions which sustain dependence, inequality, or exploitation in any research enterprise in particular, or in social life in general…"

be reflected upon in a mutually clarifying and critical manner in order to derive at a 'mutual truth'. This required a methodology for interpreting these diverse voices to find the truth and to make connections between theology and (faith) practice (cf. Robson, 2002:7; Cameron, et al., 2010:38, 49).

Corresponding to the interdisciplinary nature of the study (cf. section 1.3), and to meet the requirements outlined above, two distinct but corroborative research designs were utilised for this study, namely (Social Work) Action Research (SWAR) (cf. Wadsworth, 1997:79; O'Brien, 2001:1) and Theological Action Research (TAR).[38] The decision to allow the research to unfold and be shaped within two diverse, but compatible research designs was in part motivated by the reality of praxis. As mentioned, at the onset of this study (within social work community development) the intention was to do a social work situational analysis, not foreseeing that theological reflection and the four tasks of practical theology (as formulated by Osmer, 2008:11) would come to play such a pivotal part in the research.[39] However, as the research proceeded through repetitive action-reflection cycles, the real experiences of the researcher and the participants (community) set the agenda for practical theological inquiry, precipitating the need for "…a critical theological interpretation of the practices (and findings) with a view to changing it through concrete proposals and projects" (Osmer, 2011).

As illustrated in Figure1 (next page), these two designs (SWAR & TAR) are similar in that both derived from the classic action research design, promoting the cycle of four moments: planning, action, reflection and reaction. However, in order to meet the particular requirements of the two disciplines each cycle has distinctive features.

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[38] "Theological Action research combines features of practical theology and action research and adds a new way of thinking about the voices in conversation in theological reflection" (Cameron, et al., 2010:47)

[39] Cf. Chapter 1, section 1.5, footnote 35: Wijsen on insertion/immersion.
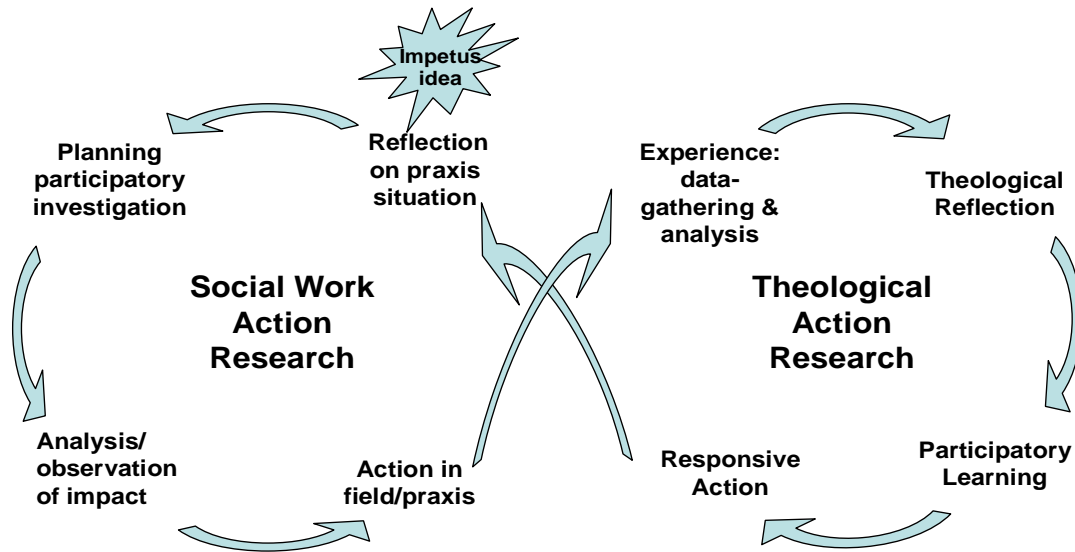
Figure1: Proposed Interdisciplinary Action Research Design[40]

The TAR cycle incorporates the four tasks of practical theology (empirical descriptive, interpretive, normative and pragmatic)[41] by making use of the 'four theological voices'[42] in theological conversation and reflection. As indicated in Figure 1, the four moments of the theological action research cycle (suggested by Cameron, et al., 2010:50) follows onto one another slightly different to the process suggested by Wijsen (2003:113) in his practical-theological spiral: insertion/contact, analysis, reflection and responsive planning and that of Karecki's (2005:140) cycle of mission praxis: identification, context analysis, theological reflection and strategies or responsive planning. In the TAR cycle the first moment combines the insertion, data-gathering and analysis (What is going on? Why is it going on?); followed by the second moment of (theological) reflection (What does it mean? What should be going on?); the third moment of participative learning (What have we learned? What should

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[40] Figure 1 is based on the work of Cameron, et al. (2010) and the action research process (in social work) as described by amongst others O'Brien (1998:14) and Wadsworth (1998:3).

[41] Cf. Section 1.3, footnote 24 for details of Osmer's hermeneutical circle or spiral.

[42] Cameron, et al. (2010:47–58) describe the four voices of theology as a new way of thinking and reflecting upon the practice of practical theology and the mystery of "God in practice" (:47). The *espoused voice* refers to the theological voice of faithful action – what they say they believe (:53). The *normative voice* refers to what participating groups name as their theological authority, e.g. Scriptures, doctrines, etc. (:54). The *formal voice* of theology refers to the theology of academics or 'professional theologians' and brings a historical perspective with in. The *operant voice* refers to the theology embedded within the actual practices and actions of a group – what do they do. Cameron's four voices is not unlike and are indeed to an extent a reflection of the four tasks of practical theology.

we change or invent?); and the fourth moment of action (Knowing what we know now, how should we respond? What should we do?).[43]

The Social Work action research cycle also encompasses four moments (each with a number of stages, as discussed in Chapter 2), namely reflection on the praxis or reality; the participatory planning and investigation; the analysis and observation of the impact; and implementation of action (in the field). The emphasis is on the accurate assessment of secular communities, emphasising inclusiveness and pluralism and the incorporation of the participants' input (knowledge, indigenous wisdom, experiences, and creativity). The methodology promotes the empowerment of and working in partnership with the participants (community) with regard to the development, implementation and evaluation of interventions (tools and strategies) that have a direct and immediate impact on their lives (well-being) (cf. Robson, 2002:220; Gilmore, et al., 1986:161).

Initiating the study within a secular community, it follows that the social work action research design and social sciences methodology of data-gathering were utilised in the first (action research) cycle of the study: empirical identification of the issue (reflecting on the praxis situation) and data-gathering. At the conclusion of the first cycle (during the analysis and observation in cycle one) the need for practical theological substantiation (a theological interpretation and understanding of 'what was going on?') was identified and the decision made to proceed by utilising TAR-methodology. Thus in the consecutive cycles, which included the development of and initial implementation of the praxis framework, as well as the developing the rules of art and the finalisation of the praxis framework, an iterative process of 'crossing over' or moving back and forth between the two designs, took place, as will be clearly illustrated in the description of the field research in Chapter 3.[44]

Finally, regarding the research subjects, or in action theological research terms, the research partners in this study: Since the field research for the study was conducted over a prolonged period (2004–2008) and involved various communities, four distinct groups emerged as research partners: the pilot group[45] in Pietermaritzburg, Natal; two sample groups[46] in Franschhoek, Western Cape; and the 'outsider' group[47] for the

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[43] Cf. Section 1.3, footnote 32; Section 1.5, footnote 35: Pastoral cycle/spirals (Wijsen).

[44] Cf. Chapter 2, section 2.6.4, Table 1: Depicting the chronological course of the empirical study.

[45] Consisting of 29 members – composed of non-professional and professional practitioners from rural and non-rural areas (cf. Chapter 3, section 3.3).

[46] Both groups consisting of mostly non-professional community workers/practitioners from rural and semi-rural communities – all (29) participants except one were female, and one member was a wheelchair user (cf. Chapter 3, section 3.4.2).

final evaluation in Pietermaritzburg, Natal. To enable the researcher to evaluate the quality and appropriateness of the praxis framework, the members of both the pilot and sample groups had to be community members functioning as community practitioners on either a professional or non-professional level. Therefore the method of purpose sampling was used for the selection of both groups (cf. Mark, 1996:113).[48]

1.6   Research constraints

A number of constraints influenced the implementation of the study. Firstly, finding potential research partners – organisations willing to join the investigation into the inclusion of spirituality in community development – posed a challenge. The study was initially met with an attitude of not 'doing God talk', accumulating in the distrust and unwillingness of organisations (including faith-based and church organisations) to allow the researcher to reveal her spiritual/religious orientation or to implement strategies and techniques addressing the spiritual dimension.

Secondly, the setback brought about by the disabling illness of Thembi Mphokeng, who has been the co-facilitator, translator, indigenous worker, key informant and supporter for most of the duration of the study. Due to the loss of her speech and mobility she was unable to assist further with the translation and interpretation of the individual follow-up interviews, worksessions and material in the final phases of this research.

Thirdly, a number of challenges were entrenched in the interdisciplinary nature of the study. Due to the lack of a body of knowledge and limited interest in the field of spirituality amongst the social work professionals in South Africa, a co-study leader from within and an added emphasis on the field of theology was decided upon. Working (initially) from a social work rather than a theological perspective also influenced the design of the study. This too was, however, a reflection of the fluid consequences of true action research as described above, even if the study's incentive was occurrences and observations in the context of social development and the initial design and the criteria for sample groups did not reflect a theological stance. Likewise, even though spirituality was not seen to be Christian spirituality but as unbiased by

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[47] Consisting of mainly non-professional community practitioners (16) representing mostly rural and semi-urban communities, drawn together by an umbrella organisation in Pietermaritzburg (cf. Chapter 3, section 3.5.4).

[48] Cf. Chapter 3, section 3.4.2: Discussion of sampling, 'insiders' (research partners in praxis).

doctrine,[49] it was to become a crucial emphasis in the interpretation and application of the research.

Fourth, even as the value and contribution of theological literature on community development or transformation and theological action research are recognised, so too consideration should be given to the potential impediments. One such possible impediment is a stance proclaiming one truth when working with people in diverse communities. For example, in multi-cultural, multi-faith contexts such as South African communities, one constraint in utilising TAR could be the focus or aim: "TAR seeks a transformation of practice which includes new insight, new *theological* insight and not just generic insights into the theory of practice" (Cameron, et al., 2010:17). According to the authors, the authority for such empirically grounded insights is closely related to the nature of Christian truth, which, ultimately rests on "…Christ's claim 'I am the Way, the Truth and the Life' – truth embodied in a Person" (Cameron, et al., 2010:17). In the context of a multi-cultural and multi-faith community where multiple voices will be heard, the pre-requisite of generating *Christian* theological truths, could proof a perilous paradigm for community development. Mercy Oduyoye (1993:118) cautions that so-called eternal truths are reintegrated in a particular age, since each generation and each place through reflection in the context of faith, adopts, adapts and recreate the inherited truths into new truths.

This implies that researchers should be sensitive to people in the communities having diverse paths to truth, and ask themselves if it is possible to believe in biblical truths, miracles and the descent of the Spirit of God on human beings from a Christian perspective, when discounting the phenomenon when it is manifested in other religions (Oduyoye, 1993:112). Kourie (2000:9) expresses the hope that "[o]ur pluralistic era is witnessing a welcome ecumenical, cross-cultural and inter-religious exchange that will hopefully affect greater understanding of the diversity and particularity of the many spiritual paths to Truth".[50] Theology may no longer take for granted the authority of 'one truth' founded in the traditional sources and norms of the church, but has to find

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[49] Spirituality not tied to religion, but as embodied by everybody, referring to one's ultimate values and commitments, and one's relationship to a Higher Power (cf. Kourie, 2000:23–25). Cf. section 1.8.1: Discussion and definition of spirituality.

[50] Cf. Osmer (2008:83), noting that theological interpretation involves drawing on multiple (interdisciplinary) theories to enable comprehensive (and truthful) understanding of and response to specific issues and situations. In his approach he builds on a communicative model of rationality which presupposes both a fallibilist understanding ("…an awareness that theories constructed by human reason offer an approximation of the truth, not truth itself"), and a perspectival understanding ("…that theories construct knowledge from a particular perspective, or position"). Therefore we need to be aware "…that no one perspective captures the fullness of truth and that, often, many perspectives are needed to understand complex, multidimensional phenomena."

new ways of "…developing truth claims and values that will be persuasive to a sceptical post-modern world" (Osmer, 2008:154, referring to Elaine Graham's *Transforming Practice*). Indeed, when considering truth, especially in the African continent, it should be taken into account that the African Traditional Religion and Islam play an integral part in the multi-religious nature of communities (Oduyoye, 1993:110–112). In this regard, Johannes Banawiratma emphasises an open spirituality, which implies an intertextual and intercontextual dialogue. Through sharing and listening within communities with their own texts and contexts, the possibility for coming closer to the core of faith becomes possible – even to the point "…where we can acknowledge that the God of the Christians and the Muslims is the same God of Abraham" (Banawiratma, 2005:80). Since the findings of this study has clearly shown the interest in and an openness with regard to 'God talk', further investigation into how especially the TAR methodology could be adapted to be sensitive to such a context, would be of great value.

Lastly, not being a systematic theologian by profession, but convinced that the study nevertheless can make a very valuable contribution to theological reflection and praxis with regard to community praxis, the researcher to a large extent had to rely on secondary sources, such as the work of David Bosch (1997, 2000), Miroslav Volf (1996), Klippies Kritzinger (2002), Bryant Myers (1999) and Eugene Peterson (2005) to formulate a ground theory and responsible hermeneutical interpretation. Due to the first restraint mentioned above, the researcher was not at liberty to utilize Bible study/reading with the participants to hear *their theology* – as suggested by Sibeko and Haddad (1996:83–91);[51] or the Scriptures as the main source of the normative voice with the participants or 'insiders' as in the TAR process (cf. Cameron, et al., 2010:25–26; 54–56; 147–148).[52] However, these limitations do also not preclude the

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[51] Reference made to the work of Sibeko and Haddad (1996:85–91) on reading the Bible with women in poor and marginalised communities, under the auspices of the Institute for the Study of the Bible (ISB) linked to the School of Theology at the University of Natal. The ISB was founded in 1990 with the aim to "...establish an interface between biblical studies and ordinary readers of the Bible in the church and the community that will facilitate social transformation" (West in Sibeko & Haddad, 1996:85). The authors found that for the women to be involved in the process of contextual Bible study – reading the Bible together with the ISB facilitators using a systematic and structured analysis of text and society – was a liberating process which "...enabled women to speak unspoken words".(Sibeko & Haddad, 1996:83–91).

[52] The TAR process is distinctive (from other action research) in the sense that theology has a key function throughout the process, utilising a heuristic and hermeneutic framework: 'the four voices' of normative, formal, espoused and operant theology (Cameron, et al., 2010:52, 54). Although these voices can never be heard 'individually' but are always overlapping, it is however, the normative voice – scriptures, the creeds, official church teachings and liturgies – "...that is a critical voice in the dynamic quartet..." (Cameron, et al., 2010:55). Not only does the normative voice give the contextual background (history of practices and traditions behold by communities over generations), but it also

value and applicability of all insights gained during the action research undertaken here and may serve as added elements of future similar research in contexts which allows for their inclusion.

1.7   Contribution of the study

The findings of this study contribute to the praxis of people and community development on both a theoretical, theological and practical level. By drawing on and integrating literature from related fields to construct theory and researched-based methods that can be used in the spiritual dimension of practice, 'second phase literature' is produced (Derezotes, 2006:2). The utilisation of existing knowledge, such as Weyers' guidelines (1991:130–149) to create an integrated practice framework,[53] falls in the category of 'second phase literature'. Such a framework would fulfil the need for in-depth and research-based knowledge to prompt community development practitioners to acknowledge and utilise the spiritual dimension of community development practice in general, but especially in the context of a faith community. Second, it would leave space for the incorporation of creative, bottom up approaches, succinctly argued for by Ife (1998:xiv):

> Community work is, at heart, a creative exercise, and it is impossible to prescribe creativity. Rather, one can establish theoretical understandings, a sense of vision, and an examination of the nature of practice, in the hope that this will stimulate a positive, informed, creative, critical and reflective approach to community work.

Thirdly, this study's findings are in accordance with Celia Kourie's distinct argument that (contempory) spirituality needs to be seen in a much wider context than that of "piety" of "otherwordliness". In fact, spirituality should be seen to "affect all areas of society, including the business world, education, health care, the arts, ecology, politics, religion,

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provides an authentic, legitimate norm for the reflection on practice. Bearing all four voices in mind allows for exploration between practitioners, church leaders and 'professional' theologians in a way which is rich and helpful both in the practice and theory of theology (Cameron, et al., 2010:147–148).

[53] A practice model (based on in-depth, research based knowledge) provides a classification or categorisation of the existing relationships between variables, thus enhancing practitioners' understanding of what actions could be expected from them under specific circumstances (Weyers, 1991:131). However, presenting suggestions and guidelines in a more flexible 'practice framework' is a less prescriptive method of presenting an approach to community development, since it allows for more interpretative freedom (Ife, 1998:xiii, 249–250). A practice framework equips professionals to deliver more effective, client-centred and accountable services by presenting them with information on the focus, strategies, intervention forms, methods and techniques – e.g. tools for spiritual assessments (Weyers, 1991:131; Hodge, 2003:2).

and particulate the academy … a force for personal and societal transformation."(Kourie 2006:19)

Therefore, anticipation is that the 'second phase data' presented in this study – specifically the proposed normative guidelines based on theological reflection and the integrated praxis framework affirming the centrality of spirituality in personal and community transformation – would provide the theoretical foundation for a normative-based, innovative and transformative approach to people and community development.

1.8   Defining the key concepts

Without a doubt research that encompasses three different fields presents several challenges – one of which is to find an acceptable 'language' by conceptualising the key concepts relevant to the research within the context of the study. A brief explication of each of these concepts serves to orientate the reader for the purpose of the study, to be further substantiated in the relevant chapters.

1.8.1   Spirituality

Referring to the "*raison-d'être* of one's existence, the meaning and values to which one subscribes" (Kourie, 2006:19), the term spirituality is widely used in both popular and scholarly terms. In its wider sense spirituality can be seen as "...*an attempt to find, or grow towards, an integration of the holy or spiritual dimension with all other areas of living"* (Jill Robson in Ludik, 1998:14). Since everybody embodies a spirituality – whether "nihilistic, materialistic, humanistic of religious" (Kourie, 2006:19), spirituality could be seen from various perspectives. Spirituality is both personal and transcendental; individual-focused, yet inclusive relational; providing a reason for living and a sense of purpose, whilst determining one's conceptualisation of how to live and which values to ascribe to (cf. Koenig, 2007:5; Kourie, 2000:12).

Spirituality lies deeper in the human soul than religious edification – spirit encompasses religion (cf. Anderson, 2003:11; Baker & Miles-Watson, 2008:448).[54] Hodge (2003:13) states that religion and spirituality are often used interchangeably, but that they are in essence distinct concepts. Religion[55] refers to those institutionalised

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[54] Cf. also Chapter 4, section 4.3: Distinction between spirituality/religion; Chapter 5, section 5.2.4.2, footnote 40: Religion/faith/spirituality as interrelated concepts.

[55] Religion provides people with a creed of do's and don'ts; it is community-oriented and responsibility-oriented; it can be divisive and unpopular; and – with a view to research – it is possible to define and measure 'religion' (Koenig, 2007:5). For individuals, subjecting themselves to religious institutions, practices and rituals, religion is a way in which a sense of order in this world is formed and maintained

forms, rituals, beliefs and practices flowing from an internal subjective reality (Hodge, 2003:13).

It is this 'internal subjective reality' – the personal and relational side of the practices and beliefs – that characterises 'spirituality' (Ver Beek, 2000:32). Spirituality is "…a relationship with God (or whatever is held to be the Ultimate or Transcendent) that fosters a sense of meaning, purpose and mission in life" (Hodge, 2003:14) – the space where an individual becomes aware of the mystery of God (the Ultimate/Creator). Understanding 'Spirit' as 'the breath of life', spirituality can be seen as "…the way humans respond to the breath of life," inspired by the Spirit (Swinton, 2001:23; Baker & Miles-Watson, 2008:447). Thus spirituality can be described as follows:

> Spirituality is an inspired journey into both a space and relationship with the supernatural or transcendental that provides meaning and a basis for personal and communal reflection, decisions, and action in response to the connection with 'the breath of life' (cf. Kourie, 2006:23; Hodge, 2003:14; Ver Beek, 2000:32; Swinton, 2001:23).[56]

Spirituality is in essence an attempt to grow in consciousness, to become more sensitive – to self, to others, to non-human creations and to God (Kourie, 2000:12). As such one's spiritual basis has a discernable effect upon one's relationship to self, nature, other and the Ultimate/Creator (Hodge, 2003:14) – noticeably also the major focus areas of community development which are people-centred and participatory.

In the context of this study, with its final stages unfolding in the discipline of practical theology, it is vital to distinguish *Christian* spirituality. According to Eugene Peterson (2003:vii), Christian spirituality is differentiated from secular spirituality through the incorporation of the person and/or gospel of Jesus Christ and the working of the Holy Spirit, as documented in the Holy Scripture and read and meditated on for nearly two thousand years (:vii). Seen from a Biblical perspective, spirituality is "...human life as it is entered, addressed, confronted, saved, healed, and blessed by the living God – God's Spirit breathed into human lives" (:viii). And, its validity having

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(Baker & Miles-Watson, 2008:450). A consequence of participating in religious practices or rituals is that it shapes the individual's life and could develop spirituality – removing one for a moment from one's time-bound finite life and connecting one with a timeless truth (Baker & Miles-Watson, 2008:452).

[56] Swinton identifies five central features of spirituality which in a sense describes the 'spiritual journey', starting with the search for meaning or significance in life; moving to value (a code of conduct and belief in values of goodness, truth and beauty). The next 'steps' are those of transcendence and connecting (with the spirit of others, God, nature) and finally that of becoming (who one is) (Swinton, 2001:56; Baker & Miles-Watson, 2008:448–449).

been tested (and witnessed) against the reality of actual lives – by "[e]very kind and sort of Christian … against every kind and sort of circumstance and condition of living…", far from being a lifeless theoretical construct, spirituality is alive: "a spirituality in action" (:vii).

Therefore, *Christian* spirituality can be described as lived experience of God – "...a style of walking in the Holy Spirit" (Anderson, 2003:123). It encompasses the whole of life, as it helps one to "...discover the transcendent meaning of everyday life including our work, relationships, life in the church and the world" (Stevens & Green, 2003:x). It is life-changing and hope-giving, enabling one to be fully alive in the present, however challenging that may be, as seen in Kourie's (2000:5) definition:

> [Christian spirituality] is an invitation to life … a call to rediscover our humanity in the presence of God and the Christian community in order to live as credible witnesses of God's kingdom in the context of a challenging and, often, broken world.

The concept of a loving God who is the subject, the object and the means of true spirituality, and our response to His flow of love in terms of living according to 'kingdom principles' or literally in the kingdom of God, is an underlying one found in many recent definitions of spirituality.[57] The rekindled awareness of God's kingship and 'new spirituality' would spill over into our communities, leading to the emergence of new kinds of faith communities – virile, nurturing, courageous, and of profound spiritual formation. These faith communities could lead the social and ecological transformation.

Christian spirituality opens us up to experience God's blessing and the guidance of his Holy Spirit in our lives. It encompasses all of our lives – it calls us to re-discover God (personified in the life of His son Jesus Christ), ourselves in our humanness, those around us and our environment in the presence of God. It invites us to 'walk' our daily lives in the Holy Spirit – according to the kingdom principles of love, grace and abundance. As Christian practitioners we are commissioned through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, to live in the power of the Spirit – participating in God's work on earth and in community (cf. Karecki, 2009:28). Thus spirituality is the very essence of the 'me-and-God'-relationship, laying the foundation for the 'me-in-community' relationship. In

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[57] The 'kingdom focus' resonates in the Anderson's definition stressing walking in the Holy Spirit and the relationship with God (Anderson, 2003:123). It is echoed in Peterson's (2005:18–19) view that spirituality is about God being at the heart of all relationships. It unfolds in McLaren's (2007:90, 296) envisioning of Christian spirituality as an invitation to live inspired by the vision of a new world brought about by the good news of the kingdom of God. This, he says, is a new spirituality following the rules of love, grace and abundance; a new way of living in the sacred presence of God, integrated with all of life – not a different space-time universe – but in the here and now (McLaren, 2007:296).

Chapter 4 Christian spirituality specifically in relation with community, is explored in greater depth.

1.8.2   Community development

At the heart of community development is our relationship with the world we live in. To be human is essentially to exist in concrete social relationships or a social paradigm: to be concretely 'the person' belonging to 'these people' while at the same time open to and responsible for the good of all people. The social connectedness, however, spills over into the physical environment – thus humans are embedded in a social and physical environment – literally to be interconnected in a 'web of life' (cf. Osmer, 2008:16–17).

The person-environment construct encompasses the inter-relatedness of human beings with one another and with their environment and emphasises our dependence on biodiversity for our survival and quality of life. These relationships of exchanges and continuous transactions resembles a process of 'fitting' together, as people express their needs and requirements (needs-perspective), and, in turn contribute to the environment (strengths perspective) (Gitterman & Germain, 2008:52). Similarly, the environment offers both resources as well as challenges for the individual to handle (ecological perspective). The balance or 'fit'[58] between people and the environment and the give-and-take processes generated by this mutuality becomes an important focus, determining to a large degree the well-being of the community. The inter-relatedness and process of exchange is reflected in Jim Ife's view of community development:

> Community development is not about defining and establishing something called the community – it is an ongoing and complex process of dialogue, exchange, consciousness raising, education and action aimed at helping the people concerned to determine and develop their own version of community (Ife, 1998:94).

The phrase "…their own version of community" immediately raises the question of meaning – which clearly would differ from person to person and community to community, and which can only be defined and restored to the 'prescription' of those involved (Coetzee, 1986b:106). It follows that there is no single version or method or recipe for development – it will differ from group to group and community to

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[58] Coulton (1981:26) describes the 'fit' as follows "…person-environment fit refers to the degree of congruence or correspondence between an individual's needs, capabilities, and aspirations and the resources, demands, and opportunities characteristic of the environment".

community. It is a complex process, full of dilemmas and problems which require unique and creative solutions. In the context of this study,

> Community development is the integrated people-centred, participative, planned evolution of all aspects of community well-being, including the economic, social, environmental, cultural, political and spiritual spheres (cf. Frank & Smith, 1999:2; Ife, 1998:94, 132).

The notion of integrated development links with the previously discussed interconnectedness: the person-environment fit is the interface where development takes place, thus involving or integrating the total 'web of life'.

The second notion, that of 'people centred' development[59] is based on the principle that all people have the right to live in a life-world which is meaningful to them – and towards which they can actively contribute (Coetzee, 1986a:5). People-centredness brings with it the attentiveness to human needs, strengths, aspirations, creativity, wisdom, participation, relationships, and a strong belief that people should grow to realise their full potential (cf. Korten, 1984:300; Davids, 2005a:20). To be able to grow, people need a critical awareness or consciousness of their own "potential to initiate and manage positive change for the benefit of oneself and others" (Davids, 2005a:20). Therefore the purpose of community development is to facilitate or guide people towards growth, equity, and well-being, by acknowledging and encompassing the richness and complexity of human life and of the experience of community (cf. Ife, 1998:131; Korten, 1984:299; Graham, 2009:10–11). Indicators of well-being (and thus potential focus areas of community development) are family relationships, income, and work, networks of community and friends, health, personal freedom and personal values and philosophy of life (Graham, 2009:10).

The third notion – participation – resonates with Ife's view that people should determine their own version of community and thus well-being. A main objective of community development is to enhance the ability of communities to respond effectively to their needs within the social, economical, cultural, personal/spiritual and political spheres (Ife, 1998:132). In other words, community members should be equipped to become full partners in determining their own future. The partnership aspect of development offers the opportunity for the 'outsiders' (researcher, facilitator or community practitioners) and 'insiders' (indigenous community members) to have equal

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[59] Cf. Chapter 5, section 5.2.2: Detailed discussion of development focussed on people.

control and to recognise the value of each other's contribution to accomplish what neither can do alone (cf. Cassano & Dunlop, 2005:5–6).[60]

The fourth notion, planned evolution, implies a process or strategy which unfolds to bring about a more desirable state or a better person-environment fit. Since social relationships are central to community and the well-being of individuals, one of the key objectives is to increase social contact and mutual support among community members, thus improving community cohesion and building a sense of community belonging. It also entails the incorporation of diversity as a component of community building, working towards an increased sense of compassion (being tolerant and accepting of differences) (Stehlik & Chenoweth, 2005:2).

A final objective – arguably the most important in the scope of this study – is the development of a consciousness or sense of the sacred and a respect for spiritual values as an essential part of people's (and the community's) lives (Stehlik & Chenoweth, 2005:2; Ife, 1998:172–173). Community well-being is only possible if communities have a consciousness of their interrelatedness – each creature being "… in symbiotic relationship with every other and in such a way that any act reverberates out and affects the whole" (Fretheim, 2005:19).[61] In the African context this interrelatedness is captured in the following saying: *Matlo go sha mabapi,* translating into: "A burning hut affects those in close proximity". Thus, what affects me, affects my neighbour (Qalinge, 2003:3).

Acknowledging the inter-connectedness of systems, Ife (1998:132–133) argues for a holistic approach utilising an integrated 'model' for community development. He identifies six different spheres or dimensions of community development, namely the social, political, economical, environmental, cultural, and the personal/spiritual spheres. The critical point is that *all* of these dimensions of community are vitally important and fundamental to a truly healthy and functioning community (Ife, 1998:133–134). Even though the dimensions are not always distinct, they are in interaction with each other in complex ways, thus emphasising the symbiotic interrelatedness of all parts – crucial to integrated or *balanced development* (Ife, 1998:173–174). The multi-focal and multi-

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[60] The notion of equal partnership between insiders and outsiders is comparable to the roles in the TAR-process, i.e. the researcher, the practitioners and the community participants (cf. section 1.1, footnote 10).

[61] Professor Terrence E Fretheim, Old Testament scholar, is currently connected to the Lutheran Seminary faculty of Old Testament. His work *God and World in the Old Testament: A Relational Theology of Creation* (2005) helped shape the researcher's understanding of God's relationship of with people in community, and community transformation (cf. also Chapter 5, section 5.2.2; 5.3).

dimensional approach has been incorporated in the praxis framework with special reference to the centrality of (Christian) spirituality, as discussed in Chapter 6.

1.8.3   Practical theology

The field of practical theology was first developed by Schleiermacher (1768–1834), followed by Karl Immanuel Nitzsch (1787–1868) who defined it as the "theory of the church's practice of Christianity" (Anderson, 2001:24). During the previous century is was Karl Barth's classic work *A Theology of Pastoral Care* and the work of Don Browning that greatly influenced current conception of practical theology (Anderson, 2001:25). Since the early sixties a process of rethinking the approach to practical theology has taken place by discarding "…the old deductive approach, thinking from the Bible and dogmatic theology towards the praxis of the church as an application of the deductive truths" (Pieterse, 2009:7). There is a growing consensus amongst theologians to move towards an inductive approach – where "…experience in the contextual situation and the praxis of the church and society" now dictate how Scripture and theological theories are approached (Pieterse, 2009:8). It is in this space of interaction between the concrete experiences and the theological interpreted message of the Scripture that the interpretation (hermeneutics) towards the development of theological-action theories for praxis takes place.[62]

For the purpose of this study the following summation of practical theology by Anderson (2001:22, 23) is relevant:

> Practical theology is a dynamic process of reflective, critical inquiry into the praxis of the church in the world and God's purposes for humanity, carried out in the light of Christian Scripture and tradition, and in critical dialogue with the other sources of knowledge. It seeks to guide the church in its ministering in its contemporised context – thus it is something lived and experienced by a particular community.

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[62] Frans Wijsen (2005:108–123) refers to the longstanding debate within the Ecumenical Association of the Third World Theologians (EATWOT) on "the divide between 'academic' theology and 'applied' theology, and between practitioners of the two forms of theology, academics and activists" (:108), stating that, in his opinion this 'false' dilemma is solved, at least in part, by the pastoral circle or spiral. According to him, the practical-theological spiral, "…is not just a pastoral method aimed at problem solving but also a strategy for developing theories in the scientific sense of the word – a grounded theory approach to theology" (:109). With reference to African theologians, Wijsen says, "[they] may become less hesitant to accept scientific methods if they are shown that academic theology can be very practical and relevant to transformation of church and society" (:110). Many third word theologians find the distinction of popular, pastoral (practical) and professional (academical) theologies artificial or even unethical, since in their minds scientific research should serve the needs of the people (and not the need to know more of the academics).

Since practical theology is currently seen as contextual, implicating that there are many different contexts for ministering actions – it follows that reflecting on and developing theory is an ongoing element of practical theology (cf. Pieterse, 1981:155). The contextualization of theology and the development of new theory are of import in the multi-religious African context (Oduyoye, 1993:109). Rather than reflecting from a so-called universal or classical Christian theological stance, theological reflection should acknowledge the temporal situation to address the human condition and reflect upon what God is doing about the situation to alleviate it (Oduyoye, 1993:113–114). Practical theology should thus "…reflect upon what God is doing in Africa, and how they recognize the gospel at work" (Oduyoye, 1993:114), recognizing that this active or dynamic theological process is an ongoing process, since God continues to reveal his nature to people even after Jesus' death on the cross. Through His resurrection and the Pentecost, the true empowerment of the Holy Spirit became clear and is continuing to empower the ministry. Consequently, each generation is shaped by their specific historical experiences, going through a process of reflection upon and adaptation of inherited truths and creating or disclosing new truths (Oduyoye, 1993:118).

Practical theology addresses what is (reality) and what might be (ideal) by reflecting upon what is normative in Jesus Christ,[63] as the inspired source of the written Word and the objective reality of Christ as the praxis of the Holy Spirit in the context of ministry (cf. Cameron, et al., 2010:20; Anderson, 2001:38–39; Sobrino, 2005:xiv–xvii). It seeks to find these revelations within the context of life, asking what relevance it has for living in the now, and how it should shape their actions (*"How then do we live?"*). Indeed, practical theology has as its central task "to propose anew the deep *connectedness* of the Christian theological tradition and human experience" (Cameron, et al., 2010:13). This is done by reflecting on Scripture and concrete experiences – finding oneself in the 'interactive loop' between 'theory' (interpreting God's Word) and 'practice' (the human spirit giving substance to the 'Word' in real-life situations). It

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[63] Jon Sobrino (2005:i–xvii) emphasises the importance for practical theologians/researchers to "…become affected by reality in order to analyze it properly", thus reclaiming the centrality of justice and injustice, by focussing on how, according to the Scriptures, Jesus of Nazareth deals with these issues. Jesus shows indignation, denouncing oppression and hypocrisy; takes sides against injustice; and expresses His love and mercy freely to the extent that He was "…crucified by human injustice and resurrected by the justice of God" (:xvi). Practical theologians need to follow the example of Jesus – His love for and defence of the oppressed and His struggle to turn that oppression around in real life. This can be done by firstly "getting a grip on reality" (:ix) by means of being truly and actively involved in reality; secondly, by taking on the burden of the reality, thus being willing to take charge of reality in order to transform it (praxis); thirdly, by taking ethical responsibility for reality, thus accept the demands and bear the hardships; and finally, by letting reality carry them, thus accept the grace (guidance of the Holy Spirit) in order to be enlightened by reality (:ix–x).

constitutes praxis. Praxis is thus action informed by the *telos* of God's Kingdom rules (Anderson, 2001: 21–20, 49–50; Pieterse, 1981:142). Theological reflection[64] is key to the process, since it is through reflection on life that the human spirit (practitioner/parisher) comes in touch with the divine revelations from which new insight arises (Oduyoye, 1993:112).

The focal area of practical theology is the praxis of the church and Christian faith community as it interacts with the praxis of the world or life itself. It encompasses all areas of life – work, sexuality, marriage, education, recreation, environmental care, youth, ageing, dying – in its efforts to articulate the grounds for practical living (Anderson, 2001:26, 32). Functioning at the critical interface between the church and the world where it is confronted by the interaction of persons and contexts of personal and social formation and transformation, practical theology is necessarily interdisciplinary, drawing on hermeneutic aids from various fields, such as the humanities and social sciences (Cameron, et al., 2010:29–30; Osmer & Schweitzer, 2003:2, 6–7; Anderson, 2001:33).

It would seem that the field of practical theology could provide the contextual space for fruitful reflection and development of theory and practice guidelines in terms of "What then should we do?" In the marginalised African communities – the focal point of this study – practical theology provides the scope for examining "[t]he rising spirit of selfhood found among the poor … reflected today not only in beliefs and practices they create for themselves, but also in theological expression…" manifesting in a "theology of the poor by the poor" (Oduyoye, 1993:115).[65] This reflective and critical, yet sensitive inquiry[66] could provide the foundation for the praxis framework.

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[64] The Pastoral Circle – a model of action-reflection inspiring to wise change (Cameron, et al., 2010:27) – has been introduced in 1993 by Joe Holland and Peter Henriot as one of the key processes or tools for theological reflection. The circle guides the reflective process firstly, to interpret particular episodes; secondly to focus on relevant ethic principles, guidelines and rules; and thirdly, to provide normative guidance by exploring the past and present practices. Kritzinger refers to five moments within the praxis cycle (his preferred term) namely the involvement, context analysis, theological reflection, spirituality and planning (Kritzinger, 2002:149). Karecki argues for the central position of the 'spirituality moment' – she is of the opinion that all other moments are influenced or informed by spirituality (Karecki, 2009:32). Cf. also Chapter 6, section 6.4: Application in the praxis framework.

[65] Cf. Chapter 3 where 'the voice of the people' is heard through their statements, constituting a 'theology of the poor'.

[66] Wijsen (2005:114–115) classifies the practical-theological spiral as theory developing research, following a design that allows the researcher to start wherever he/she sees fit; moving backward and forward as necessary. This approach sets no starting point or end point, but comes to a conclusion at some stage, which, again, is open to further criticism. According to Wijsen, "the practical-theological spiral is best seen as a grounded theory approach to theology, based on a real dialectic relation between data sources (qualitative or quantitative empirical facts gathered through field work) and knowledge sources (existing insights and theories developed previously by others that can be studied through secondary research)" (:114). The focus on the research object – "reflection based on experience and experience

1.8.4   Praxis

The paradigm of praxis emerged during the nineteenth century as an American philosophy (Osmer, 2008:75). It, however, has its roots as far back as Aristotle who differentiated between *Theoria* (concerned with knowing for its own sake) and *Praxis* (acting with the goal to change the conditions) (Anderson, 2001:4). The act of praxis also includes the final meaning or *telos* – in other words the act is towards and informed by the final goal (Anderson, 2001:50). Kemmis (1985:38) views praxis as informed, committed action – a response to a present, immediate and problematic action context. It has its roots in the commitment of the practitioner (such as theologians, social workers or community workers) to wise and prudent action in a practical situation. Praxis can only develop with direct exposure to these situations or contexts – it is by participating in real life or community that we learn to consider and evaluate the lives of others and how our actions in turn influence their lives (Graham, 2009:18). Thus praxis is about how practices shape our moral selves and build ethical practices sensitive to others and lives well-lived, whether that is framed in terms of *telos* and informed by our reflection regarding what is prudent or 'wise'. From a Christian perspective, Graham (2009:20–21) argues that:

> For Christians, all human activities of healing, nurturing, sustaining and transforming are, ultimately, varieties of "God-talk" in action and the place where God's grace is shown forth in human relations. The primary language of theology is articulated in the practical wisdom of human care; only at a second stage does it find expression in systematically doctrinal propositions.

When this response – informed, committed actions – comes in the form of a strategic action informed by a 'practical theory' and is in turn informed by and transforming the theory which informed it, it constitutes a praxis model. Models are constructed with the goal to promote insight or to focus attention on a specific segment of a reality. A praxis model or framework helps to inform practice and for that purpose the variables are organised according to specific criteria which stay constant. This guides practitioners in the sense that it provides definitions and descriptions as well as predicting what can be expected under specific circumstances. By focusing on the process, values, relationships and techniques, practice models provide a criterion for systemising literature; make

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based on reflection" (:114) or praxis (implying co-constituting theory), brings the actor (people/community doing things in a physical setting or situation) back into the study of religion and theology, making "…the practical-theological spiral very different from a systematic-theological approach, which is primarily interested in the contents of faith, more particular in a coherent interpretation of those content" (:115).

knowledge more accessible and practical; help to analyse complicated and complex practical situations; and provide broad guidelines for implementation (cf. Weyers, 1991:131; Hefferman, 1979:47; Compton & Galaway, 1989:1–4).[67]

1.9   Summary and outline of the chapters

In this overview of the call to action it was shown how the impetus for this study was embedded in the praxis of community development in South Africa, inciting the awareness of the disregard for the spiritual dimension in the lives of people and the community. The question of how to address this exclusion instigated the goals of the study: to develop a triangular theoretical construct between the disciplines of social work, practical theology, and spirituality; and to further explore the practice of transforming communities through inclusion of a spiritual dimension. The utilisation of an action research approach and methodology incorporating the TAR process was motivated. Lastly the key concepts – spirituality, with specific reference to Christian spirituality; (people-centred) community development; and practical theology, with reference to theological reflection and praxis – were defined. The limitations and possible contribution of the research were also discussed.

This dissertation is structured according to Osmer's (2008:11) four tasks for practical theological interpretation, with each chapter depicting the response to his four focus questions. In view of the proposed alternative research design integrating social work and theological action research, in Chapter 2 the underlying theoretical basis, evolution and actual design and methodology is first outlined. Chapter 3 addresses the question: "What is going on in this context?" describing the field research and findings are described. In Chapter 4 the interpretative task of situation analysis is addressed. The question "Why is it going on?" is answered by analysing the participants' response regarding the place of spirituality in their lives. In Chapter 5 the focus is the normative task, utilising theological reflection to answer the question: "What should be going on and what can we learn from Scripture regarding this?" The literature analysis and development of the triangular theoretical construct (incorporating the disciplines of social work community development, practical theology and spirituality) are depicted. In Chapter 6 the focus is on the question: "How might this practice be shaped?" A praxis framework for the incorporation of a spiritual dimension is proposed. In conclusion recommendations for practitioners with regard to the implementation of spiritual component are given.

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[67] Cf. Chapter 6, section 6.4: Praxis framework.

In the quest to find answers to questions "*What* is going on?" and "*How* can 'what is going on' be changed?" (Gitterman & Germain, 2008:56), it is appropriate to reflect on the words of John Swinton (2003:7):

> Human beings are not simply blobs of flesh, endlessly at the mercy of random, blind natural forces. Rather they are deeply relational beings whose spiritual longings and desires form the very heart of their existence. Only when that spiritual dynamic is recognised and compassionately acknowledged can human beings be seen as meaningful valued creatures with both temporal and transcendent significance.

Faced then with the paradox of people and communities' woundedness and inner power, this study has as its ultimate goal to uncover and create tools, within the context of community development, for such compassionate involvement with people in communities in answer to the *"How can what we have been doing with people and communities, be changed for the better?"*. It calls for listening to and acknowledging of what is: *both* the cries for help *and* the shared inner wisdom of people. In the following two chapters, the reality of what has been going on is reflected in the description of the research process, field work and findings.

CHAPTER 2

LINKING PRAXIS AND THEORY:
AN ACTION RESEARCH PARADIGM

I have always been more interested in understanding the process in and by which things come about than in the product itself
(Paulo Freire, 2006:10).

2.1   Introduction

As was shown in the first chapter, at the heart of this study lies the exploration of spirituality as a possible resource for dealing with challenges of community living. The interdisciplinary nature as well as the need to explore spirituality within a community context denoted one of the key challenges of this study: to find the appropriate research design and methodology.

After consideration of factors such as the essentiality of the inclusion of the people's voices and experiences, space for in-depth partnerships, and reflective practice, the decision was taken to work within a praxis approach and to utilise an action research design. According to Stringer (2007:1), action research is "… a systematic approach to investigation that enables people to find effective solutions to problems they confront in their everyday lives". Since the approach is open, flexible and allows for diverse voices to be heard, it lends itself to working through the complexity of community development praxis situations – such as being addressed in this study.

Although the initial action research design followed fell clearly into the discipline of social work community development, on closer scrutiny the methodology developed for Theological Action Research (TAR)[1] proofed informative and useable. TAR combines features of action research and practical theology to add a new *theological* perspective to reflection. In addition to utilising action research processes and skills to acknowledge the significance of the experiences and input of the participants, TAR also provides a particular framework for the theological understanding or the making of connections between theology and practice (Cameron, et al., 2010:48–51).

Given the relative unfamiliarity of these designs in the South African context, it was deemed necessary to include an in-depth discussion of the research design and

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[1] Theological Action Research (TAR) is a recent ground breaking practical theology methodology introduced by a team of researchers: Helen Cameron, Deborah Bhatti, Catherine Duce, James Sweeney and Clare Watkins in their 2010-publication: *Talking about God in Practice*. Refer to Chapter 1, footnote 1 for more detail.

methodology. In this chapter the utilisation of an (interdisciplinary) action research approach (incorporating aspects of TAR) to investigate the role of spirituality in the community, is depicted. First, by reflecting briefly on the confrontation with the reality of peoples' spirituality, which directly influenced the choice of research design and second, by addressing the impact of the researcher's worldview on the implementation of the research[2] – with special reference to practicing as a non-African in predominantly African communities. Third, an overview of the current praxis research approach and the motivation for the choice of an alternative research paradigm and methodology – namely an integrated social work and theology design – is discussed. Fourth, the timeframe and progression of this study is outlined, explaining the two phases encompassed in this study, namely Phase I involving the pilot group in KwaZulu Natal and Phase II involving the sample groups in Franschhoek. Finally, the role of the action researcher – presenting a number of paradoxes – is addressed.

The in-depth discussion of the research process as it unfolded during the fieldwork – illustrating the interplay between social work and theological action research[3] – is discussed in Chapter 3 and the hermeneutical interpretation of the findings (according to TAR's four voices/Osmer's (2008) hermeneutical circle) is depicted in Chapter 4.

2.2   The moment of insertion: Being faced with the reality of peoples' spirituality

The first question that needed to be addressed concerned the communities who stood to benefit by the research. The researcher had to be mindful of their reality which, as indicated earlier, presented a duality. On the one hand, there were individuals or groups whom, despite extreme adverse conditions, everything being against them, actually 'made it'.[4]

On the other hand, there were frequent encounters with people struggling (and often not succeeding) to survive in the face of overwhelming poverty, a severe lack of resources and the onslaught of Africa's most powerful killers such as TB, malaria,

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[2] This is in adherence to the action research and TAR approaches, deeming the researcher's subjective perceptions, interpretations and feelings as legitimate data, which has an important influence on how the research is conducted, e.g. how partnerships are established and data is interpreted (cf. Cassano & Dunlop, 2005:2; Strydom 2002:420–423; Cameron, et al., 2010:55–56).

[3] Cf. Figure 1 (Chapter 1, section 1.5).

[4] In almost every community, we came across people 'who have made it against all odds': Five mothers, each with a severely disabled child, wanting to start an outreach project to offer support to other mothers in similar situations; a group of unemployed people who initiated an HIV and AIDS Care Project for those in their community who could no longer take care of themselves; and a young man who lost both his parents at a very young age and had to work (hauling bags of coal) to pay his own schooling, and who subsequently, started his own gardening service in a township, employing five to seven fellow youths by the time we met him (at the age of twenty).

measles and HIV and AIDS.[5] Together with widespread malnutrition and loss of environmental resources, these factors contribute to human pain and suffering, the loss of productivity or income, growing poverty and inequality, the hampering of children's schooling and social development, and finally, a total loss of hope and vision of a future (Shah, 2005:2; Sacco, 1999:2–5). According to Haddad (2001:9), this is true especially in female-headed households – representing 41% of South African households – reflected also in the sample group representatives, being but one, female.[6]

Paradoxically, as will be shown by examples given in chapter 3, it was precisely within this context of deprived and apparent resource-depleted communities, that the totally unexpected ways in which people *do* cope and sustain themselves, were observed. From this it was concluded that it would be worthwhile to discover (and eventually anthropomorphize) the source of their strength. Although a preliminary literature search into existing models/frameworks of community development shed very little light on this phenomena, initial observation and interaction with some of these people uncovered the prevalence of daily spiritual living of a lived spirituality.[7]

The challenge was to find strategies and the methodology allowing for flexibility and sensitivity when engaging with people in the community. Being an 'outsider' aggravated this challenge.[8] In part, says Beverly Haddad (1998:18), the "…complex

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[5] Almost 25.8 million people living with HIV and AIDS; millions of people infected with and dying from TB; almost 3000 children dying per day in Southern Africa from malaria (Shah, 2005:1) or other diseases such as severe diarrhoea, measles and meningitis.

[6] Cf. Chapter 3, section 3.4.2: Selection of sample group.

[7] Cf. Chapter 3, section 3.2: Illustrative material on spiritual strength, i.e. women from Atteridgeville.

[8] Cf. the researcher's experience as 'outsider' when lecturing at the University of Venda during the eighties: The year is 1988. The place a classroom, University of Venda (Limpopo Province, South Africa). The view as observed from within the room, three 'mamas',[8] hacking away on the land and singing as they work. The setting is me in front of a small group of third-year Social Work students, teaching marital counselling and the sentence pending: "When the children reach their teen years, each child wants her/his own room" – neatly founded on the excellent work of Duvall and Miller (the text book I have only just utilised during my UNISA course on the same topic). Then it happens: the words turn around, centring somewhere inside me in a yet to be identified space. What I can identify is the total absurdity of what I have been involved with: 'teaching' these children of Africa how the Americans live their lives and worse, contemplating that this is going to be of any relevance and help in their practice as Social Workers in South Africa! At this moment my 'quest for wisdom' took off and, as it turned out years later, the first research question underlying this study was coined: *"How can I as a European South African social worker/lecturer interact with my fellow African Social Work students in such a way that it is of significance to them in their future as social workers in South Africa?"* For the next 20 years I trudged this path, journeying on both a personal and professional level through the desert and wilderness of the South African reality of political upheaval, souring expectations, flailing hope, rising poverty and an ever widening gorge of muddy social, economical, political and spiritual disillusionment between the 'have's' and the 'have not's'. Being involved in student training and

and difficult task" facing researchers/practitioners when attempting to confront the realities of South African communities, can be ascribed to the differences that exist between people:

> For me, as a privileged woman attempting to hear the voices of those who are marginalized in South Africa, the task is a particularly sensitive one. Not only must my subjectivity be foregrounded, but I also need to allow myself to be partially constituted by my work with groups that are 'other' than me. Their voices and experiences need to shape my voice and experience. Only then can I risk representation (Haddad, 1998:18).

Being deeply aware of and sensitive to one's 'otherness' and subjectivity – shaped in part by one's background and perspectives – and finding a research paradigm that accommodates such 'subjectiveness', are prerequisites of entering in dialogue with others. Given the interwovenness of researcher's worldview, the choice of research design and unfolding of the process, the second question to be addressed was: How does the researcher's worldview impact on the study?

2.3   Relevance of researcher's worldview to the study

Contrary to the traditional claims to the objectivity of the researcher, it is now widely acknowledged that the research design, process, choice of methodology, interpretation of findings and eventually the outcome, will be influenced by how the researcher customarily looks at, understands, deals with and, ultimately, adapts to "what life throws at him/her" (cf. Sherwood, 2002b:10). Underlying these interpretations of, and response to reality, is the researcher' worldview – the basic set of beliefs or assumptions defining his/her perception of the nature of the 'world', her/his place in it and the range of possible relationships to that world (Guba & Lincoln in Mark, 1996:206). It is clear that if one's reality changes (as it does when conducting research which exposes one to new contexts and realities) one's worldview will be affected. This is especially important in the field of community development, where the practitioner is faced with the very fabric of life that contributed to his/her own shaping: "… a particular understanding of progress, health, modern education, family life, democracy, participation, decision making, market reality, economical principles and perspectives" (Myers, 1999:59). To 'know oneself', implies the articulation of one's worldview – a basic requirement for all involved in development work and research

community development for most of these years, a second question was formulated: *"How can I have an impact on the lives of people – enhancing their ability to have hope and meet their own needs?"*

(cf. Myers, 1999:58–59). In order to fully comprehend the reciprocal influence of the researcher's worldview and the unfolding of an action research process, it is necessary to briefly look at the formation of worldview.

Sherwood (2002b:9) states that a worldview "give faith-based answers to a set of ultimate and grounding questions…" leading towards an understanding of the universe and persons, that helps individuals to 'make some sort of sense' out of their experiences. In turn, this understanding defines their relationships with social institutions, nature, objects, other people and spirituality (Barker in Thabede, 2008:234). What is more, an individual's functional assumptions or "pre-experience faith … strongly affects what we perceive (or even look for)" (Sherwood, 2002b:10). However, this pre-experience faith is not complete – it is ever changing through our interaction with the world. Since the world is *living* and changing, each person risk coming away from encounters with the world having their faith and categories somewhat altered or even corrected. This 'altered faith' is brought into the next encounter – thus affecting an ongoing process of interaction with the world (cf. Sherwood, 2002b:10).[9]

Sherwood (2002b:10) further emphasises the importance for practitioners to be conscious, reflective, considered and informed regarding their worldviews: "[T]he most objectivity we can achieve is to be critically aware of our worldview and how it affects our interpretations of the facts." Indeed, the researcher's scholarly interpretive activity plays an integral part in shaping the research process, especially during the initial phases.[10] Apart from presenting the reader with a framework for understanding what is to follow, these brief sketches depict the growing into new insights which gives rise to new ways of thinking and doing – praxis.[11] It is therefore of scientific value and

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[9] Cf. Osmer's (2008:21–23) views, which he expresses with reference to Heidegger's conviction of the existence of intuitive everyday-life interpretative activities in all people and, also, Gadamer's expansion of this "hermeneutical nature" of human beings into the "interpretative dimension of scholarship" by way of his hermeneutic circle culminating in the scholar's fusion of horizons/new understanding and thus new applications/acting.

[10] A case in point is Bevans' discussion of models for contextual theology: he illustrates each contextual model with case studies from practice, introducing his case studies with a brief background sketch of the practitioner or researcher (cf. Bevans, 1992:63–80). This portrayal of the 'protagonists' clearly illustrates how the practitioner or scholar's life up to the time of involvement with practice and research, influences the nature of his/her interaction (hermeneutical process) with the context and study material.

[11] Cochrane, De Gruchy and Petersen (1991:2, 15–16) refer to the contextuality of "the person who carries out the practical theological work and reflection", reiterating that the practitioner is "a being-in-community" who cannot be separated from social or communal existence and influence. This is regarded as of such importance that they propose an additional moment of 'prior faith commitment' as the first moment of the pastoral-hermeneutic circle. The practitioner's "commitment to a particular way of being in the world" encompasses the conscious self-awareness and a self-critical attitude expected of the practitioner. Therefore 'knowing where you stand' is a prerequisite for entering into practical theological activities (and research).

interest to provide a similar background of the researcher in the current research study.

2.3.1   Where do I stand

Over the years in practice of community development, I have formed my own story – depicted here with a view to understand how it interfaced with the research process.

> I was born into an Afrikaner family with a strong missionary background and raised in the hub of *Afrikanerdom* (Stellenbosch). I graduated in Social Work during in the 1970's from the University of Stellenbosch and obtained a master's degree in Social Work in the early 1990's. Although my professional career was greatly enhanced and my beliefs regarding 'apartheid' thoroughly challenged during a three-year stint in Canada (1979–1981), I could still be described as a proper Dutch Reformed white politically moderate middle-of-the-road-social worker/tutor during the 1980's. It was only after lecturing at the University of Venda (a 'black' university), that I truly began to question my understanding of the world I lived in. My unconditional acceptance of everything I was brought up with – including 'church', 'God', 'apartheid', 'family' and 'help' (or social work) – was shaken. I realised that things were not necessarily what they seemed, neither were they what I have been trained to see and accept during my childhood – so deeply entrenched by my family tradition of ministry and missionary work. Over the period of the next ten years a series of life changing experiences on a personal level, exposed me to inner healing processes, pastoral counseling, deliverance healing, grief recovery and narrative therapy. I was challenged to work with multi-cultural students and communities, utilising an array of approaches such as people-centred community development and PRA (participatory rural appraisal). At this time the partnership between me and an indigenous worker (Thembi Mphokeng) commenced and together we integrated healing strategies in the community context. These experiences challenged my traditional Christian worldview. I still believed that God, who is a loving God, created the world and all human beings in His image and it was good. I believe that all people are equal, though not the same – requiring me to treat others with respect and dignity, whilst acknowledging that I cannot pretend to fully comprehend the values and moral obligations of other's, since everyone is also influenced by his/her cultural sensitivity. As Christian I have to recognize that I need the discernment of the Spirit.

Although adhering the Christian faith, my worldview impelled me to work within a paradigm that would provide space for learning from others (as opposed to enter the research as the 'expert') and that acknowledges the equality of all – therefore not enforcing one's belief system on other's in any way. Within such a paradigm each

person has the right to be treated with respect and dignity, and their voice would be heard. This implies that differences, such as cultural background, should be especially heeded.

2.3.2   Being a non-African

In light of the preceding section and since a worldview is based on and informed by cultural beliefs, practices and values – it can be argued that the cultural background of the researcher (i.e. customs, beliefs, values, knowledge and way of life) will impact on the mind-set with which he/she enters into the research process. It follows that being from a different cultural background and operating ('trying to make sense of') according to a worldview dissimilar to that of the research subjects, would hold obvious implications and impediments for the researcher.

This poses specific challenges for researchers working in a multi-cultural society such as South Africa. This study was conducted by a white, female South African in communities comprised of predominantly coloured and black African people.[12] Whilst it could be argued that as an Afrikaans-speaking white person, she could have a fair understanding of culture of Afrikaans-speaking coloured community members and subsequently their worldview, the same did not hold true in the context of the black, 'African' communities.

To highlight this dilemma further, one only needs to heed Thabede's argument that 'a sensitivity' is required when encountering African people, since their African worldview informs the way Africans relate to phenomena, including challenges life presents to African communities (Thabede 2008:233). The virtual impossibility for an outsider (such as the researcher) to be truly sensitive to these elements is highlighted in his further argument that African worldview and Afrocentric worldview could be regarded as synonymous, clarifying the term 'Afrocentric' as referring to "…an idea and a perspective which holds that African people can and should see, study, interpret and interact with people, life, and reality from the vantage point of African people rather than from the vantage point of European people, or … [any] non-African people" (Gray in Thabede, 2008:233). This worldview is informed by and rooted in African culture, reflecting the life experiences, history and traditions of African people as the centre of analysis (Thabede 2008:234). It can be deducted that a European

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[12] Thabede (2008:233) clarifies the use of the concept 'African' by referring to 'African' as "…(Black) people who are residents of South Africa and fall within the Zulu, Xhosa, Sotho, Tsonga and Venda ethnic groups" – thus clearly setting apart the researcher from the researched.

researcher would not be able to adopt a worldview which will enable her/him to perform analyses on such ground.

I harboured a deep-felt sense of heeding this sensitivity. Thus I resolved to allow myself to be guided and informed at all times during the research process by my African, Zulu-speaking colleague/co-facilitator during worksessions, Thembi Mphokeng. Thembi's cultural background (black South African growing up on a rural farm and spending her formative years in a black township) with the added benefit of her ability to converse in all South African languages, rendered her input invaluable with regards to 'opening up', interpreting and analysing the African community members' understanding of their relationships with social institutions, nature, objects, other people and spirituality.[13] The interaction with an African co-worker – even prior to the commencement of the study – contributed vastly to the hermeneutical experience[14] and ultimately, to the choice of research paradigm.

2.4   Situating this study in a Praxis Research Paradigm

Whereas the researcher's worldview determines how she/he relates to the world and its challenges, a research paradigm determines how the researcher relates to the research process – the organisation of her/his observations and reasoning (Fouché & Delport, 2002:266). Inherent to a research paradigm are assumptions about the nature of reality, the relationship of the researcher to those being researched, the role of values in the study and the choice of methodology. The paradigm underpins and directs the total research process, obliging the researcher to be diligent in the choice of the paradigm. The paradigm identified as befitting a study such as the one at hand is the so-called Praxis paradigm.

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[13] A precedent for using an indigenous research partner was found in a comparable research study focusing on disability (another marginalised group) and spirituality. In this study conducted by Boswell, Knight, Hamer and McChesney in 2001, a research partner with a disability was included on the research team to serve as co-facilitator of the research (Boswell, et. al., 2001:3), In the research at hand Thembi Mphokeng fulfilled a similar role as well as that of interpreter, thus enabling the researcher to communicate with and 'hear' directly from the community members their views, requests and input (simultaneously contributing towards meeting the requirements of action research for the partnership with and direct input of the researched). Secondly, in the Boswell, et al. study (2001), the same team member was tasked with identifying and addressing possible unrecognised biases held by the other (non-disabled) research team members during the analysis process – a role which Thembi (from an Afrocentric perspective) fulfilled throughout the research process (cf. Boswell, et al., 2001: 1–10). Thembi's input contributed towards a collective analysis and, in addition, the acknowledgement of indigenous knowledge, as called for in the participative action research process (Odora Hoppers, 2002:3–2, 7, 15; Cassano & Dunlop, 2005:2).

[14] Cf. Chapter 3, sections 3.3.1 & 3.4.5: Advantage of having an 'African co-worker'.

Osmer (2008:75) refers to the paradigm of praxis as "…pragmatism … an indigenous American philosophy emerging in the nineteenth century, invigorated in recent years by a variety of American intellectuals". Roy Anderson (2001:4), one of the American (practical) theologians working within the paradigm of praxis, describes praxis as a form of action, which does not only seek to achieve particular ends, but is both reflective and theory laden. Praxis founds its action in theory, and as it unfolds, reflects on the means and the ends of action in order to assess the validity in the light of the purposed end, allowing new theory to emerge (cf. Anderson, 2001:47).

Aristotle contrasted *Praxis* (the art of acting upon the conditions one faces in order to change them) with *Theoria* – those sciences and activities that are concerned with knowing for its own sake. He further distinguished praxis from *poiesis*. *Poiesis* refers to the act of making something where the *telos* (final meaning, character/purpose) lay outside the act of making, for example a worker folding boxes without knowing what the box will be used for – packing grapes, baby napkins or guns. His folding of the boxes is an uninformed action; his responsibility minimal. *Praxis*, according to Aristotle, is an act that includes the *telos* (or final meaning and character of truth) within the action itself (Anderson, 2001:48–49). An example of praxis would be to participate in a building project having seen the building plans stating the end purpose of the building (e.g. a church). The worker knows exactly what the purpose and meaning of the building is and could alter his intention, actions and input accordingly. By including the 'final purpose or meaning' in the action, the action is accountable to the *telos*, and, "in moving towards the *telos*, is informed by the *telos* as to the kind of action required in order to produce the intended effect", thus becoming 'praxis' (Anderson, 2001:50).

The paradigm of praxis denotes a method or model of thinking about and reflecting on and acting upon the conditions one faces in order to change them. It requires one to – during practical action – reflect on the inner dynamic (*telos*) that informs the action. According to O'Brien (1998:11) praxis "deals with the disciplines and activities predominant in the ethical and political lives of people". Boff sees it as conscious acts aimed at changing social relationships (Bevans, 1992:67).

As previously stated, praxis is both theory and action laden – promoting the sequential derivation of knowledge from practice, and practice informed by knowledge in a continuous process (O'Brien, 1998:11). Praxis holds that truth cannot be worked out apart from life, but can only be grasped in a dialogue with life as it is actually lived, suffered through and celebrated (Bevans, 1992:74). Therefore, it presupposes the importance of political and socio-economic systems, culture, traditional

customs, values, and expressions of language to inform action (Bevans, 1992:67). What is required is a critical reflection of historical practice; ensuring thinking is rooted in existence and committed to transformation of lived reality (Hall in Bevans, 1992:74–75).

The paradigm of praxis compels the practitioner to accept the role as researcher and vice versa. Both researchers and practitioners are obliged to employ a method which is, in the phrase coined by Paulo Freire (1998), 'reflected upon action and acted-upon reflection'. This enables them to gain knowledge and insight with regards to aspects such as gospel, tradition, culture and social change from a holistic perspective (Bevans, 1992:65). According to O'Brien (1998:12) this feature "that knowledge is derived from practice, and practice informed by knowledge, in an ongoing process, is a cornerstone of action research".

The praxis paradigm rejects the notion of researcher neutrality, but requires an intensified awareness of the self as subject engaged upon the search for understanding (Hall in Bevans, 1992:75). Likewise, action research too negates the notion of researcher neutrality. To the contrary, since 'actor's understanding' is crucial to resolving a problematic situation, the action researcher or practitioner holds centre-stage in the research process.[15] The paradigm of praxis thus seems to be the natural abode for action research which requires researchers to allow themselves to become subjectively involved with, to invite participation, to follow a cyclical process of problem or need identification, reflection and action, and to be committed to bring about change in the lives of the people they are involved with.

Depicted as such, the action research design renders visions of 'friendly engagement' and undetermined but satisfactory outcomes. Conversely, the emphasis in on purposeful yet contextualised action – informed by those who stand to benefit from the input – with a view to bring immediate and lasting changes. It is this emphasis on reflected upon action that was one of the main factors determining the choice of paradigm and strategy of this study – to be discussed in the next section.

2.5   An alternative design: Toward integrating social work and theological action research

The first determinant for the choice of a research paradigm and eventually design and methodology, is the impetus for the research – in this study, the dislocation and fragmentation of people struggling to survive in numerous South African communities

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[15] Cf. Chapter 2, section 2.6.5: Role of the action researcher.

profiled by disparity between needs and resources (cf. Nouwen, 2006:7–9). Scientists, clergy, politicians, or, in the words of Jim Ife (1998:xi), 'modern life', has failed to meet the two most basic prerequisites for human civilisation, namely the need for people to be able to live in harmony with each other and their environment:

> The world is characterised by increasing instability – whether ecological, economical, political, social or cultural – and existing institutions seem only able to provide solutions which, in the long term, and even in the short term, only make things worse … *the need for alternative ways of doing things becomes critical* (Ife, 1998:xi my italics – IM).

Ife suggests one such 'alternative way': to reject linear thinking and look at the world through a different lens requiring a renewed vision of how things might be organised holistically, so that genuine ecological sustainability and social justice can be realised in the experience of human community (Ife, 1998:xi-xii; Young, 2006:ix). From a faith-based viewpoint, Cameron, et al. (2010:12) propose another alternative: the reclaiming of deep traditions, taken for granted values and customary practices (the work ethic, neighbourliness, marriage, family life and childrearing) renewing the continuity between faith and life (cf. Cameron, et al., 2010:12–13). Within such an approach, faith practitioners will need to adopt a reflexive and self-critical stance, which would increase their capacity for theological functioning – i.e. seeing the world and human life "…through the lens of religion or spiritual tradition…" rather than through the lens of secularization. This, in turn, would promote their ability to generate alternative and imaginative solutions to praxis problems (Cameron, et al., 2010:14).

   As Norman Polanski suggested as early as 1975 (1975:18), a shift towards an alternative stance implies change – a radical change of heart – literally seeing and hearing things differently. Drawing on the work of Freire (1998), Cameron, et al. (2010), Kemmis (1985), O'Brien (1998) and Robson (2002), identified eight requirements for an alternative approach:

1. First, is for researchers to adopt an *attitude of humility*, acknowledging that "…no one knows it all; no one is ignorant of everything; we all know something; we are all ignorant of something" (Freire, 1998:93).[16] In the quest to find solutions for community issues, the practitioner has to concede to listen to the community.

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[16] Freire (1998:93) places strong emphasis on the values of humility and respect and the praxis of action/reflection to listen to and learn from those within the community who are coping, and to work with them in finding ways to transfer these 'lessons' to those who are struggling to make it.

2. A second requirement (for this alternative stance) is an *emphasis on praxis*:[17] people acting together upon their environment in order to critically reflect upon their reality, and so transforming it through further action and critical reflection (Freire's, 1998:93). Action research is, according to Kemmis (1985:36), in essence the active participation and input of all the participants (i.e. the people within the community who are directly involved as the providers/facilitators, as well as the recipients of development interventions), which will bring about change, whilst simultaneously contributing to social science. Indeed, the participatory nature of action research not only allows participants to influence the process, but to determine the conditions of their own lives. Furthermore, involving the participants in all aspects of a project from the planning through to the emerging of solutions as a result of the research, brings about authentic empowerment of the people.

3. A third requirement of an alternative approach is that of an '*unassuming*' *entering into the community*: the researcher does not approach the community and the people as an expert, but as a novice. In the words of McTaggart (1989:1), the researcher should engage in "…a *systematic learning process* in which people act deliberately through remaining open to surprise and responsive to opportunities". Thus, following an inductive approach, as opposed to relying on a literature search and theoretical background, former knowledge and notions has to be shed, entering into the process afresh, listening, observing and allowing the 'observees' to determine the pace and flow of the process (cf. Monette, et al., 2002:205).[18]

4. From the above, it is clear that in preference to opting for the classic quantitative research design, a more flexible methodology – allowing the freedom of a more supple research process to gather data and to discover new insights for the formation of (new) theory – was called for. A fourth requirement is, therefore, an *open, unfolding design*: rather than identifying a clear cut design at the onset of the research process, the researcher has to allow the design to unfold or develop as the

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[17] Cf. discussion on praxis in Chapter 1, section 1.8.4.

[18] This is comparable with the work of Christian author, lecturer and psychiatrist Robert Coles (in Yancey, 2001) who literally followed the children he was working with into their neighbourhood, schools and homes for observation and to "…hear their tales". He did this in order to find the answer to the question of "How come some people became 'sick' while others from equally troublesome backgrounds stayed reasonably healthy?" (Coles in Yancey, 2001:92). Coles believed that the answer was to be found in discovering "the meaning of life" for individuals (Coles in Yancey, 2001:92; Coles, 1999:37) and this he hoped to discover from what he heard from them in this way. Similarly, during this study 'village walks' were conducted *in situ* (cf. Chapter 3, section 3.3.1; 3.4.3).

research progresses (Fouché, 2002:272; O'Brien, 1998).[19] In most instances, as opposed to the formulation of a research question by an 'outsider' (the researcher), this 'unfolding' is likely to be preceded by the identification of a deep-felt need usually identified by or in the community. This was the case in this study, where the stimulus was embedded in praxis and the research questions were raised by various community groups[20] – voicing their needs and opinions – over an extended period of time.[21] The involvement of these various groups and of multiple voices – representing diverseness of cultural and religious backgrounds – became the concrete experience providing the data in the contextual praxis, which dictated the theories that were approached to explain what is found (cf. Pieterse, 2009:8; Babbie, 1998:54; Monette, Sullivan & De Jong, 2002:205; Cameron, et al., 2010:36).

5. A fifth requirement is that of *multiple realities*: rather than assuming one single reality, the nature of reality is defined by the interaction of the researcher with the phenomenon under study. This implies that researchers should enter the world of the participants and apply these multiple perceptions and assumptions to the research study (Mark, 1996:61; Robson, 2002:216). The process, assuming the prolonged involvement of the researcher and the 'learning from' rather that 'imposing on', endorses the employment of such methods as participant observation, in-depth interviews and immersion in the culture of the group.[22] Such methodology allow the researcher to move freely from data collection to theoretical analysis and back; to collect data over a prolonged period of time; to change and modify explanatory concepts as new information is gained; and to meet the need for developing, implementing and assessing strategies to directly benefit the researched (cf. Robson, 2002:220; Cameron, et al., 2010:107–108; Chapter 3 implementation of material and projects resulting from the retreats and capacity building sessions). As these methodologies provide the opportunity for the participants (community members) to become directly co-responsible for finding solutions, they are empowered. Thus,

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[19] Action research's slowly unwinding, accommodating yet purposeful process is described by Cameron, et al. (2010:44): "Action research is comfortable with an emergent research design that starts with where the practitioners [guided by the participants] think the most pressing problem is, then moves the enquiry out from that point as new insights arises. Each cycle of the enquiry should result in changed actions or meanings that can be revised as wider insights arise."

[20] Cf. Chapter 2, section 2.2: Discussion of the 'call from the community' which instigated this study; Chapter 3, section 3.2: Field-experiences shaping this study.

[21] Cf. Chapter 1, section 1.3 and Chapter 2, section 2.2.

[22] Cf. footnote 18 on Coles's methodology.

being involved in all aspects of the research – ideally starting with raising the research issue, participating in the planning and working towards the emergence of solutions or positive outcomes – community members are given a voice (Mouton, 2003:150; Cameron, et al., 2010:38).

6. A sixth requirement is that of *respectful researcher-researched relationship*: the researcher has to establish relationships of trust and confidence, building the foundation for hearing one another's voice, mutual confrontation, new thinking, growth and creative action (Cameron, et al., 2010:37). Establishing such relationships, says Karecki (2005:140), is possible if the researcher is "both in communion and in communication with the community". Such was the case in this study, where the meaningful interaction with both the pilot and sample groups were long-term and included a series of capacity building worksessions, which enabled the 'community' (participants) to contributed actively to the research process.[23]

7. The seventh requirement, *partnership*, is directly linked to those of process and relationships. Partnership both requires and enables the participants to have direct influence on the process and on the conditions of their lives. Such a co-operative partnership is further fostered by the action research process: a continuous process or spiral of repetitive cycles of observing (the identification of major issues, concerns or problems); planning/acting (the initiation of actions on the spot); and reflecting (self-reflection and group reflection on the implications of the actions) (cf. O'Brien, 1998:4; Strydom, 2002:426; Kemmis, 1985:38–39; Cameron, et al., 2010:50, 166–167). These cycles call and allow for continuous input by those who are to benefit from the research and for adaptations in the planning and actions of the researcher/practitioner, thus serving the ultimate 'object' of action research – that of informed, committed action or praxis (Stringer, 2007:8–9; Cameron, et al., 2010:38). This long-term involvement and the ongoing or cyclical inter-active learning process, are likely to ascertain the collective generation of knowledge and the development and implementation of appropriate interventions (Strydom & Delport, 2002:336), as was evident in the various evaluative sessions in this study.[24]

8. A last requirement is that of a *focus on the lived dimension* rather than on the speculative: the emphasis is on the specific needs of specific people in specific situations, which entails that the improvement of the situation it is more probable (cf. Robson, 2002:215; Stringer, 2007:1; Cameron, et al., 2010:136). In the current

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[23] Cf. Chapter 3, sections 3.5.1 & 3.5.2: Outcome of capacity building sessions.

[24] Cf. Chapter 3, sections 3.3.3; Appendices A1–A5: Examples of evaluative sessions and tools.

study, although people from various communities were involved, the focus in each situation was localised dealing with their specific issues.[25]

Based on these requirements and given the many similarities in social work and theological action research, an interdisciplinary action research design (discussed and depicted in Chapter 1)[26] was proposed and utilised in this study.

2.6   Action Research design and methodology[27]

What follows in this section, after defining action research (AR), is a short overview of its evolution, a delineation of the components, the cyclical nature, and the tools utilised in it, followed by an outline of the stages of the action reach process, and, mindful of section 2.3.1 above, some further reflections on the role of the researcher.

2.6.1   Definition and evolution of Action Research

Action research has been utilised in the social sciences from as early as the 1950's, as well as within and across various disciplines. Despite this, there are few definitive definitions of action research to be found in the literature. Moreover, a review of the current literature revealed that there is some discrepancy regarding the actual design (Keune, 1996:156; Cameron, et al., 2010:39). In much of the literature it seems that action research is seen as a synonym for 'participatory research' and frequently it is equaled with the various different participatory approaches[28] (Strydom, 2002: 419; Cassano & Dunlop, 2005; Monette, et al., 2002:9). For the purpose of this study the researcher, referring to the work of Coenen, (1996:1); Wadsworth (1998:7) and Dick (2002:3), formulated the following functional definition of action research:

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[25] Cf. Chapter 3 depicting that, although similar processes and content were implemented for both sample groups, the actual outcome (final stage where there community projects were planned and initiated) differed according to the specific requirements and needs (section 3.5.3).

[26] Cf. Chapter 1, section 1.5, Figure 1.

[27] In this discussion the focus is primarily on action research within the field of social sciences. However, where applicable, reference will be made to theological action research as depicted by Cameron, et al. (2010).

[28] What action research has in common with these various 'participative (action) research' approaches or models is features of 'learning by doing', inclusiveness, multiple involvements (input from all affected parties) and real change, e.g. improved practices or life circumstances or transformation of social structures (Mitchell, 1968:2–3). What distinguishes action research (from mere participative action) is the emphasis on the actual research procedures and findings – i.e. using proper scientific methods to collect, examine and report on data. Furthermore, action research as a distinctive research design emphasises the non-negotiable significance of reflecting on and strict recording of the actual facts and findings (whilst participatory action is frequently utilised as methodology). Action research is called for first and foremost, when practitioners need to better their practices in real situations (rather than contrived, experimental studies) and for preliminary or pilot research (O'Brien, 1998:9).

Action research is a bottom-up form of experiential research, involving all relevant parties in a flexible spiral or cyclical process of examining current action or practices or social circumstances (which they experience as problematic or unsatisfactory) in order to rectify, change and improve it to the benefit of all involved, thus enabling the achievement of action – (social) change, improvement – and research – understanding, (scientific) knowledge – at the same time.

Alluding to the above descriptions and definition, the following comprehensive descriptive definition is formulated.

Action research

- Is a continuous investigative process focusing on practice situations (conditions of work and life of both social practitioners and the 'ordinary people' involved);

- Requires the establishment of inclusive partnerships (built on trust and respect) to enable the participation of both the researcher and the researched (and others involved) on a 'subjective level' – i.e. their experiencing of the situations;

- Is a flexible cyclical process of studying (examining) the system or practice, reflecting on the findings, experimenting with practice (acting in practice = praxis) and learning from these critical reflections (cf. Kemmis, 1985:36–38; Gilmore, Krantz & Ramirez, 1986:161);

- Leads to the building of theory ('how to' rectify, improve, change, transform, overcome) and the education of all involved, whilst simultaneously striving to better the real situation or to meet the identified need(s);

- Leads to social transformation;

- In the case of TAR, by means of theological dialogue between 'insiders' and 'outsiders', leads to the enhancement of the understanding of and articulation about "God in practice" – "…facilitating change in belief and action" (Cameron, et al., 2010:63–64).

Action research originated in the early 20th century, with Kurt Lewin, a German social and experimental psychologist, generally considered the first to coin the term 'action research' in 1944. Lewin described action research as "a comparative research on the conditions and effects of various forms of social action and research leading to social action (that uses) a spiral of steps" (Kemmis, 1985:36), with each spiral composed of a cycle of planning; execution or action; fact-finding for the purpose of evaluating the

results of the second step; and revising the plan (Kemmis, 1985:36; O'Brien, 1998:11). Apart from this cyclical nature, another three important characteristics of action research were put forward, namely "…its participatory character, its democratic impulse and its simultaneous contribution to social science and social change" (Kemmis, 1985:36).

A second significant contribution came from Eric Trist, a social psychiatrist at the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations in London.[29] Trist identified three basic principles of action research, namely that there should be direct collaboration between professionals and clients; that functional group relations form the basis for problem-solving; and that decisions are best implemented by those who help make them.

By the mid-1970s the field had evolved, revealing four mainstreams that had emerged: traditional,[30] contextural (action learning),[31] educational[32] and radical action research (O'Brien, 1998:12). Radical Action Research, rooted in "…Marxian 'dialectical materialism' and the praxis orientations of Antonio Gramsci, has a strong focus on emancipation and the overcoming of power imbalances" (O'Brien 1998:12). Recognising that sustained improvement in people's living conditions is possible only with their involvement from initiation to solving, as in the work of Paulo Freire,[33] radical action research strives for social transformation via an advocacy process to strengthen peripheral groups in society. This includes the empowerment of people by redressing inequality and redistributing power (Cassano & Dunlop, 2005:1–2) and, for practical theologians, the concept of "praxis … which they believe to be a new and profound way of doing theology … able to deal with gospel, tradition, culture, and social change all in perspective" (Bevans, 1992:65). Within the family of Radical Action Research falls the current more popular *Participatory Action Research*, found in

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[29] Trist and his group initially engaged in applied social research for the civil repatriation of German prisoners of war. Eventually involved in large-scale, multi-organisational problems, they sought to apply their research to systemic change in and between organisations by giving workers more control over their daily lives (O'Brien, 1998:12; Cameron, et al., 2010:40).

[30] Traditional Action Research stemmed from Lewin's work within organisations and encompasses the concepts and practices of Field Theory, Group Dynamics, T-Groups, and the Clinical Model.

[31] Contextural Action Research (Action Learning), deriving from Trist's work on relations between organisations, gave birth to the concept of organisational ecology, and the use of search conferences.

[32] Educational Action Research has its foundations in the writings of John Dewey, the great American educational philosopher of the 1920s and 30s. After the decline of interest during the late 1950s, the work under John Eliot and Clem Adelmann of the Ford Teaching Project (1973–1976) – involving teachers in collaborative action research into their own practices – spurred renewed interest (Kemmis, 1985:37). Practitioners of educational action research mostly focus on development of curricula and professional development within educational institutions, emphasising the application of learning in a social context (O'Brien, 1998:12).

[33] Educationalist Paulo Freire's most well known works are *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1987) and *Pedagogy of Hope* (2006) (cf. Chapter 1, footnote 25).

liberationist movements;[34] in international development circles; and in *Feminist Action Research.*[35]

It is not uncommon to find research processes gleaning features from different action research models. Much of Freire's work was done in educational settings focusing on the development of curricula for adult learners, but at the same time liberating people from suppressive circumstances. Freire thus utilised both educational and radical actions research since he believed "…a democratic education cannot be realized apart from an education of and for citizenship" (Freire, 1998:90).[36]

As will become evident, in this study features from both radical and educational action research have been utilised throughout, but more specifically in the development of the praxis framework (cf. Chapter 6). Prominent components in the definition of action research (section 2.6.1) are that of continuous (and recurring) processes of reflection, participation, learning or education and action. These and a number of other key elements will be discussed next.

2.6.2   *Components, principles and tools of Action Research*

Several authors emphasise that what differentiates action research from other types of research is the innate process of action research – referring to the cyclical execution of the key components: planning, acting, observing and reflecting (Kemmis, 1985:37; O'Brien, 1998:14; Wadsworth, 1998:3; Wijsen, 2005:113; Karecki, 2005:140). Apart from this cyclical process – to be discussed in more depth in a subsequent section – it is the focus of action research that further distinguishes it: a focus on turning 'ordinary' people into researchers by accepting them as 'co-researchers'; on the social dimension or 'real life' situations; on the solving of real problems; and on the embracing of experiences as data and the subjectivity of the researcher. Scholars such as Keune (1996:157–158), Wadsworth (1998:1–6), Strydom (2002:421–427), O'Brien (1998:18–20) and Cameron, et al. (2010:47–60) identified distinctive components inherent to action research.

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[34] According to the theologian Leonardo Boff (in Bevans, 1992:67), "the first word is spoken by what is done … a conscious act aimed at changing social relationships."

[35] Cf. for example exponent Virginia Fabella – known for her writings on "liberational, hope-filled, love-inspired and praxis-oriented Christology" (Bevans, 1992:77) – who focuses on liberating (Asian) women from situations of oppression, abuse and domination.

[36] Another example closer to home is that of the University of Western Cape (UWC) Master's programme in action research and school improvement, which in the 1980's – the final years of apartheid – inspired by the *People's Education Project*, built on a 'radical pedagogy' to equip teachers to bring about change and transformation in the classroom (Van den Berg & Meerkotter, 1996:86–100).

The *social dimension* of action research refers to the fact that any real life situation (or problem) is of interest to a number of parties. Their interests could lie anywhere between the trivial to life-threatening ends of the scale. Typically such a situation would involve oneself; those who share one's concerns, experiences and interests; others suffering from the problematic situation; others trying to assist; and those who oversee the material (or other) resources needed to support the change (cf. Wadsworth 1998:7). Both Cameron, et al. (2010:41–42) and Osmer stresses the systemic nature of TAR, acknowledging that although action research could benefit individuals, "…focussing exclusively on individuals is too limited … [w]e must think in terms of inter-connections, relationships and systems" (Osmer, 2008:17). When aiming to solve these real life situations or problems through an 'involved' research process (i.e. action research), the focus should be on the *shared real-world situation*. When people have a *shared interest and purpose*, they are involved in their own situations and become researchers into their specific situations (cf. Cameron, et al., 2010:57–58). They learn best, and are more willingly apply what they have learned and the problem is more likely to be solved.

Collective action is undertaken whereby those who are to be helped determine the purpose and outcomes of their own inquiry in order to bring about long-term solutions (Wadsworth, 1998:7). These actions may seek to transform fundamental social structures, relationships, redress inequality and redistribute power, but are basically actions to facilitate the participants (especially the 'researched') to connect with their own power to impact their work and life situations. In the case of TAR, this power refers to renewed theological insight and practice as "…the ongoing dynamic of God's revealing life' (Cameron, et al., 2010:51–52). *Participation and collaboration* refers to the active involvement of insiders (group/community) and outsiders (usually the researchers) in all discussion of and decisions related to objectives and activities, as well as the activities themselves. The primary purpose of participation is to encourage community self-determination; capacity building of the insiders; and a broadening of knowledge and perspectives (Cameron, et al., 2010:64). In TAR participation and collaboration culminates in *theological conversation* which enables the various parties to explore practice (and theory) and to find – through these shared conversation and insights – possibilities for new practices, learning and, ultimately new theology (Cameron, et al., 2010:58).

The emphasis of *observation* is on participant observation – with the researcher and the researched given equality with regards to their observations.[37] High value is placed on *people's experiencing* of situations, actions and problems – these experiences are acknowledged as valid data. Similarly, in TAR the practices (participated in and observed) are considered 'bearers of theology', with all expressions, material, written and unwritten text, and praxis actions considered as potentially theological (Cameron, et al., 2010:51). *Critical self-reflection* is an integral element to action research. It invites the researcher and all other parties involved to examine, think about, 'weigh' and contemplate their actions, input, information shared, experiences, observations and even emotions. TAR has as one of its key characteristics *theological reflection* – inviting participants to explore practice as "part of God's revealing life" (Cameron, et al., 2010:52) and utilises the conversation between the four theological voices to disclose the practical theological insights (Cameron, et al., 2020:56). Thus, the personal experiences and understandings of all participants are viewed as valid – and are reflected upon as part of the research process.

Key to action research is *educational collective learning* taking place in concrete situations. It requires equal access to information generated by the process for all participants, with learning taking place throughout the process, e.g. during joint reflection sessions (Cameron, et al., 2010:105). A culture of *subject/subject* is cultivated – in other words, the researchers have an equal and open relationship with the researched. Relationships of mutual exploration and reflexive consideration of all options between pastor/people/researcher is seen to be key (Osmer, 2008:19). This leads to another component of action research - that of *multiple perspectives and diversity*. *Diversity* is sought and obtained by being open to include different individuals and groups who bring diverse evaluations of situations to the process, which in turn lead to different actions. As multiple participants participate in the inquiry, interaction and learning, *multiple, diverse perspectives* are heard and developed (Pretty & Vodouhê, 1997; Cameron, et al., 2010:64). In addition, the utilisation of triangulation (the combination and application of a variety of methods in the research study, e.g. multiple disciplines/theories, observers, empirical material) promotes the validity of the findings (Chambers, 1994:1254).

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[37] Wijsen (2005:115) gives weight to the researcher's role as participant observer, since "...the researcher's involvement in praxis differs from other participants in that it is more systematic and mythological…" This involvement – or participant observation – adds to the possibility of finding "true knowledge ... the knowledge out there".

Creativity and probability refers to how solutions are found, through the imaginative, deep and creative use of their imaginations by all involved; the openness to 'see things differently'; to look at what is possible; and to draw from unusual sources for ideas. Usually, these insights are arrived at during a *creative moment of recognition or transformation* – an imaginative leap from the world of 'as it is' to a glimpse of a world 'as it could be', opening up the realm of possibility (Wadsworth, 1998:3). Since theology has the capacity to disclose meaning and purpose during so-called 'light bulb moments', TAR gives all involved the opportunity to access these moments of transformation or insight (Cameron, et al., 2010:14). These moments of recognition of "...theology that is before us" could be described as significant moments of 'epiphany', which, in TAR, is facilitated by the reflection and conversations between various groups of participants (Cameron, et al., 2010:148–149), and usually appears quite unexpectedly: "Theological envisioning of our lives and world comes in glimpses and is never fully grasped" (Cameron, et al., 2010:16).

In addition to the process and components which help to define and set action research apart from other research types and designs, a number of principles underlying action research have been outlined by practitioners such as Winter (1989), McTaggart (1989), Chambers (1991a), O'Brien (1998), Pretty & Vodouhê (1997), Strydom (2002), Wadsworth (1998) and Cameron, et al. (2010). Their work forms the basis for formulating the following principles of action research. Action research seeks to promote:

- *Social change:* The improvement of social practices by changing it by means of critical analyses of the institutionally structured situations (projects, programmes, and systems) or the communities in which those involved work and live – in order to transform these structures or communities.

- *A defined methodology and systematic learning process:* The involvement of people in a process of continual planning, acting (implementing plans), observing, reflecting and re-planning – learning from the process and the consequences of the resulting change.

- *Collaborative resources:* The creation of a collaborative process, presupposing that each person's ideas are equally significant as potential resources for creating interpretive categories of analysis, negotiated among the participants.

▪ *Contextuality:* The positioning of research within a specific context – carried out face to face in the field, implying localisation and utilising local resources (people, materials).

▪ *Reflexive critique/knowledge:* The eliciting of a self-critical mindset amongst those involved, utilising critical self-reflection, recording as accurately as possible what happened (by describing observations, experiences and events), and by collecting and analysing the group's judgements, reactions and impressions about what is going on.

▪ *Political power and risks:* The empowerment of those involved, equipping them to take risks and bring about changes which will affect them and those around them.

▪ *Accountability and responsibility:* The accountability of those involved for their input, self-reflections, actions and collaboration. Participants are thus required to build records of their inquiries and work/research processes and outcome.

▪ *Theory, practice and transformation:* The involvement of people in theorising about their practices by being inquisitive about and coming to understand the relationship between circumstances, action and consequences in their own lives.

It is apparent from this overview that, since action research is associated with an interest in real life situations or practices that need to be changed or transformed by those who stand to benefit from the change, the process should lend it to input from wide array of participants. This is made possible by the inclusive and cyclical nature of the action research process, examined in the next section.

2.6.3   Cyclical nature of and techniques employed in Action Research

Participants are engaged in the transformational process of their social and work situations and practices by means of the continuous spiral consisting of planning, acting, reflecting and observing. Each of these moments has a specific function and follow on to one another and is repeated in subsequent cycles to 'produce' the continuous action research spiral – as depicted in Figure 2.[38]

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[38] This conception of a spiral or cyclical process was around since the inception by Lewin (1946), but it was Stephen Kemmis who in 1985 introduced a 'visual' model of the cyclical nature of the typical action research process, depicting the four steps or moments of action research, namely reflecting (or critical reflection), planning, action (implementing plans) and (systematically) observation (cf. Wadsworth, 1997:79; O'Brien, 2001:1; Robson, 2002:218).
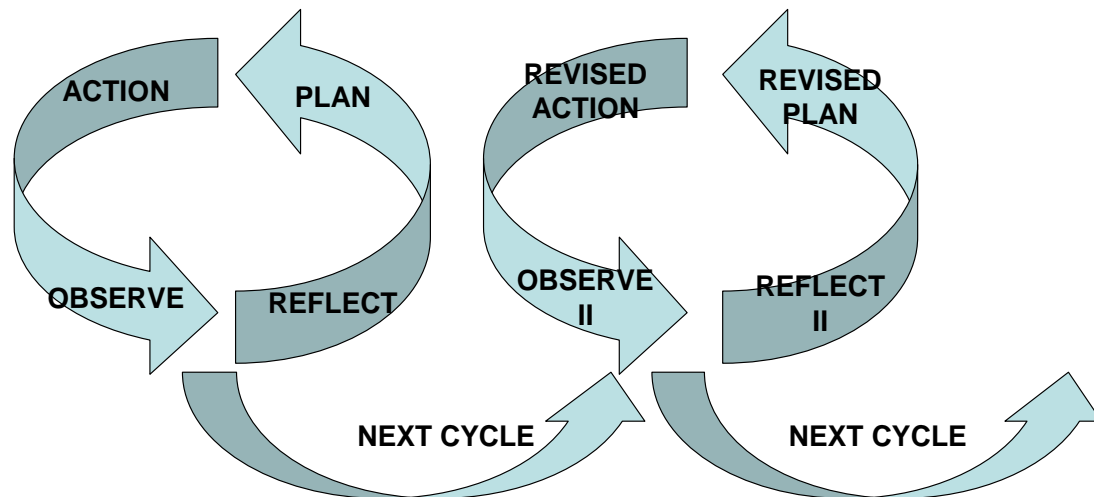
Figure 2: Action Research Spiral

Hughes and Seymour-Rolls (2000:1–2) summarise the function of the moments of (social sciences) action research as follows: *Reflection* refers to the moment of connection between the different research partners – or the inversion of the outsiders in the reality of the insiders – and includes the pre-emptive discussion of all participants to identify, examine and reflect upon a shared concern, need or problem. *Planning* refers to the moment of the participatory investigation and the constructive seeking for a response. Co-operative planning takes place during discussions among the participants and includes the critical examining of the data, experience and (previous) actions, as well as the determining of possible indicators for change to be use in evaluation. *Action*. refers to the moment when the plan – the deliberate and strategic action or response to the situation identified in the first moment – is put into place and the hoped for improvement to the social situation occurs. Action always takes place within a real situation and not just as an experiment 'to see if it works'. *Observation* refers to the moment of research analysis – utilising actual research tools or instruments (e.g. questionnaires, structured interviews, participant observation and in situ observations) to observe, analyse and evaluate the changes or impact resulting from the implementation of the outlined plan – with special attention to the effects on the people and the context.

As illustrated in Figure 1 (Chapter 1, section 1.5), in the theological action research spiral these 'moments' diverge slightly from those in the social work action research cycle in terms of both occurrence and content. In the theological action research cycle

*co*ntact/*insertion* refers to fact-finding (e.g. storytelling, listening to the response of the people and participant observation) in order to describe what is going on. *Context analysis* refers to engaging with the community, involving the key actors and drawing connections between culture and historical aspects toward an understanding of the deeper reality of the situation – in order to know why is it going on. *Theological reflection* refers to the moment of critical confrontation (evaluation) and discernment in view of shared values, faith commitments, scriptures, norms, and wisdom of the ancestors – in order to understand the relationship between faith and life. *Response/action* refers to the moment of effecting the desired change through steps of planning, acting and evaluating – in order to act responsively toward change/improvement of the identified issue (cf. Wijsen, et al., 2005:229–230; Karecki, 2005:140–142; Wijsen, 2005:122–123; Cameron, et al., 2010:50–51; Osmer & Shweitzer, 2003:2–3).

Concurring with the action research process, any of these moments may overlap, or, as in the case of the moments of action and observation, occur simultaneously. For instance, as participants engage in these moments of reflection on action, learning about action, and then, newly informed action, change happens – often 'on the spot' and unexpectedly. 'Instant action' occurs as participants absorb new ways of seeing or thinking in the light of their experience and implement new actions there and then. These instant insights and changes are typical of action research and serve to change the shape and focus of the process over time (cf. Wadsworth, 1998:4).

Contrary to that in most research processes, there is no specific 'point of entrance' into the action research process – the cycle can be accessed at any moment and an action research study can begin with quite imprecise research questions. It could also be entered into by the researcher setting out to explicitly study 'something' – a need, problem or expectation, arising from an unsatisfactory situation that those who are most affected wish to alter for the better – in order to change and improve it (Wadsworth, 1998:3). Regardless of the point of entry, issues and understandings on the one hand, and the practices themselves, on the other, will develop and evolve, given that the action/reflection spiral is followed systematically. Even though it is likely that, as pointed out above, the initial questions may be imprecise, yielding imprecise answers, the inherent flexibility of the process allows for multiple opportunities of reflection and refinement of questions and methods. Each cycle can be a step in the direction of better action and better research – guiding the research-participants

along from "…imprecise beginnings while progressing towards appropriate endings" (Dick, 2002:4).

There is a built-in rigour deriving from this process, contributing to the trustworthiness[39] of this research methodology. Obligatory to this progressive process is an array of tools or techniques, not necessarily unique to action research, but none the less vital in the successful execution of the action research process. Central to action research methodology is recording, utilising a variety of techniques, such as making audiotape records of verbal interactions, keeping a research journal or focused diaries (often done on individual and group level in order to build in a system of 'counter checks'). Most of these recording techniques elicit information whilst simultaneously serving as recording of specific data, as do, for example, recordings of household interview charts, institutional diagrammes, problem or need priority sheets, time and trend lines, rapid report writing, seasonal calendars or, as in the case of this study, 'workbooks' compiled (by the researcher) after each session based on the actual content and input from the participants (Kemmis, 1985:39; O'Brien, 1998:15; IIED & ODA, 1994:6; Pretty & Vodouhê, 1997:6).

Techniques for obtaining and the analysis of data may include questionnaire surveys (often in a 'simplified' format – a concise questionnaire with few items/questions focusing on a specific issue, such as the check list used for 'vicarious trauma' during the retreats),[40] document collection and analysis, structured and unstructured interviews, direct observation, key probes, mapping and modelling, transect walks (referred to as 'village walks' in this research study),[41] visualisations and analysis of artefacts. Techniques used to generate and accumulate evidence about practices, and to analyse and interpret this evidence, include case studies, ethnographies, community forums, nominal groups, focus groups, workshops (specifically to refine newly designed practices), role-play or drama and storytelling (Kemmis, 1985:39; O'Brien, 1998:15; Strydom, 2002:430–431; cf. Chapter 3, sections 3.5.3 &

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[39] Trustworthiness of findings in action research has to be taken into account throughout the process. Albeit flexible, there is a built-in rigour to the action research process, to be found in the "logical, empirical, and political coherence of interpretations in the reconstructive moments" of the ongoing and regular self-critical reflection and in the justifications of proposed action (Kemmis, 1985:40). This implies that as the research process progresses, multiple judgements with regards to the 'correctness' of information, underlying assumptions and the implementation of suggested changes will be made by the different parties involved – allowing for a degree of 'cross checking'. This also infers the importance of the involvement of more multiple interested parties who provide information and critique (Dick, 2002:4). For a set of criteria to judge the trustworthiness of the findings cf. e.g. Pretty and Vodouhê (1997:9).

[40] Cf. Chapter 3, section 3.4.6.3: Discussion on the vicarious trauma checklist; Appendix B, Exercise 5: *When I'm alone in the Night.*

[41] Cf. Chapter 3, sections 3.3.1 & section 3.4.3: Discussion on village walks.

3.5.4). The ability to utilise these (and other similar) techniques does imply a certain level of knowledge and competence in the researcher, especially facilitating and group work skills – as will be discussed in section 2.6.5.

As backdrop to the discussion of the field research in Chapter 3, the stages of the action research process is discussed next.

2.6.4   *Stages of the action research process*

Although mention was made of the flexibility inherent to the action research process, it does not imply a haphazard and undocumented process. Based loosely on the 'moments' (discussed in section 2.6.3) an action research process of ten stages has been identified (cf. Strydom, 2002:427–429; Robson, 2002:218; Cameron, et al., 2010:47–60; Osmer, 2008:41–43). In Table 1 (on the next page) the focus of these stages are outlined and illustrated by its application to this study. Also indicated, is the unfolding of the fieldwork in two action research cycles following unto another.

Rather than unfolding chronologically and linear, the actual 'stages' quite frequently happened simultaneously and, at times, the process literally 'folded back unto itself'. Throughout the process this flexibility of process was necessitated by the expectations, needs and reality of the researched – implying that great sensitivity and flexibility was needed with regard to the guidance and facilitation of the researcher. Lastly, it is clear (from Table 1) that the initial field work cycles unfolded mainly according to the social work action research process, albeit with a degree of theological reflection taking place even in the earlier stages – moving gradually into the discipline of practical theology toward the final phase of the research (as indicated in Chapter 1, section 1.5). This unfolding can be likened to a journey (Mouton, 1996:25–27), beginning with the lengthy preliminary or pre-study phase that took place over a period of nine years (1994–2003). As of 2004 the action research phases were adhered to, namely (1) the identification of the target community for the pilot study, (2) engagement with the community; (3) agreement on the research focus; (4) clarification of need and goal establishment; (5) data gathering and field work within (pilot/sample) community; (6) synthesis and data analysis; (7) reviewing/adaptation; (8) planning and implementation; (9) monitoring and evaluation; and (10) final modification and reporting. This 'journey' is illustrated in Tabel 1 on the next page.

Table 1: Stages of the action research process as applied in this study

FOCUS	APPLIED IN STUDY
Pre-study stage	
Awakening: initial raising of the idea/request for help	*1994–2003*
	Exposure in various communities and 'wake up' call
1. Recognition of and attending to the initial idea	
• Attending to idea/request for help	*Cycle I 2004* (Pietermaritzburg)
• Being present to situation and people in their context, particularity and otherness	Identify research issue/need: NCVV[i] request for capacity building
• Ask: "What is going on?" "Where, who, when, how…?" "Why are/aren't things…?"	Identify target community for pilot study
	Cycle II 2006 (Franschhoek)
	Request for help from CCPP[ii] manager
2. Engagement with the community	
• Making grassroots contact with community/group	*Cycle I 2004*
• Ask: "How will we get entrance into the community/group?" "Who should be involved in the research?"	Village walk (observational visits)
	Agree on issue (capacity building: self/community)
• Gain entry: informal talks, village walks,[iii] sharing stories	Initial capacity building sessions with pilot group
	Analysis of pilot study information
• Initiate relationships of trust, co-operation, and collaboration	*Cycle II 2006–2007* (Franschhoek)
• Explain the process, intention, ethical implications and interest / status of the different participants	Preliminary discussions with CCPP manager in the identified target communities
	Village walks (Franschhoek)
• Obtain representation / approval from the local leaders	Selection of sample groups (FH1/FH2)
3. Agreement on research focus / Defining the inquiry	
• Clarification, accord and prioritisation re research focus	*Cycle I 2004*
	Agree on modifications; development of spiritual exercises; assessment tools; 1st praxis framework
• Obtain information re the issue, people and context	*Cycle II 2006–2007*
• Secure working relationships with all involved	Final assembly of sample groups (FH1/FH2)
• Inform participants of the scope, timeframe, possible outcomes of the research and (realistic) expectations	Agreements with CCPP manager on retreat planning
4. Describe the situation / Establish goals and objectives	
• Participative, inclusive goal clarification (insider/outsider perspective)	*Cycle I 2004*
	Clarify need; establish goals
• Clarify responsibilities; inputs of insiders / outsiders	Analysis of initial NCVV-capacity building sessions
• Ascertain clear focus; commitment toward achievement of objectives, goals and change	Move from 'development' to 'healing'-paradigm
	Cycle II 2006–2007
• Ask: "What are we required to do here?" "What are we trying to do here?"	Establish goals: from development to healing paradigm
	Village walks (2nd round)
	Finalise action plan (sample group FH1)
5. Initial data collection / inclusive participation	
• Preliminary fact finding for 'thick description'	*Cycle I 2004*
• Initiate community self-survey / group activities	Literature search: spiritual healing component
• Choose / implement techniques of data collection	Implement spiritual healing component in capacity building worksessions with pilot group
• Establish comprehensive participation	*Cycle II 2007*
• Train co-researchers re data-gathering techniques	Field research: spiritual healing retreats and capacity
• Pilot study: to clarify goals and course of action	

	building worksessions (sample group FH1)
6. Synthesis and analysis of data	
• Analysis / categorisation of data • Reflect upon meaning • Weighing results in light of values, norms, belief systems • Ask: "Are all facets of the issue/problem clear?" "What is happening in this situation as understood by all participants?" "What does it mean?"	*Cycle I 2004–2005* Analysis of pilot study data – adapt praxis framework Follow-up questionnaire; self-evaluation *Cycle II 2007–2008* Assess effectiveness / outcome of retreats Analysis of participant reflection / input (FH1/FH2) Theological reflection – re-defining framework / content
7. Reviewing of findings / Negotiation of ownership	
• Rank issues/problems & identify differences; potential conflicts • Ask: "What is the contrast between what is happening and what we would like to be happening?" • Discuss proposed strategies / activities for change • Establish co-ownership for research project / actions • Determine timeframe for 'handing over the stick'	*Cycle I* 2005 Ownership of project taken by NCVV *Cycle II 2007/2008* Follow-up questionnaires; self-evaluation Adapt / implement material in 2nd round of retreats (FH2) Negotiate ownership of proposed community projects[iv] Follow-up village walks with visitors to 'show-case' projects (FH1/FH2)
8. Planning and implementation of action	
• Ask: "What can we introduce to address this contradiction (between what is and what we want)?" • Detailed planning with input from all participants • Indicate the cost, opportunities, responsibilities • Criteria for evaluation (how will success be measured?) • Approval / Implementation of the plan (e.g. intervention, adaptation of an existing practice, programme or training-workshops)	*Cycle I 2005* Implement adapted capacity building / spiritual healing material for 'insiders' (NCVV) *Cycle II 2007–2008* Workshops (training): project management/facilitation & community healing (sample groups FH1/FH2) Implement community projects in Franschhoek Graduation / certification (FH1/FH2) Literature search: Practical theology foundation of final praxis framework
9. Monitoring change / Evaluation	
• Ask: "What has happened to the situation/people as a result of the implemented changes?" "Was it worth it, sufficient?" • Ongoing monitoring through cyclical reflection • Assess implementation of the action plan; meeting success/progress indicators • Follow-up / evaluate need for further period of research	*Cycle I 2005–2007* Feedback / follow-up with NCVV social worker *Cycle II 2008* (Pietermaritzburg) 'External' evaluation of spiritual healing material (CINDI)[v] Individual assignments to assess integration of skills (participants) Feedback from practitioners: follow-up questionnaire, structured interviews (FH1/FH2)
10. Writing of the report	
• Ensure access to information / findings to all involved throughout process (e.g. ongoing reports) • Final report (after the evaluation and follow-up)	*Cycle I 2005* Feedback report (Pietermaritzburg) *Cycle II 2007–2011* Workbooks; intermittent reports; final research report
Literature search	
• Literature search – a continuous process[vi] • In-depth search – at a more advanced stage in the process (often during the stage analysing of initial	*Cycle I 2003–2004* Preliminary literary search throughout the study

data) to verify findings, conceptualisation and guide the creative development of intervention	*Cycle II 2010–2012[vii]* Further literature search to sustain reinterpretation of findings and theoretical basis of praxis framework in practical theology

The preceding discussion and depiction of the application of the stages of the action research process, clearly illustrates the range of processes and actions covered. It becomes apparent that the expectations of the practitioner-researcher is quite complex, as will be highlighted in the succeeding section.

2.6.5   *Role of the action researcher*

The role of the practitioner/researcher in the action research process, is both distinct and one of paradox: firstly, the researcher is simultaneously actively involve in both the context of the researched (community) and in her/his own context or practice (consummating praxis)[42] and; secondly, although facilitating and 'engineering' the research process, the researcher does not do so as the expert, but as an equal partner to the researched – consummating 'servant-leadership'[43] combining both competence and humility[44] (cf. Strydom, 2002:420; Osmer, 2008:192–194).

The first paradox, that of praxis, requires of the researcher to fulfill the role of mediator of theory and practice, implying that whilst directly involved in a process of enabling the researched (amongst others by empowering them with knowledge and skills), the researcher is reflecting on his/her own practice and the process.[45] Given the

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[42] According to Kemmis (1985:39), the nature of the practitioner-researcher's involvement with and in the community, consummates praxis. Praxis is not mere behaviour, but a strategic action undertaken with commitment in response to a present, immediate issue or need identified in a specific action context. But, the significance of the strategic action (or praxis) can only be established in context – implying the presence, co-operation, input and feedback of the participants. (Kemmis, 1985:38; Strydom, 2002:420). (Cf. also section 2.4.)

[43] Osmer (2008:192) defines servant-leadership as "…leadership that influences the congregation to change in ways that more fully embody the servanthood of Christ", stressing that such leadership "…will take courage, resolve and the ability to empower others". The role of the researcher in action research – where the expectation is one of an outcome of change or transformation – could be liken to this view of servant-leadership.

[44] Humility, as prerequisite for servant-leadership, should not be mistaken for weakness – in the words of Fee, "[i]t has to do with a proper estimation of oneself, the stance of the creature before the Creator, utterly dependent and trusting … [being] aware both of one's weaknesses and of one's glory … by [not making] too much nor too little of either" (Osmer, 2008:193).

[45] The reflection on praxis is expected to result in the development of methodology and strategies, such as a praxis framework, which calls for a process of 'trial and error' (testing, evaluating and redesigning) to incorporate the suggested skills and strategies (Robson, 2002:216). In this regard the TAR methodology of the 'four voices' both served as a heuristic (or experienced-based) and hermeneutic framework for making this complexity (the need to establish a certain coherence – a truth revealed – between diverse voices) manageable (Cameron, et al., 2010:53–54). TAR also provided the tools (reflective practices) for further investigation into how the theology that arises from practice can offer fresh insights into formal (academic) theology and how normative theology can shape practices

fact that only practitioners can research their own practices, the question could arise whether the practitioner can understand his/her own praxis in an unbiased, objective and undistorted manner. Kemmis (1985:38–39) states that "[t]his is an illusion created by the image of a value-free, 'objective' social science that cannot by definition always embody values and interests". In addition, the very nature of action research provides mechanisms to counteract bias and distortion, namely, the participants' co-responsibility and integral participation in the reflective process[46] (cf. Chambers, 1994:1258–1262; Strydom, 2002:432; Robson, 2002:216). The researcher is also expected to be open and clear about why he/she is interested in the research (e.g. by sharing the personal experiences that led to the interest and involvement) and the nature his/her foreseen commitment over time. Professional integrity and a focus on accurate truth finding are highly valued attributes in the light of the more subjective involvement and bring the balance with regards to trustworthiness of the research outcome (Keune, 1996:158–159).

The second paradox, being a servant-leader or, in, the words of Kemmis, being 'center stage' implying being both an actor and the director in the process – requires the ability to obtain the active participation of the people who are to benefit from or assisted by the research. Therefore, the researcher has to enter the process with humility and an openness to listen to and learn from the various participants.[47] Researcher and the community are deemed to be equal partners and co-learners, together working towards finding solutions to particular problems or issues within a community (Strydom, 2002:419, 421; Cameron, et al., 2010:36–38).

Furthermore, the action researcher has to join the process of reflective action without regard for his/her own position of power or expertise – with as its main focus the interest and transformation of the work and lives of the participating co-researchers. What is required is the ability to 'stand back', whilst being open and sensitive towards the needs, experiences, expectations and contribution of the researched. This sentiment of 'less is better' (less expertise, less pre-conceived ideas,

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(e.g. changing the practitioner's own context through education, dialogue, renewed language and insights) (Cameron, et al., 2010:58–59).

[46] TAR utilises the methodology of the 'four voices', referring to a conversation between four voices in which "…we can never hear one voice without there being echoes of the other three" (Cameron, et al., 2010:4, 56), as well as a process of successive reflective meetings (and recordings) for insider, outsider and joint teams (Cameron, et al., 2010:102–107).

[47] In fact, the notion of "…the superiority of professional knowledge over the practical knowledge of local stakeholders..." (Greenwood & Levin, 2007:53) is unacceptable within the action research paradigm.

less top down) is reflected in the view of several authors who identify the role of facilitating the process, nurturing the participants (leaders and 'researched') to full collaboration and into being co-responsible for the process, as the most definitive role required of the action researcher (Cassano & Dunlop, 2005:2; O'Brien, 1998:18; Wadsworth, 1998:5–6). Roles collaborative to this enabling role are those of listener, observer, learner, and supporter. Yet, paradoxically, to truly facilitate the enabling of others requires the taking of a leadership or planner stance at times, implicating roles of activist, educator, planner, leader, catalyser, designer, advocate and reporter.

Lastly, creativity, imagination and the ability to perceive possibility – drawing ideas from the most unusual sources and being willing to present them to the other partners envisioning a desirable new state or options – are valuable attributes for the action researcher (Wadsworth, 1998:4).

In summary: whilst the researcher is expected to be open towards the process and participants, to be committed to build the participants' capacity; to be willing to defend the conclusions reached; and to facilitate the implementation of the changes (Stringer, 2007:24–27; Cameron, et al., 2010:37); the researcher should also – throughout the process – be critical of and responsible for her/his own input, actions and practices (cf. Kemmis, 1985:37–38; Cameron, et al., 2010:24).

2.7   Summary

To summarise, as recounted in the first paragraphs of this chapter, the research question matured gradually over years of interaction with and 'attending to' the various communities in which the researcher was involved, leading to the conviction that the only way to proceed was by continuing to allow practice to inform theory – clearly pointing towards the action research design (as demonstrated in section 2.5).

Reference was made to the differences and similarities in the social sciences and theology rendering of the action research design and, a proposed integrated design (as depicted in Chapter 1, Figure 1) and process for action research discussed. The application of this design was demonstrated in Table 1, depicting the cyclical unfolding of this study according to the ten stages of the action research process. Clearly indicated is the course of the research process, evolving through more than one cycle to incorporate both social work and practical theology in its field of study and methodology. Pertaining to this evolving process, an emphasis of this chapter is the need for and proposed framework for an alternative reach design to enable the study of complex concepts, such as spirituality in community development. In sections 2.5 and

2.6.4, the need for and the actual integration of social sciences and theologically action research designs to provide the needed process and methodology for meaningful research in this area, have been demonstrated. And lastly, the distinct role of the practitioner as researcher depicted as servant-leader, has been emphasised.

In the next chapter the fieldwork – engaging the pilot group (Pietermaritzburg) and the two sample groups (Franschhoek) – is discussed in terms of the actual interventions, namely the village walks; the healing retreats; the capacity building worksessions; and finally, the initiation of the two community projects as an outflow of the research. The input, feedback and participation of the pilot and sample group members is reflected upon, as is the modification of the content and framework for the capacity building sessions to include a *spiritual healing* component. It will be indicated how reflection on the data and data analysis in the initial stages, finally directed the founding of the praxis framework in practical theology (as described in Chapter 6). The normative analysis, based mostly on the TAR questions of theological reflection, is depicted in Chapter 4.

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[i] Natalse Christelike Vroue Vereniging (NCVV), a NGO delivering social work and community development services in the KwaZulu-Natal province. The social worker Rina Steenkamp (in her capacity as community worker), was the contact person.

[ii] CCPP refers to *The Community Care and Protection Plan*, an inclusive poverty alleviation program launched in 2006 by the Department of Social Services and Poverty Alleviation.

[iii] A village walk is a preliminary visit to and observational 'tour' of the community guided by representatives from the organisation or community and could be done on foot or using local transport.

[iv] As outcome of the sessions both the sample groups initiated community projects for change: FH1 launched *Youth Empowerment Network* (YEN) focussing on parent-to-parent training to improve the quality of life for the children and young people and FH2 launched *Uthando Lwethu Ebantwaneni* (For the Love of the Children), a project providing day-care for children and initiating outreaches to parents in the community.

[v] Children in Distress Network (CINDI) is a multi-sectorial network of over 200 organisations – non-government, faith-based and government agencies – founded in 1996 with a view to implement programmes for children affected by HIV & AIDS in the province of KwaZulu Natal. Sessions presented in Pietermaritzburg (on 13–17 October 2008) to a group of 16 CINDI-members – community representatives (non-professional) and professionals (social and community workers) practicing as community facilitators under the auspices of CINDI.

[vi] Fouché and Delport (2002:267–268) refer to the use of a 'before' and 'after' continuum to indicate the utilisation of theory and literature before or after the data were collected, suggesting that in case studies the literature search is likely to fall at the middle of the continuum.

[vii] In this study the initial field research actually preceded the literature search, which subsequently took place at various intervals during the refining of the intervention plan. However, it is also clear that both I and my co-worker, Thembi Mphokeng, coming from a background of community involvement and facilitation, brought with us a sound theoretical foundation – which supported and guided us throughout the process. Wadsworth (1998:4) refers to this phenomenon as follows: "…A Good Thing happened in this way: as a product of people who 'knew their turf', knew who they were doing it for, and had the imagination to collectively envision a desirable new state and attract others who shared their vision…". This 'pre-knowledge' has been reflected in the preceding discussions of the situating of the study in a triangular context, whilst in the subsequent chapters it will be demonstrated how the literature from the various connecting and interacting fields was integrated to lay a sound theoretical foundation for the practice framework.

CHAPTER 3

ARTICULATING THE PEOPLE'S VOICE: FROM SOCIAL WORK FIELD RESEARCH TO SPIRITUAL INSIGHT

We got where we are through intimate experiences of faith together with others, through participating with others in our search for light and growth, through discussing and praying and often agonizing with other Christians (David Bosch, 2000:69).

3.1   Introduction

To address the question: "*What is going on in this context*?" an in-depth description of the fluid process encompassing the various stages of the field research and ensuing findings is required. Auspiciously, as highlighted in the previous chapter,[1] Action Research offers an inclusive, flexible and open design and methodology that invite people to participate actively in finding effective solutions to the "…sometimes puzzling complexities" of real life problems they face (Stringer, 2007:1). True to 'real life'-dynamics, the fieldwork involving both the pilot and sample communities – spanning various cycles of the ten stages of the action research process[2] – did not follow a clear-cut or linear course. This inclination for overlapping and sometimes 'regressing' back to an earlier stage was observable throughout the course of the research.[3]

For this reason, rather than attempting to give a chronological portrayal of the cyclical course of the research, the focus of this chapter is on an in-depth description of the field observations and the impact of the various interventions – the village walks, the healing retreats; the capacity building worksessions; the instigation of the two projects, namely Youth Empowerment Network (YEN) and *Uthando Lwethu Ebantwaneni* (For the Love of the Children); and finally the resultant adaptation of the various practices. In order to achieve the latter – in a step viewed as the essence of the field research – the findings relating to the healing retreats and the capacity building sessions with the sample group, is analysed and discussed in-depth, also with a view to showing how these specific activities relate particularly to community development.

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[1] Cf. Chapter 1, section 1.5: Process and applicability of Action Research; Chapter 2, section 2.6.3.

[2] Cf. Chapter 2, section 2.6.4: Stages of the action research process.

[3] Cf. Chapter 2, section 2.6.4, Table 1 (process followed in this study).

A brief sketch of the causative factors shaping the study and a reflection on the pilot study[4] precedes the discussion of fieldwork with the sample groups.[5] To enable a functional discourse, the field research involving both the sample groups is presented simultaneously, reflecting on the criteria for inclusion, the village walks, the healing retreats and the capacity building worksessions. This is followed by a description of the feedback and follow-up sessions and, lastly, the 'birth' and launching of the two projects (YEN[6] and *Uthando Lwethu Ebantwaneni*[7]) as outcome of action research. Finally, the findings relating to the healing retreats and the capacity building sessions with the sample group, is reflected upon with regard to understanding the reality of spirituality in the community – represented by the sample groups.

In adherence to action research methodology's approach of not necessarily conducting a preliminary literature review, the findings of the literature reviews undertaken at various stages are interwoven in the discussion as the process unfolds. Complying with the innate action research notion of 'listening to the people',[8] the emphasis will be on the actual verbatim input of the community members as key data. Abraham Herschel (1955:244) reflects on the importance of language and words, posing the question: "What else in the world is able to bring people together over distances of space and time, other than words?" By relating the words of people in the communities, it is hoped that a reflection of 'their truth' is given, enabling one as 'outsider' to 'meet' them and to more fully understand the complexity of their lives. Indeed, that by listening to and heeding their input, the wisdom and lessons gleaned from their reality may be integrated into the praxis of working with and developing people and communities.

3.2   Preliminary stage: Field-experiences shaping the research

In hindsight, although not officially part of the current study, a number of pre-study experiences could be seen as the 'awakening to the idea', which instigated all further

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[4] Pietermaritzburg, 2004–2005, cf. Chapter 3, section 3.2.

[5] Franschhoek, 2006–2008, cf. Chapter 3, sections 3.4 & 3.5.3.

[6] The community project resulting from the work with sample group FH1: Youth Empowerment Network (YEN): launched Parent-to-parent training groups with 'divisions' in a number of local communities facilitated by the FH1-trained leaders.

[7] The community project resulting from the work with sample group FH2: *Uthando Lwethu Ebantwaneni* (*For the Love of the Children)* crèche opened during 2009 in the house made available by one of the group members. A soup kitchen for street children was also initiated by two FH2-members.

[8] Cf. Chapter 1, section 1.5: Cameron, et al., (2010) on listening to the voice of the people; Chapter 2, section 2.5.

research and fieldwork.[9] The initial 'wake up call' came during the 1994–2003 period of the pre-study work in various South African communities in the Gauteng, North-west and Limpopo Province[10] and was echoed in the communities of KwaZulu-Natal (cf. Chapter 1, section 1.2). Though nine years may seem to be a lengthy period for an idea to germinate, it has to be kept in mind that "…what is expected of practitioners involved in action research is to watch, listen and learn" (Chambers, 1994:1255). The pre-study phase served the purpose of preparing the researcher to 'be in the presence of the other', being open and non-judgemental and becoming aware of "…what is actually there" (cf. Kemmis, 1985:35; Osmer, 2008:41). This awareness led to reflection and prompted questions such as: *How do I understand? How do I do it better? What if…? Where will I get more data?* (cf. Osmer, 2008:41–43, 47).

Contributing to shaping the research idea, was the researcher's exposure to the above-mentioned communities; involvement in research relevant to community development;[11] and in the development of training material for and conducting of community workshops focused on the empowerment of people.[12] In essence, these experiences served as a repositioning to a praxis paradigm of *maybe we need to re-think, listen and learn before we enter peoples' lives* – urging the discovery of new, alternative routes toward people and community development. In 1993 Leila Patel, then a social work activist and lecturer at University of Witwatersrand, wrote these significant words:

> A new path will need to be chartered for social welfare as an instrument in the promotion of national reconstruction and social development – a process in which grassroots social development initiatives and a people-centred vision of development should be the driving force of social transformation.

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[9] In *Pedagogy of Hope* Paulo Freire sketches some of his early experiences leading up to his well-known work *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* stating that "[i]t was a long learning process, which implied a journey, and not always an easy one, nearly always painful…" (Freire, 2006:16).

[10] Mainly life skills training with women in rural and semi-rural areas, and, during the final period, empowerment of self; project and small business development; and community facilitation for professionals and non-professionals.

[11] The study regarding the Social Work curriculum conducted in 1994 by the Department of Social Work of Pretoria University on the relevancy of pre-graduate social work curricula in order to derive at recommendations sensitive to future socio-economic and political changes; and an evaluative research study on impact of WOF 10, conducted by Equip Development Consultants during 2002. (*WOF 10 refers to Women's Outreach Foundation Life Skills Programme*: A basic life skills programme developed during the late 1980's by the then University of Potchefstroom for the Women's Outreach Foundation (WOF) with the aim to reach out to women living in poverty in the rural areas.)

[12] Under the auspices of The Institute for Psycho-Social Development (IPSO), founded in November 1993, with the goal to address the challenges in the social development field in the evolving South African society.

In the light of the growing emphasis on grassroots self-empowerment and human dignity, a series of experiential worksessions for capacity building for 'indigenous' community facilitators were developed. Post-workshop feedback affirmed the importance of a focus on the mobilisation of the people's potential, self-initiative and creativity, and the acknowledgement of people's inherent possibilities and spirituality – illustrated in the following practice-related incident:

> During our very first session with community members – held on the premises of the Society for the Aged in Atteridgeville (a traditional 'township' outside of Pretoria) we were confronted by women who, after the initial prayer and hymns, looked at us, asking, *"Where is the money?"* To our astonishment and discomfort, they assumed that, since we were from Pretoria, the seat of most government departments and hence the source of funding, we were bringing money. It was quickly established that these women, being part of an informal sewing group over a pro-longed period expected that they have reached the point where – to realise their dream of starting an income generating venture – they needed formal training and sewing machines. We spent the rest of the day working with these motivated women on self-empowerment and basic project planning to enable them to come up with a very basic business plan and strategy for finding the necessary resources. As a result, these women were able to find a teacher and machines; and to set up a small business (Kirsten, 2002:20–21).

Increasingly, as was the case in the related incident, the feedback from community members confirmed that the participatory, experiential format of the worksessions and the 'hands on', illustrative, basic and practical input was successful. Respondents emphasised that the participants should be given hope and motivation, and their knowledge, wisdom and experience be acknowledged. They valued the fact that the sessions started with Scripture reading and hymns/religious songs, thus acknowledging 'the way they are used to do things'.[13] The feedback indicated that *how* (in terms of presenting style) was at least as important as the *what* (topics and content). Community members voiced their need for skills and competencies in empowering themselves as individuals; in dealing with and relating to other people; and the utilisation of inner-power or spiritual strengths – as illustrated by the following anecdotes from practice:

> During the opening session of a workshop conducted for the Moreleta-Worship HIV and AIDS Project, the participants stated that "…*this is God's work and He has called each of us to be together here on this day*" (Kirsten, 2003a:1). When asked to share something about

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[13] Participant focus group conducted prior to the WOF 10 evaluative research (Kirsten, 2002).

themselves, all participants shared that they love God and therefore want to help others (Kirsten, 2003a:3). Similarly, when reporting back after making their individual collages, the participants emphasised their love for God: "*We get our strength from God, through reading the Bible, praying, praising God and having fellowship with other Christians*" (Kirsten 2003a:10).

When requested (during a capacity building session), to choose a group name and share what they want to give to their community, one group[14] showed their logo, depicting a cross in the middle surrounded by a circle of living water, inscribed with the words *Tsholofelo/Hope 2 Others* and said: "*We are here to hear God's voice. Our group's name is Tsholofelo, which means 'bringing hope to others'.*"

Significantly, invited to share their views on how to conduct a project, many participants relayed a strong awareness of the presence and guidance of God. The following statements made at worksessions reflect experiences of God's involvement and accountability to God (Kirsten, 2003a:19–20):

▸ *Projects are not about making money – it is to show that God cares. We have to model peace and love through our projects.*

▸ *We light a candle at the beginning of our sessions as symbol of God's light – knowing that He will show us what to do.*

▸ *We open our sessions with gospel songs and prayer to invite God into our sessions and work.*

▸ *Projects are not the government's responsibility – we can minister to people and guide them – to save their souls.*

Evident in their statements pertaining to their personal strengths, and to what they want to do in the community, are the frequent references to God. To them, God is present in all areas of their lives: in the area of money, in determining the goal of the project, and in caring for and loving others. God is guiding and helping them to make a project/dream a reality and God is leading the way in their relationship to others/the community – even to ministering to and "…*saving their souls*" [for God].[15]

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[14] SAVF-group (community members and social workers), Pretoria, 2004.

[15] During their experience of reading the Bible with women in communities, Sibeko and Haddad (1996:91) observed that the text of Mark 5:21–6:1, when applied by the women to their own context, led the women to conclude that "…the faith [of the bleeding woman] enabled her to reach wholeness and to be defined in a new way … not by illness, but by wholeness". In turn, this insight (or interpretation) strengthened these women's own faith and nurtured their vision of wholeness. When writing about the role of faith in practical daily living of poor women, Haddad (2001:44) states: "Prayer to God becomes a means through which women voice their burdens away from sites of struggle in their own safe space. It becomes an immediate link with the spiritual realm that enables

Documenting the verbal input from participants, listening to their stories and achievements, became a live testimony of the inner strength hidden in people. In addition, 'handing over the stick' – providing people with the opportunity to share their experiences, wisdom and insights – were beginning to pay off in the workshops. One such 'indigenous' insight and request was the incentive for the compilation of post workshop workbooks,[16] setting the trend for all future worksessions – eventually utilised as valuable data-recording tool during the research.

Progressively, the exposure to and working with community members brought convincing evidence and answers to the initial question regarding why some people cope against all odds. It seemed that this ability to cope, could at least partly, be consigned to their ability to act – and this ability to act, is embedded in their sense of 'being capable' – often underscribed by their faith or spiritual orientation.[17] Having been 'given permission' by community members indicating their need and ability to integrate the physical (e.g. a day-care centre for the children) with the spiritual (God's loving concern for and involvement with the children at the day-care) in their lives – the inclusion of spiritual space and methodology became a key focus of the capacity building work. Thus, when in 2003, the request for help with capacity building came from a social worker in KwaZulu-Natal,[18] the decision to launch the pilot study was made.

3.3   Pilot study: Cycle I

The fieldwork with the pilot group consisted of a full action research cycle spanning almost the whole of 2004 and included first, the conducting of a 5-day worksession with the aim to empower practitioners and community members for community

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them to see their lives from a different perspective as they unburden their hearts to God and one another…"

[16] The participants of a workshop told us that even though many of them could not read, they wanted to have their input and comments typed and printed in their own workbook. Their children or literate family members could then read what they have been doing in the workshop. Thus, the 'post - workshop workbooks' (compiled by the researcher based on the participant's direct verbal/written input during the worksessions) were given birth and have proved an invaluable source of reflection, learning, capacity building and wisdom.

[17] Cf. the following statement from one of the women's groups: *"We get our strength from God, through reading the Bible, praying, praising God and having fellowship with other Christians"* (Kirsten 2003a:10).

[18] Rina Steenkamp, then a community worker at the Natalse Christelike Vroue Vereniging (NCVV), a NGO delivering social work and community development services in the KwaZulu-Natal province. At the time, she has been involved with the initiation and deployment of a number of community development projects in the Rocky's Drift community. The Rocky's Drift community is an arid rural (mostly agricultural), sparsely populated community about one and a half hour's drive from Pietermaritzburg.

facilitation, including a component on dealing with trauma. Second, it also entailed the undertaking of a village walk[19] to engage with the community at large and familiarise the outsiders (research team) with the context of the insiders (community members) and third, a one day follow-up workshop for feedback and reflection and assessment.

3.3.1 Village Walk: Engaging the pilot community

To enable a better understanding of the difficulties community members encountered, one had to 'to see for oneself'[20] where they lived and worked.[21] This observation (and need) was echoed by participants who emphasised that professionals seldom reach their extremely isolated areas.[22]

The village walk facilitated the grassroots entrance into the community, giving the researcher/outsiders the opportunity to make direct contact with the community members (insiders) and to observe first-hand where, how and what was taking place within the community and their projects. From the 'outsiders' viewpoint, the village walk as first level contact was of great significance, as it enabled listening to stories – thus laying the foundation for building a relationship of trust and co-operation. From the insiders' viewpoint it was meaningful that the one co-worker[23] could relate to them in

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[19] A 'village walk' consists of the researcher(s) visiting (by vehicle or preferably by foot) the actual localities where the community representatives (in this case, the pilot group members) live and participate in projects. It is usually organised and/or guided by a local professional or community leader and the itinerary is mostly determined by the local community. For the purpose of the study, the NCVV social worker, Rina Steenkamp (cf. footnote 18) organised the village walk in co-operation with local representatives and leaders. As is often the case, an 'additional' or hidden agenda became clear during the course of the village walk, namely that one of the local leaders wanted to use the walk and exposure to 'outsiders' toward his personal political advancement. This caused a degree of unhappiness amongst the pilot group object members, as it prohibited the team from visiting all their projects. It did, however, provide valuable insights into the local political set-up and contributed to an understanding of the issues the local community members were up against (cf. also section 3.4.3).

[20] In *Pedagogy of Hope* (2006:16–18) Paulo Freire relates an incident when, after delivering a presentation on Piaget, "a still rather young but already worn out and exhausted" man raise his hand to ask: "Dr Paulo, sir, do you know where people live? Have you ever been in any of our houses, sir?" This 'lesson', states Freire, stayed with him for the rest of his life.

[21] Steve de Gruchy (1997:61) stresses the importance of experiencing the context of the people in order to 'do theology' [or community development] contextually, since "...the rural areas with their imposing majestic views, large skies, and desperate reliance upon rain and sun on the one hand, and their pathetic scenes of poverty and loneliness on the other, hold before humanity a truth of God and the world that theology cannot afford to lose."

[22] During the Pietermaritzburg capacity building worksessions, one group member, referring to the social workers' conduct in the rural communities – and specifically concerning the member's own isolated community, located in a difficult to reach valley – had this to say: *"They [the government social workers] park on top of the hill and do not want to walk down to our village, because they don't want to walk through the mud with their high heels. They don't see what is really going on down below where the problems are, but expect us to come up to them at the top.'*

[23] Thembi Mphokeng is Zulu speaking.

their mother tongue, thus establishing immediate contact on a – to them – culturally comfortable level. To receive the 'visitors' on their 'home turf', affirmed their dignity.

The photographs taken during the village walk produced an extremely valuable portrayal of the encounters. As it allowed for more in-depth reflection and provided a record of visual images that greatly added to and confirmed the initial observations, it was found to be vital as research material.[24] The detailed assessment report (compiled by the researcher) served as a source of recorded data reflecting the observations; a brief evaluative discussion of the projects, the role of the social worker, and the role of the organisation; and the conclusions relevant to the capacity building sessions (Kirsten, 2004a). In addition, as required in action research, the assessment report provided a means to give direct feedback and information to the insiders.[25]

3.3.2   Capacity building sessions: Data-gathering and action

The pilot group consisted of 29 rural and semi-rural participants – NCVV/SAVF[26] social workers, community developers and community members involved with self-help projects in the immediate surroundings of Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal. The criteria for inclusion in the pilot group were involvement in self-help, community or development projects and the willingness to continue an active group membership or facilitation role. The content of the worksessions covered the areas of empowerment; self-fulfilment; group facilitation; self-help group/project leadership; and basic business development. The focus was on transferring knowledge and skills in the areas mentioned (i.e. self-enrichment, self-knowledge, self-confidence, dealing with trauma, leadership and group facilitation, and project and basic business development). Adhering to the methodology of Adult Education and PLA-principles[27] with an outcome-based focus, the worksessions offered participants the opportunity to be involved in experiential learning activities. The aim was to sufficiently equip and empower the participants with the skills and confidence to enable the transfer of these competencies to others within their communities, organisations or projects.

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[24] Action Research holds that the community has the ownership of the collected data; therefore, they should have access to it. In the case of illiterate or semi-literate communities, photographic material (e.g. videos, photo albums, and reproduced prints) is one of the best sources to relay the information back to them. Also cf. Chapter 2, section 2.6.2: Tools; section 2.6.5: Role of researcher.

[25] Cf. Chapter 1, section 1.5; Chapter 2, section 2.6.2.

[26] Non-governmental organisations focussing mainly on work with families and communities: Natalse Christelike Vroue Vereniging (NCVV) and Suid-Afrikaanse Vroue Federasie (SAVF).

[27] Participatory learning in action.

3.3.3 *Reflection and adaptation of the praxis framework*

The final follow-up worksession took place on September 16th, 2004 in Pietermaritzburg.[28] The aim of the session was to assess the participants' integration and utilisation of the material; to create space for questions and discussion of problems arising from the implementation in their projects or practices; to provide the opportunity for networking with fellow participants; and to offer support, encouragement and motivation for the continuation of the work. The participants' feedback regarding their understanding of the content and especially the process, were encouragingly positive, as was their rating of their contributions, sharing and active participation in the various activities during the sessions.[29] This could be interpreted as an indication of the value of the experiential and inter-active process, as well as the fact that the 'stick was [truly] handed over', with the participants taking responsibility for themselves, rather than expecting someone else 'to wait' on them.[30]

Reflecting on the findings of the 'pre-study' work in the communities, as well as on the work done with the pilot group, namely direct observation, individual and group feedback and the insights gained during the village walk, ten 'practice lessons' were identified (Kirsten, 2006:192–193). Representing key issues and problems to be addressed in refining community capacity building interventions, these lessons imply that people want:

- to be heard, therefore *listen and change the 'theme' to focus on personal empowerment;*

- to be accommodated, therefore *work inclusive; help with practical aspects;*

- to be treated with respect, therefore *acknowledge the past and inner pain; make real contact (in their context);*

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[28] The session was attended by most (17) of the participants of the 5–day capacity building workshop.

[29] An open-ended sentence assessment questionnaire (completed by 20 participants) was utilised to assess the participants' opinion of their progress and the worksessions. Each question was read and translated in Zulu and participants could respond in the language of their choice. Most of the participants completed every statement in detail and this was captured in the assessment report (Kirsten 2004b:8–14).Cf. Appendix A4: Verbatim feedback given on 16 September 2004.

[30] Confirmation for this conclusion came from the NCVV social worker who acted as insider for the Rocky's Drift community during the pilot study. In an e-mail, dated August 10th 2009 she wrote "…*for them [the pilot group members] getting to know who they were and what their needs were during capacity building worksessions proved to be invaluable for the following two years. Even when problems occurred (once the projects obtained government funding), they were able to deal with it. The projects (candle-making, needlework, beadwork, embroidery, thatching, grass products and gardens) are now sustainable and the women are proud, confident and thankful*" (researcher's translation).

- to contribute, therefore *respect people's dignity; compile 'client-inspired' workbooks;*

- to be empowered, therefore *be willing to 'hand over the stick'; allow people to teach each other; acknowledge people's initiative;*

- to have the opportunity for healing, therefore *laugh together; listen to their pain; respect people's need for restoration, forgiveness and healing;*

- to have self-actualisation and the right to self-determination, therefore ask *Whose project is this? What are the different expectations? Whose money is it?;*

- to receive practical guidance, therefore *acknowledge community's initiative and abilities; 'assist' and give input where they request/need it;*

- to be part of, therefore *affirm 'we can' and 'we care' – work through their pain and support self-help actions;*

- to have responsibility and ownership, therefore *reach out – visit the communities; 'walk in their shoes'; do village walks; listen and see; motivate the community to take ownership; cultivate attitude of 'we will take control'.*

These 'lessons' affirmed the notion that listening to, showing respect, and accommodating the need to be healed, are crucial in community capacity-building initiatives. An analysis of the content and the methodology of the pilot study interventions indicated that to a large extent the prerequisites of listening to and enlightening of people (developing self-insight, skills and competency), were met. What were lacking were techniques to facilitate the community's need for dealing with inner healing on an emotional and spiritual level.

At the conclusion of the pilot study, the initial research-question "Why do some people cope against all odds?" was reflected upon yet again. By listening closely and by accepting the community's input as 'lived' and valid, it became evident that their ability to act positively is embedded in their sense of 'being capable'. And this sense of capability is most often underpinned by their faith or spirituality. The participants' involvement in the pilot group sessions seemed to have touched on these sources, resulting in change – yet there were clear deficiencies in the current praxis framework. The challenge was to identify and refine additional strategies and methodology to tap into this inner source of strength and coping, which, in turn would enable the transfer of this 'life giving resource' to others in the community. Turning to the spiritual dimension, says Terry Sacco, could provide a break-through regarding the apathy and hopelessness that people experience. On the other hand, "…failure to attend to the

spiritual dimension leaves a vast resource of inner strength and a sense of dignity, meaning and purpose untapped" (Sacco, 1999:3). The opportunity to delve deeper into this question (and entering a second cycle of action research), came in the form of yet another 'call for help'.

3.4   Field work with the sample group: Cycle II

3.4.1   Call for help: Attending to the idea

The call for help came from the social worker involved with the CCPP[31] in the Franschhoek community[32] – requesting worksessions focussed on inner healing to precede personal capacity building and community facilitation sessions.[33] The request originated from the CCPP, but was shaped by the social worker's explorative investigation in the Franschhoek community. This indicated that the breakdown in community development services did not occurred because of lack of leadership or services. Rather, it could be ascribed to burn-out of people involved in community projects; their being over-burdened (by their responsibilities in their family or community situation); or their believe of being incapable – an attitude most often linked directly to their experience of inner hurt, pain and unresolved past emotional issues.[34] Therefore, to enable them to sustain their involvement and contribution to their communities, they needed the opportunity to work through their personal issues and to be equipped to help others similarly.[35] It was agreed that the inner or spiritual healing-focus – i.e. working through their inner hurt, pain and unresolved past emotional issues during retreats[36] – would precede the capacity building sessions.

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[31] The Community Care and Protection Plan (CCPP) were initiated during 2002 by the (provincial) Department of Social Services and Poverty Alleviation. The government's expected outcome for the programme focused on "*building families and communities in order to eradicate the root causes of social problems ... [by] support[ing] families and communities to take primary responsibility for the care and protection of its vulnerable members through the development and utilization of internal strengths and the elimination of negative factors*" (CCPP 2004:2). It was envisaged that this would be obtained in part by assembling community members in action committees representative of the Greater Franschhoek community with the purpose to develop an integrated strategy for addressing child care and protection (Swart, 2008b:1).

[32] Franschhoek is a semi-rural town nestled in the mountains of the Western Cape's wine country.

[33] The project manager of the CCPP, Heidi Swart (a social worker).

[34] Personal exploratory conversations with the social worker, conducted prior to our direct involvement, Stellenbosch. September, 2006.

[35] Cf. the reference to the initial expectation outlined in February 2007: "These workshops should address the obstacles identified in phase 1 (such as traumatised, burnt-out service providers, lack of motivation to work together, etc.)" (Swart, 2008a:5).

[36] Inner healing retreats refer to small group worksessions conducted by experienced facilitators over an extended period (usually a weekend) and in a setting that is conducive to silence, relaxation and healing, such as a nature reserve (cf. section 3.4.4.3).

Action research requires alertness – the ability to think differently in the light of changing expectations and needs (cf. Wadsworth, 1998:4). Thus, when faced with the reality of providing an intervention focused on healing within the context of a community, it was clear that the current approach needed to be expanded and refined. For this purpose, a three-pronged approach was followed: reviewing existing information sources (in particular practical theology-literature);[37] the study of natural examples (e.g. attendance of experiential workshops); and the identification of functional elements of successful models (cf. De Vos, 2002:405–407).

The researcher's attendance of various conferences and training opportunities focusing specifically on material for spiritual assessment;[38] as well as 'self-experience' – going through a series of inner or spiritual healing sessions[39] – provided invaluable 'new' information, skills and insights. The experiential learning opportunities, such as Grief Recovery[40] sessions, were deemed essential, since it enabled the studying of natural examples and the familiarisation with the methodology to be utilised during the retreats. Indeed, having undergone an inner healing process, the researcher (and co-facilitators) was better positioned to evaluate the material she encountered and, more important, to relate openly to the participants by means of self-disclosure (cf. De Vos, 2002:406; Staral, 2003:48). With these experiences came an awareness of the sacredness of being allowed into other people's spaces of inner pain, and the need for treading with the utmost sensitivity and respect, as echoed in these words:

> *It was very difficult to share – to find someone to take into confidence, but today I felt I could use this group as an opportunity.*[41]

The initial capacity building interventions were based on a community enrichment practice model, adapted from Lewis and Lewis (1990).[42] The gradual modification of

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[37] Cf. Chapter 5 for in-depth discussion of the integration of literature of the disciplines of practical theology, spirituality and social work community development resulting from the literature search.

[38] June 21–23, 2007: *Second North American Conference on Spirituality and Social Work*, Dominican University, Chicago; June 02–05, 2006: *Grief Recovery,* The Grief Recovery Institute, Niagara Falls, Canada; May 25–27, 2006: *First North American Conference on Spirituality and Social Work*, Rennison College, Windsor, Canada; and October 2004: *54th Convention and Training Conference of the North American Association of Christians in Social Work*, Sheraton Reston Hotel, Reston, VA.

[39] The Battle belongs to the Lord Conference, Ellel Ministries, Doxa Deo, East Campus, Pretoria, February 28–March 2, 2003. Participated in spiritual-healing sessions with both Peter and Fiona Horrobin (2003) and Christo Cloete (2003).

[40] Cf. footnote 38.

[41] Participant of a healing retreat, IPSO Weekend Retreat for Community Caregivers (FH2), 16–18 November 2007 at Olyfhuis, Jonkershoek, Stellenbosch.

[42] Adapted by the researcher in fulfilment of the master's degree in social work (Kirsten, 1992:66–77; 124–127).

the intervention framework – i.e. the assimilation of a healing component – was informed by insights forthcoming both from praxis and the (continued) literature review. The approach to spiritual healing (incorporated in the work with the pilot group and initial capacity building work) originated from various Christian inner healing models and approaches (cf. Horrobin, 1994; Cloete & Cloete, 2003). These models, however, had limitations in the work with communities. The growing awareness of the need for involvement on a spiritual level or within the spiritual dimension of people's lives urged the addition of functional elements and techniques from alternative approaches on spirituality and spiritual healing[43] (cf. De Vos, 2002:407).

Given that social work and community development literature provided insufficient material (Ver Beek, 2000:36–39), an investigation into literature from discipline of practical theology to discover and generate new linkages was undertaken (cf. De Vos, 2002:406). Progressively the practical theological contribution, such as TAR,[44] was integrated with the existing body of theory underlying both the action research methodology (reflected in the previous chapter), and in the conceptualisation of the praxis framework (discussed in Chapter 6). Yet, very little literature on the actual implementation of spiritual healing in a community context could be found. Therefore, the researcher turned to the work of social work practitioner-researchers[45] to identify appropriate methodology to adapt for this purpose, such as the narrative framework and the spiritual (eco-)map,[46] developed by Social Work academic and researcher, professor David Hodge (2003).

Lastly, working in multi-cultural communities raised the question of cultural consciousness. Sensitivity for the African context came through working closely with 'indigenous helpers' (community representatives and co-facilitator Thembi Mphokeng) and sharing stories with hundreds of community members. The literature search provided information on relevant topics of indigenous knowledge and approaches to

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[43] The literature review of approaches to 'natural' and spiritual or inner healing revealed that there are many commonalities throughout the spectrum of healing approaches (cf. Sollod, 1993:3–5; Horrobin, 1994; Smith, 2002; Montgomery, 1999:3; Lane, 2006, Chapter 5, section 5.4.3). In Social Work literature applicable instruments, techniques with a specific focus on spirituality – though on an individual and group level – was found to be helpful (cf. Hodge, 2003:6–7; Staral, 2003:42–43; Derezotes, 2006:1; Nouwen, 2006:89–95; Ver Beek, 2000:31, Chapter 3, sections 3.4.5 & 3.4.6).

[44] Theological Action Research as discussed in Chapter 2.

[45] Canda E. R. 2007. *Spiritually Sensitive Practice Skills and Techniques*; Moore D. L. 2006. *The Esther Model: A Theoretical Approach to Faith-based Social Service Programming*; Sheridan M. J. 2007. Integrating Contemplative Practices into Social Work Education and Collins B. J. and Laughlin T. M. 2006. *The Power of Story*.

[46] Cf. Chapter 3, section 3.4.5.8 for discussion on the implementation of the spiritual map during the retreats. Cf. also Appendix A5.

spiritual healing, ancestral spirituality and wisdom, 'coping know how' and traditional African values such as inclusivity and unity.[47]

3.4.2   Selection of sample groups

The selection of the sample groups was subject to the local government's proposals for and expectations of co-operation with the community-based organisations as outlined in the CCPP;[48] the availability of an 'insider',[49] the community's request for input; and the availability of funding. Using the non-probability sampling technique of snowball sampling,[50] entailed that the 'insider' identified community members who were willing to co-operate, and in key positions to recruit potential action committee members (cf. Monette, et al., 2002:150). These community members (as potential action committee participants) were then screened and selected by the project manager on the basis of their connectedness in their communities; their prior involvement in some kind of community initiative; and their willingness to make a long-term commitment to the government initiated project working with youth in the Franschhoek district – which included their participation in the capacity building worksessions, the initial weekend retreat and the willingness to apply the gained knowledge, skills and competencies within the framework of the CCPP focusing on children and youth in their various communities (Swart, 2008a:3).

It is noteworthy that the criteria for the selection of sample group members were partially determined by the fact that the CCPP programme was a government-initiated project (CCPP). Thus, the community members' religious orientation and affiliation – whether or not they were church members or involved with spiritual activities – were of no account in their selection. Furthermore, at the time it was deemed of greater significance to emphasise non-prescriptive inclusiveness with regard to religious or spiritual worldviews. Similarly, there was no gender preference – the fact that only one male was selected, reflected a reality of work in the communities: the overwhelming majority of community volunteers and practitioners are female.

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[47]The aspect of an African consciousness raises similar challenges than that of not being African working in African communities as discussed in Chapter 2, section 2.3.2; Chapter 5, section 5.4.3.2 and focussed on in the work of several African authors on community development (cf. Salole, 1991:8–11; Upkong, 1990:75; Barrett, et al., 1985:215–171; Thabede, 2008:234; Sacco, 1999:12).

[48] Community Care and Protection Plan, initiated during 2002 by the Department of Social Services and Poverty Alleviation.

[49] In this case, Heidi Swart, the social worker appointed as manager for the CCPP's project in Franschhoek district.

[50] This interactive sampling technique is especially effective for sampling subcultures where the members routinely interact with one another, as was the case in this community (Monette, et al., 2002:150).

Initially (2006) only one group/action committee (consisting of Afrikaans-speaking Coloured people) was selected (FH1). Towards the end of 2007, the (provincial) Department of Social Services and Poverty Alleviation requested the selection of a second group consisting of Xhosa-speaking members.[51] Both groups were composed of literate and semi-literate members, with Group FH1[52] composed of 15 participants from the coloured population and Group FH2 of 14 participants from the black Xhosa-speaking population. Members of group FH1 (14 women and 1 male) represented the following smaller communities (all within the larger Franschhoek district): Wemmershoek Safcol, Safcol La Motte, Langrug, Mooiwater, Groendal and Dennegeur (Swart, 2007:4). Group FH2 (all women, one a wheelchair user) consisted of representatives from the Mooiwater, Langrug and Lanquedoc communities.

3.4.3   *Village walks: Engaging the sample communities*

In keeping with the lessons learned[53] regarding the value of a village walk for engaging with the community, five village walks were conducted in various locations in the target community from March 2007 to October 2008. On four of the village walks, one or more of the community members (selected for the sample group/action committee) accompanied and guided the 'outsider research group' (i.e. the social worker/project leader, the two co-facilitators and the researcher).

The analysis of observations, impressions and the feedback received from both the co-researchers and the community members who were involved, indicated that the significance and meaning of the village walks centred around five aspects: engaging on a different level; installing hope; seeing the bigger picture; developing a sense of self-autonomy; and linking with 'outsiders' and resources. As was the case with the pilot study (cf. Chapter 3, section 3.3), 'hearing' the community and literally 'walking in their shoes' enabled the outsider-research group to engage with and relate to the community members on a different level. Conducting the village walks over a period of months provided the additional benefit of 'growing into' the communities by literally 'seeing differently' on return visits. These recurrent visits enabled an understanding of what to be on the lookout for, e.g. the distance and difficult terrain mothers with young children have to travel to the official crèches – and to understand the need for

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[51] On reviewing the progress report on the impact and outcome of the retreat and capacity building process, the government requested that a second group (FH2) – representing the black population in the area – should be selected to be exposed to the same process.

[52] The two sample groups are referred to as FH1 (Franschhoek group 1, Afrikaans) and FH2 (Franschhoek group 2, Xhosa).

[53] Cf. section 3.3.1.

informal crèches established at various locations, e.g. up on the mountain slope slope – all aspects that may be addressed in future community development projects.

The outsiders' act of 'having been there' – reaching out and actually showing up on their doorstep – may be the single most important value of the village walks. Apart from showing a truthful interest and commitment to the process, it acknowledges community members as people who are making a difference in their community.[54] The outsiders' presence relayed the message that the community has something of worth to show and teach, which in turn served to install a sense of hope in the community.

Furthermore, when visual portrayals of the village walks (PowerPoint presentations compiled from slides taken during the walks) were shared with sample groups, it helped them to see the 'bigger picture'. Since the members came from a number of smaller communities (3.4.2), they acknowledged to finding it very enlightening to "…see how the others lived". It helped them to look at their own community through different eyes. With their permission, the presentation was screened during an international conference – which had the direct result that a group of students from Union University (USA) included a visit to this area in their study tour.[55] In addition, inviting outsiders to visit the community projects, resulted in financial support, for example during a visit to the day-care mother, Zuki,[56] one of the Danish visitors enquired from Zuki what she needed to enable her to continue with the work she was doing. Her answer was, "Blankets". Consequently, a couple of the Danish visitors collected money toward the COMFIKIDS Project,[57] initiated as a direct upshot of that experience to provide 'portable bed-and-blankets' for Zuki's day-care centre.[58]

A last unexpected outcome of the village walks was the development of a sense of self-autonomy amongst the sample group members. During the USA visit, the action

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[54] McLaren (2007:277–281) relates how a missionary family in Argentina had a similar experience by re-visiting (and becoming involved with) a remote village in the mountains over a period. When questioned about the value it had for the villagers, they realized that "*[i]t wasn't the resources we brought that made the difference. It was our presence. We were simply among them as people with hope, among them as people with love, and that made the difference. They caught our hope*" (McLaren, 2007:281).

[55] Since their participation in the village walk on May 25, 2007, the Social Work Faculty of Union University's (USA) have been including a 'village walk' in the Franschhoek community in their bi-annual student study tour to South Africa. These study visits offered on-going support and motivation for the community members by giving them the opportunity to share their work and wisdom with the international students.

[56] Zuki is a sample group member who lives up the mountain slope in a two roomed shack where she provides day-care for the small children of single mothers who do seasonal work.

[57] COMFIKID was initiated during 2008 with the vision to provide children in the community with portable, washable soft 'beds'. The COMFIKIDS were produced by a local work creation project for women in the community and distributed with the input of local community organisations or leaders, ensuring involvement of the parents whose kids receive the COMFIKIDS.

[58] Cf. Chapter 6, section 6.3.1: The relationship building and transformational impact of these walks.

committee members – on own initiative – invited the local councillor of the specific area (Groot Drakenstein) to address the USA visitors on the situation regarding 'outsiders' (mainly citizens from Europe and North America) buying farms and not being sensitive toward the history and needs of farm workers. Using the village walk as a cultural-political platform was an unexpected and notable outcome, indicating growth and empowerment within the action committee members, signifying an increased awareness of their right to human dignity and to the freedom of speech – thus socio-political growth. They wanted their 'voice to be heard' by an international group who could "*…tell the world what is happening here*". Through this action, they (as community members and representatives) not only extended their reach, but also laid the foundation for possible future development initiatives and support on an international level.

The overall perception was that the village walks served both to prepare the research team for 'starting where the community is' and to create an expectation that something of significance could happen if all involved continue to respond toward the process. As such, these encounters laid a positive foundation for the weekend retreats, and set an example for future development projects. Moreover, the encounters between the research team and the various representatives from the community, not only contributed greatly to their sense of dignity and self-worth (as illustrated above), but provided the 'outsiders' with first hand experiences of the spirituality of the local communities. For instance, when the research-group (accompanied by the international visitors) visited the sample group's projects, the sample group members without fail opened their activities with hymns and prayers. When sharing the stories behind their individual projects, they frequently made reference to experiencing God's guidance in the establishing and daily running or their projects. Interestingly, church membership was mentioned in very few instances, and it would seem that religious affiliation was not the main driving force behind their co-operation within projects. Rather, it was the spirituality of 'one-ness', of being together in a community, caring about the same thing and wanting to contribute to the well-being of the whole, that motivated them to work together. These encounters laid a positive foundation for the weekend retreats.

3.4.4   Healing Retreats: Data-gathering

To a large degree, the course of the study – and future action – was shaped through the sharing of stories of life's challenges, pain, survival and victories during the healing retreats. In this section, the development and implementation of the healing retreats (attended by the sample groups) is described. The findings (as it reflected upon during

the course of the process) pertaining to the prerequisites, objectives, adaptation of techniques of spiritual healing in the community context and the distinctive role of the researcher as facilitator and 'healer' are reflected upon. Brief reference is made to the significance of retreat-format and content. The findings relating to the participants' involvement with the healing process, with specific reference to the impact of the sixteen exercises[59] utilised during the retreats and its applicability to community development, are discussed in section 3.4.5.

3.4.4.1   *Retreat as experiential journey to spiritual healing*

As indicated in preceding paragraphs, the encounters with community members and professionals or practitioners in the capacity as 'caregivers' in an array of community development initiatives, repeatedly underlined the need for a different approach to community capacity building. In addition, caregivers and community development practitioners encountered in the various communities[60] expressed *a need for time out from the pressure of helping*. A number of factors contributing to this feeling of being overburdened was identified, such as lack of time, stress caused by lack of funding, inflexible structures, lack of understanding and 'over-use' of existing helpers, and, becoming 'containers of hurt' (cf. Collins and Laughlin, 2005:x).

In the words of Collins and Laughlin (2005:x): *"One of the primary benefits we* [community caregivers] *offer … is our presence as a listening and validating human receptacle for their stories of trauma"*. Community caregivers are confronted on a daily basis with serious problems and prolonged struggles, issues with no 'quick fix' solutions and frequently death and dying of the people, they work with. Yet many of the people in caregiving (and the service professions) are not in the position to share the burden of their work with anyone at work or in their home environment, let alone have the luxury of 'taking time out' to recharge their own *spiritual* energy. Bearing this in mind, the goal of the 2½-day retreat was to offer participants the opportunity to 'unload' and find some inner quietness, providing them with the opportunity to relate to their Creator, nature and each other. They would be enabled to go through an individual inner or healing journey guided by facilitators experienced in spiritual mentorship. Lastly, they would be exposed to techniques and methods of inner healing which they can apply in future.

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[59] Cf. Appendix B for detailed descriptions of the exercises utilised during the retreat.

[60] Referring to those communities encountered during both the preliminary study period as well as the initial involvement in the target communities of the Franschhoek district.

Based on the conviction that community members (and others) working as caregivers in the communities or in the service professions could benefit from the experience of inner revitalisation or spiritual recovery, it was anticipated this may be actuated through a structured inner journey involving quiet time, meditation, creative activities and being offered support on a need-to-have-basis. The programme was founded on the values of compassion, acceptance and caring, allowing each individual the freedom to an individual healing journey. Henri Nouwen (2006:91–92) emphasises the importance of granting the participants 'personal freedom': the facilitators should take care that their presence should not be "threatening and demanding, but inviting and liberating", creating a space where pain and hurt can be freely shared. Shared pain, says Nouwen (2006:93), is no longer paralysing, but mobilising – we cannot escape our pains, but we can mobilise then into a common search for life, transforming the very pains from expressions of despair into signs of hope. In addition, the serene natural environment chosen for the retreats emphasised the interconnectedness of all human life and creation. According to Haws (2009:478) and Bryant Myers (2008:218–219), this connecting with and recognising God in nature, is one of the ways to enhance our walk with God, as illustrated in the magnificent metaphors used in the Psalms.[61]

The researchers' understanding of the spiritual or inner healing process[62] is that it becomes a journey where the facilitator/healer – under the guidance of God or the Holy Spirit – guides the individual through an analytical and intuitive or spiritual process. With reference to this 'walking alongside' the other, Thomas Keating (2006: 109) writes, "An important part of the response to Divine love … is to pass it on to our neighbour in a way that is appropriate in the present moment". The journey is aimed at the understanding and delineation of the source of negative experiences, problems, or blockages (resulting from physical or mental trauma) in a search for wholeness, meaning, and reconciliation with God, self and others (Kirsten, 2004c:7). Given that the inner healing process emphasises the significance of the individual's spiritual beliefs and practices in her/his search for wholeness, meaning and reconciliation (Milner, 2003:81), the utilisation of specific aides and techniques to support this analytical, yet spiritual process were deemed vital.

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[61] Myers (2008:218–219) refers specifically to Psalm 104 to illustrate God's active involvement with creation: "Gods speaks and directs while nature responds … so that man can thrive". When spending time in nature during a retreat – such as during a *nature walk* – something of this interaction is transferred unto us (cf. section 3.4.5.5).

[62] Cf. Chapter 5, section 5.4.3: Detailed discussion of inner or spiritual healing within communities.

The endeavour to facilitate inner or spiritual healing in a group setting was urged by the exposure to the community members' stories of past hurtful events and their openly expressed need for wanting to deal with these issues – before moving into the community development process. However, most techniques for spiritual healing were developed for working with individuals.[63] It follows that, working in community context with groups of individuals (such as project members, action committees); these techniques and assessment tools had to be modified subject to a number of factors and constraints.[64] Thus, heeding the time constraints, the need for personal space, and especially the integrity of the healing process, the retreat programme was structured to include those healing components considered viable.[65] This resulted in a retreat programme and content with a flexible format delicately balancing a variety of techniques, activities and exercises to allow individuals – within a group context – first, the space to follow their individual healing process and second, the opportunity to prepare for their task as practitioners in community development.

An overview and analysis of the healing components, and specifically of the participants' input and contributions, response to and feedback regarding their experience of the retreat-process, activities and exercises, is given in section 3.4.6.

3.4.4.2   Researcher as facilitator and healer

The nature of the healing retreats necessitated from the researcher to take on a different role than before – moving from 'data-collector' to a facilitative and more 'therapeutic' role, i.e. facilitating the inner healing process.[66] Yet, rather than becoming 'the expert', it requires the ability to respectfully walk alongside the other.[67] Paulo

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[63] Cf. discussion on spiritual healing in Chapter 5, section 5.4.3.

[64] Firstly, for any spiritual healing to take place, the individuals involved should be open or receptive to working through their past hurt. Enough time should be allowed for the process – a challenge, since there usually are time constraints. Peoples' expectations should be considered, since, in the community development process people have action goals, and are not all on the same level of 'openness' (with a view to deal with inner pain/turbulence). Lastly, not all community facilitators have a background in therapeutic or healing work or sufficient experience to deal with inner pain/turbulence in a group setting.

[65] Given the constraints (cf. previous footnote), the healing components considered vital and viable for facilitating healing both as individual inner journey and as basis for the capacity building (for the participants in their role as community care-givers), were: self discovery; contemplation; story-telling; mindfulness; grieving; forgiveness; and holistic participation. (Cf. Chapter 5, section 5.2.4.2 inclusion of spiritual dimension in community development; section 5.4.3 spiritual healing process.)

[66] Cf. Chapter 5, sections 5.4.3.1 & 5.4.3.3 on spiritual healing and the role of the spiritual healer.

[67] The practitioner's role as facilitator of the healing journey is different from what was previously seen as the 'therapeutic role'. There is a danger of not standing back, of becoming the 'expert', rather than be gentle enough to allow the other his/her space for inner healing. Wessel (in McLaughlin & Briggs, 1996:7) states that "…in order to be a healing influence, the healer must cultivate a basic sort of humility and respect, where it is not appropriate to show up as an *expert*".

Freire (2006:21–23) relates how he had to 'unravel the fabric' of his past, unmasking the 'why' of his suffering in order to be able to reach out to others. Henri Nouwen (2006:82; 94–96) uses the term 'wounded healer', implying that one has to acknowledge (and in fact utilise) one's own woundedness before attempting to 'heal' another.[68] The practitioner then, is compelled to be willing to admit and face his/her own 'woundedness', and, to a degree, share it with those he/she is working with. Such an attitude of 'openness to learn from' will in turn foster self-confidence, self-dependence and a feeling of 'we have what it takes' amongst community members (cf. NETWAS, 2002:1–2; Chapter 3, section 3.3.3 practice lessons).

Essentially, the role of the facilitator in the spiritual healing process is one of providing a safe, supportive space for guiding the individuals – in a group setting – through an introspective process to address their inner wounds and pain; share "confessions of our basic brokenness" (Nouwen, 2006:93); and to discover their spiritual assets. Lastly, the facilitator has to create an awareness of the value of these spiritual assets in dealing with life's challenges and communal living. Next, the creating of a space and format for the healing process will be discussed.

3.4.4.3   *Creating a space and format for inner healing retreats*

Freire (2006:26) refers to the human condition of loneliness and longing; desperation and hope as essential issues to be addressed in the inner healing process. For the healing process to transpire there needs to be a safe space where people can be invited to enter "*…into their own wisdom … to see the gifts embedded in their trauma...*" (Collins & Laughlin, 2005:41). According to Nouwen (2006:89), this space is partly created by the facilitator's display of 'hospitality', implying that – in order to pay attention to the guest(s) – the 'host' has to place his/her own needs, worries, preoccupations, tensions and appointments in the background in order to create space for the 'guest'. Apart from providing emotional and spiritual safety, the safe space has to be created on a physical level, including aspects such as venue, programme, and physical layout, food, sleeping facilities, the staff, safety and comfort of the participants.[69] The feedback received after the retreats indicated that these elements

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[68] Cf. Nouwen (2006:82): "He is called to be the wounded healer, the one who must look after his own wounds but at the same time be prepared to heal the wounds of others."

[69] Driskill (1999:58–61) refers to the importance of working in a venue (physical space) conducive to the process of spiritual practicing/healing. A welcoming, safe space where the participants can settle in and familiarise themselves with their surroundings to decrease anxiety, soft music, enough air flow, light, quietness and comfortable seating, as well as providing a focal point (such as a burning candle) will aide the process. During the retreats, ample use was made of fresh flowers and elements from nature – for example, the silent walk on the mountain slope.

were integral to meeting the interest and need for 'recovery' or rejuvenation of the participants, for example,

Yesterday I was afraid of what I was going to meet: new people, facilitators – but now I am comfortable. This place is remote, no noise or disturbances – it enables us to look within.[70]

Given the retreat-focus on working through inner hurt and pain of unresolved past emotional issues towards 'restoration and revitalisation', it was decided to include only 6–8 participants in each 2½-day weekend retreat. The same basic format, programme and content were utilised during all four the retreats, with only minor deflections from the actual programme in terms of the order in which the different exercises took place and occasionally (due to the need of the participants) more time spent on certain exercises. Aides utilised to affirm this healing journey included music and other symbols (e.g. candles), photographs taken during the retreats;[71] and a retreat workbook.[72] In all instances, the reaction to these workbooks and especially the photographs was extremely positive, as the participants expressed that *"this is our work, this is the journey we went through"*.

A number of factors determined the format (i.e. the choice of activities, material and the actual course or 'flow') of the retreat programme – and, subsequently, the analysis.[73] First, the exercises were not seen as 'spiritual exercises', but as tools to stimulate healing and transformation on a different level. Understanding humans as "…spiritual beings – in the whole of their body/soul existence - having a human experience" (Anderson, 2003:66), it follows that all activities could be seen as having a spiritual dimension. Moreover, although healing comes from within oneself and can only brought about by the person to be healed, the healing process can be supported and nurtured by others through competent intervention with the appropriate tools (cf. Anderson, 2003:95; Montgomery, 1999:3). In this instance (i.e. the healing retreats), the intervention consisted of the utilisation of exercises with an inner or spiritual healing component, within a very specific process and space. Consequently, in determining the actual content, the underpinning question was, "What activities or exercises will enable

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[70] A member of group FH2 during retreat November 25–27, 2007.

[71] These photographs (or visual portraits) are seen as part of the outcome, as it vividly portrays the involvement and the range of emotions experienced during the various exercises and activities. Besides from including the photographs in the workbooks, they were used to compile a PowerPoint presentation shown to participants as feedback and assessment aide during a follow-up session.

[72] Compiled during the retreat, based on the actual content and the group's photographs and actual inputs and contributions.

[73] Subsequently in the analysis of the impact of the exercises and process these factors also served as indicators of success. Cf. section 3.4.6 for the analysis of data resulting from inner healing retreats**.**

or facilitate the individuals (and ultimately the group) on their inner journey toward a holistic healing – i.e. working through thoughts, emotions and spiritual awareness towards reconciliation with God, self and others.

A second factor is the high regard given to 'the voice of the people' in action research. Listening to and analysing the actual voiced experiences of the participants were deemed the most reliable method of measuring the value and impact of the intervention. Thus, the programme format allowed for one of the facilitators to capture the verbatim input for the duration of the retreat (and subsequently the capacity building worksessions).[74] In the final analysis process, more weight was allotted to this input than to the researcher's 'objective' observations and opinion. Rather than determining sub-themes and categories based on the literature findings, the direct participant input was utilised to derive at main themes, which provided the basis for further reflection, discourse and possible adaptation of the process and content.

The third factor that affected the compilation of the retreat programme was the complexity of measuring a non-substantiated entity, namely the hoped for outcome of inner healing, i.e. increased inner power or strength. Since in reality there is no 'resulting competency' to measure, alternative measures to determine or gauge the impact of the activities and process had to be found. Allowing sufficient time for reflection and feedback between the various sessions; adhering to the pace of the participants (continue only once all the participants indicated their readiness to move on); and including time for sharing and feedback between partners, enabled the determining the level of insight, growth, impact, change and satisfaction. In addition, the presence of two facilitators during the retreat sessions was another 'control factor' in the sense that participants could be monitored closely and had access to a facilitator at all times if the need arose.[75] The level of active participant involvement was another indicator of 'success'.

The fourth factor was the cultural background of the participants. To ensure that the content and process of the retreats were accessible to all, the co-facilitator translated all communication into the mother tongue of the participants. The format and contents of the exercises have been tested and utilised amongst various cultural groups throughout hundreds of communities in South Africa, thus 'testing' and ensuring its acceptability to all cultural groups.[76]

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[74] Reflected as statements throughout this report.

[75] Cf. TAR process of reflection, written record and joint discussions (Cameron, et al., 2010:102–106).

[76] Cf. discussion on differences in cultural groups' experiences – section 3.4.6, paragraph on spiritual dimensions of peoples' lives.

In the subsequent discussion, the retreat process – entailing eight sessions – and the impact of the various activities and exercises are reflected upon.

3.4.5   Descriptive reflection on the impact of retreat process and exercises

The retreat programme consisted of eight sessions, structured to guide the participants through a process addressing the following components of spiritual healing: hope, self-discovery, contemplation, storytelling, mindfulness, grieving, and, since the focus was on community, holistic participating. During each session, participants were given information, participated in activities and joined in a reflective interaction. In the subsequent discussion a brief analysis and interpretation of the significance of the key 16 exercises/activities (as utilised during the various retreat sessions) against the backdrop of the overall proceedings of the retreats is given.

The first session, which opened with hymns and prayers, focused on a*n invitation to enter into hope*. Information and an overall outline of what the weekend would look like in terms of the retreat programme and focus was given. In accordance with the participative paradigm, the researchers informed the participants that their approach was imbedded in a Christian worldview and gave the participants an open invitation to either accept or reject the belief system. They were free to participate or 'sit out' during exercises with which they did not feel comfortable. The co-facilitator in the language of the participants gave a 'declaration of intent'. This statement set the stage for the rest of the journey:

> *By the end of this weekend* (or retreat or session) *you will say to us, 'Why did we not start earlier?' Why can't we stay longer? Because you will not be the same. You will be a different person from the one that came here. Moreover, remember, here, every thing you say is right. There are no wrong answers. We are here to share, to listen and learn from one another. If you have something to say, we will all learn from you.*

This statement resonates with those of both McLaren[77] and Freire[78] regarding the paradigm of hope. By telling them that they will be different an expectation of

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[77] Cf. McLaren (2007:5–6) explaining how Jesus' new framing story begins "to foment a revolution of hope". In terms of the retreat process, the 'revolution of hope' is fomented by helping participants to discover a new framing story for their lives by means of their inner journey and the facilitated process of connecting with God, themselves and others.

[78] Cf. Freire (2006:2–4) stating, "I do not understand human existence, and the struggle needed to improve it, apart from hope and dream. Hope is an ontological need." He continues to say that hope alone is not enough, does not win: one needs the struggle, the concrete action. In our terms, working through the inner hurt and pain in a very tangible fashion – identifying the hurtful truth, obtaining methods and skills to deal with it and move on.

change, of hope, was created. The assurance that *"there are not wrong answers"* and that we will learn from them – acknowledged their wisdom, their potential and their being, thus planting the seed and creating the framework for change, growth, healing and restoration. Anderson (2003:159) views hope as an "act of mutuality, an act of shared imagination", resting, finally, in God. Thus having 'declared' the researchers' standing as Christians, trust in the process was engendered and the participants were invited "to enter into partnership with the creative power of God" (Anderson, 2003:156).

Next, the participants were asked about their expectations for the weekend. One groups' response (as seen in Chapter 1), affirmed the deep need for a focus o hope:

> We *are the hidden people – we are hidden behind the other people – we are not known, not seen … hidden in the plakkerskamp.*[79] *She*[80] *came into the plakkerskamp where we were hidden and she unearthed us and picked us up from under the table, out of our hokke*[81]*… that is why we are here.*

Reflected in these words, is the frame of mind of the participants at the onset of the retreat (and their disposition towards their involvement of the action research process). It resonates significantly with the dimensions of poverty identified by Chambers (1997), as it contains elements reflecting material poverty, isolation, vulnerability, powerlessness, physical weakness (lack of strength), and, up to when they were 'unearthed', spiritual poverty – the lack of hope and the believe that change is possible (cf. Myers, 1999:67). Underlying this statement is the call for being recognised as dignified human beings – the need of individuals to be seen, heard and recognised – to be discovered as human beings of value.

3.4.5.1 Self-discovery

The second session focussed on the *self-discovery*. The exercise chosen to facilitate a connection and create an atmosphere inductive to self-discovery and ultimately fulfilment was the *Masks-*exercise[82] – literally making a mask of one's face by using aluminium foil. The *Masks-exercise* helped to emphasise the importance of being able to open up during the retreat. According to Anderson (2003:160–161), to mask the reality by denial or avoidance, by pretending not to see or to feel the pain is a form

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[79] Squatter camp/informal setting.

[80] Heidi Swart, the CCPP-project manager and co-ordinator for the sample groups in Franschhoek.

[81] Small shack built of wood and corrugated iron.

[82] Developed by IPSO©2003.

of self-deception. Whilst 'taking off the mask' – the recognition and articulation of what is wrong, painful, imperfect in one's life – can lead to healing and the creation of hope and healthier relationships (cf. Smalley & Trent, 1982:126).[83]

Reflecting on the experience most participants indicated that they enjoyed and found it easy to put on/mould a mask; yet some were uneasy. The participants drew the conclusion that by putting on the foil mask, they were imitating what they do in life. Putting on a mask may result in feeling *"…a little unsure – is it (the mask I am moulding) going to be 'right'? Will it be 'real', reflecting me … [or will it be] … suffocating, lifeless, out of tune … [leaving me] blinded, lifeless, and anxious?"* One participant stated, *"The mask is not me – it is only an image. The real me is the person behind the mask. One cannot portray one's inside feelings in the mask."* The group agreed that although there are some instances when one needs to put on a mask, the most important is that one should be aware of wearing a mask. They gave examples of circumstances under which it is acceptable to wear a mask, e.g. to protect or not affront others (*"…putting on a happy mask to encourage people, to make them happy, or to protect people – like my children"*). One could also wear the mask to protect oneself, e.g. *"To prevent me from dumping my problems on someone else"* and in specific social situations/positions: *"When I have to address a specific issue or problem, I first put on my 'friend' mask (becoming one of them) in order not to talk down, but on their level."*

One of the noteworthy insights raised were that many participants were not aware that they were wearing masks. Yet, once they realised that they did, they could acknowledge that it is a strategy of hiding one's inner hurt, pain, insecurities to the outside world. Thus, when constantly wearing a mask (denying one's true feelings) one's actions are influenced: *"My feelings are buried … I can't see in which direction I am moving and my ability to 'see' and take action is hampered."* They agreed that in doing so, people are suppressing their feelings and living a 'false' life, even to the degree that *"…one's soul is broken"*. Although there are circumstances where wearing a mask is appropriate, one should be honest enough with oneself to acknowledge the fact that you are putting on a mask and be willing to take it off if it becomes damaging to oneself or others. They concluded that even though acceptable at times, it is actually

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[83] Cf. David Bosch (2000:52–53) refers to Genesis 32:28 where Jacob had to hide behind a mask (his brother Esau's garments) in order to receive his father's blessing (meant for his brother). Twenty years later, at the river Jabbok, he had to take off his mask and admit that he was not Esau but "Jacob, the impostor" before God gave him his blessing and a new name. As did Jacob, it is easy to get accustomed to your mask and hide there, pretending to be 'another', different person from who you really are. It takes courage to take off the mask and admit the truth about ourselves – our insignificance – like Paul did (2 Corinthians, 12:9), enabling him to take his joy and pride in his weaknesses. Taking off the mask also enables others to see Christ in you, "…shining through an earthen pot".

far better to live without masks – taking it off "*…to be the way God created us … [and to] … look at the 'real me' inside – only then can we work on change from the inside.*"

From a spiritual healing perspective, it was interesting to note how they 'elevated' the mask-experience to a deeper level (of self-examination) and eventually related it to finding meaning, by pointing out that in stead of wearing a mask, "*…[we should] be the way God created us*". It would seem that, by giving the participants the space to express themselves freely, they were enabled to cross the line into the spiritual dimension. Hiding behind the masks, they were invisible and in danger of staying 'abstractions'. Only once the masks were removed, were they able to recognise themselves (and be recognized by others) as "…human beings who have names, who are made in the image of God, whose hairs are numbered…" (cf. Myers, 2008:57). On this journey to dealing with inner hurt, this exercise most certainly helped to raise the participants' awareness of 'hiding', the need for opening up, role of relationships, and the presence of the Spirit: *"I felt healed – when we used the mask, we realised that we (all of us) do not know each other – it was acknowledged and the Holy Spirit worked to help us to get to know one another. The [opening] prayer helped."*

The next exercise, *Lighting a Candle*,[84] was used to create an atmosphere of calmness; to suggest the spiritual – that which is beyond the here and now; to reflect something of the sacredness; and to help people focus. At the onset of the retreat, one of the facilitators lights the candle, but during the consecutive sessions, the participants are asked to light the candle – to convey the message that it is their process and not that of the facilitators. In the cause of the retreat(s) a shift in the participants' attitude was observed – the groups gradually 'took responsibility for the candle' (and thus the process) by ensuring that it was always snuffed at the end of one session and re-lit at the beginning of the next session. During general feedback or reflection sessions, they often referred to the importance of the presence of "*the light*" or "*God's light*" – proclaiming that God enlightens their minds and gives then insights, wisdom and guidance, e.g. "*Even when I am on my own in 'darkness', I may light a candle as symbol of God's love/light.*"

A further noteworthy outflow of this exercise was that all the groups insisted on lightning the candle during the capacity building sessions. They felt the process of becoming enlightened should continue and the lighting of the candle symbolised that

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[84] Developed by IPSO©2003, based on contemplative practices encountered during courses facilitated by Centre for Christian Spirituality, Cape Town.

for them.[85] In turn, they had to go into the community "…*carrying the light*": "*We bring the light we have discovered here, to people who are hurting in the community*." It is a metaphor for how they should work in the community:

> *The candle is the symbol of silence – it burns without 'making a noise'. We should work like that in the community – with 'no noise', without being seen, silent – only when you leave people will notice you are no longer there.*[86]

Lastly, the *Lighting the candle-exercise* was used on an individual level during the session focusing on grief recovery,[87] when participants were invited to light a candle for someone they wanted to bring before God in prayer. Participants found this an exceptionally valuable exercise, sharing that it made the forgiving and closure 'visible'. In the words of Driskill (1999:55), the candle seemed to become a symbol of spiritual power in their healing and throughout their continued capacity building process and journey into the community.

The last exercise utilised during this session was *Journaling*[88] – a personal recording of one's reflections. The most significant insights were that the participants saw the journal as an important tool for *remembering things and reflecting* on one's life, e.g. "*Use it as a diary – to write all the things [good and bad] that are happening to you.*" "*Write about yourself – my life history – to explain what kind of person I am; things that I want to do; my dreams; my plans.*" It could also be used for *noting intellectual growth* and for *leaving something behind/completing something*, e.g. "*…writing down new things that I [learn]*", "*… [w]rite things I want to say to my child.*" Some remarked that the journal could be used for *communicating with God*, e.g., "*We can write our prayers …. what God says through His word.*" "*I write poems to God.*" A few participants immediately started to use their journals (and shared on the second day some of their written reflections and – in one case – drawings and pictures). It seemed even though not all participants were that comfortable with writing – that journaling could contribute towards the participants' inner or healing journey, especially in the area of

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[85]Driskill (1999:55–57) reminds that spiritual exercises, practices, rituals and symbols have considerable emotional and spiritual power in the lives of those utilising it, since it opens them to the Spirit. Since we cannot determine in which way the Sprit will move, he heeds the facilitator/leader to approach these practices with a sense of the holy, as well as with care and wisdom.

[86] Statements made during group FH1 Capacity Building Session 7 for Youth Empowerment (YEN), 4 August 2007: *"YEN is the place of light"; "We bring the light we have discovered here, to people who are hurting in the community".*

[87] Exercises utilised include *Forgiveness* and *Writing a Final Letter* (cf. section 3.4.5.7 & Appendix B, Exercise 13 & 14).

[88] Developed by IPSO©2003, based on the work of, amongst others, Julia Cameron. 1996. *The Vein of Gold.* New York: Putnam (14–18).

self-knowledge and insight.[89] One participants' comment illustrates this:*"[I] write things down so that I will get to know myself better; reflect on my hurts, what I am struggling with – for [me and] my family so that they will know me better."*

3.4.5.2 Contemplation

Throughout the duration of the retreat participants were engaged in contemplative practices to further the healing process. These practices require one to become quiet and focus on God – to contemplate, ponder or look at with attention – what He is saying to you.[90] A few simple acts (such as beholding pictures of objects of nature) "will sustain one's attention to God with the loving experience of God's presence" (Keating, 2006:141). Contemplation or reflective prayer is effective as closing exercise after a healing session, since it helps the participants focus on what is happening within them. Used extensively during previous worksessions with community groups, those formats that people felt most comfortable with, namely *Face of God, Scriptures,*[91] *Stone and Examen of Conscience* were chosen for the retreat.[92] Predominantly, the participants were very receptive and open to these modes of

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[89] Driskill (1999:109–113) discusses the value of keeping a 'spiritual journal' to foster one's spiritual development. A spiritual journal "…explores life from the perspective of the holy Where is God as work in my life today? How do I understand God's call in the present moment? Are there things I can do to cooperate more fully with God's work in my life? Recording insights, events of 'spiritual' nature. The spiritual journal "is a record of an individual's encounter with God", and helps to raise the awareness of God's presence in one's life.

[90] Contemplation is a centuries-old Christian spiritual discipline. For the past 500 years predominantly a Roman Catholic phenomenon, has been increasing in popularity across different Christian traditions since the second half of the previous century. Contemplation is characterised by an intimacy with God and the experience of nearness. It includes reflection on the Scriptures and 'resting in' God. According to Keating (2006:140–152), the person who practices contemplation is taken into a "state of tranquillity and profound inner peace".

[91] *Lectio Divina*, the reading of Scripture and silent reflection upon it. See also next footnote.

[92] In the *Face of God*-exercise, participants were asked to circle a table, looking at pictures depicting different images of God and Jesus and to choose one that 'communicates' with them. With the picture, they sit down again and look at the picture in silence, becoming aware of or 'hearing' what God says to them. After 10 minutes, they have the opportunity to give feedback (if they want to do so). During the *Scriptures-exercise*, the participants sit relaxed, with their eyes closed whilst a short Bible passage (2–3 verses) is read – once slowly and repeated twice more. While listening, they have to take note of any verse, phrase or word that 'connects' with them and then meditate on that – waiting upon God. After 10 minutes, they are invited to give feedback. During the *Stone-exercise,* every participant chooses a stone from a container and then, whilst sitting in a relaxed position, look at the stone – becomes aware of its colour, shape, size. Then, closing their eyes, they are invited to sit, waiting on God. They are to note anything (thought, image, sensations, and emotion) that they perceive as God's communication with them. The *Examen of Conscience* (Staral, 2003:40, 45–46) is an ancient form of meditative prayer during which one reflects on one's day (or week or year) contemplating what happened to bring you closer to God or to turn you away from God. Participants, sitting calm and focused, listens to the facilitator reading the instructions helping them to 'live through' these events. Time is allowed to contemplate how with the help of God, they could in future do things differently.

guided contemplative practices. Based on their feedback[93] it can be deducted that the various formats of the reflective prayer/meditation contributed significantly to the participants' experience of getting in touch with God and their 'inner-most'. All participants commented on the value of being able to connect on a deeper level with themselves and God. It seemed that even more than Scripture (reminding them to "….*keep fellowship with God … walk in the light of God … be 'quiet' with the word of God – and to hear God's voice*"), the practices involving more senses (*Face of God, Stone*), elicited a wider range of responses and insights. It was as if the individual's were truly transcended to another level of contact with God and being in touch with themselves, as can be seen in the following examples:

▸ *When sitting quietly, looking at and reflecting on the picture, it 'spoke' to me – reminding me of an incident I had as a child.*

▸ *The stone is like an anchor – something tangible to remind me of God's presence in everything. The stone reminded me of a rock – Jesus is in the rock. I held onto it with more and more power – as if God was in my hand. It helped me with self-examining regarding my life – it was like being in touch with God.*

Interestingly, the guided contemplative prayer, *Examen of Conscience*, prompted the most compelling responses with regard to self-examination and encountering God.[94] One participant remarked: "*This kind of prayer helps me to become deeply quiet, getting into contact with my innermost that I did not know existed … to do a deep self-examination.*" Some experienced that they heard God's voice and received his guidance: "*I want to understand where and what my role is, what I need to do every day and in God's greater plan. One needs to become quiet in order to see the bigger picture ... this prayer forced (me) to stand still.*" Indeed, the opportunity for silent prayer seemed to touch the core of the need to be replenished and motivated to continue with one's life task, e.g. "*I give so much of myself – one needs to create opportunities to replenish one – to connect with and confront oneself – and to see God's hand in everything. This prayer helped me to do this.*"

A number of participants experienced that during the prayer they were given hope and vision: "*The silent prayer gave me hope – it is like a confidential conversation*

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[93] Verbatim statements as recorded in the *Capacity Building For Community Facilitators Weekend Retreat Workbooks* (9–11 & 16–18 February 2007; 16–18 & 23–25 November 2007).

[94] Cf. Driskill (1999:97) refers to the Prayer of Examen as a reflective prayer examining God's activity in human life and at the same time "an activity that keeps the heart burning with the desire to seek, love and serve God." Both these perspectives are echoed in the participants' statements.

between God and me." "*I saw this vision after I had closed my eyes: I have been in the presence of God.*" Lastly, for some praying this prayer was a healing experience: "*I felt healed … [t]he prayer helped.*" Thus, although most participants have not been exposed to these practices in the past, they affirmed that they wanted to practice reflective prayer/meditation in future. Similarly, the participants acknowledged that, though for them up to then unfamiliar, the music[95] used during the retreats, greatly contributed to their experience of being able to become quiet. They found the music peaceful, non-intrusive and '*spiritual*'.

This contemplative practices, introduced in a non-intrusive manner and at various stages or the healing process, seemed to be of great value to guide individuals from the external to the internal – and to connect with God. Participants were unexpectedly open to these practices and participated earnestly in the reflective discussions afterwards. This seemed to lay a sound foundation for the more structured and probing exercises to follow.

3.4.5.3   Confrontation with reality

During the second session, we introduced the concept of secondary or vicarious trauma, referring to the "*act whereby caregivers take on someone else's pain and carry it inside themselves*" (Collins & Laughlin, 2005:130). Since the participants are the people in their communities who are actually taking notice of what is happening and taking care of others in their families and communities, they (as caregivers) are often confronted with other people's pain, hurt, fears and anxieties. Thus, they are exposing themselves to taking on and hiding the pain/hurt of others deep in themselves. If one does not find effective ways to either prevent this from happening or to work through this 'stored up pain' and get it out of one's system, one could be bogged down with the weight of other people's trauma. To confront this reality, the participants were given a vicarious trauma checklist to complete.

Completing the *When I'm alone in the night-checklist*[96] helps to identify whether the caregiver (or professional) is carrying too much of other people's pain him/herself. Once these were completed, a group reflection on each statement took place. Participants avidly interacted in the conversation. Key issues were the realisation that they have a choice to do or not to do the work they do, as illustrated in this statement:

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[95] Mostly instrumental meditative Taizé recordings.

[96] Developed by IPSO©2006, based on work by Collins B. J. & Laughlin T. M. 2005. *The Power of Story*. Duluth, Minnesota: Whole Person Associates. (cf. Appendix B, Exercise 5 *When I'm Alone in the Night/Vicarious Trauma Checklist*).

"This checklist helped me to know that I am not satisfied with what I am doing – I want to find something with better pay." It also opened their eyes to the fact that they are carrying too much and should take control of their situation: *"I love my work, but there are different problems that I experience with the work/people and I would like to change to help people in another way."*

Technically (in terms of time constraints and individual sessions with participants who requested it) this session proved to be challenging and exhausting for the participants as it is often the first time that they openly admit to "*being bogged down*" and over-burdened. Many shared stories of their confrontations with pain and hurt in their families or community – some quite traumatic of nature. Accordingly, to facilitate the healing process, the next exercises were chosen with the purpose of re-kindling hope. For example, the *Circle of Hands*-exercise lays the foundation for finding and developing their own 'safe spaces' within their living and working environments.

3.4.5.4 Storytelling

This session was introduced with a discussion on "*To see differently*".[97] It was acknowledged that these women have already been successful in seeing differently, i.e. although they felt they are not seen or "…*hidden behind the other people*", they have each decided to see differently by not focusing only on the problems, but on what can be done. Every single one of them was trying to contribute and to make a difference in the community. To enable them to continue to meet the challenges they were facing and prevent them from becoming overburdened, additional tools such as storytelling[98] and creating a circle of safeness and support, were introduced.

The *Circle of Hands*-exercise[99] is designed to create a circle of safeness and support, by inviting others in a similar situation to join you in the sharing of stories (Collins & Laughlin, 2005:120). Going through a process of physically 'linking' hands in a circle, a visual 'safe space' is created – where stories and emotions are shared, by writing the key emotion inside the drawing of one's hand, and verbally by telling the story. At the closure of the retreat, each person writes a 'final word' in her/his hand, sharing why this word was chosen.

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[97] Based on the work on attitudinal healing by Susan Troutman: *To See Differently.*1990. Washington, D.C: Three Roses Press.

[98] Cf. Chapter 2 section 2.6.3: Value of storytelling to obtain information, participation and as legitimate constructions that contribute toward societal transformation.

[99] Developed by IPSO©2006, based on work by Collins B. J. & Laughlin T. M. 2005. *The Power of Story*. Duluth, Minnesota: Whole Person Associates (cf. Appendix B, Exercise 8).

It is clear when comparing the sets of words that the mood changed from one of dissatisfaction, anxiousness, failure and helplessness to one of love, acceptance, empowerment and thankfulness at the closure of the retreat. This can be seen as an indication of the value of the healing journey for the individuals. The silence and being able to share in the discussion regarding vicarious trauma – *"just being here in this circle of friends"* – helped them to feel safe. To them, the hands touching each other symbolised what they have been experiencing for the previous couple of hours. Nonetheless, their 'final words' were even more positive, *"I feel better now"*, *"hopeful and happy"* and *"satisfied"*. The participants explained that sharing and working together helped them to feel more at peace within themselves and with one another. Another group[100] had this to say:

> *The circle of hands is beautiful – it shows how we got together. Last night we felt safe in the house because God is with us. Even though we did not know each other then, we now feel safer, we trust one another.* They described themselves as *"being in a circle of care"*.

Re-telling a story helps one to reflect on and unravel one's life; to critically examine one's old story frame and find new perspectives or insights; and to, through the intervention of new story lines, create concrete hope (cf. Collins & Laughlin, 2005:x–xiv; Morgan, 2000:77–80; McLaren, 2007:65–67; Freire, 2006:7–9, 13, 22–24). Thus, the third session was based on the sharing of stories, which could be either work-related or of personal nature. To help the participants relax and to facilitate the *Story telling,*[101] they were guided through[102] an *Intentional Breathing-exercise.*[103]

The participants all willingly chose to share their personal stories. During the reflection following the actual telling of the stories, they noted that, although it was not easy to share, they felt relief in finally being able to share their (previously hidden) story, e.g. *"It was difficult – I was afraid, and I have never, ever thought that I will speak about it. Now it is better – I have energy to go on."* They stressed the importance of sharing with the right people in a '*safe'* (trustworthy, confidential) place: *"It is better to*

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[100] FH2.1, Retreat 16–18 November 2007.

[101] Refined and formatted by ISPO©2006, based on work by Collins B. J. & Laughlin T. M. 2005. *The Power of Story*. Duluth, Minnesota: Whole Person Associates (cf. Appendix B, Exercise 8).

[102] Guiding the participants through *Intentional Breathing* into the *Storytelling-exercises* requires time and the ability to read the group – following their pace. With the participants sitting in a semi-circle large enough to allow each person his or her personal space, the facilitator leads the process of relaxation and breathing. As they relax, they are more open to connect with their own stories, and eventually to share and listen to the stories of others.

[103] Cf. Appendix B, Exercise 7. Developed by IPSO©2003, based on work by Canda E. R. & Furman L. D. 1999. *Spiritual Diversity in Social Work Practice*. New York: The Free Press (:296–298).

share it in a group like this – it is safer this way. You cannot do it in the community – to 'just open up' – you cannot risk it." Some experienced it to be a relief to realise you are not the only one with a problem and to experience understanding*: "I felt that we were really 'taking on' each other's stories – we could share in the carrying of the stories."* Once the story was out, they experienced enlightenment and could even see more clearly towards a solution: *"As we were telling our stories, I sensed God's presence – when we closed our eyes afterwards, I was able to talk to my God so that He could show me the way out."*

The above statements clearly reflect the need for providing community caregivers with the space and opportunity to unload – they *"wanted to do this, but did not feel safe".* Although they found it daunting at the onset, all participants voiced the relief they felt after sharing. It was also evident that the facilitated listening (non-judgemental, respectful and accepting) contributed to the opening up of the individuals. The element of being co-responsible for another was emphasised, as the importance of being able to trust on another. Participants also referred to their consciousness of God's presence during this session. Further reflection led the participants to the conclusion that sharing in this kind of setting helped them in various ways to gain insight into themselves and God's grace. One group[104] summed it up like this:

You have to love the Lord your God with your whole heart and your soul and you have to love your neighbour as yourself. Sometimes we overlook the fact that you have to love yourself – if you do not love yourself, you will become empty and have nothing left to give to others.

3.4.5.5 Mindfulness

The importance of paying undivided attention to one's inner life, as well as to that of others, had been brought to the fore during the previous sessions. In this session, different exercises were utilised to hone the skill of mindfulness or living consciously.[105] The simple act of attention has a healing and restoring effect: The instant a person notices something, that person is affected by it. The instant a person pays attention to her/himself – he/she is alert to her/his thoughts, feelings, sensations and practices. When one pays attention to others, one can perceive them accurately and empathize.

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[104] Group FH2.1 as recorded in the retreat workbook.

[105] Cf. Kritzinger (2002:154–155) emphasises the importance given to 'awareness' as an "authentic living-in-the-here-and-now", fostered through, for instance, prayer, mediation, relaxation exercises and focus or control of one's thoughts (such as the case in the '*Peeling the Naartjie*' exercises). According to Kritzinger, 'mindfulness' or coming to terms with one's body and all its functions is seen, in various forms of spirituality, as "the only way to a meaningful and transformative spirituality".

When one pays attention, noticing everything very carefully, one discovers new things and we experience even familiar things freshly and vividly (cf. Canda & Furman, 1999:295–296).

The *Peeling a Naartjie-exercise*[106] is an invitation to experience living consciously.[107] Each participant were given a naartjie and invited to use all their senses to become mindful – by attending to the colour, the texture, the smell, the form and taste. When peeling the naartjie, they were to handle it with care, regarding it like a valuable, delicate parcel. From the participants' feedback, it was clear that this exercise served to significantly elevate their sense of observation and consciousness. They observed that all their senses were involved in being mindful. They noted how "we *miss out…*" by not paying attention, especially to other people, e.g. "*Give attention, open up, give time to someone – learn to know them and then you will see the 'inside' of another person.*" It also brought about the realisation that one should pay attention to oneself – peeling the naartjie can be related to our (personal) opening up. One participant said, "*The naartjie reminded me of the mask: once you take it off, there are many hidden elements that we are not always aware off. We need to dare open up.*" Another described this awareness as follows: "*You become aware of the perfect form that God has created. Getting rid of the 'outside baggage' helps one to reckon with the truth.*" Finally, they applied their observations and insights to their work in the community:

> *Being very aware of what you are busy with is what one should do when working with the community: it is necessary to first observe what the community does. When I touched and smelled it, it is like before you talk to the community: you have to look and observe where they are; then check their personality and then you get the way to enter the community and can connect to people.*

From the onset of the retreat process, the participants have been coached to embark on a journey toward greater self- and inner-awareness. Thus, by the time that *Peeling the Naartjie* was introduced, they were already sensitised to 'being aware of more than the obvious'. They have started on their journey to live consciously, to be in touch with their innermost, and to be sensitive for the voice or guidance from God. It would seem as if this 'secular' exercise became 'sacred' due to its place in the reflective journey toward the integration of their spirituality. Could it be that here too "…sharing

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[106] *Naartjie* is an 'easy peeling' citrus fruit. The exercise was refined and formatted by IPSO©2006, based on work by Canda and Furman in a book entitled, *Spiritual Diversity in Social Work Practice.* (1999:295–296).

[107] Cf. Appendix B, Exercise 9.

reflections on another's'*…* [life stories] *…* in an atmosphere of mutual respect was a move onto sacred ground" – as was experienced during group reflection? (Cameron, et al., 2010:118.)

In the late afternoon, the participants were introduced to one more activity to help the focus on what is happening 'inside' them – to become aware of what God is saying to 'me'. The whole group participated in a *Silent/Reflective Walk*[108] – walking in silence to connect with nature and God – on a mountain slope. Afterwards, many participants shared the sacredness of the experience, saying that although they love nature, they have never before thought it possible to *"get close to God by keeping quiet whilst in nature"*. They expressed 'hearing' and 'seeing' God – in the leaves, plants, trees, mountain, clouds and rocks. They were more aware than ever of *"God's voice coming to us the songs of the birds and the sound of the wind"*. The participants shared the opinion that it is a wonderful way of becoming aware of what God is saying to you. Many of them resolved to undertake 'silent nature walks' with their families, project members and on their own in future.

The meditative walk fulfilled an important function in the healing process as it allowed participants some 'time out' in their own quiet space, away from the physical space where they had to confront their past, hurt and inner pain. Notably, quite a few participants expressed how free they felt to be out in the open, as if they could *"…talk directly to God, and hear God talk to me"*.

3.4.5.6 *Grieving*

In this session, loosely based on the grieve recovery work of James and Friedman (1998), the focus was on acknowledging inner hurt, pain and unresolved issues. Two practical exercises (*Loss History Graph* and *Relationship Graph*) were used to help individuals face the truth. By literally drawing a picture (or graph) of their past losses and another of one relationship they want to attend to, each person visually "brings the past to the light" (James, 2006).[109]

Due to the intimate and personal nature of this material requiring a therapeutic stance, these sessions (dealing with loss and grieving), were conducted behind closed doors. Since this exercise requires of the participants to share information on a one on

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[108] *Silent Walk*, a walking meditation is based on ideas encountered during a ourse offered by Centre for Christian Spirituality, Cape Town. It requires the participants to walk in silence for the duration of the walk, to re-connect with their inner-self, nature and God.

[109] Encountered during the *Grief Recovery Training* presented by John James, director of The Grief Recovery Institute. Niagara Falls, Canada. June 02–05, 2006. During these exercises the researcher took on a healing or therapeutic role.

one basis with a partner, they were asked to choose their own partners with whom they felt comfortable. After explaining the procedure, the researcher drew her *Loss History Graph*,[110] using self-disclosure to set the example of getting real and being truthful in 'shining the searchlight on the past'. On completion (after the one on one sharing), a break was scheduled, followed by a lengthy group reflection session.[111]

When asked how they experienced the drawing of the *Loss History Graph*, the participants responded that the actual drawing and sharing brought relief. It helped to realise that the hurt was in the past, *"The actual hurt was when it happened – now it is only a discussion."* Some experienced that God will help them, *"I believe that God is going to help us through our difficulties – since we share it and 'call' God to hear."* It also brought the awareness that God is there to help, *"This has given me the confidence to keep quiet, to listen to God – then He will give me the guidance to deal with my problems."*

The importance of finding the right people and space to share was once again emphasised, *"I cannot share with any person – they will think you're mad! You have to choose the people you share with carefully."* To share thus with a trustworthy person, lightened their burden, *"I feel I have taken my burden and given it to her [my partner] and that I have taken her burden … I believe that after I have shared my story, we will pray for one another."* Facing what happened and sharing gave them strength: *"As I am sharing, I feel strong and empowered – to experience that I'm not alone struggling – to find support from my group and partner."* Apart from taking them on their inner journey, the experience also opened and prepared them for dealing with the community, as reflected in the next statement:

> *As a person with a home of safety for children this has taught me how I can help the children. I now realise that some of the children may have similar problems than I have/had and I can help them in this same way. I had this problem of closing up, but now I will be able to listen to somebody.*

As with sharing their stories, the participants were willing and able to work on a deeper level, truly opening up and making themselves vulnerable. This willingness to 'delve deep' seemed to pay off in terms of the insights they gained, even to the point

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[110] Refined and formatted IPSO©2007, based on the work of James J. W. & Friedman R. 1998. *The Grief Recovery Handbook*. New York: Harper Perennial (:85–100). Cf. Appendix B, Exercise sheets 11 & 12 for the full detail of these exercises and illustrations of the examples given.

[111] Care was taken to focus on the participants' thoughts and feelings whilst doing the exercise and not to open any conversation on the actual content of the loss history graphs.

where they – without any input from the facilitators – applied the individual experience to their work or community context, e.g. a newfound awareness of the need to help children through a similar process.[112]

It was obvious that the communication – the actual verbal sharing with another (trusted) person – contributed to the impact of the exercise. Being listened to without interruption transmits acceptance and validation (cf. Hodge, 2003:22). Not only are you acknowledging to yourself that you have had these losses – you are openly declaring it to another human being. The nature of this relationship (being one of trust, and contained within a pre-set framework of 'rules', which also emphasises confidentiality) seems to be a key factor in the healing process. Utilising this 'partnership' in the retreat setting, serves to model the kind of relationship that promotes the sense of selfhood, empowers the individual to develop a healthy sense of self-worth and affirms the individual as capable and able to deal with life's difficulties (cf. Anderson, 2003:33). As pointed out by the participants, this has significant implications for work in the community.

Apart from being another step in the individual's journey towards healing, the next exercise (*Relationship graph*[113]) serves as an affirmation of the importance of relationships in our lives. In writing about the healing of relationships, Haws (2009:484–485), stresses that we live our lives in relationships with or being connected to other people – our stories or narratives connect at various points. Sometimes it is a positive connection but at times, it is a negative connection – where we sustain our injuries, are 'wronged' and hurt. This is precisely here – at the place of injury – that we have to re-connect when we truly want to forgive. We have to re-visit the place of injury and embrace the hurt as the reality of the broken world. This act of letting go of the hurt enables us to overcome the power of the injury and to 'set the offender free'. It is for this very reason that one needs to face the actual 'moment of injury' (cf. Haws 2009:484–485). To enable one to face the 'moment of injury' (for each relationship in which one experiences pain and a degree of 'unforgiveness'), one needs to look at the history of the relationship. The *Relationship Graph*[114] *– drawing a 'graph' or visual representation of the relationship* – helps one to pinpoint and confront the positive and negative, and especially the moments of injury, in that specific relationship.

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[112] Cf. Nouwen (2006:82) referring to the 'wounded healer' as the one who has to "look after his [her] own wounds first", but at the same time be prepared to take on the role of healer towards others; section 3.4.4.2: The role of the facilitator-as-healer role.

[113] Refined and formatted IPSO©2007, based on the work of James J. W. & Friedman R. 1998. *The Grief Recovery Handbook.* New York: Harper Perennial (:115–130).

[114] Cf. Appendix B, Exercise 12.

After completion of their graphs (and sharing with their partners), the group was asked for feedback on the experience. Their responses highlighted the significant 'releasing' and empowering effect of being honest with oneself (by facing reality) and sharing this process with a trusted, attentive partner. As described by Hodge (2003:47), the fact that the individuals draw and explain/share their own relationship graph, place them in charge of their own healing process. The participants' responses correlated with this statement. The sharing of their relationship stories promoted self-esteem, enhanced self-image and the feeling of being capable and worthy, and fostered their awareness that they have a significant role to play in their own life and that of others, e.g., "*I feel happy – even though I'm not educated, here I can share and learn and feel empowered*".

Picturing their relationship visually imparted the history of the relationship – which helped them to realise that "*all relationships have ups and downs*" and that one should accept it as part of life. Sharing also brought the awareness that they are not alone in this struggle – emphasising the role of love and God to sustain us. Lastly, drawing the relationship forced them to re-think the past, enabling them to re-examine the nature of the relationship and come to grips with its current status, "*Before this workshop I thought he was gone forever – but now I know he is still there – and I am happy to know that when I look at his child – his name will remain*". Aligning the facts helped them to face the truth and to come terms with the hurt and unresolved issues, e.g. "*If he comes back I will forgive him – the old things are gone – I am a new person*".

The last statement vividly illustrates the shift from 'me as a victim' to 'me having the power to forgive', thus becoming a new person. Here it is witnessed in practice: without prior knowledge about the healing process as derived from the theory, the life experience bears witness to an inner wisdom directing the individual towards healing. The next session focused on these aspects of taking control through forgiveness and obtaining closure.

3.4.5.7   *Forgiveness*

To be healed is not the freedom of all pain, losses and conflicts: it is to be at a 'place' in one's life where one is able to cope with the pain and conflicts (Anderson 2003:22). Getting to this place or state – being healed – involves a process, a continuous journey moving beyond the moments of injury. Once the past realities (such as losses and broken relationships) have been brought to the front and acknowledged, restorative steps should be taken. One such step – according to many *the* most important

restorative step – is that of forgiveness (cf. Anderson, 2003:117–124; James & Friedman, 1998:136–140; Haws, 2009:480–488).

In the session on healing, the fact that the journey towards healing has many moments or steps was emphasised. After working through some of the grief (doing the *Loss History* and *Relationship Graph*) – the logical next step would be to look at what the concept of forgiveness[115] entails. On asking the particpants to share their perception of forgiveness, most of the participants agreed that forgiveness "*...starts with me – if I realise that I have wronged somebody, I have to go and talk it out and to forgive and ask forgiveness.*" They said that one needs to choose to forgive; make a decision; and act on that decision. Forgiveness, according to the participants, "*...enables one to work through things one does not want to face.*" One participant said:

> *If someone has wronged me – how can I forget? I can do 'lip service' – but it (the unforgiveness) still remains with you. It is like a hymn – people say it but they do not mean it. 'To forgive' is in the Bible: it is when you ask God to help you to forgive the person that has wronged you. Forgiveness goes hand in had with love and peace.*[116]

Forgiveness of self and others, is possible "*...[o]nly with God's help...*". Asked to share instances where they have been able to forgive, participants (of all four retreats), earnestly participated in lively and 'searching' reflection – trying to embrace the concept of unconditional forgiveness. Their final reflection on the nature and process of forgiveness – showing a remarkable resemblance to the basic key elements described in literature[117] – is summarised below:

> *Forgiveness is setting the other person free. It does not mean I accept/agree with what has happened, but that I have found peace in the fact that I cannot change what has happened and therefore choose to let it go. It means to change our perception and to let go of the fear, the idea that "I am the victim" and have the right to hold grievances and judgements. It is releasing that person from punishment – accepting that I cannot judge or punish the person – I*

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[115] Developed by IPSO©2003, based on work of, amongst others, Cloete C. & Cloete M. L. 2003. *Spiritual Growth*. Unpublished notes. Pretoria (cf. Appendix B, Exercise 13: *God's View*).

[116] FH2 retreat, 23–25 November 2007, Olyfhuis, Stellenbosch.

[117] Cf. how the groups' responses resonates the view of Miroslav Volf (1996:119–125), describing forgiveness as "a genuinely free act which 'does not merely re-act'… [but] breaks the power of the past and transcends the claims of the affirmed justice and so make the spiral of vengeance grind to a halt" (:121). Also comparable to the work of Troutman (1990:143) and Smith (2002:120–131).

should leave it in God's hands. Forgiveness includes the transformation of inner emotions, words spoken, and our involvement in forgiving activities.[118]

The next exercise, *Final Letter,*[119] offers a practical route toward this type of spoken or confessional forgiveness. Both the researcher and co-facilitator candidly shared their own experiences in writing *final letters* – how difficult it can be and the emotional impact it can have on one. To ensure that the participants felt safe with this vital step in the healing process, the intent of the exercise was explained and detailed instructions for executing the exercise given.

While reading their letters aloud, many of the participants were crying. The researcher observed that the participants felt the impact of what was happening: the closure of longstanding unfinished business. The writing brought back both bad and good memories – it is finding completion: *"In a sense it is like entering into a discussion with that person ... of letting go of a burden." "It is like a discussion between you and the person in the relationship – about things gone by – you are forgiving that person and the person will feel forgiven. It brings relief – there is no heavy burden."* It is an effective way of getting the other person to pay attention, e.g. *"Receiving a letter: the person who receives the letter will open it with care, touch it, read it and take notice."* Writing the letter helped them to organise their thoughts, e.g. *"I can give the gist of the whole thing without reservation – be open and not withholding information/what I want to say."* It is a safe way to deal with unfinished business and to talk from the heart: *"My words were just flowing from my heart."*

The verbatim statements indicated that the writing of the *final letter* brought home the depth, honesty and finality required for working through past hurt and pain. A number of the participants commented on how they thought that, after sharing their story and loss history graphs, they were healed. However, when confronted with having to forgive and to write (and share) the letter, they realised that they still had issues to deal with, e.g. *"I was able to say everything that was done to me by that person – to get it out – it brought back the thoughts – I also remembered the good things".* Writing it down like this and then *"listening to my own voice reading it"* helped them to express themselves freely, *"I can talk my heart out – in my own words it will say what I feel."* It also helped them to find true closure: *"If I regret things I have not done or said*

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[118] Combined input from FH1 and FH2 given during the 2007 retreats (and captured in workbooks), Olyfhuis, Stellenbosch.

[119] Refined and formatted IPSO©2007, based on work of James J. W. & Friedman R. 1998. *The Grief Recovery Handbook.* New York: Harper Perennial (:145–151). During this exercise, individuals who are unable to write, is assisted by the facilitator(s).

this (writing) helps me to close that and to work through that." Expressing them in written format, served as a confirmation for their forgiveness – for letting go: *"The letter is my witness – what I have said. Now I will live differently: If I forget this, I will go back and read it again and will be reminded."*

The participants felt this letter should be written to each person in their lives with whom they have unfinished business. They acknowledged that they might need to write more than one letter to deal with deep hurt. For example, when dealing with a father who totally neglected you, there were simply too many issues to work through in a single letter writing session. Finally, the relief they experience of having gotten to this point was voiced and could be seen in their reactions. They concluded the following:

▸ *Hearing one's own words of forgiveness and closure helps one to come to terms with the reality – it is no longer 'inside you' hurting and festering, but 'out there'; no longer part of you.*

▸ *Having another (trusted) person listen to your reading, serves a similar purpose as doing a confession: it is having a witness to the fact that you have written (and are sending) the letter and closing the relationship.*

3.4.5.8   *Personal and holistic participation*

In line with the retreat objectives up to this point in the 'inner healing journey' we have been dealing with the 'me'-focus. The objectives outlined for the retreat were to 'unload'; find some inner quietness; relate to their Creator, nature and each other; go through an individual inner or healing journey; and, lastly, to experience techniques and methods of inner healing which they can apply in future within the community. To move onto another level in order to fulfil the last community-focused objective, two exercises to help the participants gain insight into utilising their newly discovered spiritual strengths within their communities were introduced.

The *Spiritual Map*[120] or collage allows the individual to reach into their own history or narrative, identifying events, people or encounters that have sustained them through difficult times. Making a visual portrayal of and sharing these symbols or elements of spiritual hope with others, help to affirm the fact that you have a 'built-in set of spiritual tools' to see you through life. It also opens one up to understand that each person's set of tools is different – as caregivers we need to be able to help others uncover their 'set of spiritual tools'.

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[120] Refined and formatted by IPSO©2007, based on work by Hodge D. R. 2003*. Spiritual Assessment.* Botsford, CT: North American Association of Christians in Social Work (:34–51).

It was found that, given the limited time during the retreat (and the 'place' in the healing process), the emphasis should be what *they* view as the essence of their spiritual lives. Rather than compiling a complete spiritual history, the participants were invited to compile a 'collage' of all kinds of symbols – something from their past or present – that have meaning for them. The co-facilitator (Thembi Mphokeng) demonstrated a *Spiritual Map* by sharing hers with the group, explaining the basic idea of the exercise. The participants were given the materials needed and invited to draw, write or paste pictures and/or words that depict *"the most important people, events and symbols which sustained you through life"*.

After completion of the spiritual maps, each individual presented and interpreted her/his map – allowing the rest of the group to ask questions. Sharing these symbols with the group had an observable positive effect on the individuals. It was evident that they felt empowered: they were comfortable and eager to share what they felt were positive strengths and features in their lives. These sessions invariably energised the participants, stimulated interaction and ended on a positive note.

Information obtained from the spiritual maps of 21 participants was observed: 66 different symbols were used. Some symbols featured more often, for example flowers (8), nature (6), family (8), children (5), baby (4), church (4), people praying (4), Bible (4), and God (4). The symbols were sorted into the categories of human, nature and religion/God according the objects identified by the participants. Most of the symbols depicted human objects (49); whilst 37 symbols related to religion/God; and 37 symbols related to nature. Many of the symbols were used as metaphors for God's grace and care and embodied the essence of the individual's understanding or experience of God:[121]

> ‣ *Flower: As the flower unfolds petal for petal, so can my life unfold with the help of God. The Spirit of God wants us to bloom, shine like a beautiful flower.*

> ‣ *Pregnant women: It reminds me that God knew me even before I was born – in my mother's womb.*

> ‣ *Air balloon: God's Spirit is like an air balloon – we cannot determine where and how it moves, but it is there – gliding above us.*

The spiritual map-exercise was an effective tool for gaining insight into the definition and experience of spirituality of the participants. Rather than being new or original,

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[121] Cf. Appendix A5: Verbatim description of spiritual symbols (obtained during *Spiritual Map*-exercise).

most of these symbols refer to ordinary objects – spirituality seems to be part of their 'everyday life' with 'normal' objects such as friends, a husband, a baby, the church building, a cloud with a silver lining, an oyster, animals, flowers or a blade of grass reminding them of God's love, power, grace and support. The objects mentioned most frequently, was that of humans (49), ranging from myself, family, children, men (father/husband) to female friends.[122]

Giving the participants the opportunity to express themselves like this, allowed them total freedom to reflect on what sustains them as individuals. This is in accordance with the PRA principles of giving the people the freedom to choose what is meaningful to them – without influencing them or expecting them to accept information from you (as researcher/facilitator). Portraying these symbols served to remind the individuals (and the group) that they were sustained in the past and is likely to be sustained in future by their God, family or nature. The *impact of bringing these elements to the front* was evident when, during the follow-up capacity building sessions, the participants kept referring back to some of these images. Once 'uncovered' and recognised as a source of strength and inspiration, the spiritual strengths were more frequently utilised in their lives (cf. Driskill, 1999:55–57).

Finally, the participants came up with beautiful metaphors, depicting a movement away from the focus on their individual journey, to a focus on the community:

▸ *As the mother bird is feeding the babies – we need to feed (teach) the community.*

▸ *Like the ants carrying the reeds, we are carrying the people's burdens.*

This indicated a deep-felt caring and awareness of why they were invited to join the group, namely to be equipped to make a difference in their community. The final exercise, *Weaving a Basket,*[123] helped the participants to focus on how they – as a 'team' – could reach out to the community. In essence, it raised their awareness of their connectedness to one another and to the community. Subgroups of 4–5 people were supplied with the basic material (cardboard and *dodder*[124]), instructed to weave a

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[122] Noteworthy is the fact that, although almost half the participants were from a Xhosa background, only one reference was made to ancestors. This can be seen to correlate with literature findings that most of the symbols depicting 'spirituality' identified by *Bantu* people actually relate to nature and natural objects and not to the ancestors (cf. Kiernan, 1995a:20). This finding seems to emphasise that an individual's spirituality is not equal to their religiosity – although religion may serve to give expression to their spiritual beliefs, spirituality is more personalised, internalised and indefinable.

[123] Developed by IPSO©2007, based on idea from a paper by Van Schalkwyk, A. 2006. *Women, ecofeminist theology and sustainability in a post apartheid South-Africa.* Unpublished Paper. Pretoria: UNISA (:15–16).

[124] Indigenous plant material growing on the Western Cape mountain slopes.

basket, and to come up with a name and slogan for their group, project or initiative. Apart from enhancing group communication, decision-making, planning and leadership skills, this exercise served as a visual, tangible transition from the focus on 'me' (and 'my inner healing process') to a focus on 'us' and the process needed to observe and react to the need of others.

The exercise proved to be highly effective, eliciting co-operation; a hundred percent participation; and brought to the front the creativity of the participants. In addition, it provided an unexpected assessment tool. As the groups shared their basket-weaving-process; the meaning of the various symbols they have used; and the goals they have set for their project/community involvement, it was realised that it actually reflected the level of understanding and integration of the spiritual strengths and steps of the healing process. In addition, it provided information and insight into the possible path or method of transferral of the newly acquired spiritual sources and practices to others in the community (cf. verbatim statements in the paragraphs to follow).

The feedback from all the groups indicated that at the onset – when suddenly confronted with a group assignment and an 'unknown' task (the weaving process) – they were unsure what to do, what the end product should look like and how to go about the actual 'weaving'. They had to work on their team communication, visualisation and goal determination, decision-making, cooperation and division of tasks. Whilst some groups stuck to using the materials provided, most of the groups searched for (and found) additional 'resources' to aid them in their basket weaving – mostly in order to enable them to produce a better/stronger basket. Once they got going, their ideas evolved and some groups got quite creative, e.g. producing a heart-shaped basked (thus altering the provided oval-shaped basis) and the nest-basket, complete with eggs. In both instances, the shape was used as a metaphor for their involvement in the community:

▸ *Our project team is like this heart-shaped basket: We want to hold the community's problems inside, in our heart (and not shove them out). We will give one on one attention, but they are bound together in one basket.*

▸ *We call our basket a 'chicken nest' since we know the hen is the mother of the eggs and the small chicks. The eggs are the children in the community and we are the 'hen'. We will protect the children in a safe and warm place – they should not be scattered, but be kept together and get the love they need. We will give them this protection and love if their mothers can't do it.*

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In both these examples, the need for connectedness of the people in the community is emphasised: they are…"*bound together*"; "…*kept together*". This correlates with people's sense of dislocation that needs to be addressed. Nouwen (2006:8–9) describes dislocation as a break in the sense of connection, which in the past was linked to the vital nourishing systems of family, tradition, religion and their life cycle. When a person feels no sense of connectedness to the past (e.g. traditions) and the now (e.g. family) – then there is no sense of future and no hope. "Life easily becomes a bow whose string is broken and from which no arrow can fly", says Nouwen (2006:8), and people's reactions is to live a life of apathy and boredom, drifting from one moment to the next. Re-tying the string, helping people to re-connect to each other and their past is one of the notions the participants wove into their baskets.

They also used the resources creatively – e.g. the symbols (scissors, pencils) representing different groups in the community; the 'branches' sticking out symbolising networking and the 'handles' as 'safety rope' to pull those 'entrenched community members' out from the depths. The various names, e.g. *Unity, Salvation, Masakhane* ('working together'), *Open Heart,* clearly indicated a focus on reaching out to and helping the community. The slogans confirmed their focus on action, doing something, being purposefully involved in the community, for example "*We care, we serve and we give*"; "*Struggle and wiggle towards success*"; "*Wake up and do*" and "*We deliver!*" The *Tear Jerkers*[125] explained their group name and slogan, "*We can see clearly now*", as follows:

> *Here at the retreat, we went through a process of digging into our pasts. We confronted hurt, pain, and bad things that happened to us. We shared our stories. It was painful at times – we cried a lot. Now we are healed – our eyes are cleared and we can see the light. This is what we want to do in the community – help them to go through the same process so that they can see clearly.*

Captured in this explanation, is a wealth of insight and wisdom – a grassroots witness to 'seeing differently'; to healing and being transformed – to be drawn on in the development of a praxis framework.[126] These responses shows that literally weaving a basket, enabled the participants to make the transition from self to others – laying the foundation for the capacity building worksessions to follow. The team effort also provided the ideal opportunity for each individual to put their newly acquired self-confidence, inner-peace and vision for helping others, into practice, whilst contributing

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[125] Feedback given by one of the subgroups of group FH1.2 during the retreat 16–18 February, 2007.

[126] Cf. Chapter 6, section 6.1: Dirk Smit (2009:474–486) on seeing and hearing.

to the team's final product. It was a powerful exercise since the outcome is a visible product – enabling the participants to display their knowledge of and insight into community involvement and projects as well as their creativity.

3.4.5.9   Final word from the participants

All the retreats were concluded with a final reflective session. This entailed the second round of *Circle of Hands* where each participant wrote a 'final word' in their hand and shared with the group why they had chosen the particular word. Following this, participants had the opportunity to share a last statement or thought with the group. The feedback was positive, describing the experience as "…*a mind opener, unusual, very interesting, above average, perfect".* The key concepts mentioned were that of *enlightenment, a feeling of "being accepted and supported within a group", renewal, re-energised and healed.* Their verbatim statements vividly reflected the experience of change: powerless to empowered; empty to full; darkness to light; "*I am now empowered – we were empty purses, now we are wallets full of 'money' – the things that we have achieved." "It was dark yesterday, but now I can see the light – I know more things, such as 'letting go'.* Also reflected was renewed freedom (wings) and energy to move forward, "*I have grown wings during this weekend." "After this weekend, I am at peace with others and myself. Now I can work!"*

Two statements reflected the fact that the experience could be transmitted to their work in the community:

‣ *Brilliant, as at the beginning, it is all about me and how do I see myself – before focusing on the community.*

‣ *We want to say thanks to three special women who gave their time in order to help us to, with new enthusiasm, energy and hope, work in a new dimension in the community on a different level. God Bless.*[127]

As follow-up,[128] the participants were asked to rate the content of the retreats in terms of relevancy to them as individuals and in their role as caregivers. It was seen as exceptional (16) or satisfactory (4) and the value described as, "*Crucial information was provided on all the little issues we often overlook – it will change the lives of lots of people in the communities".*

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[127] Statement in thank you card handed to facilitators at the close of one of the retreats.

[128] During one of the joint Capacity Building Worksessions attended by twenty (20) participants from group FH1 and FH2.

3.4.6   Analysis of the healing retreat process in terms of the spiritual dimension

As pointed out in Chapter 3, section 3.2, numerous factors contributed to the decision to employ the action research design for this study. Amongst these was the fact that the action research methodology requires of and enables the researcher to derive data from the source (or practice). Interacting/dialoguing[129] with those who are both the source and recipients of the hoped for practice interventions (or change), is crucial to the research process. A number of process-factors influenced the analysis and evaluation of this phase of the field study – serving to create dialectic.[130] Firstly, the compilation of *retreat workbooks*[131] enabled the familiarisation with, and initial reflection upon and interpretation of the data gathered.[132] Secondly, conducting four retreats consecutively, allowed for extensive input/participation from the sample group and the opportunity to verify and reflect on the data (feedback received), observations and the process. Thirdly, after the retreat the participants had the opportunity to put to the test the authenticity of their healing and growth. At the first capacity building session (about a month later), they gave feedback on changes in their personal lives and their conduct in the community. The analysis of the healing retreat process focuses on the four aspects: the role of spirituality in people's lives; the intervention (inner healing process); the facilitator's role; and the impact of the intervention.

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[129] Dialoguing establishes partnerships between diverse stakeholders, but more specifically to empower people to act by giving them a voice and facilitating their reflection on conditions and issues that matter to them. It acknowledges people (especially those previously marginalised by society) as the experts in their own life situations and conditions, with tacit knowledge of how to change their lives in ways meaningful to them (cf. Dick, 1993:13–14).

[130] Dialectic refers to the use of similarities and differences between data sources to increase accuracy of the information (Dick, 1993:14–15). Examples of such multiple sources are the use of different informants or different but equivalent samples of informants (in the current study, FH1 and FH2); or different research settings (Franschhoek and Pietermaritzburg). The same informant(s) responding to questions addressing the same topic from different directions (e.g. various questions focusing on the spiritual dimension, asked during retreat and capacity building sessions). Information gathered at different times (process with each group stretched over months). Triangulation (utilising different methods of information gathering) (e.g. direct observation, storytelling or narratives, questionnaires, self-assessment). Different researchers (e.g. the final evaluation with the 'external group' was conducted by the two co-facilitators/researchers in the absence of the researcher – cf. section 3.5.4)

[131] Retreat workbooks were compiled after each retreat – reflecting the content, the feedback and contributions from the participants and photographs taken during the retreat.

[132] According to Bob Dick (2002:33), developing an interpretation is essential in action research, and by doing so right from the start, one has more opportunities (cycles) for thorough testing. He further holds that "in action research you can improve the rigour of your study substantially by combining collection, interpretation, library search, and perhaps reporting."

▪ *Insight gained into the spiritual dimension of people's lives*

The first criterion was the effectiveness of the retreat process in producing information and insight into the spiritual dimension of people's lives. Data gained during the retreat offered a multitude of testimonies bearing witness to the hitherto unacknowledged source of strength in the participants (communities). Sharing their stories, being witness to their healing processes (the *Loss History* and *Relationship Graphs* in particular), and spending a weekend with the participants, unveiled a wealth of information, and revealed the participants' astounding inner strength and ability to survive, adapt to and cope with dire circumstances. The sheer energy and creativity displayed once they started on their healing process, served to underline the fact that people in communities do have the skills, potential, ability and creativity to deal with even the most difficult and challenging circumstances and issues. The 'sustaining factor' most often mentioned was that of God's help, love, care and guidance – coming to them in a variety of guises and shapes, as was clearly illustrated in the feedback on the *Spiritual Map*-exercise.

Another remarkable aspect was the participants' willingness to reach out to others and to provide care for those in their communities that they deemed less fortunate or in need. A deep caring, a feeling of responsibility toward, and the need or urge to reach out to the community, seemed to be another hope-giving and motivational factor (as demonstrated in the feedback on *Weaving a Basket). The analysis of the data confirms the presence of a spiritual source or force, utilised in a variety of ways by the participants to help then cope with their challenges and circumstances.*

With regard to the diverseness in cultural background of the two groups, a number of observations were made which seemed to indicate that culture may have an influence in how an individual work through his/her personal healing process. Although no significant differences were found between the different language groups' response to the exercises, a slight variance in how they reacted to the exercises dealing with one's past grief, hurt and pain (refer to the loss history graph, relationship graph and final letter exercises) was noted. Pertaining to 'going through the healing process', the coloured groups seemed to need more time on 'questioning' and finding answers in terms of what, how and why. They reacted first with their 'minds', talking at length through things, even getting emotional at times. Yet, the actual dealing with their emotions followed later. The process thus needed to be 'drawn out' to allow them enough time to work through the different 'steps' or phases. Vis-à-vis the Xhosa-speaking groups seemed to need a little more time in the beginning to become willing

to open up. Yet, once there, they could face the deep hurt inside; to get it out they seemed to need less time to linger on what they have discovered. Once it was out in the open, they were ready to move on. In reflection upon this, Thembi Mphokeng (the co-facilitator) and some of the participants stated that in their culture to 'accept what life throws at you' is the norm. Similarly when questioned about what constituted trauma in their lives, they seemed to feel that 'life happens' – when a child dies or a relationship is broken, it is part of life – one simply "*…has to deal with it – not sit on it*".[133] They did acknowledge though, that one might not always be able to do so for a variety of reasons. They identified the custom of not sharing one's deepest hurt, anger or pain for fear of being belittled, betrayed or not understood as an important causative factor for 'burying things deep inside'.[134]

▪ *The incorporation of a healing/spiritual dimension in the community development practices*

The second criterion focused on the methodology of integrating a spiritual dimension in people and community development: Did the healing process (employed during the retreat) contribute to and/or utilise individual's spiritual capacity? What are the implications (of integrating a spiritual dimension) in terms of the process, material or tools?

As could be expected, the onset of the healing process was tentative – participants were 'feeling their way into' the provided space. However, the creation of the physical, emotional and spiritual space where the participants felt that they were accepted, being served, being cared for and treated with dignity and respect, seemed crucial to their acceptance of the process. In this space, they were able to let go of the ties that bound them to their pasts and drained their energy. By undertaking a healing journey, they were re-energised and set on a path of reaching out to others.

The nature, content and sequence of the sixteen exercises included proved to be conducive to the healing process. It served to guide the participants through a process of uncovering, acknowledging and, ultimately, dealing with various layers of pain and hurt. The feedback on the final exercises (*Spiritual Map* and *Weaving a Basket*) confirmed that these exercises were valuable in affirming the participants' transformation from self-healing to the healing of their communities.

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[133] Discussions with Thembi Mphokeng during the FH2.1 retreat in order to understand the process and to adjust the tempo and pace.

[134] Information obtained during the reflection on especially the *Storytelling, Loss History* and *Final Letter* exercises during FH2.2 and FH2.2 retreats.

▪ *The impact of the facilitator's spiritual paradigm*

The third aspect was the role and the ethical implications of the faith orientation (paradigm) of the facilitator: To what degree does the facilitator's attitude enhance or hinder the process? Could one own up to a 'Christian' spiritual paradigm when interacting with people from various other spiritual frameworks? How can the facilitator then be sensitised to people's spiritual needs?

Participants were free not to participate or attend any of the exercises and activities with which they felt uncomfortable. Throughout all the retreats, no participant indicated the slightest discomfort regarding the facilitators' faith orientation. Rather, the participants seemed to see this disclosure as an invitation to share their faith orientation as openly. This openness of the participants provided the research team with the opportunity to gain in-depth information about and insight into the lives, challenges and coping mechanisms of the people in the communities.

The participants indicated that they were "…*welcomed, accepted, heard and sustained*" by the facilitators, which, to them, contributed to their ability to enter into the healing process. They asserted that the relationship between the facilitators – being one of total trust, openness and commitment to one another and to the process – was a further motivational and positive factor throughout the retreat. Lastly, working in a small group was highly advantageous to the establishment of positive, supportive relationships – another element crucial to inner healing.

▪ *The impact of unleashing and harnessing the individual's spiritual strengths*

Fourthly, questions were asked about the impact of the intervention (e.g. exposing participants to exercises with spiritual healing as the focus) in the lives of the participants and their circles of influence. From the feedback received[135] during the first follow-up (capacity building) sessions, it became clear that the participants have integrated their inner changes that they were transforming their thoughts and actions. Participants reported that they experienced a new level of inner peace, self-honesty and self-disclosure, e.g. "…*Now I can 'become quiet', cut the 'noise' out – and become quiet before God.*" "*I can discuss my questions on inner turmoil and pain more openly. In the past, I did not share my feelings because I felt it was 'only mine'. Now I am able to share.*" A number of the participants felt that the ability to stop and do introspection before acting, enabled them to deal far more effectively with conflicts in their family, group and work situations. A surprising number of the participants relayed incidents of

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[135] Cf. Appendix A6: Capacity building worksessions – feedback (FH1).

improved family relationships due to the changes in themselves (e.g. being open, listening to others). The inner transformation became visible in their actions:

I went back as a new person to my family. In the past, I always tried to break away and to forget – just to get away from my problem. Now I am busy to move with my family. I no longer 'break away' on my own. We are once more going to church as a family.

With regard to their responsibility to the community, there was a notable increase in their confidence in themselves as able to make a difference and to have an impact, was identified, e.g. "*In the community, people often come to talk to me – now we can become silent together, meditate and then talk.*" "*…I am open and transparent for others.*" A number of participants referred to the renewed realisation (after the retreat experience) that, since God has cared for them, they should go out and care for the community, e.g. "*The first day when I arrived at Olyfhuis the light was lit – it symbolises love – we went back to share the love with others in the community.*"

All in all, the following two statements – relating to the format and process – aptly express the value[136] of the healing retreats from the participants' point of view:

‣ *Solitude and silence (shutting out everything else) brings me closer to God and gives you different insights regarding the day that lies ahead.*

‣ *This whole weekend (and the prayer) gives us the opportunity for silence, quietness, deeper self-examination. Then one can say, "Lord, here I am – bring your plan to fruition, give me the self-confidence to obey."*

Subsequent to these retreats (FH1 and FH2) the participants[137] attended the capacity building worksessions. Although slight changes occurred with regard to the timeframe (the FH2-intervention was condensed into four months) and the succession of capacity building exercises and activities, the intent and content for both groups were nearly

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[136] Cf. Appendix A7: Capacity building worksessions – assessment (FH2). On the negative side: one member of group FH2 – an elderly lady who had very limited reading and writing skills and who seemed to be unsure why she was included in the group since she was not actively involved in any community initiative – seemed to be 'drifting' throughout the retreat process. She participated and gave feedback on all exercises, but gave the impression that she never totally internalised the process. Eventually after the second capacity building session, she dropped out. In retrospect, it emphasised the crucial function of the selection criteria and process, as well as the fact that each individual have the right to be fully informed before they make a decision to join in such a process. From an intervention perspective, the incident served as a cautionary to never assume that any intervention will serve the needs of all individuals and groups – there are no 'set recipes' when working with people and community transformation.

[137] Group FH1 consisted of 16 participants. FH2 had 14 participants at the retreat, but subsequently three participants withdrew – two due to ill health and the other because she did not seem to have understood the requirements and purpose of the worksessions.

identical. Based on the data captured in the process-recordings and tables depicting the categorisation and analysis of the data accumulated during the FH1 and FH2 capacity building sessions, the proceeding reflection focuses on those aspects that seems to exemplify the spiritual dimension in working with people and communities. This is in accordance with Dick (2002:33), stating that in the final report the researcher needs to record only "… [the] interpretation and data relevant to confirmation and disconfirmation".

3.5   Capacity building worksessions (FH1/FH2): Implementation of action

Given the focus of the study – the impact of including a spiritual dimension in work with people in communities – the most critical data and findings were likely to have been generated during the retreat process. The insights gained into the nature and significance of spirituality in the lives of people in communities is evident in the forgoing discussion. Also ascertained was a clearer understanding of the methodology of interventions dealing with people's spirituality. The next area of interest and focus would then be one of sustainability: What difference do these interventions make in the lives (and ultimately the communities) of those people who have been the recipients of the intervention?

The questions precipitating the reflective sessions during this next phase were: What are the prolonged consequences of the retreat-input (i.e. the healing process)? What is the evidence confirming or disconfirming the role of spirituality in the lives of the sample group? What level of growth do the participants display in the areas of self-insight, leadership and community facilitation? What is the significance of the facilitator/practitioner's faith orientation? What is the practitioner's role and contribution in the integration of the spiritual dimension? What is the significance of structural issues?

3.5.1   *Reflective discussion of the structure and value of the capacity building sessions*

In both instances (FH1 and FH2),[138] the *purpose of the capacity building worksessions* was the development of the skills and expertise to ensure coordination, communication, negotiation and co-operation in the community with a view to form integrated, inter-

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[138] Although group FH2 was selected nearly a year after FH1 – the reasons and expectations of government/the specific communities leading to the formation for FH2 and FH1, correlated almost 100%.

sectoral partnerships to deliver the needed services in the area.[139] The area of 'self' (with the emphasis on self-care in terms of discovering the journey of spiritual healing) was covered during the retreat, allowing more time for the other focus areas – care of the other – during the six capacity building worksessions.

The *format* of the sessions followed the same pattern established during the retreat. The opening with hymns or gospel songs and prayer was followed by a reflective feedback session – with participants enthusiastically sharing the stories of the impact of the capacity building sessions on their lives.[140] These sessions simulated peer counselling, with the group taking full responsibility for one another by listening to and supporting each other. In essence, the group adhered to the principles determined during the retreat, namely respecting each individual's right to talk freely; to be listened to without interruption; and confidentiality. From an action research viewpoint, the feedback sessions served as the main reflective tool and ensured group involvement in determining the exact programme, topics and content for each session.

As mentioned, the *focus* was no longer personal inner healing, but on equipping the action committee members to become active role-players in the delivery of effective services in the community – thus on the 'restoration of the community'. Therefore the *content* was intended to promote the *expected outcome* (prompted by the need of the community[141] at the onset of the study), namely the co-ordination of existing initiatives and projects into a child protection and development network.[142] Most of the exercises focused on facilitation, leadership, project planning and management skills. Despite this focus, there seemed to be a 'golden vein' of spirituality detectable throughout the sessions. This could be ascribed to the participants' increased awareness of the spiritual dimension of one's being, e.g. living consciously and being mindful, resulting from the retreat process.[143] For instance, the participants insisted on lighting a candle at the

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[139] Three sub-goals were identified: (i) self-care/-development and leadership; (ii) project facilitation and development; (iii) basic project and money management.

[140] Cf. Cameron, et al. (2010: 72–73, 152) and Haddad (1998:13–17) highlighting the (continued) need for creating a safe space allowing people to share their truthful experiences and insights with regard to the process (i.e. healing, capacity building).

[141] Cf. Chapter 3, section 3.4.1 and footnote 22.

[142] Eventually both FH1 and FH2 conceptualised and implemented initiatives in accordance with this expectation. FH1: Youth Explosion Network focused on training parents for effective parenthood. FH2: *Uthando Lwethu Ebantwaneni* (For the Love of the Children) focused on providing a safe place/crèche for younger children. It was deemed that such a network would provide the children with opportunities for better holistic care and thus wholesome living (cf. section 3.5.3).

[143] Cf. Driskill's (1999:48) remark: "With practise and guidance we become more attuned to God's leading, we deepen our relationship with God…" "Many people report that … over the months … they notice significant changes in their lives: personal attitudes are transformed, troublesome relationships may be understood in new ways, even healed…" Cf. also section 3.5.2.

onset of every session. They felt it was reminding them of God's presence, helping them to focus, and "…*enabling us to see the light*". Exercises focusing on the spiritual dimension were inserted into the programme as the need arose, e.g. *Body Mapping*[144] for dealing with people infected by HIV and AIDS or having experienced trauma.

The *action research reflective cycle* became the 'backbone' of the worksessions. At the onset of each session (following a previous action), group reflection took place. This allowed for invaluable feedback from the group to be heard, listed and discussed, often with direct consequences for future actions (worksessions). Apart from ensuring that all input and actions were directly related to the felt need of the participants (and their communities), these reflective sessions provided a method of assessing the impact of the capacity building sessions. Individual participants frequently reported on events, incidents and relationships influenced by their growing awareness and insights on a spiritual level,[145] illustrated in the following reflective statements:[146]

> ‣ *The retreat's sessions helped me to open up, to pour out my heart, but also to keep quiet and listen – to look inside and then react.*

> ‣ *I spent far more time on introspection and my relationships with my children are far more open. I give more love and hugs. We discuss our feelings and relationships more openly. The children are also doing it now, since I have been doing it.*

From the above responses, it is clear that participants have benefit on first, a personal level – learning to share and deal with their problems, to communicate better, and to initiate change in small steps. They reported improved self-esteem, being empowered and 'kick-started'. Second, on a spiritual level – they gave credit for the opening of the sessions with Scripture, since "…*the Word of God gives us clear messages about what we are here for and about what we should do; it gives 'padkos'*[147] *for the road ahead*". Third, on a community level – their positive experience of being healed encouraged them to reach out into the community. They stated that they could share what they have learned with others and that they were equipped for a new role: "*I am beginning to think and talk like a community facilitator!*"

Since the groups expressed the need for more support and frequent reflective sessions to discuss the problems and issues encountered in implementing their newly

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[144] Body Mapping originated in South Africa, working with women who are HIV positive. It helps to raise their awareness of 'self', allowing them to share their innermost turmoil and feelings by literally painting their 'life narrative'.

[145] Cf. Driskill (1999:48) in footnote 143.

[146] Statements made during the first FH1 and the third session FH2.

[147] *Padkos* is the Afrikaans word for food you would take along when travelling.

acquired 'worldview' and skills, the frequency of the sessions were increased and the programme modified. *Additional exercises on spiritual or inner healing* were incorporated as the need arose. For instance, the *Body Mapping*-exercise[148] (helping people to come to terms with traumatic events) was utilised when one of the groups requested help with working with those affected by HIV and AIDS. Based on the participants' input during reflection, the *Body Mapping*-exercise confirmed the importance of an inner journey in the process of dealing with trauma, e.g. "*I have more self-confidence after doing this, I have 'faced' myself.*" "*One can work with a group of people at the same time … taking them through a process to deal with trauma and other difficult issues.*"

Similarly, exercises such as Co-*operative Storywriting, Healing of Memories,* and *Touch Dance*[149] contributed to the participants' growing awareness and level of comfort with the integration of spirituality in their own lives and the lives of those they work with. Statements made by participants substantiate the claim of the value of these exercises:

▸ *We have to stand back and ask God to take charge. We can pray and ask – and accept it – that others will write lines into our life-story.*

▸ *Sometimes it is only this one input, this one line that breaks the vicious circle – that makes the difference in another person's life. You will never know what that one line you have added meant or has done in the life of another person.[150]*

The participants seemed to be attuned to their own inner world, and able to work holistically in the community integrating and transferring their experiences and acquired knowledge and skills. In both these examples the participants' focus on restoring others in the community is reflected. The first statement clearly emphasises the aspect of consciously interacting with and accepting God as 'partner' in this process. The fact that the both sample groups took full responsibility for making decisions and implementing their chosen projects, confirmed their growth and willingness to transfer to others what they have gained (cf. section 3.5.3; Chapter 4, section 4.3.5.3).

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[148] Cf. Appendix B, Exercise 17: *Body Mapping.*

[149] *Co-operative Storywriting* was developed by IPSO©2006 based on 'inter-active drawing' idea from creative thinking. *Healing of Memories* was adapted by IPSO©2006 based on work done during Inner Journey Course, 2005. Centre for Christian Spirituality, Stellenbosch. *Touch Dance* was developed by IPSO©2006 based upon idea from Julia Cameron. 1996. *The Vein of Gold.* New York: Putnam (cf. Appendix B, Exercise 18: *Co-operative Storywriting*).

[150] Cf. Chapter 4, section 4.3.5.3: Statements made during FH1 capacity building session, 12/05/2007.

3.5.2   *Analysis of the capacity building sessions in terms of the spiritual dimension*

The questions[151] underpinning the assessment of the value and impact of the capacity building sessions (as continuation of the process started during the retreats) were the following: (1) To what degree do these spiritual resources and practices serve to empower the community? (2) How could these coping mechanisms be transferred to care-givers and practitioners involved with communities? (3) How could spiritual practices be incorporated in community development frameworks and approaches? (4) What would the consequences be when working from a specific (e.g. Christian) spiritual paradigm?

As required in action research, triangulating – cross-checking and progressive learning by means of the utilisation of multiple assessment tools[152] over a period – was employed to assess the impact of the capacity building sessions (cf. Cameron, et al., 2010:64; Chambers, 1994:1254).[153] Triangulation included the analysis of (i) the participants' verbatim feedback during ongoing reflective sessions; (ii) the workbook content;[154] (iii) open-ended questions and self-assessment questionnaires;[155] (iv) visual documentation of process/data i.e. PowerPoint presentations;[156] (v) continuous reflection; (vi) participant's commitment, attendance rate and level of involvement in the exercises and activities;[157] and (vii) their completion and presentation of

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[151] Cf. Chapter 3 section 3.2

[152] Cf. Appendix A (A1–A3) for examples of assessment tools utilized. Some had to be adapted due to the low literacy level of many of the participants.

[153] Cf. Section 3.4.6, footnote 130: Description of 'dialectic' principle in action research.

[154] Workbooks, based on the verbal responses and contributions of the participants as well as photographs taken during the sessions, were compiled for all sessions for both groups (FH1/FH2).

[155] The self-assessment chart/circle was developed to assess the individual's growth in the five main areas of motivation and self-worth. Previous research into community integration (Kirsten, 1996:64–67) led to the identification of the five key areas of awareness that underlie the experience of low motivation and self-esteem in individuals: *disempowerment*: no money, no skills, no information; *desolation*: nobody cares, no place to stay, loneliness; *distrust*: nobody can be trusted, not even myself, anger, hurt; *disregard:* no respect for rules or values, no responsibility for my deeds, no guilt, no regard for the rights of others; and *despondence*: no hope, no spiritual security, disheartened, no vision of future. Originally consisting of fifty statements focused on empowerment, connectedness, trust, regard (for self and others), and optimism or hope, the self-assessment chart was adapted into a much simpler version with far fewer statements (in the format of a circle with line drawings) to make it accessible for semi- and illiterate community members (cf. Appendix A3).

[156] Action research holds that the data gathered belongs to the participants and should be made accessible to them. Visual recordings (i.e. PowerPoint) of the capacity building sessions were compiled and shown to the sample groups. This enabled the participants and the researcher to verify observations and evaluate progress/change, e.g. presentation skills and self-confidence during group activities of the participants.

[157] The participants were constantly 'taking the stick' and sharing their insights and knowledge with one another and the facilitators. During many of the sessions, the group divided into subgroups, with each group working on an assignment. They had to appoint a different representative for each exercise

assignments. A number questions[158] pertinent to the incorporation of spiritual practices as coping mechanism, guided the triangulation and assessment of the value and impact of the capacity building sessions. This resulted in the identification of significant suppositions relating to the spiritual dimension of community development.

- *Going through the inner/spiritual healing process has empowerment value*

Participants – in all assessments – indicated a positive regard for the healing process and the resulting 'empowerment' experienced.

▸ *The sessions brought me much closer to my fellow human beings. This happened after I cleansed myself from the inside – then I could truly live fully in all I do.*

▸ *I liked it when the team [sample group members] 'emptied themselves' and came to understand one another. When [the researcher] asks who wants to share something, she records each person's thoughts and contribution on paper. Then it becomes our compilation (workbook) and not that of the facilitator.*

- *Inner/spiritual healing facilitates a transformation from despondency and low self-value to hope and leadership*

After completing the checklist on vicarious trauma[159] during the retreat, the participants admitted that they saw themselves as victims of life and were experiencing a degree of despondency, hopelessness, powerlessness and traumatisation. During the capacity building process, a self-assessment chart was completed. The results indicated a number of changes in the participants. They viewed themselves as persons with a high degree of self-esteem (89.3%), leadership (82.1%), interpersonal/cooperation skills (82.1%) and vision/hope for the future (89.3%). Faith (93.6%) was the aspect with the highest rating, and despair (34.3%) and distrust (32.9%) the lowest, showing a distinctive change from the first session of the retreat where participants indicated that they were experiencing a lack of faith and hope.

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to take the floor and give feedback to the whole group – allowing for immediate assessment of insight, skills and level of competency.

[158] How could these coping mechanisms be transferred to caregivers and practitioners involved with communities? To what degree do these spiritual resources and practices serve to empower the community? How could spiritual practices be incorporated in community development frameworks and approaches? What would the consequences be when working from a specific (e.g. Christian) spiritual paradigm?

[159] Cf. Appendix B, Exercise 5.

▪ *Inner/spiritual healing transforms relationships*

Participants reported arriving at new perspectives and habits impacting on and leading to improved relationships. They shared experiences and situations in their lives relating to breaking old habits and patterns, having more restraint and self-control, being at peace and able to be quiet, e.g. "*I have broken from my old patterns and habits – I tend to stay calmer and peaceful in difficult situations.*" "*I keep quiet, calm and listen to God.*" They also reported changes in their family life: "*These worksessions have helped me in my personal life and as a parent. It helps me to make contact with others and to share more freely.*"

▪ *Inner/spiritual healing leads to greater sensitivity and insight, resulting in increased confidence to work with others*

Many participants experienced tangible 'results' of their newly acquired skills, abilities, knowledge and wisdom. Areas of special growth mentioned by many participants[160] included the ability to work through personal problems/issues by means of self-examination and analyses, and improved decision-making and communication, resulting in a better self-image (transformed identity). Due to improved sensitivity toward and insight into self and others, they found increased confidence and the 'courage to act' on behalf of others, as demonstrated in one participant's story:

> There has been an article on TIK in our local paper. We know now it is a community problem. We need to take the time to listen, to exchange information. We became aware (during the retreat) of the benefits of sharing one's problem and listening to one another. It helped one to realise that one is not alone with one's problem and pain. Therefore, we should reach out to others, for instance regarding the TIK problem. Once we have spoken about it and shared, we can move forward.

Their attendance of these sessions affected their involvement in the community: "*At our Youth Camp, we utilised many of the exercises benefiting the facilitators. The children also benefited and grew to such an extent that they are now presenting some of the sessions themselves.*"

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[160] To measure their opinion of the value and impact of the various exercises and activities, the participants completed a questionnaire at the closure of the capacity building worksessions (October 2007). Both the presentations rated "highly useful" by all attendants, namely dealing with HIV and AIDS through art and *Body Mapping,* were activities focusing on one of their biggest challenges, namely how to deal with the far-reaching impact of HIV and AIDS in the community. Likewise, exercises focusing on the spiritual or inner healing component such as *Reflective Walking, Relationship Graph, Forgiving, Final Letter* and *Weaving a Basket* received a high rating from most participants.

▪ *Inner/spiritual healing enables the embracing of religious diversity*

With regard to the question relating to the consequences of working from a specific religious paradigm, it would seem that the researcher/facilitator's integrity regarding faith or religious affiliation is crucial: if acknowledged openly, in a non-judgemental and respectful manner, community members do not seem to have a problem with it. In fact, the expression of faith by the facilitator/researcher appeared to be interpreted by the participants as 'permission' and an invitation to open up the dialogue on their faith affiliations and practices. It gave them the freedom to explore the impact of their spirituality in their personal and communal lives, and set a clear example of embracing diversity.

▪ *Spiritual resources and practices have transforming and sustaining value*

Participants openly shared how their spiritual practices have sustained them throughout their lives. As the intervention process unfolded, they seemed to be more and more open to *living* their spirituality, e.g. by insisting that they want to light a candle as symbol of God's presence and light at the onset of each follow-up session. Of even more significance was their feedback given after 'testing' their newly found knowledge and practices in their home environments. In their anecdotes,[161] they frequently ascribed changes (transformation) in their relationships with family and others, or their growing confidence in taking action as facilitators and leaders, to their ability to utilise their spiritual resources – especially quiet prayer[162] – to replenish themselves: *"I keep quiet, calm and listen to God [before reacting to others]."* *"This kind of prayer helps me to become deeply quiet, getting into contact with my innermost that I did not know existed … to do a deep self-examination."* *"I give so much of myself – one needs to create opportunities to replenish one – to connect with and confront oneself – and to see God's hand in everything. This prayer helped me to do this."* Given this evidence of integration and inner-transformation, it was of import to attend to how similar processes could be incorporated in the sample groups' work in their communities (cf. section 3.5.3 below).

▪ *Transference of spiritual practices follows unto the integration thereof*

To what degree was it possible for the participants to integrate and transfer these spiritual practices (and coping mechanisms) to others? A number of factors seemed relevant. Firstly, transference of knowledge, skills and even attitudes, is possible to the

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[161] Cf. verbatim statements reported in section 3.4.5.

[162] Cf. *Examen of Conscience*, section 3.4.5.2

degree that it has been integrated into one's being. Only once the belief in and daily practising of spirituality as coping and life-giving source is deeply ingrained into the mind and life of the individual, can he/she facilitate the transferral of these practices as 'coping mechanisms'. Thus, for the concept of spirituality as source of survival and well-being to be transferred from the sample group members to others in their community, they had not only to *hear* it, but also to *live* it. As the process continued, the input and feedback received progressively indicated that this was indeed the case. The inner changes experienced and shared by the participants, included an increased level of hope, motivation, inner strength, positive thinking and acting patterns, heightened confidence in terms of own capabilities, and a heightened willingness to take responsibility for themselves and their community. The following statements confirm these conclusions:

▸ *These sessions improved my self-confidence a lot. I have analysed myself and found many 'disabilities' that needed to be addressed. I have learned to understand myself and to live without a 'mask'. I have also learned to control myself in difficult situations. I have much greater understanding for others.*

▸ *Our Youth Explosion Network is like a light in the tunnel (of the community) – it gives us hope. Since we are walking this road together, we are already in the light – and can be a light to others in the community.*

▸ *These sessions made a more mature person of me. I have learned to understand others better, to work with others and to solve problems. I have begun to contribute something to the community and to my own life – my life has become meaningful.*

▪ *Structural factors do impact on the internalisation and transferral of spiritual practices*

A number of structural factors were found to contribute to the process on internalisation of the healing and spiritual practices. First, the frequency of the sessions had to be adapted to meet the participants' need of for debriefing and support.[163] Second, the project manager's functional role throughout the process allowed for additional follow-up and support in between sessions and the addressing of the participants' requests and needs regarding their community projects, thus freeing the facilitators to focus on their 'healing role'. Third, the prolonged duration[164] of the process had a positive impact on the transferral, as it allowed copious occasion for the integration and

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[163] The original FH1 plan scheduled one session per month, allowing ample time for implementation. However, as the group expressed a need for debriefing and support on a more regular basis, the interval between sessions was decreased. For FH2 weekly session were scheduled for most of the period.

[164] FH1 February 2007–April 2008 (14 months) and FH2 November 2007–May 2008 (6 months).

measurement of the input.[165] Fourth, the content and methodology (e.g. exercises, activities and mode of presentation) utilised during both the retreat and the capacity building sessions, played a major role in the transferral of the spiritual content and experience. The participants rated the exercises dealing with the spiritual or inner healing component as most beneficial, referring to the value of the 'hands on' approach. On strength of this evidence, the researcher construed that the experiential, participative nature of these exercises aided the participants' 'unleashing' of their spiritual resources. By giving them the opportunity to uncover or re-connect with their untapped inner or spiritual resources, their capacity for dealing with their situation and challenges in the community was increased.

3.5.3   *The incorporation of spiritual practices in community development projects: Final implementation*

In this section, the final implementation of the action in Cycle II is presented in terms of the incorporation of the spiritual practices in the practice of community development; the taking on of responsibility or ownership; and the readiness for the transferral of the acquired knowledge skills and competencies.

Toward the completion of the capacity building sessions both sample groups were focused and keen to take on the responsibility of the implementation of their community projects – namely, the parent-to-parent outreach *Youth Explosion Network* (YEN) (FH1) and the establishment of the *Uthando Lwethu Ebantwaneni* crèche[166] (FH2). Given the focus and intension, as reflected in the choice of project names, it would seem that both the groups had integrated the concept of spirituality as a key dimension of life, and therefore of community projects. For instance, group FH1 concluded that their project's name should radiate hope, light and positive action to the community. Moreover, stating that since they benefited to such a degree from the input and focus on spiritual guidance they have had – they wanted others to share similar experiences. Therefore they wished to include a spiritual component in the YEN-

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[165] For example, the growth in terms of confidence, presentation, leadership and facilitation skills of the participants was observable during the recurrent village walks where they served as guides and 'hosts' for the overseas guests and the research team (cf. section 3.4.3).

[166] For the Love of the Children (*Uthando Lwethu Ebantwaneni)* crèche opened during 2009 in the building made available by one of the group members. A soup kitchen for street children was also initiated by two FH2-members.

manual[167] and programme, e.g. opening with hymns/gospel songs and prayer, and the inclusion of a significant number of the spiritual practices and exercises.

Group FH2 wanted to open a crèche, providing a safe environment for the young children: *"Bringing hope for a brighter future, safety and education for the children in need of day-care".* Their intent of including a spiritual component is evident in the following incident: At the commencement of a FH2 capacity building session, the group lit a candle and placed it inside the 'basket'[168] they had woven during the retreat, saying: "We *have brought our dream for the community[the basket] with us. But we need God's light to enlighten our minds – to show us the way forward in realising our dream."* Accordingly, all FH2-capacity building sessions were opened with hymns, a prayer, Scripture reading and lightning the candle.

An increased sense of responsibility and taking of ownership was apparent during the final phase of the capacity building sessions. In the case of group FH2, when they struggled to obtain a venue for the planned crèche through the local city council, one member offered her house at a nominal rent, saying she (and the whole group) was too committed to their goal to allow lack of a venue to stand in their way. Similarly, the FH1 members negotiated with researchers and the project manager for three additional sessions to help prepare them for their role as parent-to-parent group facilitators. One member offered her home as training space; the whole group committed to attend the additional workshops and to provide the refreshments; they came up with their plans of action and requested the help of the facilitator/researcher to compile a parent-to-parent facilitator's guide. From an action research perspective, these negotiations were proof that the action committee (community representatives) had taken full responsibility and ownership of the project – they have 'taken the stick'. Their 'readiness' to take the work forward, became even more apparent when, for the duration of these additional sessions, the group facilitated their own process and the various activities, exercises and peer assessments, and determined the format and content of the *YEN Parental Guidance Manual for Facilitators.*[169]

Lastly, the attendance of these final sessions was excellent and all members of both sample groups qualified for the certificate of attendance.[170] Based on the above

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[167]*YEN Parental Guidance Manual for Facilitators*, compiled by the researcher from material generated by the FH1 group during the Youth Explosion Network-training sessions, CCPP Franschhoek, 2007–2008.

[168] Cf. section 3.4.5.8: Discussion of the *Weaving a Basket*.

[169] Cf. footnote 167.

[170] Certificates for the Capacity Building and the Facilitation of Parent Groups were handed out at the Graduation (for FH1 and FH2), which took place on 28th March 2008 at STIAS, Stellenbosch.

evidence – both groups' proposals for action, their willingness to risk and act as facilitators in their communities; to reach out to other parents; to take a public stance concerning responsible parenthood – it was concluded that *the focus on spiritual/inner healing laid the foundation for the participants to work deeper, holistic, and with more wisdom, compassion and motivation, than before. They were eager and ready to serve their community by implementing their expanded array of competencies.*

The termination of Cycle II – in other words the final follow-up and evaluation of the process and material – is to be discussed next.

3.5.4   *Follow-up and evaluation with 'external' group: Monitoring change*

The follow-up and final evaluation of the fieldwork had four components: (1) Regular contact with the project manager to determine the degree to which the FH1 and FH2 projects were implemented; (2) Home visits to the Franschhoek communities, conducted by the project manager and co-facilitator (Heidi Swart and Thembi Mphokeng); (3) Involvement of all participants/co-researchers in group reflection, focus groups and analysis of written evidence (workbooks) to determine whether the indicators of progress and success have been met; (4) The testing of the modified programme by conducting of a weeklong capacity building session with an 'external' group in Pietermaritzburg.

The actual evaluation of the intervention (the newly developed praxis framework for spiritual/inner healing and capacity building) required input from both professionals and non-professionals in the field of community development. Thus, the modified capacity building worksessions (including the spiritual healing exercises)[171] were presented during October 2008 to an external group – community members and professionals working as community practitioners at mainly faith-based organisations in the Pietermaritzburg area.[172] Two research team facilitators, Thembi Mphokeng and

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[171] Apart from the addition of an extra day to deal with the module on spiritual/inner healing – including exercises such as *Spiritual Collage, Face of God, Healing of Memories and Reflective Prayer/Meditation* (covered during the retreat in the case of FH1 and FH2) – the content and material of the weeklong capacity building worksessions presented to this group were similar to that of the sessions with sample groups FH1 and FH2.

[172] Sessions presented 13–17 October, 2008 to a group of 16 community representatives and professionals located in Pietermaritzburg and practicing as community facilitators for mainly faith-based organisations under the auspices of CINDI (Children in Distress Network) (cf. Chapter 2, endnote v). The probability of inclusion in the external group involved the convenience and availability of participants (Bender & Lombard, 2004:93). The fact that this procedure provides for limited representation from the population from which it was drawn (social work professionals and community leaders/developers), was not a major concern, since the goal of this study was to design, develop, edit and assess a praxis framework for the integration of spirituality in community development.

Susan Andrag, conducted the worksessions, taking on the role of co-researchers in the absence of the researcher.[173]

Customary, the daily sessions were opened with hymns, prayers and scripture readings, followed by the content sessions. Feedback was obtained by means of pre- and post-workshop questionnaires, continuous reflection, and direct observation. The participants rated the content information as exceptional or satisfactory, e.g. *"It was useful information that will change the lives of lots of people in the communities"*. The individual assessment results indicated an increase in self-assertiveness, e.g., *"I felt I was always given a platform to express my feelings"; "I think I contributed more in this workshop than in any other workshop I have been to"*. Also evident was a heightened experience of trust, optimism and hope, e.g., *"I have learned that there is always hope no matter what circumstances – I will remember that attitude makes everything"*. Special reference was made to the positive impact of the exercises and process dealing with spiritual healing and working with traumatised people, e.g. *"This kind of workshop is excellent – we learn and we also heal"*.

In assessing the feasibility of incorporating a spiritual component, the researcher firstly considered the limitations inherent to the 'large group' capacity building worksessions. These are, amongst other, limited time, too many participants, lack of privacy, lack of physical and emotional space and quietness, and limitations with regard to individual attention. On the upside – despite the large group situation – the inner healing experienced by participants noticeably intensified awareness and utilisation of their spiritual strengths; it increased self-assertiveness; and their level of comfort and openness to express their faith/spiritual believes and practices a sources of support. The following statements illustrate these observations:

‣ *We bought an office in the community for our organisation. As leader, I am like the pilot of the boat, with God as the captain.*

‣ *Fundi shared that she worked in an extremely needy area and felt she could to nothing. "I prayed, and got a vision from God. Then I started to turn things around and now I do job*

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[173] Dick (1993:15) refers to the utilisation of multiple researchers to 'cross check' the research as one of the tools of dialectic (footnote 130). The two co-facilitators took on the role of co-researchers in the final phase of this study. Working 'unsupervised' they had to immerge themselves in the process and the exercise contents to a larger degree than before. Their finding was that the material was accessible to them, that they could work in great depth, and that the content and process (referring to the methodology and phases of the framework) had a visible positive and growth-enhancing impact on the participants. They reported being enriched both as individuals and community facilitators by the experience.

creation, a sewing project, a vegetable garden, a worm project, a soup kitchen and much more – all by getting out of my house and my comfort zone".[174]

The positive factors seemed to be decisively in favour of including a spiritual or healing component. In addition, taking into account the feedback from both the facilitators – acknowledging the value it held for them as practitioner/facilitators – it was concluded that it is indeed feasible to incorporate material addressing spirituality in the five-day capacity building package. Although in will not be plausible to work within the scope and intensity that was attained during the retreats, the outcome of this intervention presented sufficient positive evidence to persuade the researcher of the benefits for the participants. The issue of what prior level of experience and exposure is required for the facilitating these worksessions, has not yet been fully addressed and need further investigation. However, the existing data seemed to underscore the fact that, if the practitioner is intent on working on this level and willing to undergo experiential training beforehand, it is plausible to present this material for community groups of up to twenty participants.

3.6   In summary: Affirmation of the peoples' voice

During one of the final sessions with the sample groups, they were asked to indicate who else (apart from themselves) has been significantly influenced by their experiences during this process. They listed people such as their immediate families, their circle of friends, their work situation, institutions (school, clinic), projects, their church groups and women's clubs as areas of influence. The number of people 'touched' by them was surprisingly high (ratio of 1:33), indicative of the 'ripple effect' resulting from their input. Most convincing though, was their conclusion that the inner changes they have undergone were now reflected in their improved interaction and relationships with others, as demonstrated in their stories:

Ruth related how she has been trying for years to get a Youth Forum – representatives of all institutions and projects involved with the youth in the Franschhoek community – together and was constantly faced with opposition and failure. After going through the retreat and the first capacity building worksessions, she felt so empowered that she went back to the various parties and motivated them towards attending their first joined meeting. She ascribed her success directly to her inner healing (feeling more secure in herself) and her honed and blooming leadership and communication skills.

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[174] Feedback given by Mdu and Fundi, during the second follow-up session with 'external group' in Pietermaritzburg, 13–17 October 2008.

In previous paragraphs, reference was made to the visible changes in terms of self-assurance, leadership, willingness to take responsibility in all members of the two sample groups. When faced with international tourists, the group members acted as ambassadors for their communities, sharing both the successes and current issues with the visitors. On various levels – as caregivers in the clinic and community; as owner/manager of various crèches and day-care centres, or as representatives on community forums and in their utilisation of healing exercises with individuals and groups – the transformation of the group members were evident. The words of Ann (FH1 member) substantiate the depth of this transformation:

> *Nothing changed in my circumstances – my child still uses TIK, I am still a single mother, I still have health problems and live in a troubled community – but everything has changed: I look at things and myself differently. Therefore, I can deal with what is in my life.*

By integrating the skills and 'lessons learned' to utilise her 'renewed' spiritual resources, Ann could meet the challenges of her life with renewed resilience.[175] Her story yet again confirmed the initial observation that spirituality is a highly regarded commodity for people the community. The voice of the people reflected here comes as an invitation to 'tap into people's spiritual capacity'.[176] The substantial body of information on the impact of introducing a spiritual component in work with people in communities produced in this action research process provided one pillar in the foundation for the further development of a praxis framework. Far from comprehensive, these grassroots contributions presented sufficient data dovetailing with the literature findings to endorse the development of a praxis framework containing a spiritual component – as proposed in the final chapter. However, the one component absent from the discussion and action research process up to this stage is that of the formal voice of theology. In the next two chapters, these findings will be interpreted in terms of a theological perspective on spirituality and development.

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[175] Cf. section 3.2, footnote 15: Prayer helping the women to see differently (Haddad, 2001:44).

[176] Cf. previous quote/reference (Derezotes, 2006:1; Ver Beek, 2000:31).

CHAPTER 4

FROM SOCIAL WORK TO SPIRITUALITY AND PRACTICAL THEOLOGY – A DIALOGUE BETWEEN DIVERSE VOICES

If the poor and their world don't constitute the locus theologious par excellence, theology will have stopped fulfilling its first mission – to let God be God, who continue revealing God self in the poor (Breghenti, 2008:518).

If there are children scavenging in a dump on the other side of the world and I ignore this, then the wholeness of my being is deeply and essentially shattered (Ndungane, 2003:45).

4.1   Introduction

The focus of this chapter is the interpretative task of situation analysis: to, by bringing into dialogue the participants' (analysed) response regarding the place of spirituality in their lives, with that of theology, address the question of *"Why is it going on?"* Or more specifically, *"Why is it that some people survive against the odds within the harsh reality of impoverished communities while others are depleted?"* Thus, by utilising theological reflection in a conversation between the voice of the people and that of theology[1] this chapter will aim to also answer the normative question within Osmer's practical theological design, namely *"On theological and biblical ground, what forms ought religious praxis take in this particular social context?"* (Osmer & Schweikert, 2003:3). In this way the theological interpretation of the fieldwork findings will provide normative guidelines for the praxis of people and community development as envisioned by Osmer's final question, the pragmatic question of *"How might this area of praxis be shaped to embody more fully the normative commitments of a religious tradition in this particular context of experience?"* (Osmer & Schweikert, 2003:4). The aim is to arrive at a normative (theological) voice or basis from which to continue toward the development of a praxis framework (representing the operant voice by attending to what practices should be carried out). Therefore in

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[1] Given the context and nature of the study, with as its focus the diverse intercultural and multi-faith South African communities, it has been opted for the inclusion of theological *voices* – referring to various theological disciplines. Thus, the 'voice of theology' is heard in multiple nuances – not always in complete accordance with one another, but rather as complimentary to and as representative of the South African reality.

Chapter 5, the focus will shift to the interdisciplinary conversation between community development, spirituality and practical theology.

The investigation into the possibility of changing the praxis of community development by the inclusion of a spiritual dimension – the focus of this study as a whole – required input from various voices. The fist voice listened to, was that from below, coming through the stories and faces of people living in suffering and poverty (cf. Banawiratma, 2005:76; Smit, 2009:474).[2] As stated above, in this chapter the 'voice of theology' enters into the conversation taking place mainly between the voice of espoused theology – as captured as the participants' verbalisation of what they say they believe; and that of formal theology – represented by the 'voice' of various theologians as articulated in their work. Since no one voice could be heard distinctly "without there being echoes of the other voices" (Cameron, et al, 2010:54), the aim of theological reflection is to not 'hear' or see isolated events or incidents in isolation. Rather, it is to consider all data in the context of the Kingdom of God with a view to guide faith-full practitioners toward more effective action in the here and now in order to "…change the reality into new social situations dreamed of in the life of faith" (Banawiratma, 2005:81).

At the closure of Chapter 3, a statement made by one of the sample group members bears witness to the transforming potential of the inclusion of a spiritual dimension in people and community development: "*I still have ... problems and live in a troubled community – but everything has changed: I look at things and myself differently. Therefore, I can deal with what is in my life.*" The participant has incorporated the alternative 'tools' offered to her during the retreat and capacity building sessions to such a degree, that it indeed helped her 'see differently' and to meet the challenges she faced.

The search for an alternative approach and strategies required from the researcher (and all involved) firstly, to 'see differently and clearly';[3] second, to partake in a holistic

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[2] Captured in Chapter 3, sections 3.4.5; 3.4.6; 3.5.1; 3.5.2 & 3.6.

[3] Cf. South African theologian Dirk Smit (2009:474–486) refers to seeing depending on hearing, and, ultimately, "becoming one" through "…listening to the stories of the suffering poor … see[ing] something of the complexity of this suffering". This, according to Smit, is an integral aspect of doing theology, since "…Christian ethic begins with the act of seeing". *Seeing* entails the perception of the problem, the acceptance of it as a moral challenge and the interpretation of it in a preliminary way – each of these moments impacting on the making of ethical decisions – such as are needed in developing and implementing strategies to address people and community development in the midst of adverse conditions of suffering, poverty and violence. "Without this act of seeing, of shared experience of common discovery and observation, any such reflection and discussion would be meaningless. Seeing comes first." (Smit, 2009:482).

advance allowing for the hearing and inclusion of the diverse voices from various disciplines; and third, to 'judge' or discern in order to determine what actions should follow. Performing these tasks in an inter-disciplinary study, the challenge is to balance the input from the various disciplines. This calls for the mindful cross-disciplinary dialoguing[4] between, and inclusion of, diverse perspectives to the end that the resulting outcome (whether proposals, theoretical assumptions or, as in this case, a praxis framework) is pertinent to all disciplines or voices involved. Furthermore, the input – especially the use of methodology and language – should be inclusive, implying that the dialogue should open up new possibilities to *all* involved rather than exclude them from the conversation (cf. Cameron, et al., 2010:75, 102).

Lastly, the focus and context of this study – South African marginalised communities[5] – added to the tension of interaction between the outsiders – academic middle class mainly white with a Western orientation, and the insiders – mainly educationally marginalised (semi- or illiterate), grassroots women who have experienced oppression, exposure to African patriarchy, years of silence and survival of a situation of near destruction (cf. Haddad, 1998:9–10). Indeed, to discern the resultant "struggle-conceived theology of survival" compels a specific sensitivity (and responsibility) to hear the voice of these women (Haddad, 1998:11):

> It is in the wilderness experience, this struggle for survival, that God helps the black women each day make a way out of what they thought was no way. It requires faith. It is a quest for survival. Survival, not a text book or pulpit theology, is what ordinary African women live by. It is a working theology lived out in the shacks ... impoverished huts … crime-invested townships. These women find a God who is with then in their struggle for survival. As this occurs, God and faith are shaped according to the women's particular lived experience.

As mentioned above, engaging in a conversation between 'the voice of the poor' and theology so as to see clearly, is the focus of this chapter (cf. Gustavo Gutierrez in Brown, 1984:395; Smit, 2009:486; Cochrane, et al., 1991:32). Since theological reflection is a methodology unfamiliar to most community and social work practitioners (especially in the

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[4] Cf. Wentzel van Huyssteen's transversal model of cross-disciplinary dialogue that allows for communication to flow "downward, upward, and across the transversal networking" of diverse groups, exploring "the points of intersection and divergence at various levels, in spite of differences" (in Osmer, 2008:170–171).

[5] Cf. Chapter 1, section 1.2; Chapter 2, section 2.2.; Chapter 5, section 5.4.

South African context), the aim is firstly, to provide a brief introduction to the praxis of theological reflection in the context of this study. Next follows a discussion of what constitutes spirituality: first, spirituality in general with reference to it as a universal 'longing of the heart' and specifically with regard to Christian spirituality as "an understanding of the 'Spirit of God' as a transforming agent" as proposed by Cochrane, et al., (1991:76). Then, with reference to the work of a number of theologians, *four specific understandings of or emphases in Christian Spirituality* (Eugene Peterson) directly relevant to this study are disused, namely as a Spirituality of the Cross (David Bosch; Douglas John Hall); a Spirituality of Weakness/Powerlessness (Henri Nouwen; David Bosch), a Spirituality 'from below' (Archbishop Ndungane)[6] and last, a Spirituality of Embrace (Miroslav Volf; Madge Karecki; Tim Geddert).

Already in the discussion of Spirituality 'from below', the focus shifts to the conversation between the 'voice of the people' – as 'heard' in the statements of field study participants depicting their spirituality/spiritual understanding – and in spirituality of embrace, to the 'voice of theology' (specifically that of the Bible, with the focus on the parable of the Prodigal Son, as exemplified in the theology of Miroslav Volf and Henri Nouwen).[7] Finally, the resulting normative (i.e. theological) guidelines relevant to the praxis of community development are described. In the next chapter, transformational development and the theological grounding of the praxis framework for community and people transformation[8] are discussed with reference to the work of especially Bryant Myers (1999)[9] – motivating the shift from development to transformation.

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[6] Njongonkulu Ndungane served as Archbishop of Cape Town in the Anglican Church of Southern Africa from 1996 to 2007. Apart from serving a three year sentence on Robben Island as a political prisoner during the early 1960's, he founded African Monitor, a non-profit organization monitoring various aspects of aid-giving and receiving.

[7] Cf. the discussion on the Parable of the Prodigal Son based on the work of Volf (1996), Henri Nouwen (2010) and Tom Geddert (1995) in section 4.3.5.2.

[8] The input of community development theory and the proposed praxis framework, as well as spiritually as source for healing (cf. Chapter 3, section 3.5.2) in people and community transformation – focussing on the definition, the role of healer, the process and the methodology as relevant to and applied in the community development context, are discussed in full in Chapter 5.

[9] Bryant Myers is a Fuller professor in transformational development since 2006 and an acknowledged author on poverty and transformational development, humanitarian aide and world mission. He has over 30 years' experience in relief and development work around the world with World Vision International.

4.2   Theological reflection as transformation inducing methodology

The focus of the normative task of practical theology is "…on the construction of theological and ethical norms by which to critically assess, guide and reform some dimension of contemporary religious praxis" (Osmer & Schweitzer, 2003:3). According to the authors, it entails looking in two directions simultaneously: taking into account, on the one hand, truth, goodness and beauty enshrined in the Scriptural traditions; and, on the other hand, the reality and challenge of contemporary religious praxis under investigation. In this space, the input of multiple voices – such as those of other theological and ethical disciplines[10] – enters into dialogue to enable the crystallising of context-dependent norms of praxis (cf. Osmer & Schweitzer, 2003:3–4; Bevans, 1992:74–75; Cameron, et al., 2010:63–64).

What is called for, is that the theologian (or community/social worker) as practitioner will listen to God's Word – grounding the interpretation of that Word "in the spirituality and practice of discernment" – to address the particular situation, problems, issues and context (cf. Osmer, 2008:135; 138–139). Since moral claims serve to include, and thus further mutual responses to address praxis issues, deriving at moral and ethical guidelines through the process of discernment[11] is one of theology's focal contributions to praxis (cf. Osmer & Schweitzer, 2003:6). A process of inclusive dialogue and collaboration encourages the recognition of universal spiritual and moral truths such as justice, peace and the integrity of creation (cf. Banawiratma, 2005:75–76). The methodology utilised to realise this normative task of practical theology, is that of theological reflection.[12]

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[10] Cf. Chapter 1, section 1.5, footnote 42: Discussion of the "conversation between the four theological voices".

[11] Referring to renowned German theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Osmer, (2008:138) explains that discernment comprises of two movements and a number of practices: first, "the admission that, in reality, we don't know"; and second, "actively seeking God's will", which include the practices of 1) "scriptural listening" such as daily study/prayerful reading of the scriptures and 2) "confession and radical truth telling" – sharing with trusted friends to help distinguish God's voice; and 3) "loving and being loved" – engaging in the formation of personal relationships with other to concretely learn to recognise Christ in situations and people, especially those who are suffering from "poverty, violence and oppression".

[12] Theological reflection – most often depicted as the third moment in the practical theology/pastoral cycle (cf. Chapter 1, section 1.8.3, footnotes 64 & 66: Pastoral circle/spiral) – involves a process of seeking a deeper understanding of preceding experience and the analysis of data "in the light of the living faith, scripture, church social teaching and the resources of tradition" (Holland & Henriot, 1984:7).

4.2.1 As connective moment of integration

Theological reflection addresses the 'tension' between praxis (personal experiences) and theory (the faith traditions) by bringing into conversation the ideas, beliefs, feelings perceptions and assumptions voiced by the self (e.g. the practitioner), Christian tradition and by her/his contemporary situation (cf. Cameron, et al., 2010:25–26). Henriot (2005:25) asserts that theological reflection is "very concrete, very practical" as it provides the 'space' for the encounter with God, where the (Christian) practitioner/researcher seeks out and, in turn, brings God's voice into the praxis context (cf. Cameron, et al., 2010:23). Hearing God's voice in this space enables the moral or responsible response to the question, "What then shall I do?" – acknowledging the accountability to others as part of the outcome of the reflection (cf. Osmer, 2008:140).

Scripture, relating to humanity on all levels,[13] is seen to be the primary source for finding/hearing God's voice (Kritzinger, 2002:164). However, though acknowledging the crucial role of Scripture in theological reflection, Ndungane (2003:65), in a Mosaic turn,[14] holds that God's voice is also heard as "the voice of creation". Ndungane argues that, since the whole of creation is included in the relationship with God, religion and the more so spirituality, can not be separated from the voice of creation as embodied in "domestic life, childbirth … friendships and conversation".[15] All of these voices ('from below') as represented in the numerous verbatim statements,[16] thus enter into the conversation between voices of theological reflection (cf. Cameron, et al., 2010:26; Banawiratma, 2005:76). The convergence of these diverse voices requires the finding of a common

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[13] Cf. Cochrane, et al. (1991:26), observing that the Scriptures relate to people on more than the inner level: "It is also socially situated, both at the micro-level (family upbringing, circle of friends, immediate authorities), and at the macro-level (community, society, nation international global)."

[14] Holland (2005:6–8) refers to the Mosaic turn in theological reflection proposed by liberation theology. The kingly (Davidic) reflection, centring on the figure of David and is seen to be unconditional, and the priestly or 'liberation trajectory' (Mosaic) reflection on the figure of Moses – liberating and prophetic, yet conditional: not obeying the commandments holds the threat of penalty (cf. Osmer 2008:133; Cochrane, et al., 1991:57–58). According to Cochrane, et al. (1991:59), Jesus had presented himself more in terms of the Mosaic pole, defining himself as rabbi; though demonstrating his representation of the Kingdom rule in his liberating praxis. "Christ Jesus is the full and unsurpassable revelation of God." Therefore, says Osmer, prophetic discernment is the task of listening to this Word (Jesus) and interpreting it in ways that address particular social conditions, events, and decisions (Osmer, 2008:135).)

[15] Cf. Christopher Wright (2010:45) remarking that the Old Testament shows the scope of God's involvement in creation and our lives, modelling in detail "from the law, the narratives, prophets, wisdom and worship of Israel the kind of practical responses that pleases God (and those that don't)". Also refer to Chapter 5, section 5.3.1: Fretheim's (2005:94) remark on God's involvement in a range of family and community issues both on a spiritual and mundane level.

[16] Cf. Chapter 3, sections 3.4.5; 3.5.1.

language' (Cameron et al., 2010:95–99). The challenge is to overcome both the non-theologians' difficulty to fully grasp the theological terminology, and that of the 'non-perceptive ear' toward the voice of the people, prevalent in (traditional) academics or formal theologians. Therefore, 'translation' of the raw data (whether theological theory of field data) becomes of great importance in this conversation.

Since action research typically generates a massive amount of data, the transcribing, storing, labelling, analysis and a prepared text accessible to all involved,[17] is required for effective reflection (Cameron, et al., 2010:95–99). The reflective process and the input from all voices, may lead to the identification of areas of deficiency in data, requiring further investigation[18] or for further clarification and follow-up. The very nature of the data obtained from primary sources, may also determine the flow of the process: "…the power of raw data as text … hearing the participants in their own words was powerful for those who were not in touch with the day-to-day realities of practice" (Cameron, et al., 2010:97). Indeed, as in this study, it was being involved with and listening to the voices of the 'oppressed' – "…groups of ordinary African Christian women" – that alerted Haddad (1998:11–12) to the uncovered theological resources to be found in the everyday lives of these women. The words and phrases – not necessarily easily articulated by these 'insiders',[19] but "reflecting a theological knowledge and insight that challenged the intellectual" (Haddad, 1998:12), triggered in-depth theological reflection.

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[17] As indicated in Chapter 3, in the current research the 'workbooks' (compiled from the notes and verbatim input during each session) served this purpose – together with the formal reports reflecting the outcome of the village walks, follow-up sessions and formal assessment questionnaires and discussions.

[18] In this study the initial report was completed (and submitted) by the end of 2010, where upon the feedback from theologians was obtained and incorporated – together with the findings of the continuous literature study – to represent the 'normative voice of theology' (cf. Cameron, et al., 2010:54). As referred to in Chapter 1, a precedent for such integrative interdisciplinary work is to be found in the work and research of James Fowler. Osmer & Schweitzer (2003:2–4) describe how Fowler moved back and forth between the various disciplines – as well as the different practical theological tasks. Constructing his concept "the domain of faith" Fowler did his empirical research within the framework of structural development of psychology, and then moved to theology for the motivation and definition of the domain of faith.

[19] James Scott Welch (in Haddad, 1998:12–13, 16) argues that the oppressed have 'hidden transcripts' that are not easily voiced, but reflect a critique of power relationships particular to a specific context. It is in these hidden transcripts that the voice of the other is heard clearly and not in the 'publically presented' input. Haddad comments: "In one's initial encounters with these [African] women, talk seldom focuses on how issues of gender, race, class, or culture have an impact, in an oppressive and dominating way, on their life. What they seem to speak about and usually pray to God about are the crises of their life as they struggle to survive. But clearly, as the example of the Amawoti women shows, this is not the whole story. Under certain conditions, including whether they feel safe, they will speak further" (Haddad, 1998:16).

4.2.2   As an enlightening process

As analytical process, theological reflection entails seeking God's guidance by "…shining the light of faith on the experiences that have been analyzed" (Henriot, 2005:25). It is a sifting through, sorting out and weighing of evidence, searching for "nuggets of gold" (Osmer, 2008:137). The 'enlightening' is directed at praxis. What is hoped for, is that these faith-filled moments of reflection will bring moments of insight and will open up new avenues for relating to the presented issues, problems and contexts as identified by the practitioners or people in faith practices, or, as the point in case, in the community. Examples of such new avenues (and practices) will be expressly identified in Chapter 6 of this study.

In part, the effectiveness of theological reflection as change or transformation inducing methodology is tied to the fact that change first occurs within the participant(s). Inner change is brought about by taking the reflector (research participants) on a journey of experience, self-awareness and dialogue with 'the voices from below', social sciences and, alternatively, the normative resources of Christian faith, allowing for a renewal of situation or outlook to take place. As such, the inner change is embedded in "genuine and transformative connections with theology" (cf. Cameron, et al., 2010:29; Osmer 2011:14). This reflective journey could start with Scripture reading, a doctrine of faith, a cultural text, an everyday object or an experience (cf. Cameron, et al., 2010:28; footnote 11 on practices of discernment). Although, as pointed out, the authority of Scripture as a primary source for reflecting upon praxis is acknowledged, reading the Bible in the context of poverty and political repression, or for that matter in affluent USA, will influence the meaning of the text, necessitating that reason, faith, culture, experience, tradition and the way people live contextually, should also be taken into account (cf. Ndungane, 2003:115; Haddad, 1998:17; Banawiratma, 2005:80).

As has been shown in the work of Haddad,[20] a safe space (or 'social site') where people experience mutual respect and trust is an essential prerequisite for theological reflection (cf. Haddad, 1998:16; Cameron, et al., 2010:72–73). All participants — especially those who are not as familiar with the methodology (as are formally trained theologians) — should understand and feel comfortable with the processes and language (cf. Cameron, et al., 2010:102; Haddad, 1998:17). By determining an accessible

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[20] Refer to quote (Haddad, 1998:11) in section 4.1.

language, the space is created for multiple voices to be heard; for an interweaving of the lives of those in authority with others, and thus for particularity or difference. It is dialoguing in this space that will lead to finding answers to the questions: "What learning might you be keen to draw from this material for people involved in your organisation [community]?" "What actions would you be keen to take forward?" (Cameron, et al., 2010:103). These shared reflections, or conversation between voices, leads to the formation of a spirituality of the kingdom; enables the praxis of exercising the gift of discernment; the discovering of the resources of empowerment; and, ultimately, the becoming of the human beings and community that God intended (cf. Cameron, et al., 2010:119; Cochrane, et al., 1991:23).

Theological reflection in this study was influenced by two considerations: since there was no representation from the formal theological voice in the fieldwork research team, the normative voice of theology entered into the conversation during the final phases of analysis and theological reflection. The normative voice of theology was represented mainly through the literature[21] and discourse (within the discipline of practical theology). The second factor impacting on the nature of this conversation was the need for a 'female voice'. Despite the fact that gender is not a focus of this study, the reality of the sample groups (and community projects represented by them) is that it consisted almost 100% of females. Since the experiences of women regarding spirituality and reality differs from that of men, and African theology, although emphasising "the contextualisation of the Christian gospel within the African culture … has neglected African women's issues" (Phiri, 1997:68). Therefore, the inclusion of the voice of female theologians such as Isabel Phiri, Beverly Haddad, Mary Oduyoye, Madge Karecki, and Celia Kourie, is crucial. The remainder of the chapter sets out to depict the conversation between voices, leading to answering the questions: How then should it be? What forms ought religious praxis take in this particular social context? (cf. Osmer & Schweitzer, 2003:3).

However, the point of entry into and central to all this normative (theological and Scriptural) reflection – and, indeed, to the whole of this study – is the concept of spirituality. Next, more conceptual clarity will be given regarding the concept of spirituality, first in general, and then more specifically pertaining to Christian spirituality.

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[21] Mainly the work of Miroslav Volf (1996), David Bosch (1991; 2002), Henri Nouwen (2009), Klippies Kritzinger (2002), Madge Karecki (2005; 2009) and Bryant Myers (1999).

4.3   Spirituality as universal longing of the human heart

According to Frost and Hirsch (2003:97), spirituality essentially refers to the process of satisfying the universal "…yearning of the soul for spiritual wholeness". Furthermore, they assert, this yearning becomes more palpable when individuals are experiencing suffering, pain, trauma or severe challenges – in times like these they reach for 'spiritual answers' to sustain them and to make sense out of what is happening. It is often through a shared pilgrimage in this context of pain, struggles, doubt and the unknown that one comes to a "…place of encountering the Holy in the midst of the storm" (Frost & Hirsch, 2003:97).

Spirituality could also be described as the indefinable space, the timeless point in time where an individual becomes aware of the mystery of the Ultimate/Creator/God in his/her journey of the heart (cf. Nouwen, 2005:37, 49). In the introductory chapter to this study, spirituality was defined as a relationship with the supernatural or spiritual realm that provides meaning and a basis for personal and communal reflection, decisions, and action in response to the connection with "the breath of life" (Creator) (cf. Chapter 1, section 1.8.1; Ver Beek, 2000:32; Swinton, 2001:23). The relational aspect of spirituality seems to be a determining factor of human living and well-being. Having 'connected' with The Ultimate/Creator/God, the individual then attempts to grow more sensitive to self, to others and nonhuman creations (Kourie & Kretzschmar, 2000a:2).

Although spirituality and religion are not synonymous,[22] organised religion has been the dominant carrier for spirituality in the West (McKernan, 2005:4). One of the reasons for this is that deep discovery of truth, such as is required for spirituality, is difficult to come to on one's own. Or, in Holt's use of the well-known metaphor: "Like the blind person who touched one part of the elephant, one person's experience is too limited to discover reality [or truth]" (Holt, 1993:2–3).[23]

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[22] Hugen (2001:9) drawing on Spencer (1961) makes the distinction as follows: spirituality "includes those aspects of *individual feelings, aspirations and needs* which are concerned with [one's] effort to find a purpose and meaning in life experiences", whilst religion is "a *systematic body of beliefs* or practices or an organised *group of people* who believe in certain doctrines concerning the nature of the universe and of [human beings] in relation to the universe". Cf. also Chapter 1 section 1.8.1.

[23] Our own awareness is often limited in time and space, therefore engaging in conversation with past wisdom writers and practices, crossing intercontinental, intergenerational and intercultural borders, will greatly aid one in one's spiritual journey (Holt, 1993:3). Similarly, in Africa, religion "…continues to connect the divine and the human, through faith that is connected to life, to the body and to nature", says Brighenti (2008:519). Dispelling the "prejudiced and offensive" labelling of African belief as "animism", Brighenti (2008:519–20) says African religion is "…anchored in solid, ancient traditions unlike the new Western religious experience, which is eclectic and diffuse, an esoteric neo-paganism with no human values". And since the "mosaic of peoples in Africa" still adhere to the communal system founded in "the

Apart from providing access to wisdom literature[24] and a 'vehicle for the journey' in terms of support, community or fellow travellers, religion also provides us with examples of practices such as praying, meditation, worshipping and healing (cf. Holt, 1993:2–3; Kourie, 2000:23–24; Hugen, 2001:11). In addition, religion provides a basis for action – it spells out limitations and possibilities of relationships, setting the rules for what is right and wrong, what should be rewarded and what should be punished. In other words, it helps to regulate ordered societal existence (Kiernan, 1995a:15; Hugen, 2001:11). This could either promote spiritual growth – in the sense that it facilitates the individual's process towards 'ethical living', or it could prohibit spiritual growth – tying up the individual in strict rules and rituals. In other words – spirituality concerns more than experience and feelings, it directly influences the ways we also act.

Similarly, religion could set people apart: in order to belong, the socially shared rituals, doctrines and beliefs should be subscribed to. Those who do not conform, are pushed aside, thus promoting fanaticism, intolerance and prejudice (Hugen, 2001:11). Spirituality, on the other hand, could help bridge this divide as it brings a sense of connectedness, meaning, peace, consciousness, purpose and service – given that it is not dependent on or rooted in doctrine, culture, race or ethnicity, but in God. And since God is the Creator of all, in him we are all connected to one another (Derezotes, 2006:3).

Religion could be seen as the most important source of informing spirituality. In this regard, it is helpful to refer to Anderson's (2003:63–65) statement that "contemporary expressions of spirituality can be placed on a continuum with the human spirit as the source of spiritual experience at one end and traditional religious forms of spirituality at the

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wisdom of the oldest," (:20), which is more capable (than Western religions) in answering the issues concerning life, African religion inspires hope, founded in the solidarity and sharing (of African religion) as alternative to disconnection, consumerism and institutionalisation (of Western thinking).

[24] Wisdom literature refers to a genre of texts related in style and content from various cultures (mostly Ancient Near Eastern) seeking to provide guidelines to living a virtuous life or existential questions of human life. In a sense it can be seen as a "product of intellectual inquiry into life's deep-set mysteries" set to writing by the sages (Crenshaw, in Hesed we 'emet, 2010 online hesedweemet.wordpress.com. Accessed: 13/01/2013). According to James Crenshaw the essence of these wisdom books is answering the questions: *What is the character of this Being [God]? How should one response to innocent suffering? Does life have any ultimate meaning?* Some of the most famous examples of wisdom literature are found in the Bible, such as the Book of Job, Proverbs and Ecclesiastes. There is also a long history of wisdom literature in the Ancient Egyptian Literature (e.g. The Maxims of Ptahhotep, Loyalist Teachings) and in texts such as the Srimad-Bhagavatam – the ancient Sanskrit texts put into writing five thousand years ago by Srila Vyasadeva (the literary incarnation of God) – that touch upon all fields of human knowledge (cf. Trowbridge, 2007 online WisdomChronology.pdf. Accessed: 26/12/2012).

other".[25] According to McKernan (2005:40), other sources informing spirituality include, amongst others, the "mystical traditions from the East and West, shamanic traditions,[26] [and] aboriginal spiritual practices". For many South Africans spirituality thus is also to a large degree the mergence of indigenous religions and 'an African spirituality' with Christianity that determined the context for 'a South African Spirituality'.[27] In the context of this study and specifically as basis for theological reflection with regard to spirituality as related by the voice of the people and that of theology, it is necessary to now briefly look at *Christian* spirituality.

4.3.1   *Christian Spirituality: An understanding of the 'Spirit of God' as a transforming agent*

Describing Christian spirituality is no less of a challenge than trying to find a clear cut definition of spirituality in general. In a sense, says Eugene Peterson – scholar, writer and acclaimed professor on contemporary Christian spirituality – it is easier to explain what spirituality *is not*: Spirituality is not something 'special', a mystical "…becoming emotionally intimate with God," though it has an element of intimacy with God (Peterson, 2005a:19). Neither is spirituality "…a body of secret lore … has nothing to do with aptitude of temperament … is not primarily about you and me … [or] … personal power or enrichment. It is about God" (:19). Christian spirituality is the way we live with God. It entails following Jesus – precisely what Christians "…have been doing for two thousand years just by going to church and receiving the sacraments, being baptized, learning to pray and reading the Scriptures rightly" (Peterson, 2005b).

Christian spirituality could be perceived from an array of vantage points, as suggested by Anderson (2003:65), locating spirituality on a "continuum of being human,

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[25] New forms of spirituality with the human spirit as source are emerging on a large scale from "the void of secularism and humanism" – often promoting a form of spirituality not orientated towards a divine spirit with a name, but an extension of one's own spirit (Kaplan in Anderson, 2003:65). At the other end of the continuum are the traditional forms of spirituality, "often based on the pietistic forms of the classic *imitatio Christi* model" (Anderson, 2003:63). This requires "emptying of the self" of human inclinations and being filled with "the divine impulses of a Christ-like motivation", such as seen in the writings of Thomas à Kempis, Ignatius of Loyola and Thomas Merton (Anderson, 2003:64). There is, however, no consensus that this kind of spirituality represents 'Christian spirituality'. According to Anderson (2003:64), Karl Barth, for example, questioned the notion of "self-emptying", saying that there is nothing to justify that this is the way to reconciliation with God.

[26] *Shamanism* refers to a religion of Siberian tribes involving belief in secondary gods and in power of shamans or priests to influence these (Fowler & Fowler, 1964:1168).

[27] Cf. Chapter 5, section 5.3.2: Discussion of the historical 'path' of Christianity in South Africa, seeking to indicate how the merger of two divergent spiritualities created a very distinct backdrop for people and community development in South Africa.

as created and determined by the God of the Judeo-Christian tradition" – acknowledging that we were created in the image of God and inspired by the Divine Spirit. This view calls for an understanding of humans as spiritual beings in the whole of their body/soul existence, or, according to Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, "spiritual beings having a human experience" (in Anderson, 2003:66). Recognising that human beings have been created as "…the dust of the earth and the vitalizing breath of God", Christian spirituality blends the material and spiritual (cf. Richards, 1987:241; Fretheim, 2005:95). Thus Christian spirituality calls for unification of the spiritual and material worlds – both a reunion and experience with God and living a complete human life (Richards, 1987:243). Spirituality is not either or, but inclusive: it is both material *and* immaterial; interior *and* exterior; and both invisible *and* visible (cf. Peterson, 2005a:30).

It is this paradoxical nature of spirituality that causes Peterson (2005b) to caution against a spirituality that is seen to meet our needs. What is at play is both a sense of reverence, a certain mystery – more than just emotions and needs – a transcendental presence; and a sense of being rooted and grounded in local conditions. Therefore, being spiritual does not mean retreat from this world or to contemplate in isolation, but rather to be actively involved in every dimension of this world (Brown, 1984:399; Bosch, 2001:13). Rather than "fleeing from the city",[28] spirituality entails "being sent by God to the heart of the city and its turmoil" (Bosch 2001:13). The list of factors contributing to this turmoil that needs to be confronted on a spiritual level is, in itself, scary – more so for communities in Africa and especially for women (cf. Haddad, 1998:11; Phiri, 1997:11–13; Brighenti, 2008:514–518). Ndungane (2003:36) identifies globalisation as one of the key contributing forces. He argues that the incumbent inequality is imposed not by lack of resources, but as direct result of people's decisions, therewith leading to a reality where "there are so many destitute people amidst plenty". Miroslav Volf (1996:18) identifies human rights, economic justice, ecological well-being and identity and otherness as the key issues to be redressed.[29] The down to earth reality (of spirituality) is that we as a

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[28] Bosch refers to Jonah 1:1–3.

[29] In a sense the first three are 'misleading' issues – almost like symptoms – where-as the true issue lies deeper: identity and otherness need to be included and all four 'issues' should be viewed in relationship to on another. Identity and otherness, Volf says, leads to the so called 'hot wars': violence between rivalling ethnic, religious and language groups sharing the same territory. Therefore, identity and otherness should be placed – alongside with rights, justice and ecological well-being – at the centre of theological reflection on social realities (Volf, 1996:15–18). And the understanding of conceptualisation of identity and otherness is only possible in the spirituality of the cross (see section 4.3.2). Indeed, says Volf, "a genuinely Christian

community of men, women and children – created in the image of God – are called to, amidst all the turmoil, enter into a communal life of love:

> …an empathically *personal* life where [we] experience [our]selves in personal terms of love and forgiveness, of hope and desire. Under the image of the Trinity we discover that we do not know God by defining him, but by being loved by him and loving in return … [and by discovering] … that another does not know me, nor do I know another, by defining or explaining, by categorizing of by psychologizing, but only relationally, by accepting and loving, by giving and receiving (Peterson, 2005a:7).

Indeed, Christian spirituality, being the opposite of 'me wanting to get more out of life and the other and from God', is about loving and accepting the other, about giving and receiving, about accepting and being valued, and a sense of sacrifice. Above all, it is about following Jesus to the cross: involving death and the giving up our lives, and accepting that our destination is "a life lived to the glory of God" (Peterson, 2005a:1; Peterson, 2005b). Referring to the Gospel of Mark as directive for living Christian spirituality, Peterson states that in Mark we are first directed on *how to live* life, and then (in the second half of Mark's Gospel) we are directed *how to die*. We are shown how, in particular, says Peterson, this process of 'living learning to die' we loose all our illusions, and slowly become capable of true intimacy and love. Strangely, this life involves a kind of passivity as it is not about ends or benefits or things, but about *how* you live in reality: "[O]ur primary mode of relationship [then] is receiving, submitting, instead of giving and getting and doing" Peterson (2005b).

According to South African theologian Celia Kourie (2000:12), as "the lived experience of Christian belief," Christian spirituality is distinguished from secular spirituality by a number of characteristics: First, it acknowledges the relationship with God as Creator – as basis for all human relationships. Second, a life lived in relationship (defined by the human-Creator relationship) with other human beings and the rest of the creation, since "[t]o see the image of the Creator in each created human being is to have a perspective from which we live among other human beings" (Richards, 1987:13). Third, Christian spirituality is steeped in Holy Scripture: it is connected to God's revelation of

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reflection on social issues must be rooted in the self-giving love of the Trinity as manifested on the cross of Christ", similar to Paul's proclamation, "to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified" (1 Corinthians 2:2) (Volf, 1996:25).

himself and his work in Holy Scripture;[30] and to the rich understandings and practices of our ancestors. Indeed, Christian spirituality insists that ordinary men and women are capable of living these revelations in their homes and workplaces (Peterson, 2005a:5). Fourth, Christian spirituality is Christ-centered, informed by Jesus Christ's life, death and resurrection (cf. Brown, 1984:399; Chapter 1, section 1.8.1). Finally, Christian spirituality refers to practicing spirituality the way Jesus did – always personal and relational (Peterson, 2005b).

Jesus' spirituality is centered on the cross, the cross being "…at once, for Christians, the ultimate statement of humankind's movement away from God and of God's gracious movement towards fallen humankind" (Hall, 2006:4). It symbolises God's abiding love for the world and all its creatures, as will be illustrated in the discussion on the spirituality of the cross.

4.3.2   Spirituality of the Cross: Informed by the risen Christ

A spirituality focused on Christ – centred on the Incarnate Word of God – implies a turn to Christ's testimony: to witness how He lived his human life in union with God, in the words of Richards (1987:243) "…united fully in his actions and in his person in the spiritual and material realms". According to Cochrane, et al. (1991:77), Jesus' prayer in Matthew 6:10 *"Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven"* can be seen as the heart of a spirituality focused on the coming of the kingdom through the death and resurrection of Christ. The followers of a Christ-centred spirituality are called on by Christ to enter both

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[30] Peterson (2005a:5–6) emphasises that Christian spirituality begins in theology and is guided by it. Both these concepts are essential in the Christian spirituality equation: *theology* is "the attention … [and] … the effort we give to knowing God as revealed in the Holy Scriptures and in Jesus Christ". "*Spiritual* is the insistence that everything that God reveals of himself and his works is capable of being lived…" (:5). Spiritual "…keeps 'theology' from degenerating into merely thinking and talking and writing about God at a distance" (:5). Therefore, what Peterson calls, *spiritual theology* is the attention given to lived theology, a "…thoughtful and obedient cultivation of life as workshop on our knees before God the Father, of life as sacrifice on our feet following God the Son, and of life as love embracing and being embraced by the community of God the Spirit" (:5–6). Peterson (:13–19) sets out to illustrate how spirituality is informed by the Scriptures – e.g. the stories of Nicodemus (John 3) and the Samaritan woman (John 4) uncovering how in both stories 'Spirit' refers primarily to God, with Jesus as the primary figure working at the center, giving energy (:18–19); "formative work of the Spirit in the world we find ourselves in: Genesis 1:1–3 (God breathing over the waters at creation), Mark 1:9–11 (God breathing life into Jesus at his baptism), and Acts 2:1–4 (God breathing his Spirit into believers to create the holy community, the church)" – so as to confirm the prominent place of God's living presence at work among us and, in a sense, provide the 'ground text' for Christian Spirituality (:20). Seen as a tripod, these three texts ground "every aspect of life – creation, salvation, community – in the living (breathing) God" (:26) and demonstrate how Word and Spirit are organically connected in the Christian spirituality grounded in God's Word (Scripture) and in God's Spirit as the main action (:26).

in relationship with God *and* the world. They are to enter the kingdom of God and live by the reign of God: the reign of love toward God, toward people and toward all of creation (cf. Cochrane, et al., 1991:77). Such a spirituality entails being 'enlightened' and alive in God,[31] in communion with Him and 'the other' on a true personal level in this present moment of history (Richards, 1987:14). Indeed, an inclusive or holistic and concerned (with the other) spirituality, is "the only authentic way that positive change will come to a world torn apart by suffering and poverty" (Kourie, 2000:13). Authentic, since it is informed by the incarnation, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ as the personification of God's love, and lived according to 'kingdom rules' (cf. Kourie, 2000:14; Cochrane, et al., 1991:77; Bosch, 2000:14).

> The cross is, in one sense, a sign of total identification with the world: Jesus was never more worldly than on the cross. In another sense it is a sign of radical separation from the world: Jesus never stood over against the world more clearly than here (Bosch, 2000:15–16).

The death on the cross and resurrection of Christ embodies both the utter weakness and ultimate power, giving rise to a non-aggressive spirituality realised in love, patience, truth, weakness, service and modesty and respect[32] (Bosch, 2000:33) and a life informed and guided by the Holy Spirit – giving us 'a glimpse' of what God has prepared for us (Anderson, 2001:105). More so, if we, as Luther did, understand that the cross of Christ is not only the cross of Jesus, but also the cross of "the crucified God" (Hall, 2005:3). Hall, referring to Jon Sobrino, explains:

> Our theology of the cross becomes radical only when we consider the presence (or absence) of God on the cross of Jesus. It is at this point that we face the alternative posed by Moltmann: Either the cross of Jesus is the end of all Christian theo-logy [by which he means the end of speculation concerning the being and acting of God] or else it is the beginning of a truly Christian theology (Hall, 2005:4).

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[31] Richards refers to Hebrews 6:4–5: "It is impossible for those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared the Holy Spirit, who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age…".

[32] Bosch (2000:33) referring to 2 Corinthians 1:1–14 (emphasising putting our trust in God as source of all our comfort even amidst suffering so that we can comfort others) and 2 Corinthians 11:16–31 (focussing on Paul as 'suffering servant' who has been exposed to death, flogging, all manner of hardships, danger, hunger and therefore can boast in his weakness that opens the way for him to experience the strength of God's grace – and share that with others). In Bosch's (2000:12–13) view these texts are "…the best case study in missionary spirituality that has ever been published".

A life lived according to the spirituality of the cross is modest and tolerant – it does not claim the absoluteness of the Christian religion, but proclaims the love of Jesus Christ[33] – and therefore grips the heart of people (cf. Bosch, 2000:37 in reference to Acts 4:10–12[34]). It is the very 'humanness' of Christ who heals *and* suffers on the cross that resonates within the deepest recesses of our humanity: "Without the cross, Jesus becomes an idol whom we can comprehend, predict, and domesticate, but a Jesus who could be mocked, spat on, and stripped, is different" (Bosch 2000:38). Stripped of all pretence, a spirituality of the cross requires us to trust in God even when He does not answer; even when He forsakes – as exemplified by Jesus and Jeremiah.[35]

Clearly, as has been illustrated in the story of Jonah,[36] a spirituality of the cross cannot be defined as something isolated from the rest of our existence: the relationship with Christ and the involvement with the world are reciprocal and, as the one deepens, so will the other (cf. Bosch, 2000:13). Furthermore, steering away from an answer-theology to a relationship-theology (Bosch, 2000:35), the spirituality of the cross enables us to live a life in union with God;[37] to keep physical needs and material possessions in perspective; to turn away from the human-success thinking (:35); and to understand our role with regard to justice, stewardship, compassion and servanthood. Living thus informed, people are enabled "to live as credible witnesses of God's kingdom in the context of a challenging and, often, broken world" (Kourie & Kretzschmar, 2000a:4). Regarding this study, statements made during the retreats[38] exemplifies how people who, having made a choice

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[33] Bosch (2000:14) reiterates the importance of heeding the explicit scriptural teaching of Matthew 22:37–40: "Love the Lord God with all hour heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbour as your self" to emphasise that God should not be glorified at the expense of man – rather, love for the other is at the heart of the spirituality of the cross (and of missions).

[34] Acts 4:10–12: "It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stand before you healed …Salvation is found in no-one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved."

[35] Bosch refers to Ps 22:1: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?" and Mark 15:34: "...Jesus cried out in a loud voice, '*Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?*'…" and Jeremiah 20:7–9, 14, 18: "Why did I ever come out of the womb to see trouble and sorrow and to end my days in shame?"

[36] Cf. footnote 28 (on Jonah).

[37] John 17:18, 22–23: "As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world" … "I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: I in them and you in me."

[38] The most eloquent expressions where brought forward during the *Spiritual Map*-exercise when participants were invited to use words and pictures in a portrayal of what (e.g. people, experiences of symbols) has sustained them through life. It was interesting that, though the selection of the sample group members did not require any religious affiliation or practices, all participants displayed at least one (and in

for Christ, live as witnesses of God's kingdom – in precisely such dire, difficult and often painful circumstances:

▸ *Even though one starts off in the shade or in a shack, God's grace lets one grow and 'become green' [flourish].*

▸ *I have journeyed far and saw many places and experienced many things – some good, but others bad. I were 'closed' [shut off], but God opened me up and today I am a green, open field.*

▸ *These two people walking down the road, are me and God, walking the road together.*

▸ Picture of kneeling people*: God expects of me to be humble. If I am devastated by the onslaughts of life, God once more raises me up.*

In contemplating a spirituality of the cross, it is helpful to consider Canadian theologian, Douglas John Hall's theology of the cross,[39] steeped in the tradition particularly of Paul, but "behind that the tradition of the Hebraic prophets and poets who understood the highest consciousness of Hebrew faith to consist in the awareness of the 'pathos of God'" (Hall, 2006:1). Hall, referring to German theologian, Jűrgen Moltmann, describes the theology of the cross as "not … a specific and objectifiable set of teachings or dogmas; not 'a theology' – it is, rather, a spirit and a method that one brings to all one's reflections on all the various areas and facets of Christian faith and life" (Hall, 2006:2). According to Hall, the theology of the cross, although relevant in the context of today, is not a popular theology – it has some support but "it was never much loved" (Hall, 2006:2).

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some cases, all) symbol(s) or sentence(s) linking what has helped them through life, with God (cf. Chapter 3, section 3.4.5.8; Appendix A5).

[39] According to Hall (2006:6) the theology of the cross is a contextual theology for the following reasons: "(1) A conception of God alone having compassion for, and desiring solidarity with the creature would be an empty sentiment unless 'the creatures' for whom such love is intended were seen in all their particularity – which only represents, in fact, a return to the tradition of Jerusalem, with *its* historical consciousness, and away from the kind of abstractionism belonging to that side of the tradition of Athens that loves universals at the expense of particulars. (2) To speak of the cross of Christ in terms of God's world-orientation and commitment could only be an empty claim if 'the world' remains at the level of an intellectual construct and does not become explicit. The world: that God loves is not a construct but a reality, constantly influx, rich in variety, old in sin but redolent of potentiality. Love itself, whether divine or human, is never love for generalities but for specifics; and it becomes an absurdity and a pretense if it indulges in generalities that defy specificity – which unfortunately happens all too often in religion (*I love the world; it's only these wretched people I can't stand*). (3) A theology that is committed to truth-telling, realism about evil, modesty about itself can only be a contextual theology."

The 'unpopularity' of the theology of the cross may be ascribed to the fact that conceding to the cross as a key signature of all Christian theology requires a consideration of Christ's suffering and, according to Volf, Christ's suffering on the cross exemplifies "…the sufferings of the poor and weak, which Jesus shared in his own body and in his own soul, in solidarity with them" (Volf, 1996:23).[40] On the cross, Christ identifies God with the victims of violence and the victims of violence with God (Volf, 1996:23). This theme of solidarity is supplemented by the theme of atonement for perpetrators.[41] God's love is there – on the cross – also for the sinners, the enemies. Christ's self-giving draws all to him and through him, into eternal life. Therefore a genuinely Christian reflection on social issues can only take place from the perspective of God's self-giving love – as manifested on the cross of Christ (Volf, 1992:5). The cross then, is a signal or statement of God's commitment to and redemptive love for the world and all of creation. Hall (2006:4) puts it as follows:

> I think of the cross of Golgotha as the divine determination to *claim* this world, however wretched its history and however costly its redemption. "I will be *your* God and you will be *my* people!"[42] Against the clear tendency of the creature to degrade itself and abuse its environs, God in Christ reinstates the divine ownership of creation.

Hall (2006:4) quotes Dietrich Bonheoffer, who sees the claim of the cross (made by Paul and in the gospels) as one of sending the redeemed person back into life on earth in a wholly new way:[43]

> The Christian, unlike the devotees of the redemption myths, has no last line of escape available from earthly tasks and difficulties into the eternal, but, like Christ himself … he must

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[40] Hall (2006:6) states that when John wanted to "state in a sentence the whole intention of God in the Christ, he wrote, 'For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life' [John 3:16], emphasizing His divine love and care for the poor and the suffering and *all* of humankind."

[41] During the retreat session on grieving, loss and relationships, a recurring theme was the necessity of having to forgive those who wronged you, e.g. "*Forgiveness enables one to work through things one does not want to face." "If someone has wronged me – how can I forget? I can do 'lip service' – but it (the unforgiveness) still remains with you. It is like a hymn – people say it but they do not mean it. 'To forgive' is in the Bible: it is when you ask God to help you to forgive the person that has wronged you. Forgiveness goes hand and hand with love and peace"* (cf. FH1 & FH2 retreat workbooks).

[42] Hall refers here to Leviticus 26:12 and 2 Corinthians 6:16: "I will walk among you and be your God, and you will be my people."

[43] Cf. statement made during the session on forgiveness at the retreat: *"If he comes back, I will forgive him – the old things are gone –I am a new person."*

drink the earthly cup to the dregs, and only in his doing so is the crucified and risen Lord with him, and he crucified and risen with Christ.

Still, the cross leads to hope, to be found not in the death on the cross, but in "…God's concealed presence and determination to mend the creation from within" (Hall, 2006:5). Luther (in Hall, 2006:7) describes the life of a Christian 'in the now' as follows:

Christian living does not mean to *be* good but to *become* good; not to *be* well, but to *get* well; not *being* but *becoming*; not *rest* but *training*. We are *not yet*, but we *shall be*. It has *not yet* happened, but it *is* the way. Not everything shines and sparkles as yet, but everything *is getting* better.

Living thus after the victory of God in the risen Christ, we live in hope and not fulfillment, "…between cross and resurrection" – in solidarity with all those who are suffering, but facing towards the cross, "face to face with the glory of the coming God" (Hall, 2006:7). Eugene Peterson (2005a:137) draws a parallel between Jesus' birth – as "…entrance into the reality and meaning of creation … something to be lived, not just looked at", and his death – as entrance into the reality and responsibilities of "the mess of history" in which we find ourselves. What is remarkable is that Jesus embraced this mess, an embrace that involved enormous suffering, shedding of tears for those who are suffering in this world[44] and, ultimately, an excruciating death (Peterson, 2005a:137–138). Amazingly, although the story of Jesus' life is neither a happy nor a success story, it is hope-giving, as it is the story of salvation. Thus the hope instilled by the cross, is a hope of faith "…an orientation to the future", yet also a hope embracing despair, "…a recognition that the present is still lacking its promised fulfillment" (Hall, 2006:8). Therefore it is

...always "hope against hope" (Rom 4:18). As faith must live with doubt, so hope must live with its antithesis, hopelessness, despair. What is hoped for must not be taken for granted, as though it were already experienced reality, already 'seen' – for here too Paul resorts to the metaphor of sight: *"For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience"* (Rom 8:24–25) (Hall, 2006:8).

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[44] Peterson (2005a:138) refers to Luke 19:28–44 and Matthew 23:37–39 when Jesus, as he was surrounded with the Hosannas and the palm branches entering Jerusalem during the Passover parade, "…wept for the suffering of body and the pain of soul in store for these men and women and children who were having such an innocent good time".

In essence a spirituality of the cross is a spirituality hope and grace through suffering and death. It is standing at the cross that we are beginning to learn to deal with the wrongs of this world, beginning where the gospel does: "Jesus dead and buried" (Peterson, 2005a:142).[45] The spirituality of the cross opens the eyes of our heart to a God who has humbled himself,[46] who has showed us his heart for humanity and his creation: a heart of love and not power.[47]

4.3.3   Spirituality of Weakness/ Powerlessness

As has been mentioned before, Christian spirituality is distinguishable by a number of characteristics.[48] Whereas the foregoing discussion of a spirituality of the cross served to articulate Christian spirituality as informed by the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the discussion on the spirituality of weakness and powerlessness explicates Christian spirituality as lived in relationship with other human beings and the rest of creation.

Evidently the spirituality of the cross shares some crucial elements, such as Christ's humbling of himself, with a so-called 'spirituality of weakness'. According to the renowned Dutch-born Roman Catholic theologian and spiritual writer, Henri Nouwen (2006:22), the path of power is really about the 'theology of weakness' – a God that weeps for a world entrapped and corrupted by the lust of power.[49] God's response to the dividedness of his

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[45] Peterson (2005a:143) reminds that Scripture is full of the "suffering and death language", setting out our sufferings in the context of Christ's sufferings and placing Christ's sufferings alongside ours, referring to 1 Peter 2:21: "Christ also suffered for you, leaving you and example, so that you should follow in his steps;" and Philippians 3:10: "I want to know Christ and … [share] his sufferings by becoming like him in his death."

[46] To emphasise Christ's love as demonstrated on the cross and which his followers are required to strive for, Hall refers to 1 Corinthians 13:5: "Love does not insist on its own way".

[47] Cf. statements on having received God's light made during the retreat: *Even when I am in my own 'darkness" I may light a candle as my symbol of God's light." "We bring the light we have discovered here [at the retreat] to people who are hurting in the community."*

[48] Cf. last paragraph in section 4.3.1 referring to the characteristics which distinguish Christian spirituality from secular spirituality: Christian spirituality 1) acknowledges the relationship with God as Creator – as basis for all human relationships; 2) is a life lived in relationship (defined by the human-Creator relationship) with other human beings and the rest of the creation; 3) is steeped in Holy Scripture – is connected to God's revelation of himself and his work in Holy Scripture; 4) is Christ-centered, informed by Jesus Christ's life, death and resurrection.

[49] Here a distinction between Nouwen (2006:22) use of 'powerlessness' as the lived experience of Christ and a practitioner like Bryant Myers (1999), who, although currently professor of transformational development at Fuller Theological Seminary, has extensive experience of community development and transformation in numerous diverse 'poorest of the poor' communities as World Vision practitioner. In his discussion on the 'powerlessness of the poor', Myers builds on, amongst others, the work of Chambers – "clusters of disadvantage" (:61–77); Friedman – "lack of access to social power" (:69–71); Jayakumar Christian – "psychological, social, spiritual/religious and a cultural systems" (:73); and Wink – the concept

creation living in resentment, revenge, competition, violence, fear, alienation and brokenness, divided by urge for power, was to, rather than keep looking at the human condition from above, 'come down from above' in solidarity. Spirituality of weakness, is a communal spirituality, says Gutiérrez, involving solidarity among all people as they engage in struggle – not political struggle, but the struggle of being human as seen in the psalms, the prophets and the gospels (in Brown, 1984:400), and as exemplified by Christ's self-emptying spirituality as he humbled himself on the cross (Banawiratma, 2005:81–82).[50] Following the kenotic spirituality of Christ, his followers are 'invited' to share the suffering, to become powerless and to humble themselves so as to be transformed in their personal and social lives, partaking in spirituality as a "community enterprise … is a well from which we must drink" (Gutiérrez in Brown, 1984:403).[51] The transformative power of suffering and 'powerlessness' is illustrated by an anecdote shared by a participant during the 'external' group's follow-up session. She shared how she invited the women in her project to open with prayer and singing.[52] This was their song:

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of being "entrapped in a web of lies" by clinging to a self-deceptive, self-justifying inner reality or interpretation of life, relating to their captivity and inability, reinforcing their powerlessness (74–75). The culmination of these varied elements to powerlessness, is this: "Poverty is the world telling the poor that they are god-forsaken" (:79), which in turn 'allows' the children of the poor to grow up in circumstances that mimics this 'truth' – no loving parents, no-one to take responsibility for them or who teaches them what shared joy, pain, happiness is. Rather, they grow up experiencing deviance, delinquency and criminality all around them – 'setting up' an environment prone to even greater powerlessness (:79). (Cf. also Chapter 5, section 5.4, also looking at poverty.)

[50] It is noteworthy that Gutiérrez, the so-called 'father of Latin-American liberation theology', admits that spirituality was from the start a fundamental element of liberation theology (Gutiérrez, 1984:136, 203–208).

[51] Cf. Gutiérrez (1974:66): "In these concrete conditions the process of conversions occurs, the nodal point of all spirituality. Conversion means going out of oneself, being open to God and others; it implies a break, but above all it means following a new path. For that very reason, it is not an inward-looking, private attitude, but a process which occurs in the socio-economic, political and cultural medium in which life goes on, and which is to be transformed. The encounter with Christ in the poor man [sic] constitutes an authentic, spiritual experience. It is a living in the Spirit, the bond of love between Father and Son, God and man, man and man [sic]. Christians … try to live this kind of profound community. They find the love of Christ in their encounter with the poor and in solidarity with them: they find faith in our situation as sons [sic] of the Father working for a society of brothers [sic]: and they find hope in the salvation of Christ, in commitment to the liberation of the oppressed."

[52] During the final evaluation session (October 2008) Eldah Mbatha – a development worker at Christian Social Service, Durban – gave this background regarding the mothers of Shongweni Dam village, situated 15 km outside Pinetown on the N3 free way to Pietermaritzburg: This women's group consist mostly of foster mothers for those children who have lost their biological parents, but also include mothers of abused, neglected and abandoned children. These women were found to be "…pillars of broken homes because so many children of our younger generation, are been left without parents largely due to HIV/AIDS and

We are the women
We are the mothers
Our bodies are strong from hard work
Our hearts are big from suffering.

The women's song gave an indication of the spiritual resources within the community – they saw suffering as something that literally enlarged their hearts – their capacity to reach out to others. It yet again confirmed the initial observation that spirituality is a highly regarded commodity for people in the community context. Ndungane (2003:33) shares a similar experience where he was confronted with unexpected hope:

> During these hearings [1998 National Poverty Hearings (SA)] I came into contact with a people of hope and of dignity. Listening to people's stories of survival amidst squalor and deprivation gave me as sense of the resilience of the human spirit. They spoke with the same voice. "We do not want handouts. We do not want charity. We have brains. We have hands. So give us the skills; give us the resources; give us the capacity to work out our own existence in order that we might have dignity, that we may be fully human" (Ndungane, 2003:33).

Witnessing these examples of hope and power amidst hopelessness and weakness, is to witness God's response to his sadness and anger on seeing the 'entrappedness' of the creation. He chose to disarm the power of evil through powerlessness – Gods' own powerlessness – by choosing to enter the world and human history in the all-embracing mercy of complete weakness – as Jesus, "a man whose life was wrapped in weakness". (Nouwen, 2006:7):

> Jesus on the cross, flesh torn apart, heart broken, rejected by friends, abused by enemies, mind tormented by anguish, spirit shrouded in the darkness of abandonment – total weakness, total powerlessness (Nouwen, 2006:28–29).

It is exactly this weakness, which opened the way to the heart of God and his all-embracing love – that broke through the walls of power. God, instead of being powerful and distant, entered the world as a baby, completely dependent on human beings "to grow up and live among us and proclaim the good news" (cf. Nouwen, 2006:26–28). In

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related diseases. They have unique talents in which they display their love, nurturing skills and caring at heart for the vulnerable children."

the beatitudes,[53] says Nouwen, Jesus gave a 'self portrait' – depicting gentleness, one who cares for the little ones, one who mourns with those who mourn, one who does not hesitate to criticise injustice and defend the poor, hungry and the dying. One who does not call for revenge, but heals and one who stays focused as peacemaker on the reconciliation of people. And finally, one who, well knowing that he will suffer from rejections and abandonment, does not seek success and popularity (Nouwen, 2006:30–31). It is this spirituality of powerlessness that Jesus constantly reminded his followers of with these words: "Your foolish people, is it not necessary to suffer and so enter into glory?"[54] (Nouwen, 2006:31).

Nouwen warns that this spirituality of powerlessness should not be seen as being weak, soft, subservient and passive – it claims its power in God's all-transforming love.[55] In Mark 9:1 Jesus speaks about God's (and his own) power: *"Truly I say to you, That there are some of them that stand here, which shall not taste death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power"* (Matthew 16:28 in Nouwen, 2006:35). "Power is claimed", says Nouwen, and "power is given" – God has empowered people through the powerless Jesus, to go and, with the same authority, tell others.[56] It is this power[57] that enables people to – when defending the rights and human dignity of others and when lobbying for just and fair policies – be "gentle as doves" with each other, but also "as clever as serpents"[58] in dealing with those in power (cf. Nouwen, 2006:36). However, it requires courage to let go of the 'image of one's own power'. Bosch (2000:52–53) likens it to "taking off one's mask" – to quit pretending and being an 'impostor' by getting out from behind the mask, by being who you really are, and by admitting the truth about oneself.

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[53] Matthew 5:1–11.

[54] Luke 24:26 (KJV 2000):"Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?"

[55] Cf. Chapter 3, section 3.4.5.9: In reflection on the retreat process – which focussed (in a sense) on guiding participants to deal with their own 'powerlessness' – one group's feedback reflects the all-transforming power of God's love: *"Here at the retreat, we went through a process of digging into our pasts. We confronted hurt, pain, and bad things that happened to us. We shared our stories. It was painful at times – we cried a lot. Now we are healed – our eyes are cleared and we can see the light. This is what we want to do in the community – help them to go through the same process so that they can see clearly."*

[56] Matthew, 28:18–19 (KJV 2000): "All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore, make disciples of all nations."

[57] Barnes comments that, although as the Son of God and as Creator, Jesus Christ had "…original right to all things, to control them and dispose of them. … [t]he universe is put under him more particularly as Mediator, that he might redeem his people … defend his chosen … and bring them off conquerors and more than conquerors." (Barnes' Notes on the Bible accessed online http://bible.cc/matthew/28–18.htm).

[58] Nouwen is here referring to Matthew 10:16: "I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves."

Like Paul, in 2 Corinthians 12:9, who was able to share his weakness/vulnerability, it is when one is willing to be congruent to who one really is (in one's total powerlessness), that the power of Christ comes through, "…enabling us to take [the mask] off and to be the way God created us … [and to] … look at the 'real me' inside – only then can we work on change from the inside. If we do not do this, people are suppressing their feelings and living a 'false' life, even to the degree that 'one's soul is broken'" (Bosch, 2000:53).

Bosch refers to Paul's second letter to the Corinthians as guiding the understanding of powerlessness or the courage to be weak – the most important characteristics being that of service, suffering weakness and affliction (Bosch, 2000:75). Following in Christ's example, Paul emphasised fragility and weakness – being vulnerable and totally dependent on God in this weakness, as "…only broken men [sic] can lead others to the cross" (:77).[59] Paul – as Jesus did – accepted the paradox of power and weakness, life and death, the humiliation and suffering of the cross and heavenly glory (:79). A final portrayal of this total weakness is the defencelessness with which Jesus hung on the cross: His hands were neither open (like the hand of the Buddha), nor closed or clenched (like Lenin's); they were defenceless, and pierced through. It is on this defencelessness, affliction and self-denial that, according to Bosch, Paul centred his message – and on which we are invited to focus in our work with others (:81).

There is however, one more aspect of a spirituality of weakness or powerlessness, we dare not overlook (and which leads one directly to the next formulation/understanding of Christian spirituality described in 4.3.4 below): that of seeing the human face of poverty. Ndungane (2003:20) – who can relate to this question from his background as one of those who lived through 'forced-upon' powerlessness during South Africa's apartheid regime – heeds the irrefutable need to truly see "the human face of poverty". There is more to poverty than meets the eye: Poverty is not just about low incomes; it includes loss of human dignity and of freedoms; it is about suffering, being treated as nothing, and basic needs not being met; it is also about the denial of access to opportunities for advancement and about being affected by diseases;[60] it is about the "retardation of

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[59] Cf. feedback (given during a FH1 capacity building session) regarding how to work in the community – almost 'faceless' or 'behind the scene': *"Going into the community [we] carry 'God's light' [referring to the candle]. The candle is the symbol of silence – it burns without 'making a noise'. We should work like that in the community – with 'no noise', without being seen, silent – only when you leave, people will notice that you are no longer there."*

[60]Ndungane (2003:36–37) states that (lethal) diseases are far more frequently affecting the poor, e.g. one out of five school girls is HIV positive; women are five to six times more likely to contract HIV/AIDS)

knowledge" and inequality brought about by uneven distribution; and about excluding people from sharing "in the increasing wealth of technological information" (cf. Ndungane, 2003:20, 40, 54).

These treacherous tentacles of poverty reach into the depths of those living 'in poverty' with fearful consequences there to see – if we dare look – "in the faces of women, children, people with disabilities, the vulnerable, the elderly, migrants and refugees" (Ndungane, 2003:40). Therefore, dealing with the powerlessness of poverty is not primarily about the money – it is about how we see and treat others; about respecting their humanity, their dignity, their rights and, above all, about the spaces we create for relationships with and amongst people living in poverty. It becomes a major spiritual issue, to be reflected upon from the perspective that before God, each person is valued, equal and loved;[61] it is accepting that "[b]read for myself is a material matter, but bread for my neighbour is a spiritual matter" (cf. Ndungane, 2003:41; Bosch, 1991:437).

It is also the acceptance of and humility to know that we need each other and have God's all-encompassing power of love, which opens the eyes and ears of the heart, so as to listen to the voices 'from below', saying: "*These sessions made a more mature person out of me. I have learned to understand others better, to work with others and to solve problems. I have begun to contribute something to the community and to my own life – my life has become meaningful.*"[62]

4.3.4 *Spirituality from below: The 'voice of the people'*

In formulating a 'spirituality from below', one link with the 'spirituality of powerlessness' is to be found in the paradox of 'being strong in one's weakness'. A similar paradox is reflected in the perceptions of 'the poor' held by the non-poor. A cursory review of the definition of *ptôchos* or 'poor' reveals that even in the earliest references to the poor,

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due to lack power to insist on contraceptives; being raped and abused. These women and girls also have limited access to health care. Furthermore, global science is still directed by rich countries for their own markets, being advised that it is "…too uneconomic to produce vaccine".

[61] Cf. Gutiérrez (1994:88–89), who coined the now famous expression of the 'preferential option for the poor': "The preferential option for the poor is much more than a way of showing our concern about and the establishment of justice. Inevitably, at its very heart, it contains a spiritual … element, an experience of gratuitousness that gives it depth and fruitfulness. This is not to deny the social concern expressed in the solidarity, the rejection of injustice and oppression that it implies, but to see in the last resort it is anchored in our faith in the God of Jesus Christ…" .

[62] Sample group member during the final capacity building session, i.e. at the end of Cycle II of the field work.

there has been disparity between what God and Jesus relayed as the attitude which should be displayed, namely generosity and kindness (as seen in Deuteronomy 15:5 and Luke 12:33)[63] and the actual slightly degrading connotation given to the poor by the community. The poor are described as people who are reduced to beggary, or those who cringe, crouch and displays lowliness; those who are afflicted, worthless and strictly denounced from public space; those who are helpless and powerless to accomplish an end; and those who are destitute of the Christian values.[64] Yet, these same people are seen as fit for the kingdom of God: "men [sic] in this class most readily give themselves up to Christ's teaching and prove themselves fitted to lay hold of the heavenly treasure" (Strong, accessed online 12/2012; cf. Barker, et al., 1985:264). Similar attitudes abound in contemporary secular and faith communities, where on the one hand the poor is often romantized (cf. Myers, 1999:60, 95) and, on the other, seen to "…suffer[s] from a marred identity and a degraded vocation" (:115). Rather than disregarding these paradoxical views of and attitudes toward the poor, a spirituality from below should be especially sensitive with regard to letting 'the poor' speak for themselves (cf. Bosch, 1991:429).[65] It should accommodate the total spectrum of voices from below, giving them the space make their own voices heard – a colourful and diverse voice as has been reflected in the numerous examples given in the preceding chapters.

What is a spirituality from below? It is a spirituality brought alive in numerous statements by the community members (field study participants) depicting their spirituality/spiritual understanding of their lives, meeting life's challenges such as poverty and their understanding of "who am I and why am I here", based on their experience of God and their interpretation of the Bible.[66] Capturing this spirituality from below,

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[63] Deuteronomy 15:7–8: "If there is a poor man among your brothers in any of the towns of the land that the Lord your God is giving you, do not be hardhearted of tightfisted toward your poor brother. Rather be openhanded and freely lend him whatever he needs". Matthew 26:11: "The poor you will always have with you." Luke 12:33: "Sell your possessions and give to the poor."

[64] Cf. Myers (1999:87–88) reflecting on the view the poor have of themselves: "…the poor not knowing who they are or the reason for which they were created. When people believe they are less than human, without brains, strength and personhood to contribute to their own well-being or that of others, their understanding of who they are is marred … with marred identities and distorted vocations, the poor cannot play their proper relational role in the world…"

[65] Cf. Bosch's (1991:429) statement that those from below (the poor) should no longer be viewed merely as the objects of mission, but as the "agents and bearers" as emphasised in Gutiérrez's definition of liberation theology as "an expression of the right of the poor to think out their own faith".

[66] Cf. Myers (1999:115–116) referring to the work of Vinay Samuel on the importance of letting the community answer questions such as "Who am I?" and "What am I worth?" in order to restore their identity, dignity and recovering their vocation.

required 'crossing frontiers' and spending the time with and being open to hear them. Bosch argues that "[t]he church discovers her true nature only when she moves from one human world to another, when she crosses frontiers, whether these are geographical, cultural, ethnic, linguistic, or sociological" (Bosch, 2000:58). So should individuals/practitioners, as made abundantly clear in the ministry of Paul, who crossed the frontiers between Jews and Gentiles, and finally were able to "see the real heart of his message" (Bosch, 2000:59–60). In addition, it will also require interpretation of these statements, opinions, views and insights in the light of Scripture.[67]

'Crossing the divide' between rich and poor, entails moving from being in the position of having access to technology, education and structures of power and decision-making into the space of those who struggle to make their voice heard due to the lack of access. Stepping into the spirituality of the poor, is what is needed to come to a renewed understanding of God and his transformational relationship with his creation. While heeding the danger of 'romanticising' the poor, Cochrane, et al. (1991:80) state that the 'spirituality of the poor' may set the privileged free – liberating them from a spirituality of paternalism which had disenabled them from serving other. Or that, in the words of Volf (1996:114), "…the Kingdom of God [may] enter the world through the backdoor of servants' shacks, not through the main gate of the masters' mansions." A first such entrance is to be found in the African concept of *ubuntu*.

In the African indigenous churches, where by far the most members could be classified as being poor and powerless,[68] there is a strong notion that the 'spirituality of the poor' is

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[67] Isabel Phiri, in her article *Doing theology in the community* (1997:68–79), refers to the necessity of acknowledging the inter-relationship between Scripture, African traditional religions and the African culture as sources for theology on women's humanity. It could be argued that a similar approach should be followed in theologizing about a theology and eventually a spirituality of the poor: all elements (culture, traditional religion and Scriptures) should enter into the conversation.

[68] Poverty is certainly not the only focus of or reason for introducing a spiritual dimension in work with communities/community development. However, since the overwhelming majority of people who stand to benefit from community development do fall in the category of 'the poor', it stands to reason that 'poverty' does need to be addressed in this conversation – the people, theology, spirituality and development (cf. also previous footnote 49 on powerlessness). Bryant Myers (1999:57–62) urges us to "not forget that the poor are not an abstraction but rather a group of human beings who have names…", are made in God's image, are embedded in families, and are valued and loved. A crucial aspect of poverty is the issue of gender: Haddad (2001:5–19) – in an article addressing a gender analysis of poverty, survival and faith – emphasises that it is especially marginalised women who are affected by poverty, since (in South Africa) women were historically considered "backward members of society" – thus programming (development) were geared towards men (:7–8). In the late 1990s 41% of all African households were female-headed, yet they were exceedingly impeded by laws on land and inheritance (favouring men over women). Similarly, theologian Christina Landman (2008) – in a study of mainly poor women attending health services because of poor (mental) health – argues that women are particularly vulnerable in their intimate spaces, being exposed to

a spirituality of belonging – to God and to a living community. Therefore, 'a spirituality of the poor' becomes a spirituality of "a 'home place' in the midst of the world where all the pain and suffering which is so much at the root of the experience of the poor and the oppressed may be addressed, and a healing process may emerge" (Cochrane, et al., 1991:80). According to Ndungane (2003:40, 102) this 'spirituality of belonging' can, at least in part, be ascribed to the *ubuntu*-concept, the entrenchedness of self and the discovery of one's humanity in relationship with others: "*Thina ma Afrika singumzi wobuzalwana nobuhlobo ngokudalwa* (By nature we Africans are a family of friendship and relatedness)." Thus there is an obligation to uphold the dignity of the other by caring and living for each other according to a specific set of values: to act kindly towards others; be hospitable; be just and fair; be compassionate; assist those in distress; be trustworthy and honest; and to have good morals. The 'home place' provides the space to live according to these values, and uphold the dignity of one another. In the context of poverty (defined in terms of a shortage of money and material resources, but more so – because of a lack of choices, resources, accessibility, freedom – in terms of an infringement on how people relate to themselves and others, on their rights and dignity), *ubuntu* for Ndungane, is the bridge from powerlessness and exclusion toward inclusion and human dignity (cf. Ndungane, 2003:40, 80).

Secondly, listening to the 'voice from below' is an invitation to 'the other' (outsider, theologians) to an immersion in another world and to transformation and the construction of a new world – together with the 'poor' (cf. Bosch, 1991:424). It may bring a new understanding of the truth as understood by those toward whom – in the past –

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violence, rape, unfair financial practices and other injustices, which is aggravated by factors such as poor health services and unfair labour practices (:9–10). Furthermore, the African and traditional churches seem to perpetuate this situation by continued patriarchal religious discourses (:10). Myers (1999:65) states unequivocally that transformational development that does not address the gender issue and the empowerment of women, will fail. Reiterating the complexity of poverty as phenomenon, Myers (1999:86) argues for a multidisciplinary understanding of poverty: "We need the tools of anthropology, sociology, social psychology, spiritual discernment, and theology, all nicely integrated". He refers to Maggay in seeing the 'battling' of poverty as more that the mere dismantling of unjust social systems, saying "we are confronting the powers in their cosmic and social dimension" (:86). In the final analysis, poverty is fundamentally spiritual and relational – it is the "result of relationships that do not work that are not just, that are not for life, that are not harmonious or enjoyable … relationships that lack *shalom*, that work against well-being, against life and life abundant" (:86–87). And since the cause for poverty can fundamentally be seen the breakdown of relationships on a spiritual level (distortion of relationships because God has been "written out of the story or side-lined" and sin – as the root of deception, distortion and domination – has been allowed 'in'), the only way to deal with poverty in what he calls 'transformational development', is to provide the space for people to hear and to respond to the good news of the gospel (:88).

development work was directed. Bosch (1991:436, 446) cautions against the point of view that unreservedly accepts "the voice of the victims is the voice of God". Yet, Bosch argues, since the poor is seen to be the ones on whom God focuses his attention first (even give them preferential treatment), it is important to hear them express their experiences, believes and understanding of the world. Jesus' mission was solidarity with the poor and oppressed – listening to the poor therefore, is a gospel question.[69]

What, then, did we hear in and from the community in this study? What did the 'voice from below' tell us? The sample group participants very infrequently referred to Jesus – but rather and often to *God and his direct guidance, help and ability to provide.* *"The stone[70] reminded me of a rock – Jesus is the rock. I held onto it with more and more power – as if God was in my hand. It helped me with regarding my life – it was like being in touch with God." "I want to understand where and what my role is; what I need to do every day in God's greater plan. One needs to become quiet in order to see the bigger picture … this prayer [Examen of Conscience] forced me to stand still."* Participants acknowledged that God sustains them and gives them the answers. Most were convinced that those who move away from God will suffer, *"I believe that God is going to help us through our difficulties – since we share it and 'call' God to hear." "People have moved away from God – God gives us the strength to cope."* Their *experience of God is to be found in many symbols,* such as *"the heart: it brings me closer to God; Bible: it connects me with God; church: we worship God there; love: created by God".*

God is there for them to talk to: *"Prayer is one way to relate to God"; "When you're worried and you sit next to the water and sit and listen to God, the sound of the water is like the voice of God."* Similarly, God 'talks' to them about how they should live their lives through many different symbols or ordinary metaphors: *"Make your home a safe haven with God as the guest of honour." "The glass of wine symbolises God inviting us to come and drink of Him." "We have to bring our sins and place it in a basket – God washes it away." "God wants us to shine/glitter like a diamont – pure and open."*

God is present in nature: *"The greatness of God is visible in the universe."* And in natural elements such as the flowers in the veldt, the sea, various animals, in a tree, *"We grow like this [the tree] when God comes into your heart,"* or in the sunset *"God's light going down – it*

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[69] Cf. Gutiérrez in footnote 51 above.

[70] Reference being made to the small stones used in one of the meditation-exercises.

will be dark – don't be afraid because God is on your side." **God is present in people** *such as their children: "Children are gift from God. They can bring you closer to God."*

Praying to God they found hope, *"The silent prayer gave me hope – it is like a confidential conversation between me and God."* Or in writing in their journal, *"The more you write; this is like something you read from the Bible."* Also in gospel music: *"Gospel music connects us to God and the Bible"; "You should not fall asleep before reading the Bible – it gives you peace and direction."* **God is also in community** *–* He enables you to be in and contribute to the community *"If you don't have God in your heart, you cannot be close to the community."*

Given a safe space were they could trust and feel free to express themselves (cf. Haddad in section 4.2.2), the participants were increasingly open in sharing changes in their personal realities. One of the sample group members (a wheelchair user) had this to say after participating in the *Body Mapping*-exercise[71] during a capacity building session:

At first I was hurt [referring to the wheelchair] but because I could talk about it, I feel very happy. The wheelchair makes me different – I cannot stand on my own feet. We need to get together with others in wheelchairs and find something to help us. When you are working, like helping mothers with disabled children, you forget about the wheelchair.

Moreover, the participants shared something of their reality[72] – the context in which they live[73] and try to make a difference by transforming relationships between people. Shared

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[71] *Body Mapping* is an exercise used originally to help people with HIV and AIDS to literally 'paint their story' (on a life-size paper with the outline of their body first drawn unto it) (cf. Appendix B, exercise 17). Since the wheelchair-user could not get on the floor to draw and paint her body map, the co-facilitator helped her to draw her outline with the paper stuck on the wall, enabling her to paint her 'map' equally well as those who were non-disabled. She was no longer the 'odd one out' or excluded because of being different (in the wheelchair), but became 'one of them' – included – through this exercise.

[72] As shared (during the *Community Map*-exercise in one of the capacity building sessions) by those members of FH2 who lived in the community and affirmed by researcher's observations during the village walk in that area (cf. Chapter 3, section 3.4.3).

[73] Although used here to present a 'picture of community' in general, it must be emphasised that some of the other communities (included in this study) were even worse off: no running water, no formal houses at all (only shacks 'put together' with card board and corrugated iron or wood); no streets but rather 'passages' through which everything has to pass; no sewage systems – some places have communal cement toilets and taps which are extremely unsanitary and unhygienic; or no sanitation whatsoever; no running water; and no electricity. However, the 'human face of suffering' encountered in all these communities, are reflected in that of Lanquedoc.

here, is the reality of poverty and suffering of the Lanquedoc-community, a semi-rural agricultural community in the Western Cape, surrounded by affluent wine estates.[74]

People drink from early in morning, resulting in drunkenness during the day so people do not work – they are sleeping. Many young (and older people) do drugs (such as *tik*).[75] The children are hungry and unattended, running in the streets with nobody looking after them. If you visit the community in the afternoon, you will find the children are tired, hungry and sick with adults still drunk and getting ready to go out again at night. During the evenings parents are getting ready for more drinking. There is only one church – for coloureds in Afrikaans, so the Xhosa-speakers cannot attend and understand. There is no school or crèche, no clinic and no police station and few taxis, even though the nearest shops and facilities are miles away and the surrounding area is wooded – dangerous to walk at night. Because of HIV and AIDS many children are left parentless and do not know their history.[76] Many people are without jobs, leading to violence (the young men carry knives); and young girls selling their bodies (they go out into woods two-two to have sex). The community leaders do not serve us. The new houses (built by the employing company) were given to people (black people from the Eastern Cape, who speak Xhosa) brought in for working on the surrounding company farms. They took our jobs, and are 'strangers' (being from another culture) who do not understand/fit into old community (who were mainly coloured people who lived and grew up in the local community). Some houses are empty because the people died or moved way, but the 'old' community may not have those houses – now they are vandalised. What we wish for our community is that we could have real leaders (who will fight for us); that this was a safer place; for peace and

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[74] The Lanquedoc community is one of the Greater Franschhoek District sub-communities presented by members of the FH2-sample group. The information shared here was recorded during an exercise to help the group with the identification of their community project ('For the Love of the Children') at one of the follow-up capacity building sessions.

[75] *Tik* is the popular username for crystal methamphetamine, a cheap, easily producible and freely available and highly addictive drug used especially in the Western Cape.

[76] Ndungane refers to the 'loss of memory' prevalent in communities where 'their story' is no longer told. During the *village walk undertaken in Rocky's Drift, KwaZulu Natal* (cf. Chapter 3 section 3.3.1; 3.3.3), the local guides shared their fear for exactly this occurring with greater frequency amongst the rural (and semi-rural) communities. Since the parents of the young children are dying increasingly at a younger age (due to amongst other causes HIV and AIDS; TB) the children no longer hear the stories and know their true identity – in some cases literally not knowing who there parents were. They said that in some villages nobody can remember the history and the children are 'like lost souls'. Ndungane (2003:67) observes: "Entire communities lose their memories…" and the answer to the question where do we come from? They cannot remember their stories any longer, thus "…communities and individuals within them lose their identity … self-understanding … [and] … sense of being located in a comprehensible sequence of events".

green grass. We also wish the people could be educated and have knowledge and that their attitudes will change.[77]

Reflecting on this 'portrait of a community', what seems to be the underlying current – the story behind the story – is one of *disillusionment* (no jobs, drunkenness, drug abuse, "sleeping at all times", violence, vandalising of empty houses) and *broken-down relationships*: between parent and children (parents are either drinking or sleeping it off); children and their community (running around un-schooled, uncared for); between employers and workers (new workers brought in, previous workers left without income, a future); between leaders and their constituency, cultural groups, genders (young grills being raped); between people and their environment (dangerous surroundings, lack of "green grass"); and, above all, the disintegration of self (joblessness, drunkenness, use of *tik*, "selling their bodies" and getting involved in violence). In their 'wishes for the community', the sample group members expressed their *hope for improved relationships* (for all) in the community: good leaders who would care and take up their cause; for safety for the children; and for education so that attitudes and therefore relationships can be changed. This raised the questions, "How do they define 'good relationship'?" "Where do they find the 'truth about good relatedness'?"

Truth and hope (regarding relationships) then, is to be found, according to the participants, in God and his promises (in Scripture), through prayer[78] and sometimes visions,[79] but, primarily in an *intimate relationship with God*: God is present in their lives whether in family, work, suffering or in the gift of children.[80] When *working in projects*, they *ask God's guidance and input*:[81] "*...the Word of God gives us clear messages about what we are here for and about what we should do – it gives us 'padkos'.*" When there is

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[77] Text taken from the group FH2 Capacity building session workbook (May 2007).

[78] Cf. statements made during retreats: *"This kind of prayer helps me to become quiet, getting into contact with my innermost that I did not know existed ... to do a deep self-examination."*

[79] Ibid: *"This silent prayer gave me hope – it is like a confidential conversation between God and me." "I saw this vision after I had closed my eyes: I have been in the presence of God."*

[80] Ibid: *"I felt healed ... the Holy Spirit worked to help us to get to know one another." "As we were telling our stories, I sensed God's presence – when we closed our eyes afterwards, I was able to talk to my God so that He could show me a way out."*

[81] Cf. Chapter 3, section 3.5.4: Statements made during final external evaluation session, Pietermaritzburg: *"We bought an office in the community for our organisation. As leader, I am like the pilot of the boat, with God as the captain."* One member felt she could do nothing in the extremely needy area: *"I prayed, and got a vision from God. Then things started to turn around and now I do job creation, a sewing project ... all by getting out of my house and comfort zone."*

dire need, they selflessly give, such as one FH2 member gave her house as venue for the new crèche (cf. Chapter 3, section 3.5.3). They also worked toward reconciliation, like Ruth (a FH1-member) successfully bringing together various groups and parties to focus on the youth and cooperate with one another in planning future actions (cf. Chapter 3, section 3.5.3).

What came as a surprise, was the *capacity for suffering with and the willingness to humble the self* so as to 'deal with the log in your own eye before talking to your brother/sister about the splinter in theirs': *"This is a picture of my parents who never gave me any love. [But] beautiful things happen – this [next] picture of a stream and flowers, shows the peace that I found after I have forgiven my father and mother."*[82] Self-humbling was also exemplified in numerous statements about dealing with anger, unforgiveness, broken down relationships by changing behaviour to be more open, to listen, and to heed the other (cf. Chapter 3, sections 3.4.5.8.; 3.4.6; 3.5.1). Equally remarkable (and inspiring) is the ability to 'see clearly' reflected in so many of the statements: yes, the reality is extremely difficult; yes, people suffer in all manners and to a degree unimaginable for those who do not live under these circumstances; yet, they continually indicated their willingness and ability to *"go back into my community to share the Light"*. In fact to, despite their own unchanged circumstances, admit to 'seeing differently' and having a contribution to make precisely *because of* their own of suffering and journey toward healing (cf. Chapter 3, section 3.4.5.8).[83]

So, what additional answers or guidelines – be it contrary to or in accord with the spirituality of powerlessness – is suggested by theologians? Miroslav Volf, having had first hand experience of suffering in Croatia during the war with Yugoslavia, says the task of theology is not to "tickle the palates of (Western) theological connoisseurs dulled by abundance and variety, but to fill empty stomachs of people engaged in a bloody conflict … nutritious value for the hungry is what matters…" (Volf, 1990:28). Conversely, trying to find answers that will meet the needs of those millions who go hungry in their suffering repeatedly ends in 'liberating' strategies, which, if submitted to discerning examination,

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[82] Statement made in feedback on *Spiritual Map*-exercise during retreat.

[83] Cf. also Myers' view that "[h]ealing the marred identity of the poor is the beginning of transformation" (1999:115), which should lead to the restoration of relationships (key to the transformational process) (:117) and the willingness and ability of the community to carry what they have discovered and learned over into transforming their personal lives, relationships and community – indicative of the long-term impact (or sustainability) of development (:183).

frequently exposes an inherent tendency whereby one set of structures and persons are 'liberated' to, in turn, oppress the next.[84] Consequently, the crucial question is not one of how to achieve liberation or freedom from oppression and, ultimately, reconciliation, but rather, "*what resources do we need to live in peace in the absence of finding reconciliation?*" (Volf, 1996:109). Hence, the final formulation of a Christian spirituality discussed and brought into conversation with 'the people' in this study, is that of a spirituality of embrace.

4.3.5   *Spirituality of Embrace: Empowered by hope*

The cross, as central to Christian faith and spirituality, would be pointless – if it ended in Christ's death on the cross, with no progression into a hopeful future. In an all-inclusive act of grace, God gave us the cross as symbol of the self-giving love of the triune God in a world of enmity – creating an ultimate metaphor for his embrace of humanity. Therefore, says Miroslav Volf, a hopeful future becomes praxis through a *spirituality of embrace* – a spirituality which both helps to overcome the polarity between 'either us or them' ensuing in living in enmity; and enables sustained peaceful community living (cf. Volf, 1996:100). Christ's suffering on the cross was a prayer for forgiveness, as the "boundary between exclusion and embrace" (:125). The (defenceless) arms of Christ have been opened by the cross to create a space in God, inviting and welcoming the other, unequivocally, into the embrace of forgiveness, redemption and the kingdom of God (:126). The cross, as God's reception of hostile humanity into embrace and divine communion, presents a new covenant[85] – a model for human relationships and interaction (:100).[86] On the cross God

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[84] Writing about the "ambiguities of liberation", Volf (1996:101–105) takes on the idea that "freedom is the most sacred good", pointing to the frequency with which one set of 'liberators' is replaced with the other (most often the 'newly freed'), stating "liberators are known for not taking off their soldiers' uniforms" (Volf 1996:104). Referring to Jurgen Moltman's theology, Volf (1996:105) reiterates that "the ultimate goal of human beings is not the 'kingdom of freedom' … [but] … the kingdom of God, which is the kingdom of love".

[85] The new 'social covenant' is a made between God and humanity and involves the (1) readjustment of complementary identities; (2) the repairing of the covenant by those who have not broken it; (3) the refusal to let the covenant be undone – ever. The 'inner circle' of the covenant is God's embrace, and the 'outer circle' is the social side – how we should embrace each other, even in enmity (Volf, 1996:156).

[86] Volf (1996:153–156) explains the relationship between the cross and the new covenant as follows: The cross symbolises what God has done to renew the covenant broken by humanity. (1) *God makes space* for humanity as seen in the open arms of Christ – Christ creates space in himself for the other by suffering that enables Him to unequivocally accept the other into his emptied arms. This implies an understanding of and sensitivity to one's own identity and that of the other; and the acknowledgement of a mutual influencing/forming capacity: each one's identity is formed in relationship with the other (:153). (2) *God gave himself* – Luke 22:20 refers to the 'covenant made in blood'. God – as the 'not guilty' partner – on behalf of the 'guilty' human partner who broke the covenant – literally died to enable the renewal of the

sets out to embrace the enemy[87] (*all* who has fell out to the friendship relationship with God) in unlimited love. It also challenges us to contemplate "the God who delivers the needy and the God who abandons the Crucified" (:9) for the purpose of saving the guilty, the perpetrators, the injustice. Yet, despite (or rather, because of) these conflicting actions of God, we experience his embrace. Having thus experienced God's embrace, we must make space for others in ourselves and, in turn invite them – even our enemies – into our embrace.

According to Volf (1996:129), the Eucharist is a ritual *par excellence* of celebration of God "making-space-for-us-and-inviting-us-in" and it opens the way for us to invite 'the other' into our embrace. The "Eucharistic embrace" (:131) carries the symbolic message that *all* people who are taken into the embrace are being forgiven (by the body and blood of Christ) and are now called 'brother' and 'sister'. It therefore extends a non-aggressive, non-coercing invitation to 'the other' to share in the grace of God, "Would you like to join us at the table?" (Kritzinger, 2002:169). This 'celebration of embrace' is even more evident in the African context, where music and dance is an integral feature of Christianity. The "spontaneous joy of believers" (Kritzinger, 2002:169) displayed during rituals such as the Lord's Supper, could be utilised to welcome and let 'outsiders' into the sharing of the spirituality of undeserved grace and embrace.[88]

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covenant (:155). Christ, through this sacrificial death, is being 'renewed' as the truly communal self, in the image of triune God (:155). (3) *The new covenant is eternal* – God's commitment is irrevocable (Hosea 11:8) because he is bound to humanity with "bonds of love" (:156). The covenant "can be broken, but can not be undone," therefore "... all the struggle for justice and truth … takes place within the covenant." "Nobody is outside the social covenant; and no deed is imaginable which would put person outside of it" (:156).

[87] In the context of the cross as embrace, Volf explains *perichoresis* as follows: Every divine person of the triune God is the other persons, but he/she is the other persons in a particular way, in reciprocal relationship – in a dance around and within the other. When God sets out to embrace the enemy, the result is the cross. And, with reference to John 17:21, on the cross, the *perichoresis* – the dancing circle of self-giving and mutually indwelling of divine persons – opens up for the enemy: in the agony, the movement stops for a brief moment and a fissure appears, allowing sinful humanity to join in (Volf, 1996: 128–129).

[88] Kritzinger (2002:169–170) notes how, in the early 1980s during apartheid era, he contemplated the utilisation of Christian symbols to share something of the death of Jesus on the cross and the message of love with non-Christians. It seemed to him that the Eucharist was such a symbol, referring to Jesus' words in John 12:31:32: "I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to me." Kritzinger concluded that "such a magnetic and non-coercive Christology can produce a spirituality that will root us deeply in an incarnational Christian faith and at the same time give us the wings to interact respectfully with people of other faiths (and no faith), to co-operate with them for the good of society." Similarly, Cochrane et al. (1991:80–81) views the Eucharistic celebration, involving "listening to the Word, praying in solidarity for the needs of the world (especially for its 'victims' and those who struggle for justice), sharing the bread of life and the cup of liberation" as central to a spirituality of inclusion (and embrace) in the celebration of God's liberating power.

Herein – this understanding and celebration of 'the divine embrace' – may rest one of the most significant (and foundational) indications for change in the approach to working with people and communities. In development work there should no longer be a holding on to the myth that enduring or 'sustainable development' with the future of humankind and the ecosystem in mind, can be 'people-centred' or even value-centred. People (and the values established by them) have time and again been proven to be fallible[89] – to have very limited success in finding strategies to truly connect people and/or to redistribute sources across the boundaries from exclusiveness between the have's and have nots – with even 'liberation' leading into new modes of failed reconciliation, persecution and exclusion.[90] Similarly, according to Volf (1996:105), the failure of every single *grand narrative* seeking to effect the final reconciliation between cultures and subcultures, leads to the conclusion that "along with new understanding and peace agreements new conflicts and disagreements are permanently generated". The only possibility left, he says (1996:105), is to find a way of living within the reality of the impossibility to find total reconciliation, asking: *How then do we live within the irreconcilable world?*

The answer is to be found in the open, outstretched through suffering, defenceless arms on Christ on the cross: to live and suffer with those who are suffering, to love those who are perpetuated, to embrace the other even if or precisely because it is my worst enemy – that is Kingdom strategy demonstrated, lived, by God through Christ. Jesus does not ignore liberation: "His action is always in response to human misery … He finds and sees people in the shadow of death" (Smit, 2009:478), or "hidden in the *hokke*",[91] the down trodden and the poor; he hears "the sighs of the voiceless and the cries of the powerless" (Volf, 1996:105) and works for their liberation. Volf places this kind of liberation within a larger framework of "a theology of embrace" (Volf, 1996:105) and the praxis of the 'inner' and 'outer' circle of the new covenant (cf. section 4.3.5, footnote 85).

For Volf, the understanding of identity of self is fundamental in the process of embrace (cf. section 4.3.5.1). Identity includes the separation of self and the connection to others – similar to the creation process, described, according to Volf (1996:63), in Genesis as "an intricate pattern of 'separate-and-bound-together' entities". Human beings are then, "who

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[89] Cf. Chapter 1, sections 1.1 & 1.2.

[90] Cf. Volf (1996:104–106) referring to the "oppression/liberation schema" posing the question, "does it not betray an ideological blindness because it fails to entertain the idea that when the victims become *liberators* it is they, and not only the oppressors, who might need to change?" Cf. also section 4.3.4.

[91] Cf. Chapter 1, section 1.1: Statement made by sample group members during retreat.

we are not because we are separate from the others, who are next to us, but because we are *both* separate *and* connected, *both* distinct *and* related; the boundaries that mark our identities are *both* barriers *and* bridges" (Volf, 1996:66). Using the metaphor of a tree, Ndungane (2003:54–55) further explicates the need for humanity to not be fragmented and disconnected from one another:

> We are all branches form the same family tree. When one branch withers, the rest of the tree is affected … all human beings are to look to the Author of Life, to God, and to pay attention to what God teaches us about who we are. God is love. God is in relationship. We are created in his image – human beings are meant also to be essentially in relationship.

Bearing this interconnectedness and interdependence in mind, the cry is not so much for liberation (since that may inevitable lead to more division and disconnection), but to "engage now in combating this war[92] by putting in place strategies to create a world with a human face" (Ndungane, 2003:65). The face that needs to be seen first of all is the face of those who suffer, such as the face of Africa, of which it is said, "to be African is to suffer" (Smit, 2009:473). It is a spirituality which is located within the midst of the suffering, turmoil, the hospital of the world, a moving amongst and listening to the stories within their own context[93] (cf. Brown, 1984:399; Smit, 2009:478). It is precisely in these cries and faces, says Smit, that we recognise the voice of the living God, almost "as if, looking, reflecting on the face of God, our eyes are opened, also to see the hidden face of Christ in the many faces of suffering" (Smit, 2009:487).[94]

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[92] Salvadore Marcus (in Ndungane, 2003:65): "A new world war has begun, but now it is against humanity as a whole, in the name of 'globalization'. This modern war assassinates and forgets." What is at stake in this war is the "…new division of the world consist[ing of] increasing the power of the powerful and the misery of the miserable."

[93] Agenor Brighenti, in her article titled *Cries for Africa*, reports on the proceedings of the seventh World Social Forum (WSF) which took place in Nairobi, Kenya in January 2007 and states that "[o]ne of the most powerful experiences of the forum involved visits to Christian initiatives tackling poverty and marginalization in the slums, orphanages, and rubbish dumps. One of the slums, Kibera, with 700,000 inhabitants … exposed the extreme life conditions there, but also its people's creativity and the heroism of the pastoral initiatives taking place" (2008: 515).

[94] One such an encounter with 'the face of Christ amongst those who are suffering' took place (during the pre-study stage) when invited to present a capacity building session for a mothers' outreach group in an informal semi-urban community outside of Pretoria. On meeting them, it was established that these women, who lived either in shacks or HOP-houses (two-roomed sub-economic government housing), all had severely disabled children for whom they had to take full responsibility, e.g. one multiple physically disabled and retarded five year old being carried everywhere by the mother for lack of an alternative. Yet these mothers wanted to reach out to other *"…less fortunate mothers who were ashamed to share the fact that they also had disabled children,"* – such as those who were locking their children in their houses on a

Exclusion of the other (not hearing, not seeing, cutting the bonds of interdependence or not recognising the other as a separate dignified human being) is, according to Volf (1996:68), "the sinful activity of reconfiguring the creation," of separating what God has joined – protracting suffering and struggle. Exclusion has been hailed by the prophets and the gospel to be "an objective evil", since it is when we exclude others – disconnecting them from relationships – that they suffer. It is when we are willing to 'weave a basket' where the little ones, the ones who are suffering and despised are given the space and our protection, like "a mother hen looking after her chicks",[95] that 'the other' is being embraced and included in the example of Christ:

> *We will protect the children in a safe and warm place – they should not be scattered, but be kept together and get the love they need. We will give them this protection and love if their mothers can't do it.*[96]

Anderson (2001:233), in a way that reflects the (South) African contextual reality, states that the kingdom of God is a culture that takes form in the world and does not exclude any language, race, sexual role, ethnic origin or worldview – it accepts the fact that God, the Creator had said: *"I will pour out my spirit[97] on all people".*[98] This culture includes everyone under 'the rule of God', accepts diversity and is open to all. Nobody and no deed of anyone is outside of God's new covenant, indeed, "…God does not discriminate between those who believe and those who do not, but treats each person as someone created in the divine image and as an object of God's love and care" (Anderson, 2001:234; cf. Volf, 1996:156). God and the Holy Spirit was (and is) present in all people, long before they were told about God by Christian missionaries: "The people …

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daily basis for fear of community rejection and retaliation. When confronted with the question why they as women's group wanted to reach out, they answered: *"We have to share the love of God by showing understanding and offering information and support to these 'scared' women."*

[95] Cf. Chapter 3, section 3.4.5.8: Metaphor used for working/taking care of the children in the community by one FH2 sample group referring to Matthew 23:37 (NIV 1985) "… how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings…". Also refer to section 4.3.2 and footnote 35: Jesus' weeping over those who suffer.

[96] FH2 during feedback *Weaving a Basket*-exercise at closure of retreat (cf. Chapter 3, section 3.4.5.8).

[97] The Hebrew word used for spirit (*ruach*) is frequently employed in contrast to the *nephesh* (soul), which is often coupled with the word *basar* (flesh) and *lev, levav* (heart). *Ruach* is not used as synonym for *nephesh*, but usually used to contrast *nephesh:* where *nephesh* means life, *ruach* means 'vigorous life' or inspired life, e.g. God will give his own Spirit (vigorous, inspired life) to a chosen people (cf. Anderson, 2003:31).

[98] Joel 2:28.

have already been touched by Christ, and the Spirit has long been at work in their lives" (Kritzinger, 2002:160). All persons are thus equally created in the image and likeness of God – with, ultimately, a conscious spiritual partnership with God (Anderson, 2003:32). As (Christian) practitioners, we have to acknowledge this and be willing to listen, to receive and to be 'converted' in the process of working with the other, getting to a fuller understanding of who Christ is.[99]

4.3.5.1   The drama of embrace

To understand this *inclusion of all* following unto the act of reconciliation, and the application of the spirituality of embrace in the praxis of people and community development, it is helpful, at this stage, to look in more detail at Volf's understanding of the concept of embrace.[100] His depiction of embrace is a reflection of Christ's death on the cross as the "…narrative of the love of Divine Trinity turned toward a sinful world" (Huyser-Honig, 2012:1). This (divine) love comprises of the Crucified's gift of forgiveness to perpetrators and his embrace of justice for the oppressed, or in Peterson's terminology, to embrace "the mess of this life we live in" (2005a:137). As Christ shed tears for and opened his arms to include everybody in this transformative embrace, the followers of Christ are called to, no matter what was done to them – be willing to begin the process of making the enemy your friend by a similar act of (tearful) embrace.[101] The 'drama of embrace'[102] consists of the following four steps or moments (cf. Volf, 1996:141–144 & Karecki, 2009:30–31):

1. *Opening the arms – an invitation*: It begins with acknowledging the absence of (pain) and longing for the other's presence (joy), which instigates the creation of space in the

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[99] Cf. Kritzinger (2002:161) refers here to Acts 10–11 describing the conversation of Cornelius, which according to Kritzinger, could as well have been described as "another conversion of Peter".

[100] Volf's article *Exclusion and Embrace: Theological Reflections in the Wake of "Ethic Cleansing"* (1992) is critical reading with regard to how we make sense of the vicious circle of hatred and evil which people inflict upon each other and of finding a way to live together in spite of ethic, religious and cultural differences.

[101] Peterson (2005a:137–138) refers to tears shed throughout history (e.g. the massacre of babies with Christ's birth; Jesus crying for Jerusalem – see previous footnote). "History is lubricated by tears." "Prayer … is accompanied by tears" (:138). This is echoed in one FH1-group's feedback on their envisioned community involvement, who decided on the name *The Tear Jerkers* to reflect the tears they have shed during sharing their painful stories. These tears have *"cleared our eyes" [so that now] we can see the light and help the community to go through a similar process"* (cf. Chapter 3, section 3.4.5.8).

[102] In Karecki's (2009:30) description, the embrace is seen first as a contemplative encounter, thus focussed on the practitioner and her/his relationship with God; but, second, also as applicable to (practitioners') encounters with 'the other' in community.

self for the other. To do this, "…the self must withdraw from itself, pulling itself back," since the self who is 'full of itself', cannot receive another. Consequently, the opening of the arms represents a self-emptying, a *fissure* in the self, an opening-up of the boundary to let the other in; and finally *inviting* the other to enter (Volf, 1996:141–142). Thus, by acting – by expressing the desire of the other and indicating that, through opening the boundary, a space has been created – the other can respond and is enabled to get out of him/herself and to step forward into the opened space.

2. *Waiting*: Once the arms are opened, the waiting upon the other starts – waiting on the desire of the other and for the arms of the other to open. In the waiting is the power of letting the desire grow in the other, thus the 'waiting' is not coercive or manipulative, but steadily extending the invitation to let the other know the embrace can only be an embrace if it is reciprocal (Volf, 1996:143). Just as God waits with open arms for us to be drawn in, to enter into relationship with him, so we should await those we are working with. God did not do anything apart from wait – he did not follow, he did not force the return; he gave time and all the while, his love endured.[103]

3. *Closing of the arms*: "Each is drawn to the other, held by the other, holds the other…" (Karecki, 2009:31), "…both active and passive" (Volf, 1996:144). Each self is involved in free and reciprocal giving and receiving – experiencing the presence of one the other, being transformed by the union with the other. It requires a self-giving and a soft touch, not a clinging; it requires also an understanding, a seeing of the other (and of the self) in a new light.

4. *Opening the arms again*: The embrace is not a disappearance of the 'me' in the 'you', but a let go of the other to maintain each other's integrity and otherness. The open arms which 'let go', immediately signals a new invitation for the other to return (Volf, 1996:145). Such an embrace – not clutching onto the other, but in faith, letting the other move on – "…is always a gift and an invitation. It never leads to self-absorption, but to self-emptying; a condition of authentic Christian love." (Karecki, 2009:31–32). In waiting upon God during contemplation, one is drawn first into the embrace and changed to become more like God, enabling one to open one's arms to invite others into a loving embrace.

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[103] Cf. Psalm 136 referred to by Karecki (2009:30).

What is the implication and application of this 'drama of embrace' for working with people and communities? Who should or could be transformed in the process of embracing and to what purpose? In the context of community, what does the 'spirituality of embrace' really imply? Kritzinger's (2002:161–162) metaphor of us "being pilgrims moving onwards to learn and embrace the fullness of our own faith," helps to bring an understanding of how the embrace of the other, as stated above, never leaves one unchanged. By being willing to share one's space with another, by providing 'the other' the space to share his/her story (and to listen to mine), we both give and receive. In this 'drama of embrace' unfolds the 'drama of God': answering the question "Who do you say I am?"[104] By looking into the face, being enfolded by the limbs of, and hearing the heart of 'the other', ultimately, one is confronted with Christ.[105]

Volf turns to the *Parable of the Prodigal Son* (Luke 15:11–32) to illustrate the practical implications of God's embrace as "inner side" of the new covenant of love[106] (Volf 1996:155–165). In the subsequent reflection on the parable, Volf's work in conversation with that of Henry Nouwen and Tim Geddert is referred to.

4.3.5.2   The theology of the spirituality of embrace: 'The parable of the running father'

In this section it is endeavoured to – referring to the work of mainly, Volf, Nouwen and Geddert – reflect upon the Parable of the Prodigal with the view to provide a scriptural basis for the praxis of the spirituality of embrace (to be discussed in 4.3.5.3). Why the deliberation on the Scriptural grounding for the praxis of a spirituality of embrace? When bearing in mind the context of this study, namely the modern-day mainly rural and semi-urban South African communities – which, for the purpose of this study, represents the 'African context' – it is pertinent to observe the difference between the cultural world of the Bible and the culture of contemporary/traditional Africa, necessitating for the contextualising of the reading and application of Scripture (Raman, 2006:1).[107]

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[104] Kritzinger (2002:161) argues that to be effective in reaching out to others – to life our lives – "[w]e should integrate the 'Great Commission' into a holistic biblical vision that includes the 'Great Commandment' of Matthew 22:34–40 and the 'Great Question' of Matthew 16:15."

[105] Cf. Eugene Peterson's (2005a:2) metaphor of Christ: "For Christ plays in ten thousand places, lovely in limbs, and lovely in eyes not his – to the Father through the features of men's faces."

[106] Cf. previous footnote 86 on the new covenant.

[107] For example, it is interesting to note Raman's (2006:2) suggestion regarding the application of three educational principles in order to interpret the parable in the African context: the teacher, the learner and the teaching-learning process. This implies viewing the father as the teacher/pastor; the sons as the learners, and the encounter between the father and the sons as the teaching-learning process. In the African context

Geddert (1995:32) reminds that "…ultimately the issue is what the parables are aiming to do to us, not what we choose to do to them" – thus, requiring from the reader (theologian practitioner) careful listening, a readiness to be surprised and most of all, a willingness to step into and be challenged by the parables (:28). He reiterates that the main focus should be on the text itself and on knowing the historical context of the text, as well as of the available (historical) cultural, sociological, economic, anthropological and religious contexts (Geddert, 1995:29). Therefore, to contextualise the parable of the Prodigal Son, it is important to get as close as possible to the 'ground message', firstly, by asking the question: "What is the key focus of the parable?" and, secondly, by reflecting upon the question: "How does this apply to the local (African) community context?"[108]

In Geddert's opinion, the parable of the prodigal Son as told in Luke 15:11–32 is in the first place a *portrait of Jesus*, even though at the surface this is not apparent. The two sons represent two contrasting groups of people: the younger, the tax collectors and sinners (with whom Jesus associated); and the older, the Scribes and Pharisees (strong critiques of Jesus). The father represents both God, the Father seeking to win back his sons and daughters into his family; and Jesus, inviting all kinds of people into the family (cf. Geddert, 1995:29–30). Rather than being a parable about 'the wayward', at the heart of the parable is *Jesus' message about our shifting the focus from 'anti-sinning' to 'anti-judgmentalism' or 'anti-legalism'*. It is a recognition of the faults of sons [sic] – being that of rejecting 'rules' or of legalistically over-emphasizing rules, and of God's willingness to accept them back into relationship with him as part of his family (cf. Geddert, 1995:31). Thus Jesus' perspective on relationships is unlocked: to God, *relationships are far more important to than how wrong or right a person lives*, or how much he/she have been slaving away for the Father (cf. Geddert, 1995:32; Volf 1996:156). In his reading of the parable, Volf (1996:156) identifies two main themes, namely the *father's self-giving* to his

the first application would be the attitude of the family towards the father – he needs to be respected and obeyed and children have to accept the rightful discipline of the father. The father would not easily 'give in' to the request of giving the younger son his inheritance and would at least have to explain why this is not appropriate. The question of forgiveness will also be addressed: in Burundi there is a saying that even the worst child rejected by society must be taken care of, and be accepted as a son, taken back into the family and church. Rather than having a feast on the son's return, the father (in Africa) is likely to take the son in for wise counselling and guidance in the ways of the Lord – in an act of reconciliation. It is important to consider the fact that in Africa many people do not have a Christian father, making it difficult for them to understand and accept the metaphor of a Christ-like heavenly father. Moreover, in some instances it is the mother who has the 'father's' position – and this needs to be taken into account in the application of the parable. Cf. also the discussion on the role of the Father in this section.

[108] This aspect is dealt with in more detail in Chapter 5, section 5.3.2.

wayward son and *his receiving of the son back* into the family. According to Raman (2006:1), the emphasis in the parable is on the *principle of God's love and forgiveness.* All the characters are "portraying powerful ideas of the dynamics of family life in its cultural context", such as the Father's responses to compromising acts of the two sons. Indeed, a focus on each of the role-players and relationships in the parable, provides helpful insights into God's view on relationships that could, in turn, serve as guidelines for the praxis of community development from a Christian perspective.

The younger son: Seen against the historical context, the younger son, by asking his father for his part of the estate and the right to dispose of it, does more than act in an extremely unacceptable manner – in reality he is saying "Father, I cannot wait for you to die" (Nouwen, 2010:39; Geddert, 1995:32). By breaking off his relationship with his father and family; his place of birth and nurturing; as well as with his traditions and thus his community, the younger son has broken "the ancient household solidarity whose basic ethos was protecting and increasing" (Volf 1996:15; Nouwen, 2010:40). He sets off on a journey of rebellion, cutting himself loose in terms of living, thinking and acting – his very identity – which has been handed down to him. He is leaving his father's spiritual embrace – ignoring the Father who has moulded him in the depths the earth and knitted him together in his mother's womb (Nouwen, 2010:41 referring to Ps 139:13–15; Volf, 1996:157). Thus the son 'un-sonned' himself by an act of exclusion, pulling himself out of relationship with and responsibilities toward others – making himself 'homeless' and, in a sense, their enemy (Volf, 1996:158). Most of all, he is choosing to get out of earshot of the voice saying to him: "You are my Beloved, on you my favour rests" (Nouwen, 2010:43 referring to Mark 1:11[109]/Luke 3:22).

The rejection of that voice of unconditional love, 'sanctioned' the falling into the trap of listening to 'worldly' voices, resulting in "…anger, resentment, jealousy, desire for revenge, lust, greed, antagonism and rivalries" and disconnectedness from God (Nouwen, 2010:45). Being 'cut off' from the father's house, the younger son was enticed to keep asking: "To whom do I belong?" and to go searching the world for acknowledgement and belonging, and finally, left totally disillusioned (Nouwen, 2010:45).[110] Having thus cut

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[109] Mark 1:11 (KJV Bible 2000): "And there came a voice from heaven, saying, You are my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

[110] Nouwen (2010:45–46) applying the parable to his own life, says that this searching is a never ending and never satisfying process. Since the world's acknowledgment, belonging and love will always be conditional, one is forced to be 'hooked' tot the world by "trying, failing and trying again … fostering

himself loose from his inherited identity, the prodigal son leaves to his new, foreign identity of "pig herder, a foreigner, alienated" from his proper self (Volf, 1996:158). In a sense, he finds himself "away from himself" (:158). He has lost everything on a material, cultural and spiritual level, and is "empty of himself" (:158). Only when hitting rock bottom, does he "come to himself" through remembering his father's house and his sonship. Following unto his "memory of sonship" he begins to return, preparing to submit to a judgmental Father, primarily out of his dire need to eat and live, but also out of guilt; a self-repentance born out of his need to survive; and a belief in a God as his last resort.[111] (Volf, 1996:159).

According to Nouwen (2010:58), this brings the "mystery of the message" of the parable closer: *Jesus* as the true prodigal, leaving his father's house – not as rebel, but as obedient son – in order to bring back his wayward brothers and sisters – all the lost children of God. "[Our] sonship and the sonship of Jesus are one and the same; [our] return and the return of Jesus are one … [our] home and the home of Jesus are one" (:58).[112] In the return of Jesus to the Father, *He has enabled the return of all into the house of the father*. Jesus' brokenness symbolises the broken body of humanity, reflecting the suffering of all people "longing to re-enter the lost paradise" (:60).

The elder son: Although seen to be the picture of an unforgiving family member toward his brother (and father), the elder son, according to tradition, has reason to look upon his father and the younger son in disdain. The younger son has dismissed tradition, custom and the family values – causing every one to feel unsafe and insecure, with no sense of order and no trust possible (cf. Volf, 1996:162–163). Consequently, the elder son strives to uphold the standing order and traditions. Unfortunately, flaunting his disposition

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addiction" (Nouwen, 2010:46). According to Nouwen it is the lostness that so deeply permeates contemporary society – being hooked to a world that "…cannot satisfy the deepest craving of my heart" (Nouwen, 2010:46). Humans become the prodigal each time they search for unconditional love where it cannot be found; or keep using their health, gifts, intellect, emotional gifts to impress people to receive affirmation and praise, to compete instead of developing these attributes for the glory of God (for kingdom work) (Nouwen 2010:47). All which will leave them totally disillusioned.

[111] Nouwen stresses that, in a sense, the prodigal son is still clinging to his deep-seated rebellion against God, and is not ready to accept God's total forgiveness or the responsibility coming with that, namely to live as a fully ordained son of the Father. To do this, he must be 'born again', becoming a 'newly born child' of the father: poor, gentle, mourning, hungry and thirsting for uprighteousness, merciful, pure of heart, a peacemaker – all attributes acclaimed in the Beatitudes and exemplified in Jesus' life (cf. Nouwen, 2010:56–57).

[112]Nouwen (2010:60) recalls the words of 1 John 3:2: "…we are already God's children, but what we shall be in the future has not yet been revealed. We are well aware that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he really is."

of self-righteousness, he makes himself guilty of un-love-like attitudes and actions, being embittered, and of breaking-up family and community by destroying sacred relationships. Rather than rectifying the situation, the elder son's attitude – withholding love, living in bad temper, anger, unforgiveness, and being judgemental toward those around him (the father, servants, other guests and his younger brother), severely affected them. Furthermore, his (self-willed) imprisonment in obedience and duty lived out in slavery, causes him to display a disposition of resentment and jealousy (cf. Nouwen, 2010:78–79; Drummond, 1971:34–37).

Even so, the Father does not force himself unto the elder son – he allows him the space to come to the consciousness of his own rivalry and the need to let go of the resentment and jealousy. He has to hear God's love for him, calling him *teknon* – an affectionate form of address – and the elder son has to hear the Father saying to him: "You have always been with me, all that I have is yours – unlimited, unreserved" (Nouwen, 2010:82–83). What the Father wants him to understand is that – rather than an attitude of rivalry, comparisons and competition – what is called for, is total surrender to God's love and acceptance of his fellow brothers and sisters. He has to realise that he has to once again trust the Father's 'judgement' displayed as an affirmative, accepting love. This love gives him (as son) access to *all* the Father is and has – thus allowing the son to literally become one with the Father (Nouwen, 2010:89, reflecting on John 17:22).[113]

In Henry Drummond's (1971:19) opinion, the elder son – in his anger about broken rules – portrays the sins of disposition: being angry, jealous and breaking off his relationship with both his father and brother; being a resentful, proud, unkind, selfish person; and complaining from the heart that he did not get what was his due (cf. Nouwen, 2010:73–74). He makes himself guilty of the sin of 'un-sonning' himself and of 'non-brothering' and 'non-fathering' his brother and father (cf. Volf, 1996:161). According to Nouwen (2010:90), the eldest son portrays Jesus, being sent by the Father as revelation of His love for all his resentful children and by showing the way. Therewith making the impossible possible: now *all* can become the Beloved Son. In essence, says Drummond (1971:19), the relationship of the father with both his sons, illuminates love as key-dimension of relationships.[114]

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[113] John 17:22: "I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one."

[114] Cf. Drummond's view of the younger son: The younger brother's behaviour portrays sins of the body – going away, living a life of drunkenness; a life spend squandering and misusing his money, time, friends

The Father: Henri Nouwen (2010:105) portrays the father as firm but gentle, as one who can shed tears and experience great joy, but above all as one whom, in stead of measuring his children according to their behaviour, loved his children in an all-giving, and forgiving manner. Even so, the Father could not compel his son to stay home or to return – he had to love him unconditionally to give him the freedom to find his own life, even at the risk of losing him. Yet, the embrace that the father bestows on his younger son is one of extending the original blessing (given to Adam): "God has never pulled back his arms, withheld his blessing, and never stopped considering his son the Beloved one" (cf. Nouwen, 2010:47). That, according to Volf, is one of the surprises of this parable – not only does the father gives the son the inheritance and the permission to leave home (breaking social tradition), but does so without 'un-fathering' himself. In stead, he re-negotiated his identity as father, becoming father of the 'lost' or 'dead' son, filling his heart with compassion (Volf, 1996:159 referring to Luke 15:24). So that, when he saw the son returning, he ran to the prodigal – in a humbling act.[115] Thus the *running Father* is oblivious to all except the unfathomable joy he experienced on the return of his lost son. To him the relationship is of ultimate importance (Geddert, 1995:34) – a relationship that does not "rest on moral performance and could not be destroyed with immoral actions" (Volf, 1996:159). A relationship that symbolises 'the new covenant'. In this action-filled, unconditional embrace, the father reconstructs the son's identity and re-installs him as son, by clothing him in a robe and sandals and giving him a ring to wear on his finger (Volf, 1996:160).

The father bestows gentle love (like a mother's love) unconditionally – irrespective of the returning child's esteem, whether it be low or 'bloated'. This love forgives even before forgiveness is asked and gives the returning son the very best: re-installing him as son in freedom and giving a lavish feast (Nouwen, 2010:111–112). The Father's feast for the returning son is a joyous communal occasion – the neighbours are invited and the son is

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and even his own body; rebelling against morality, allowing himself to be swept away with lust and greed (1971:19).

[115] Geddert (1995:34–35) refers to the (on site) research done by Professor Kenneth Bailey regarding the traditional contextual interpretation of the parable. In the traditional context, the people from the village would have mocked, laughed and turned their backs in scorn on the returning prodigal. They must have been thoroughly surprised to see the father's odd and humiliating behaviour. He did something unheard of for a man of his age in that culture: shaming his family by not only welcoming the prodigal back into the family, but actually picking up his garments and running towards his son, making a laughingstock and fool of himself (:34). The key message, according to Bailey, was the grace of the Father bestowed on his prodigal son – "…a loving Father taking on our shame and exchanging it for his glory" (Geddert, 1995: 34). God became the running Father, giving up his honour to explain the importance of loving relationships to all of human kind.

presented as son of the house (thus re-installed as worthy person). The invitation to the feast is also an invitation to rejoice together, since "from God's point of view one son returning causes the heavens to rejoice" (Nouwen, 2010:115).[116] The Father sets an example of how to live – not in anguish, but in rejoicing over something small, intimate, beautiful;[117] not looking at the other through one's own eyes, but through the loving eyes of God (cf. Nouwen, 2010:105). Since in the African context and families, relationship-building and right attitudes toward one's parents are important issues, the Father's actions are important as a 'model'. The warm, loving process in which the father reaches out to *both* the sons – teaching them something about family relationships, comforting them and providing a listening ear – resonates with African families and African fathers (Raman, 2006:3–4).[118] How then, does this apply in the praxis of community living?

4.3.5.3   *The praxis of the spirituality of embrace*

Contrary to the current praxis of community development that often focuses on all dimensions other than the spiritual dimension, a spirituality of embrace requires the centrality of spirituality as the foundation for an alternative perspective, strategies and actions; and the acceptance that, without a transformation on a personal level – i.e. an inner transformation evident first of all within the practitioner and the individuals involved in the initiative, and then 'spilling over' into the community – nothing will really change. In reflecting on the key aspects of the 'spirituality of embrace' as seen both in Volf's 'drama of embrace' and the parable of the prodigal, it is possible to make a number of observations applicable to first, the context of the sample groups, i.e. the communities around the Franschhoek area and their endeavour to in some way or other 'make a difference' in the lives of especially that of children and the youth. And second, in the context of most development initiatives (where, typically, 'the have's' are trying to do

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[116] Cf. footnote 107 on African way to deal with 'wayward' children and to re-install them into the community – by accepting them back into the family and church.

[117] Nouwen (2010:114–116) says in his journey he became "…accustomed to living with sadness and so have lost the eyes to see the joy and the ears to hear the gladness that belongs to God and which is to be found in the hidden corners of the world" (:114). He urges that one should turn around and find something very small, very beautiful and find joy in it (:115). "Joy never denies the sadness, but transforms it to fertile soil for more joy" (:115).

[118] Cf. footnote 107 on an 'African understanding' of the parable.

something for the 'have nots', or to put it differently, where the 'rich man' is reaching out to 'the poor man'.[119]

First then, a brief reflection on **the parable of the prodigal son in the context of the sample group** brought to the front the similarities to be found in the life of the prodigal son and that of so many in the communities represented by the sample group members. When compiling the *Youth Profiles* of the various communities,[120] all were fraud with examples of perilous behaviour of the children/youth in these communities[121] comparable to that of the younger son: rebelliousness, not heeding to the father's authority, choosing to go his own way, to spend his money and to 'live the good life' presumably with boisterous friends, in drunkenness and with prostitutes. Similarly, several of the stories shared, reflected situations of on the one hand, the struggle (with authority, with 'doing the right thing'); and on the other hand, adults who were there to embrace and re-built relationships.[122] A clear illustration of this is to be found in a story about a 'typical child in the community' written by one group during the Co-*operative Storywriting* exercise,[123] offering all these elements. In this story, the 'little boy' portrays to a degree both the younger and elder brother in

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[119] Cf. section 4.3.4, footnotes 53 &54.

[120] Cf. Chapter 3, section 3.1 and section 3.5.3. Since the aim was to make a difference in the life of children and young people in the various communities they represented, the *Youth Profiles* were compiled during the first capacity building session for sample groups FH1/FH2. It was crucial that they reflected on the question "What is the reality we are faced with?" prior to deciding which issue(s) to attend to or the planning and launching of initiatives or projects.

[121] Cf. the *Youth Profile* composed by the participants from the Wemmershoek Sawmill community (Capacity building session 10/03/2007): *Nothing happens there – it is a 'grey' community. It represents a negative circle: smoke, tik, pregnancy, drunkenness. Children grow up hungry and without supervision since the parents are drinking. High incidence of teenage pregnancies – the young girls ask the older men to have sex with them – they 'hang out' at the shops and want to be 'raped' (to be seen as 'grown up'). The girls are rebellious and they get pregnant. They (the children) steal clothes from the clothing lines – they want to be 'in' and like one another [one of the crowd/'gang']. They sit at the game shops and tik and smuggle houses. More and more children threaten to commit suicide – they jump from the bridge and take pills [try to overdose]. Especially the boys do not talk – they feel cornered. Tik is literally taking over. The young people scoff at condoms – they do not want to use it and ignore the danger of HIV and AIDS. Children want to be slim and anorexia is a problem. People try to do something, e.g. offer rugby, but the community does not want to co-operate. Children are playing with 'mix it' and are busy with their cell phones all during the day; they become detached from reality and opportunities and [through cell phone technology] get into contact with people over which the parents do not have control. They have access to and are involved with pornography. A spirit of 'no prospects and no future' is rife.*

[122] Cf. section 4.3.5.2.

[123] Cf. Chapter 3, section 3.5.1. *Co-operative Storywriting* was developed by IPSO©2006 based on 'inter-active drawing' idea from creative thinking.

their battles with 'sonship'; and the 'aunty' and Youth Camp[124] facilitators could be casted as 'the father', there to embrace and re-establish sonship:

> *Once upon a time there was a little boy. He was very ill and looked for help. Then an aunty [lady] who always helped with sick children came. The little boy was very interested to see how this aunty cared for those sick people who could not look after themselves. Because he was so interested and inquisitive, he said to himself: "One day, just like this aunty, I want to help other people." He joined a Youth Camp to get more information on everything. I hope he takes from that everything that he really wants to learn. Yet he found that it is a difficult road to expose oneself to the community and [he] had to keep praying. His friends made a joke of him and tried to undermine his work. He showed determination and 'against all odds' realised his dream. Today his is an excellent example to the other youth.*[125]

Interestingly, the change in attitude (seeing 'through the eyes of the Father') was also notable in the group's outlook upon the youth when, after writing these 'co-operative' stories, they shared their wishes for the youth. Contrary to the focus on 'the youth as problem' illustrated in the *Youth Profile*[126] (compiled during a preceding session),[127] the individual and group wishes/dreams for the youth surprised with its creativity and embrace of young people back into the community, as illustrated below:

> *Our wishes for the youth are: That they will be taught godly principles in their homes and receive a Christian education; parent guidance; that they will experience safety and being comforted; loving parent-child relations; parents who listen; improved communication, wisdom and insight; self control; less peer pressure; that they will have respect for themselves and others; that they will see the opportunities [available to them]; the they will have hope and expectations; that they will have an vision for and a positive future – which entails freedom of the 'ugliness of the world'; and the knowledge that God is with them in all they endeavour/embark on. Our vision for the youth is to create a 'safe space' for the youth where they can develop positive dreams of hope and a future.*

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[124] The 'Youth Camp' referred to is a camp organised on a regular basis to reach out to the youth in the community. During these camps the facilitators are mostly devout Christian leaders who have the interest of the youth and leading them to Christ, at heart.

[125] The story (translated by the researcher) was one of ten stories written during the fourth FH1 capacity building session (12/05/2007) by the whole group – each adding one line at a time to the previous lines.

[126] Cf. footnotes 119 & 120:Youth Profile.

[127] Cf. Chapter 3, section 3.5.3 referring to the series of capacity building sessions resulting in the final project undertaken by sample group FH1.

So, by changing their attitude from being judgmental and powerless in dealing with the youth to one of seeing differently and embracing the youth, they realised that they – as adults who care for the youth – needed to "…help the young people to change their story" – in order to become *beloved sons and daughters of the community*.[128] Contained in the group's envisioning of how this was to be done, is a number of analogies to 'the running Father'. The first analogy is a focus of *preparing and inviting the youth to a feast*. In community terms, this translated into suggestions for organising singing competitions and festivals, dance classes, gospel singing events, coffee 'meetings' (drop in centre), excursions, recreational opportunities, sport events, choir singing/festivals, camps, jewellery making, and art classes. With the view *to create a stimulating, safe, creative 'space' for the community's youth,*[129] it was envisioned that the *whole community should be invited to join,* contributing to and participating in these festive and creative activities.

Also, the sample group members' comments with regard to one's responsibility or rather, one's 'power to contribute', in a sense echoes the parable of the prodigal. Relationships and our interaction with one another – what we do, how we 'recognize' or see and *create space for one another* – are crucial, for example:

> *We all, on a daily basis, write 'lines' into one another's life-stories. Yet, we cannot write another person's story (not even that of our children) – only add lines to it." "Even by smiling and making eye contact do we write lines into one another's stories." "Sometimes it is this one input, this one 'line' that breaks the vicious circle that makes the difference in another person's life. You will never know what your input has meant or done in the life of another person.*[130]

There has also been recognition that, ultimately, it is the Father (God) who enables one to create this space and make the contribution – we are dependent on his input and guidance: *"We realise that we have to stand back – and wait and ask God to take control over each person's story." "We can also pray, ask and allow others to add 'a line' to our children's (and our own) stories."*[131]

Similarly, 'a change of heart' and behaviour, echoing what Nouwen (2010:124–126) described as the *personal journey one has to go through of becoming in turn each of the*

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[128] Cf. Discussion of the father in section 4.3.5.2

[129] Responses documented in FH1 Workbook 4, 12/05/2007. Also cf. Chapter 3 sections 3.5.1 & 3.5.3.

[130] Responses given during reflective session following the completion of the *Co-operative Storywriting* exercise, FH1 capacity building session, 12/05/2007. Also cf. Chapter 3, section 3.5.1.

[131] Ibid.

sons and then the father,[132] was reflected in feedback given by the FH1 group.[133] The participants' newly found (and honed) consciousness of having to forgive oneself and others, and then to embrace those one previously ignored of held a grudge against, clearly changed their behaviour in their different relationships: *"After the sessions I could talk to and fix things with my daughter. I was able to give her [the other] space to talk – also about our feelings."*[134] Their feedback reflects similar attitudes as that of the father in the parable of the prodigal son: forgiveness, re-installing the person into the 'right' relationships, an acknowledging or seeing the other through God's eyes – resulting in the affirmation of the relationship of love and caring, expressed in listening to one another,[135] giving hugs[136] and "moving with the family" (connecting and uniting with the family):

▸ *I look to the inside and my relationships with my children are more open – I share more love and hugs. Therefore our family talks more openly about how we feel in our relationships – the children are now able to do it because I am doing it.*

▸ *I went back as a new person to my family. In the past, I always tried to break away and to forget – just to get away from my problem. Now I am busy to move with my family. We are once more going to church as a family.*[137]

Secondly, within the context of this study, for the practitioner it could be helpful to reflect on the parable of **the prodigal son as metaphor for Christian biblical-based community development praxis.** The younger son may be seen as a metaphor of the poor: those who have lost everything, who sit at the 'pig sty of life' with no income, no energy left to keep on trying to make ends meet, with few or no resources (food, work, housing), despondent, disconnected from their previous 'families' or society as a whole – albeit through their own choice to 'un-son' themselves, alienated (cf. Volf, 1996:158).[138] They have reached the

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[132] "Once we are in God's house as sons and daughters of his household, we can become like him, love like him, be good like him, care like him" (Nouwen, 2010:124).

[133] Feedback during the second capacity building workshop (10/03/2007). Also cf. Chapter 3 section 3.5.1.

[134] Cf. Chapter 3, section 3.4.5.7.

[135] *"Things also changed in my family – I give the others, e.g. my husband, the opportunity to talk and I listen"* (cf. workbook compiled after session with sample group).

[136] *"In our family, we now give each other more hugs." "I am open therefore others may give me hugs" [others may embrace me]…"* (cf. workbook compiled after session with sample group).

[137] Cf. workbook compiled after session with sample group.

[138] Cf. Myers (1999:122, 116–117) reflecting upon the importance of taking into account the role of 'freedom of choice': the poor is, in part at least, co-responsible for their situation due to the choices they

end of their resilience and, in a last effort to survive, may 're-enter' society to ask for help – whether from their own family, a previous employer, a NGO or church. They literally have nothing left to loose and in their 'empty handedness' they come asking help for one last time. The elder brother could be seen as a metaphor for the rich, 'the haves', or their representatives (the Wold Bank, governments, and institutions such as the church).[139] Having stayed 'within the law' these 'elder brothers' look in disdain upon the prodigal: "(S)he who does not work should not eat" could be a description of the perspective underlying their attitude toward the poor. They are motivated by an attitude of hoping that someone else will make the problem go away, or at best, being willing to contribute financially on a once-off basis, feeling they have done their share. For the rest, these 'elder brothers' will participate in formulating policies and laws for 'orderly citizenship' – in favour of keeping their comfortable life styles in tact, of keeping them 'on top'.[140]

Raman (2006:4) – referring to the African context – likens the father in the parable to both the father figure[141] as 'teacher' and the pastor, who in the African culture are required to set an example for the community regarding how to live and act within relationships. Similarly, in the context of community development, the father could be likened to the facilitator/practitioner 'setting the example' for the other. When thus looking at the father of the prodigal, his total different or 'unworldly' strategy needs to be heeded: a strategy of all-inclusive and all-embracing love. He acknowledges both the poor and the rich son as being in a father-son relationship with him. Therefore, he welcomes the poor back into his family, prepares a feast and invites all others to join

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have made. Similar, they are part of the solution – by changing their choices and being willing to accept God's story.

[139] Cf. Chapter 1, section 1.3, footnote 19: Equity crisis.

[140] Cf. Chapter 4, section 4.3.4 & footnotes 53, 54 &58: The poor.

[141] With regard to 'the father figure as guide/teacher' it is necessary however, to heed female theologians' observation that the influence of Christianity frequently increased practices and attitudes reflecting a strong preference for patriarchal customs and practices. Isabel Phiri (1997:75) writes: "Theologically trained and conscientised Africa women recognise that the Bible was written by inspired men within a patriarchal culture … interpreted by male theologians who … have made women invisible or present them negatively." This, in spite of the fact that in many contemporary African communities at least half of the households are female headed. Furthermore, support for patriarchy has been strengthened by the fact that the Bible has mostly been introduced to these communities as a "tool of control" setting down rules as "…a code of law, that lays down the rights and wrongs of God against the community…" (cf. De Gruchy, 1997:60). This has been in direct contradiction to the churches preaching about the "equality of humanity in Jesus Christ …" (Phiri, 1997:74), and the message relayed through the Parable of the Prodigal Son of the Father "willing to break all rules of propriety" *to include and embrace all equally* (cf. Geddert, 1995:35). Thus, recognising the wholeness of humanity, community and human being, we "need to abandon patriarchy and to see humanity and divinity as both *pater* and *mater*" (Oduyoye, 1993:117).

joyously in the feast – also the 'rich' elder brother. He does not ask questions about squandered money or failed chances; he offers a position of honour and respect to the poor – dressing the younger brother in a new robe and sandals – immediately elevating him to the level of son, person of integrity, able to participate actively in the family business and society as a whole. He acknowledges his son's attempt to return, embracing him even before listening to his vocalised confession and plea for forgiveness – thus through his actions showing the younger brother that he has already been forgiven and accepted (cf. Volf, 1996:160–161). The father gives and loves without expecting to receive or to be loved in return, and hold without expecting to be held in return (cf. Nouwen, 2010:89). And to the 'rich' elder brother, he unequivocally says: *Everything I have is yours – you are to be the steward of all the resources, and – by standing in a relationship of unselfish love with the other – you are to manage it to the benefit of all* (cf. Drummond, 1971:37; Volf, 1996:163; Nouwen, 2010; 82–83, 89).

To recap: The practitioner – like the 'rule-breaking' Father for whom relationships are of the utmost importance (cf. Geddert, 1997:35; footnote 115) – has to see the human face of suffering and poverty and be on the look out for the impoverished son/daughter's return. S/he does not look away, or loose heart or, worse, try to manipulate the son/daughter to come home and into her/his embrace, but waits for the son/daughter to be aware of his/her own situation and to willingly re-join the family/community. The first transformation, however, has taken place within the practitioner (father). When the son/daughter 'leaves' (i.e. does not want to co-operate), the practitioner has to re-negotiate her/his relationship with the community, and rid her-/himself of any feelings of rejection, judgement or anger – s/he had to empty her-/himself in order to create an open space to receive the community back. Thus being ready to when the community returns (by choice), embrace them, enfolding them in love and acceptance – without expecting anything in return. In addition, s/he has to acknowledge them as the 'returned son/daughter' and re-instate them as members of the family and community, even giving them the means (the sandals and ring) to participate once more as an active members. To do that, the practitioner has to 'go into partnership with God' – seeing the community through God's eyes and loving with God's inclusive love. It also implies that the practitioner has to go through her/his own grieving and suffering – first to give the community/the other the freedom to go, then to forgive, and then to wait upon their return.

In the praxis of community transformation, the four moments of the embrace could be seen to be the moment of opening the arms by actively waiting upon the readiness of the community to step into the opened space. It requires an extreme sensitivity with regard to who oneself and who the other is. During the time of waiting, the key would be to stay in communion with the Holy Spirit, so as to steer clear from any manipulative actions, and to ask for discernment with regard to any barriers (in the practitioner or in practice) that needs to be eradicated in order to create an open, welcoming space for the community. It also requires an inner 'cleansing' and transformation with regard to all negative attitudes and false perceptions. When accepting the 'returned' back into the embrace, the acceptance should be affirmed in the words, actions and the 'official' acknowledgement of the newly confirmed relationship, proclaiming the community's status as full blown 'family member'. In the community context, the last step or moment of embrace, may be the most important: as a fully responsible family member, the 'community' is free to go and act 'unchained to the father': the working relationship has to be one of free will and no manipulation, it has to be open and equal partnership – a new covenant of trust and love, for the good of all.

Reflecting on the foregoing discussion, it can be concluded that the spirituality of embrace seems to exemplify the merging of the spirituality of the cross, powerlessness and from below into the "defenceless arms of Christ … opened by the cross to create a space in God, inviting the other … into the embrace of forgiveness, redemption and the Kingdom of God" (cf. section 4.3.5). In this deed of self-giving, God entered into a new, irrevocable covenant with humanity – declaring his unlimited, all-inclusive love for all. The cross, therefore, should be seen as narrative of the triune God's loving embrace of all humankind: God creating space for 'the other' through the suffering of Christ. The cross enables us to 'see and hear the other', and especially to share in the suffering of the other. Through sharing their stories (and suffering), the similarities and differences are acknowledged and people are drawn into 'community', separated and bound together, interconnected and interdependent. These actions (of seeing, hearing and suffering with) are only possible if one is willing to enter into the reality (or context) of the other (in this case of 'those from below': the poor and powerless) with an attitude of inclusion rather than one of exclusion – i.e. with a willingness to participate in 'weaving a basket for communal well-being' (cf. section 4.3.5). It entails the acceptance that God has poured out his spirit on all and that therefore, the Spirit of God is working in all.

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In summary then, a spirituality of embrace requires of the Christian practitioner to 'deploy a praxis of embrace': to – in an self-emptying 'opening-open-of-the-arms'– create space, inviting the other into the embrace; to wait patiently and without prompting, on the other for his/her response of stepping forward into the embrace; to – in a self-giving and transformative encounter – accept and enclose the other in embrace; and to 'set the other free' in an opening of the arms. In this the practitioner is both *becoming Christ for* and *facing Christ in* the other (cf. section 4.3.5.1), as is clearly illustrated in the Parable of the Prodigal (cf. sections 4.3.5.2, 4.3.5.3) and reiterated in the normative guidelines for the praxis of community development (cf. section 4.4.).

Miroslav Volf acknowledges coming to the conclusion that the spirituality of embrace is the answer to the difficult question of the praxis of having to live with the enemy (cf. Volf, 1996:125; Volf, 1990:28). Similarly the spirituality of embrace is proposed as the theological grounding for transformative development; yet, to meet the needs of community development praxis, there need to be clear and more extensive guidelines.

4.4   Normative guidelines relevant to the praxis of transformative community development

Undoubtedly, since the aspect of spirituality has been almost entirely excluded in approaches to community development and transformation (cf. Chapter 5, section 5.2.4); there is a need for 'new' normative guidelines in people and community development.[142] As has been stated previously, one of the tasks of spiritual discernment is to seek God's guidance in sifting through information to come up with normative guidelines (cf. Osmer 2008:137–138).[143] In the final analysis, when determining the normative guidelines, the four questions that need to be answered are 1) Where is God in this? 2) What guidelines have been coming forward? 3) What is 'common good' and how does it impact on the praxis of community development? 4) What should we (practitioners) do?

▪   *Where is God in this?*

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[142] Cf. Chapter 1, section 1.1: The non-inclusion of a spiritual dimension is identified by Ver Beek (2000:31) as an important factor contributing to the failure of community development initiatives. In his view spirituality is "…a powerful factor in shaping people's decisions and actions," contributing to their sense of hope and power; and section 1.2: According to Osmer (2008:137–138) spiritual discernment refers to the seeking of God's guidance with regard to the present circumstances, questions and material to be implemented and encompasses the sifting through, searching out and weighing of evidence.

[143] Cf. also section 4.2.

God feels – He reveals himself not as an abstract concept, but in relation with the world. He relates personally and intimately with his creation. He is moved by His creation and respond to what happens here (Osmer, 2008:136). He is sympathetic – and suffers with and for the creation, and is – in Jesus – "God suffering in solidarity with the suffering of creation" (Osmer, 2008:137). God (in Jesus) shows – both in his words and acts – compassion towards the suffering, the sick, the social outcasts, and the poor and is touched and angered by the unjust systems and the suffering of those who stand up against it (Osmer 2008:137). God liberates: Jesus makes the liberating prophetic tradition central to his own mission – relating it to the proclamation of God's new rule in concern for the oppressed such as women, the dumb, the blind, the poor, and those possessed by demons – and confirms this with his suffering, death and resurrection (Cochrane, et al., 1991:59). Therefore, exemplifying God's 'rules' in the praxis of community development, the principle of compassion and a deep concern for and 'living with' those who are suffer should be central to all conceptualisation, planning and actions.

▪ *What has to happen? What guidelines have been coming forward?*

This is a *kairos* moment, says Archbishop Njongonkulu Ndungane, urging Christians (and the Church) to develop and apply new models for political, social, economical, and spiritual liberation:

> We must create models of hope and trust that will give the vast majority in our country a new chance. The first Christians stood on the threshold of the first millennium in a state of hopelessness at the crucifixion of Christ. But God raised him from the dead: hence our age is one of hope, an age of new beginnings, an age of the resurrection faith. It is applicable to everyone, from the multinational corporations to the multinationals of the Church (Ndungane, 2003:23).

So, holding unto this vision of hope based in God's resurrection of faith and restoration and accepting the friendship between God and his creation (Bosch, 1991:443), the Christian practitioner has to recon with the reality of the world. The larger framework within which people and community development (and ultimately, transformation) takes place, has shifted from general or widespread to particular, from global to local, from equality to diversity and from self-giving (going into the world) to contemplation (coming out of this world). From a Christian perspective, this implies a total adaptation of

perspective and strategy by means of what Cochrane, et al. (1991:78) describe as "…a [prayerful] listening to the Word of God in Scripture with eyes opened to oppressive suffering and reality". Prayerful listening requires a sharing, a being in communion, and an acknowledging of one another within the space created by God. This God-space encompasses a personal relationship, an acceptance of His love for oneself and the faithful knowing that all human life is ultimately about "being loved by a God of unconditional love" (Kourie, 2000:29). Such knowledge, faith and acceptance infer *orthokardia* or 'right heartedness' toward God, i.e. expressing the compassion of God (Kourie, 2002:28), as exemplified in Jesus' life and death,[144] integrating *orthodoxy* and *orthopraxy* (cf. Bosch, 1991:443). In this 'integrated space of communal spirituality', it becomes possible to accept the impossibility of *solving* the problems or eradicate suppression or poverty (our hearts now having been opened and guided to see and hear), but to live in compassion with, to suffer with those who cry (cf. Smit, 2009:487; Volf, 1996:105 in section 4.3.5).

The opposite of this would be, warns Bosch (1991:447), to become caught up in the world – being burdened by the reality of suffering, injustice and hopelessness – to the degree of losing vision and faith. Without a vision, the practitioner can easily succumb to anxiety and despair, to be overwhelmed and to turn back to self-flagellation, inactivity or traditional dualistic thinking, getting lost in the notion that there is a choice between body and soul, church and society, the future and the present. What is needed, is a centring onto the vision of the God who is working toward the elimination of all exploitation, pain and poverty – to enable the striving for "…an all-embracing faith, hope and love in the ultimate triumph of God casting its rays into the present" (Bosch, 1991:447). Based on the spirituality of Paul and Jesus, Bosch reiterates that they have indicated the way for Christians to triumph even in the face of severe circumstances and unfreedom: adhering to faith in Christ and his interpretation of things, or, in Paul's words, "Everything works together for the good of those who love God" (Romans 8:22 in Bosch, 1991:446). Such a vision requires discernment: the spiritual ability to perceive what God is doing within a particular context; to "interpret the times" (Luke 12:54–59 in Cochrane, et al., 1991:79); and to distinguish and grab the opportunities God offers.

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[144] Bosch (1991:443) emphasises the crucial redemptive act of Jesus which Christian practitioners are to follow: Jesus' death was needed for the liberation of humankind "…from social situations of oppression and marginalisation, from every kind of personal servitude, and from sin, which is the breaking of friendship with God and other human beings".

Most strategies for dealing with differences concentrate on social arrangements – how society should be arranged to accommodate diverseness. In exploring "what kind of selves do we need to live in harmony with others," Volf (1996:21) reiterates the need for respecting difference. This respect for difference entails the recognition of the unique identity or distinctiveness of each individual or group, brought about by their irrevocable connectedness to the social setting (or context) into which he/she is born and socialised (Volf, 1996:19). If this is not recognised, it is a form of oppression, inflicting harm and distortion on the individual's being. The opposite attitude of respecting differences, is one of 'we have the truth, we are right, all the rest are wrong' (cf. Bosch, 2000:36). Indeed, the challenge to tread the fine line between exclusion and exclusiveness and that of inclusion and acceptance becomes even greater in the reality of working in a diverse secular society. In this regard, an important role can be played by African Christians, especially women theologians/practitioners, on every level of the community development process – gleaning from the notion prevalent in African religion of no separation between secular and sacred – leaving no 'artificial' fissure between issues of belief and practice (cf. Phiri, 1997:75). This will be made possible by "[p]utting spirituality as the centre of the cycle of mission praxis acknowledges that all authentic mission [including the community transformation component][145] needs to be informed and shaped by a spirituality that is infused with the grace of the Holy Spirit" (Karecki: 2005:143).

- *What is common good? (And how does it impact n this work/the inclusion of spirituality in community development?)*

One of theology's focal contributions to praxis is truth, goodness and beauty as moral and ethical guidelines – as identified through the process of discernment[146] (cf. Osmer & Schweitzer, 2003:6). Although a fundamental preference for good is embedded in human nature and every human has "…the capacity to recognize the good, a capacity which natural law ascribes to God, no matter how one understands God" (Ndungane, 2003:69–70), a process of inclusive dialogue is needed to discern universal moral and spiritual truths (cf. Banawiratma, 2005:75).

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[145] Cf. Chapter 6, section 6.4: The proposed praxis framework.

[146] Cf. section 4.2.1 and footnote 11 referring to Bonhoeffer (in Osmer, 2008:138) on the two movements and a number of practices of discernment.

Arguing from the point of view that humanity is an universal community bound together by an eternal order by God as Author, Ndungane (2003:72) states that values – such as the sanctity of life; the dignity of each human being; the responsibility to demonstrate respect and care for the other person; and the expectation of being treated with respect and care by the other – are applicable to everyone. Bosch (1991:431) refers to the realisable universal guide to the truth and justice[147] – or "the lodestars indicating God's will and presence" – as being present/discernable "where people are experiencing and working for justice, freedom, community, reconciliation, unity and truth, in a spirit of love and selflessness," as opposed to a spirit of self-centrism, enslavement and enmity. Understanding faith, hope and love is made possible in a loving relationship with God where one's eyes are open for the co-existence of the paradoxes of our reality: love and hate; joy and sorrow; hope and despair; and body and spirit.

According to Ndungane (2003:72, 75), Paul founds his 'rules' on Scripture: God, being the source and definition of 'good', revealed the law (rules of 'good') in Jesus Christ (Acts 17:23–31).[148] Thus, far from being arbitrary, natural law "…confirms to the created order and to created human nature itself," involving God (who continuously creates); humans (being made in the image of God and who have free will); and a triune God (God existing in relationship) (Ndungane, 2003:72). Indeed, human actions towards good is only possible by God's grace. It could be argued that one such universally acceptable and applicable value exemplifying God's grace is the African concept of *ubuntu*. Nyembezi (in Ndungane, 2003:80) defines *ubuntu* as involving to live and care for others; to act kindly towards others; to be hospitable; to be just and fair; to be compassionate; to assist those in distress; to be trustworthy and honest; and to have good morals. Since '*ubuntu*-rules' are reconcilable with Scriptural values, it would be beneficial to, in the South African context, accept *ubuntu* as our indigenous contribution to the transformational community development praxis.[149]

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[147] According to Bosch (1991:431) "…the best models of contextual theology succeed in holding together in creative tension *theoria*, *praxis* and *poiesis* – or, if one wishes, faith, hope and love". He emphasises the importance of beauty *(poiesis)* and its rich resources of piety, worship, love, awe and mystery as "…partner to justice".

[148] Cf. Acts 17:23–27: Paul refers to the "Unknown God" as being God, the personal creator who made the world. In verse 29, Paul talks about God's command for repentance and about the day of judgement and the appointment of Jesus Christ in Acts 17:31: "For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed."

[149] Cf. section 4.3.4; *ubuntu* as integral concept to the 'spirituality from below' as indigenous contribution to praxis of community development.

▪ *What should we, as practitioners, do?*

Christian practitioners are challenged to commit themselves on two levels. Firstly, on a personal level, they have to have a personal relationship with God, be willing to be transformed to the image of Christ, and be open to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Secondly, on a praxis (or public) level, they are required to let this transformed self spill over into their interaction with people and communities.[150]

Thus, on the personal level, practitioners need the *discipline of gratitude*, going beyond 'mine' and 'thine' – the explicit effort to acknowledge that "…all I am and is given to me is a gift of love to be celebrated with joy" (Nouwen, 2010:87). The praxis of gratitude requires one to see beauty; to invite, bless, and be gentle to those who do not want to forgive one; to reach out to those who have rejected one; and to speak a word of healing or blessing to those who resent one or cannot reconcile (Nouwen, 2010:88). [151] Furthermore, practitioners need to see clearly (Smit, 2009:478) and to get to know 'the other' – since, once people get to know each other, transformation takes place and community is formed.

The role of the practitioner in a transformative process, also implies the *creation of space for the other to truly listen to their story,* as illustrated in the following situation. During a community project[152] workshop in Tembisa,[153] the 'project team' – a group of elderly people – were asked to share youth stories – recalling humorous things that happened to them when they were children. All had interesting, funny anecdotes to share, except one woman, who said that her story was sad. Here is her story, depicting her memory of life as a child on the farm where her parents were employed as farm workers:

> She recalled how, as a young black girl, she used to help her mother (who worked as 'kitchen girl' on the farm) with small tasks. One of her tasks was to fetch water from outside, carrying a large bucket and filling the sink tub for the farmer's wife's evening bath. Waiting in the kitchen, the wife would sit on a chair, with her husband (the farmer) standing next to her, the

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[150] Cf. Ndungane (2003:4–9): As practitioners we are to live in faith and gratitude; to make ourselves available and to participate in God's work (being co-creators); to study and raise awareness of issues; ask what need to be done; encourage initiatives; stimulate giving; encourage a culture of compassion giving and caring; and sacrifice something on a personal level – e.g. one meal per day.

[151] Cf. also Chapter 5, section 5.4.3.3: Role/ethos of the practitioner as healer in the community context.

[152] A group of elderly people, who had been part of a Bible study group for many years, had identified the need for a Club for the Elderly in their community to organise educational and recreational activities for the elderly – this was the first project planning session.

[153] A sizable township in Gauteng, with formal and informal housing, for mainly African South Africans.

sjambok[154] dangling from his hand. As she filled the tub, the wife would dip her toe into the water to test the temperature, frequently exclaiming, "This is too hot!" or "This is too cold!" With every exclamation, the farmer would hit the young girl with the *sjambok*, telling her not to be stupid and to "fix" the water. The woman – now in her seventies – said she no longer felt humiliation or anger, and has forgiven the farmer and his wife. She only wanted the researcher (the only white person present) and the co-facilitator Thembi Mphokeng, to hear her story. Even so, there were tears running down her cheeks as she concluded her story.[155]

Her story unfolded a sad reality shared by so many others – one of oppression, suffering, humiliation, pain inflicted upon 'the other' and dysfunctional relationships. Being the only white person present, the researcher could do nothing but step into the spaced opened up by the sharing of the story, and ask her (and the rest of the group) for forgiveness for the wrongs done to them, and the elderly lady's permission to embrace her. On which the group joined spontaneously in prayer and hymns before continuing with the project planning. Evident from this is the need for the practitioner to be sensitive toward the community's hurt, and to create a platform for the transformation of people and communities through inner or spiritual healing.

Referring to God's grace showing forth in human relationships, Graham (2009:20) states that "the primary language of theology is articulated in the practical wisdom of human care." Practitioners are challenged to – in providing practical care – display wisdom and are thus required to be deeply sensitive to the fabric of society and the hearts of people, heeding their beliefs, customs and deepest longings.[156] Encountering 'the other' practitioners have to tread softly, to be aware of the responsibility that accompanies the privilege to be allowed into another's sacred space, and of the fine line between 'healing' and 'development' and 'trespassing' or over-stepping the boundaries.[157]

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[154] A *sjambok* is a short heavy horsewhip.

[155] Story based on the verbatim input recorded during the workshop by the researcher.

[156] This need for sensitivity is illustrated in Chinua Achebe's best selling classic *Things Fall Apart*, where he relates the gripping story of Okonkwo, an important man in the Obi tribe in the days when white men first appeared on the scene. Chinua Achebe put these words in the mouth of one of his characters, voicing his feelings to Okonkwo after a villager's tragic death by hanging in accordance to the (Christian) white men's law: "*He [the missionary] has put a knife to the things that held us together and we have fallen apart. In the end ... Aneto was taken to Umuru and hanged. The other people were released, but even now they have not found the mouth with which to tell of their suffering*" (Achebe, 1958:125).

[157] Cf. "Do no harm" as one of the key principles of transformational development (Myers, 1999:125).

Besides the need for practitioners working with people and communities to be sensitive to the reality of people/communities; to acknowledgement of God's Word; to live in a personal relationship with God; to take a stance for justice and the liberation of people from oppression; and to have a Spirit-inspired vision; a final requirement for developing a transformative praxis, is "…a communal hermeneutic" (Kritzinger, 2002:159). Referring to Paul's prayer for the congregation in Ephesians 3:18 – praying that they will have a comprehension of Christ's all-inclusive love – Kritzinger postulates that, to understand all the dimensions of God/Christ's love, "…we need to interact with *all God's people* in open ecumenical fellowship" (:159). Although Kritzinger writes here in the context of church world mission, the concept of working inclusively, of seeing the work (in the community) as "a journey of learning and embrace" and as a pilgrimage through time and space, guided by the Spirit of God to continue the work He has started, should be a cornerstone in the work with communities.[158] The presence of God is universal not just in 'church communities' and therefore requires us to acknowledge that *all* work in *all* communities should be guided by the *all-inclusive love of God*. Agenor Brighenti (2008:524) heeds us to acknowledge "that the Holy Spirit has passed through the continent [of Africa] before the missionaries, and sowed seeds of the Word, that fructified in abundant fruit of the Kingdom of God, like hope, happiness, sharing and care of life and nature." Therefore, we are required to embrace and adopt Africans (and, for that matter all of humanity) as "brothers and sisters in the construction of another necessary and possible world, where there is room for everybody" (Brighenti, 2008:524). It is in this striving that communal prayer, worship and the "sharing of the bread of life and the cup of liberation" (Cochrane, et al., 1991:89) – the Eucharist – become crucial, as it represent a space where Christian communities share in God's concern for one another and celebrate life.[159]

In addition to providing the opportunity for sharing, the Eucharist – by presenting the visual symbols of Christ's death – reminds of the death and resurrection of Jesus for all. Thus, inviting Christians to respect and invite people with other faiths to come to the Table to cooperate for the good of all (cf. Kritzinger, 2002:170). Even as the inclusion of others

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[158] Kritzinger (2002:169) emphasises the 'invitation' aspect of the Eucharist: "[I]t is Christ who invites us to the Table; he does not command or threaten or bribe us to do so", but prepares an open grace-filled space where a communal spirituality and a *kenotic* life style can be nurtured. There is no Eucharist without true embrace and sharing – also or especially 'away from' the table where material and other resources within society then is equally shared (cf. Kritzinger, 2002:169; Cochrane, et al., 1991:81).

[159] Cf. section 4.3.5 on the Eucharist as embrace.

at the Eucharistic Table offers the opportunity to recognise and celebrate both the similarities and differences, it requires a hospitality which, says Brighenti (2008:519), is the most sacred of values on the African soil. Africans hold onto the sharing and solidarity even in the face of being impoverished, finding – amidst poverty and suffering – a reason to feast and to generate life. As such, the Eucharistic Table could be a powerful tool to bring the joy and hope of Christ to the people.

To recap: Deliberation of the questions *Where is God in this? What guidelines have been coming forward? What is 'common good' and how does it impact on the praxis of community development?* and *What should we (practitioners) do?* provided insights into and guidelines essential to the development of especially the spiritual healing component of the praxis framework (to be discussed in Chapter 6 section 6.4). More so, all Christian community development praxis should reflect God's intention for his creation, as exemplified in the life of Jesus. God shows his compassion for the suffering, the sick, the social outcasts, the poor, those harmed by unjust systems through the praxis of Jesus' words and actions. Therefore, the principle of compassion and a deep concern for and 'living with' those who are suffering should be central to all community development conceptualisation, planning and actions. Being offered a *kairos* moment, Christians (and the Church) urgently need to develop and apply new models for political, social and economical liberation: models of hope and trust that opens up new possibilities for growth and wellness for those suffering in despair.

In essence all community practices should reflect the friendship between God and his creation: God does not work in 'general' but individually with great care to the detail of each situation, each person. Such an 'individualised' approach to the praxis of community, is only possible it practitioners enter into it prayerfully, waiting and listening to the Word of God and for guidance form the Holy Spirit, or, to put it in other words, beholding the other through 'soft eyes'. This entails that each person (and community) will be recognised in their unique and distinctiveness, yet also irrevocably connected to the social setting (or context) into which he/she is born and socialised. Furthermore, there can be no separation between the secular and sacred – rather, spirituality is central to and informs and shapes all dimensions of human life and therefore of community development. Indeed, with spirituality as the axis, infusing all theory and actions, development is metamorphed into true transformation of individuals and communities and, finally, of society as a whole.

Finally, although a fundamental preference for good is embedded in human nature and every human has the capacity to recognize the good, it is only through a process of inclusive dialogue that universal moral and spiritual truths are discernable. In the African context, the *ubuntu*-concept, personifying care, kindness, hospitality, fairness, compassion, trustworthiness and honesty, serves as an example of a moral and spiritual truth and is reconcilable with Scriptural values of transformative community development praxis. A spirit-filled community practitioner would integrate such truths into her/his own being (through adhering to spiritual disciplines) and re-enact the example of Jesus: seeing goodness and beauty; being kind and respectful toward others; forgiving the other; reaching out to those in suffering and rejected; and 'standing in the gap' for those who have been unjustly treated.

4.5   Summary

Having focussed on the triune God – the Father (as creator and author of the covenant), Christ (and the cross), the indwelling of the Holy Spirit – and the 'new covenant' from the perspective of a spirituality of embrace, in the next chapter the movement is back into the praxis of community development, specifically the interface between 'people', 'development' and spirituality. In entering this space the practitioner need, apart from the theological norms to guide him/her, a more tangible framework, methodology and techniques to address the need for healing and restoration and the unlocking of people's inner strengths and spiritual resources, as exemplified in the proposed praxis framework for community transformation (outlined in Chapter 6). Bearing this in mind, in Chapter 5 – after reflecting on the outcome of the literature search indicating a disregard for the spiritual dimension in current community development approaches – the focus shifts to practical theology as conceptual space for transformational development and the aspect of spiritual or inner healing as strategy for working with people from various cultural backgrounds within the transformational development context.

CHAPTER 5

FROM PEOPLE-CENTREDNESS TOWARD CHRIST-CENTREDNESS: THE PRAXIS OF TRANSFORMATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The irony: good humanists work all their lives to improve the conditions of the disadvantaged, but for what? To raise them to the level of the upper classes so that they too can experience boredom, alienation and decadence? (Phillip Yancey, 2001:107).

From the very beginning the missionary message of the Christian church incarnated itself in the life and world of those who had embraced it (David Bosch, 1991:420).

5.1   Introduction

Having established the normative guidelines relevant to the praxis of transformative community development in the previous chapter, the focus remains on the normative task. Progressing to, in this chapter, reflect on how the diverse voices of social work community development and spirituality engage with the voice of practical theology to construct a praxis of integrative people and community development or transformation. And, in answer to the Osmerian questions "What should be going on according to Scripture?" and "How might this practice be shaped?" the foundation for a praxis framework incorporating the spiritual dimension is proposed.

The literature search covering recent tendencies in community development praxis revealed an engulfing secularity of current people and community development approaches, culminating in a disregard for the spiritual dimension of people and communities.[1] Yet, what crystallized both from the direct work with the target population (and sample groups),[2] as well as from the preliminary literature search,[3] was that people's relationship with God/Creator and with all of creation, could contribute significantly to an understanding of 'us' (human beings) in relation to the

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[1] Cf. Chapter 1, section 1.3; Chapter 5, section 5.2.4.1.

[2] Cf. Chapter 1, section 1.2; Chapter 3, section 3.5: Research participant feedback, e. g. when making the community maps or profiles during the capacity building sessions people voiced their disconnectedness to self, other, their environment and their Creator. Their stories related how these broken and distorted relationships in turn led to their sense of lack of identity, isolation, stagnation, desolation, hopelessness, disempowerment and 'futurelessness' (cf. also Chapter 2, section 2.2). Yet, FH1 & FH2 members emphasised the significance of their relationship with God (cf. Myers, 1999:26–27, 67, 71–72; Chapter 3, section 3.4.5: 'We are the hidden people'; section 3.4.5.8: 'God is with us in everyday life' (outcome of *Spiritual Map-exercise*).

[3] Cf. literature findings on the significance of individual's relationship with God (as key component of spirituality), e.g. Myers (1999:118) stating: "The central relationship in need of restoration is one's relationship with *the triune God*, the God of the Bible."

bigger picture. Such a focus on relationship could provide enlightening guidelines for the restoration of disconnected or severed relationships and lasting change.[4] Indeed, it would seem as if the answer to significant and sustainable work in the community is to acknowledge humanity's connection to God/the Creator and the inherently spiritual nature of all human beings. As Myers (1999:43) points out: "We are human beings created in the image of God … the relational God", and, since this is so, *self* can never be seen aside from "our being-in-communion with God and other human beings". Clearly, the transformation from a life of insignificance and 'meaninglessness' to a life of significance and well-being requires one to re-connect with God, other and self.

What is called for is a transformational approach. Such an approach would address what Myers (1999:43) refers to as "spiritual poverty" – people (and communities) suffering from broken and dysfunctional relationships with God, self, each other, community and creation. Transformational development will help individuals – and ultimately communities – to dispel the distortions that have marred their relationships, identities and their sense of dignity and meaning, inevitably changing the hearts of people and communities (cf. Myers, 1999:85–86; 115).

In Chapter 1, endeavouring to unravel the praxis of healing or transforming communities,[5] a crucial question was posed: "How does one do transformational development and heal broken relationships in a sensitive, appropriate and non-coercive way?" (cf. research questions Chapter 1, section 1.4; Myers, 1999:88). According to Myers (1999:113), a sensitive approach to transformational development begins with the community's articulation of their story and their understanding of the better future they wish to pursue – on a physical, social mental and spiritual level.

Accordingly, in this discussion the focus is firstly on community development from a people-focused perspective, presenting arguments derived from recent research and literature to argue the case for the inclusion of spirituality as an integral part of development. Secondly, a Christ-centred approach to development is explored as a means to integrate spirituality in community development – and eventually transformation. Given the South African context of this study, also reflected upon is the meeting of two worlds: Christian and indigenous African perspectives merging into a unique spirituality as backdrop for community development initiatives in South Africa.

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[4] Cf. Chapter 1, section 1.8.2: Fretheim (2005:19) referring to each creature being "…in symbiotic relationship with every other".

[5] Cf. the understanding of healing as component of well-being, as in Chambers referring to the objective of transformational development as "responsible well-being – as opposed to ill-being – for all". This includes the whole range of human experience: material, social, mental and spiritual (Myers, 1999:104–105).

Thirdly, it is argued that the field of practical theology provides the conceptual space for the praxis of development focussed on the 'healing' or transformation of people and communities (cf. footnote 5). Fourthly, the concept of spiritual healing as key intervention of people and community transformation is explored. The discussion of the proposed *relational praxis framework for people and community transformation* – with its main focus on the restoration of relationships in order to facilitate lasting change in the lives of people and communities – is discussed in Chapter 6.

5.2   Community development focussed on people

Although development involves "…literally millions of individuals who are indicated as being materially or spiritually in distress…", the 'solution' to this unfortunately is most often to endeavour to change their circumstances 'for the better,' as measured against the modernistic concepts of total satisfaction[6] of all human needs (Coetzee, 1986a:1). Concurring with Kothari and Minogue's statement that "[d]evelopment is ridden with paradoxes" (2002a:1), it could be argued that one paradox is the question of *who* is developed to *what intent*?[7] Another paradox is to be found in equalling 'successful outcome' of the investment of money and manpower in development, to economic growth. Even if in some instances 'increased development' (understood as increased economic growth) seems to result from such investments, relative and absolute poverty and inequality still thrive the world over. Coetzee (1986a:2) refers to the "…illusion of bettering their living conditions in per capita income", whilst concealing their actual needs. This only contributes to the gap between 'success' (those that have) and 'failure' (those that do not have) increasing rapidly (cf. Kothari & Minogue, 2002a:1; McLaren, 2007:5; Van der Berg, et al., 2007:1).

The context of this study is South Africa with its diversity of cultures and worldviews: on the one hand, a Western worldview with its distinct spiritual and material realms, and on the other, what Myers (1999:xvii) refers to as the "holistic spiritist" worldview of indigenous or traditional cultures. Given that one's worldview is crucial to determining one's response to development, it was important for the researcher to reflect upon this issue and on her own worldview as South African,[8] and, ultimately, her perception of community development. For the purpose of this study

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[6] Cf. Myers (1999:91–92) referring to "the three remaining horsemen of modernity … capitalism, science, and technology" still offering to save the poor, claiming that things *are* getting better. Yet despite these claims, capitalism "…carries within itself the limits of its own horizon" (:90) since it cannot with 'things' satisfy the deepest longings of the human heart.

[7] Cf. the question posed by Yancey (2001:107), quoted at the beginning of this chapter.

[8] Cf. Chapter 2, section 2.3: Researcher's worldview.

community development was considered from a holistic, integrated perspective with a focus on the development of people. Holistic or integrated development encompasses the five key relationships with self, others, God, community and the environment (Myers, 1999:118) and includes all aspects of human and community well-being: the economic, social, environmental, cultural, political and spiritual spheres (Frank & Smith, 1999:3; Ife, 1998:132).[9] Holistic community development is also about change – Frank and Smith (1999:6) refer to it as a "planned evolution" – happening as the result of the collective action of a group of people in a community choosing to find a mutual solution to a common or shared situation, need or problem.

5.2.1   Community development as 'freedom process'

In Chapter 1 reference has been made to Ife's statement that community development should been seen as "…an [integrated or holistic] ongoing and complex process of dialogue, exchange, consciousness-raising, education and action aimed at helping the people concerned to determine and develop their own version of community" (Ife, 1998:94). Conceptualising community development as a process 'determined by the community' immediately brings with it an awareness that there can be no single version of development – on the contrary, each community will have their own take on development. This alerts us to the fact that meaning is central to community development.

Meaning (as opposed to meaninglessness) is arrived at by individuals who are free to ask questions; to be alert to the "far-from innocent forces which shaped their lives and society" (Morrissey, 1997:67); and who are free to examine different options. Finding meaning is only possible once individuals have arrived at the willingness to critically question the powers which shaped the way we think (Morrissey, 1997:67–68). This ability to question is important, since it brings about the recognition that "the common-sense notions and assumptions 'which we absorb with our mother's milk' serve the interest of the dominant groups in society" (Morrissey, 1997:68), rather than the needs of the marginalised or powerless. It is only once people (in the community) enter into dialogue with others that they question these 'common-sense notions', embrace honesty, and find truth. Likewise, entering into dialogue with others is central when trying to establish what development entails and who it truly serves. Thus far a number of aspects critical to holistic development have been identified, namely the importance

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[9] Cf. Myers (1999:72) referring to the complex framework of interacting disempowering systems which holistic development needs to respond to: cultural, biophysical, personal, social and spiritual/religious systems.

of worldview in the response to development needs; the need for a people-driven, planned evolution; improved relationships and well-being as expected outcome; the centrality of the notion of 'finding meaning'; and the crucial role of dialogue in this process.

If people are to be free to examine different options in order to determine their own meaning, it follows that 'experiencing freedom' should be another key concept in holistic development. Nobel Prize winner Amartya Senn (1999:3) defines development as "a process of expanding the real freedoms that people enjoy". He argues that income alone cannot be an indicator of development (success/failure), as the creation of wealth in itself cannot be the end goal of development (Senn, 1999:8,107–109). The usefulness of wealth lies in the things it allows us to do, changing the lives we lead, and for this we need freedom in the political, social, security, transparency and spiritual spheres (Senn, 1999:14; Myers, 1999:72). The interconnectedness between these areas of freedom implies that 'unfreedom' in any one area (e.g. economical), could bring about that a person becomes the helpless prey to other unfreedoms, such as social or political unfreedom. Similarly, unfreedom in a spiritual sphere could directly impact on unfreedoms in the sphere of education or economy, e.g. people of a specific faith are not allowed to enrol their children in government schools or wear clothing displaying their religious preference in a work environment and are therefore discriminated against, thus 'unfree'. Only by expanding all our freedoms – by engaging with freedom's possibilities – can we make our lives richer and more unfettered, can we become fuller social persons, interacting and influencing the world in which we live more extensively (cf. Senn, 1999:298). Freedom encompasses all dimensions of human well-being and all levels of society – if the poor are not free, no-one is truly free. Or in the words of Desmond Tutu referring to the post-apartheid South African situation: *"[N]obody is really free; nobody will be really free until Blacks are free. Freedom is indivisible"* (Haws, 2009:481). But, as important, says Myers (1999:85; 88–89), is the 'freeing' of the oppressors/non-poor: as long as they suffer from their God-complex, the overwhelming 'powerfulness' – they are not free to expand the freedom of 'the other' (the poor).

From the above it could be argued then that, framed in a people-in-community perspective, development is the inclusive, people-driven planned evolution towards freedom in all spheres of community well-being, encompassing the economic, social, environmental, cultural, political and spiritual spheres or dimensions (cf. Frank & Smith, 1999:6; Senn, 1999:14; Ife, 1998:32). In essence, development consists of "an idea, an objective and an activity" (Kothari & Minogue, 2002a:12), requiring is an

extensive, inclusive process whereby the various role-players come together to take collective action and generate solutions to common issues, such as the expansion of freedoms and the improvement of relationships (cf. Senn, 1999:8; Myers, 1999:86–86). The process of underlying this 'expansion of freedom' is the enrichment of human life to encompass elementary capabilities such as being able to avoid deprivations such as starvation, under-nourishment, escapable morbidity and premature mortality, as well as enjoying freedoms that are associated with being literate and numerate, enjoying political participation and uncensored speech (Senn, 1999:36). Finally, freedom also includes a focus on the way different kinds of rights, opportunities and entitlements contribute to the expansion of freedom.[10]

These concepts of development (freedom, rights, opportunities, relationships and interconnectedness) allude to a living system – which can be transformed with regard to its patterns of organisation, structures embodying these patterns and the processes by which a living system takes in, modulates and creates output (Osmer, 2008:16–17). The individual is a diminutive but integral and inter-related part of the community as living system.[11] It follows that if the smallest part of the living system (the individual) experiences expansion of freedom, increased connectedness and improved well-being, it will flow over into the rest of the system (or larger community). An individual-in-community (or person-in-environment) focus emphasises that transformation will occur – not engineered by technical experts – but "humbly in small increments by individuals stepping out of isolation, enjoying connectedness and taking responsibility for their public lives" (Francis, 2002:91). This correlates with one of the basic tenets of development with a focus on people, namely that true development is bottom-up, starting on grassroots level with individuals. Even so, as Davids (2005a:23–25) suggests, since there is a plethora of definitions[12] for development – giving cause to numerous interpretations and assumptions – one solution is to use a conceptual parameter such as 'development is about people'. This will narrow down the scope of development and provide a broad framework on which to base one's approach, as is outlined in the next section.

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[10] Failure to focus on these key issues of development could result in further decline, as illustrated in Myers' (1999:6) statement: "Poverty is a result of relationships that do not work, that are not just, that are not for life, that are not harmonious or enjoyable."

[11] Cf. Chapter 1, section 1.8.2.

[12] Director of the People-Centered development Forum, David Korten's definition is one of the more helpful definitions, as he focuses on people-centeredness as opposed to economic growth-centred development: "[People-centred] development is a process by which the members of a society increase their personal and institutional capacities to mobilize and manage resources to produce sustainable and justly distributed improvements in their quality life consistent with their own aspirations" (1990:67).

5.2.2 *People-centred development: Purpose and attributes*

The main purpose of people-centred development could be seen as the creation of opportunities to allow people to increase their capacities and grow towards equity and well-being, within the complexities of their relationships.[13] Objectives or steps towards reaching this goal would include the strengthening of the ability of communities to respond to their needs; identifying and addressing causes of social issues; and mobilising of people's potential and creativity by increasing their self-reliance and decision-making power. It also includes increasing people's self-esteem, self-confidence and enhancing social contact and mutual support. Other objectives are to improve compassion – being tolerant and accepting of differences – by building a sense of community belonging and community cohesion; and developing sustainable and just social systems. Lastly, the objectives could also include the enhancement of 'deep literacy' (referring to people's ability to reflect and fight back) and the development of a consciousness of spiritual values on a personal and community level. Ultimately, all objectives aim to contribute toward reaching a level of greater freedom in all spheres of life (cf. Chambers, 1994:1255, 1266; Department of Community Development 2007:3, 8; Frank & Smith, 1999:8–10; Freire, 2006:64–66; Ife, 1998:132; Myers, 1999:96–97; Senn, 1999:36; Stehlik & Chenoweth, 2005:2). The scope of community development initiatives will differ, but the basic pre-requisites are that it should be long-term, well-planned, sustainable, inclusive, equitable, holistic and integrated, and finally, initiated and supported by and beneficial to the community it envisages serving.[14]

Development for people (people-centred development) has certain distinguishing integral attributes, of which the following were incorporated in the approach followed during the field work and consequently impacted on the praxis framework described in Chapter 6, section 6.4. The first three attributes to feature are those of meaning,

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[13] Cf. Chapter 1, section 1.8.2: Korten's (1984:67) definition of development, emphasizing the process, capacity building, justness and sustainability; Myers' (1999:96) notion that development should be consistent to the people's expectations.

[14] In the local context the focus on people centred development was heralded by "the release of Nelson Mandela in February 1990 [ushering] in an era of socio-political change in South Africa" (Davids, 2005b:43). After coming into power in April 1994, the ANC acknowledged that firstly, people should be empowered so that they can become self-reliant; and secondly, that the initiation of participatory development programmes and projects are essential to help redress the injustices of the past (culminating in the severe poverty of mainly Black South Africans) (Davids, 2005b:42–43). Further support was given to the socio-economic policy development objectives by Chapter 2 of the South African Constitution (Act 108 of 1996) giving South African citizens political, civil, social and economical rights, such as the right to housing sanitation food health care, water and social economic security, education, and a clean healthy environment.

control and freedom – grounded in the perspective of development as freedom process, discussed in the foregoing section.

- *Meaning as essence of human well-being*

Development for people has to do with the "restoration of meaning" (Coetzee, 1986b:106). In response to meaninglessness, development strives to give or restore meaning, starting on the micro-level – the level of individuals. No-one can interpret 'meaningfulness' on behalf of someone else – individuals have to articulate their own concept of what it comprises (for them) to move to a phase (or level) of life that is more humane or meaningful. Any development effort has the dual tasks to allow people to venture on their search for meaning – letting them tell their stories – and then to base its efforts on what is meaningful to the people who are the focus of the development initiative (cf. Davids, 2005a:23; Kirsten, 2004c:13). The attempt to discover meaning involves, according to Freire (2006:53), a reflection upon one's life and how it inter-relates with those of others: It is "in old weavings, facts, and deeds of childhood, youth, and maturity, in my experiences with others, within the events…" that our lives become meaningful. When people are given the opportunity to tell the painful stories of their past – and in doing so face the truth together in a spirit of grace and reflection – they can discover together what to do now, where to go next and how to move forward.[15] Together they can work toward finding new meaning (and a new metanarrative) in an otherwise broken and disconnected world (cf. McLaren, 2007:21–23).

- *Control in the hands of the community*

In people-centred development control should not be in the hands of 'the other' (outsider, government, business) but with the community, since it has a core-focus "*to assist people to control their own development …* to increase the capacity of individuals and communities to initiate, plan, implement and manage their own development on a sustainable and independent basis" (Honey, Thomas & Davidson, 1992:215, 224). Being able to control one's own life, can only become a reality if one has the freedom to do so. This implies that human rights will be respected and that the community members will increasingly have the ability to control the transformation of their lives and community (cf. Coetzee, 1986b:88; Weaver, Rock & Kusterer, 1997: 29–30).

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[15] Cf. Chapter 3, section 3.4.5.4: The life-changing impact of the *Stroytelling*-exercise during the FH1/FH2 retreats.

- *Creating freedom and increasing capacity*

Creating freedom goes hand in hand with increasing the community's capacity for controlling their present and future. Freedom, in the words of Freire (1998:90), implies the freedom to work, eat, dress and sleep in a house, to support oneself and one's family, to express oneself (emotions, thoughts, needs), to be educated and to participate in vocational, social, religious/spiritual and political activities of one's choice. Individuals should be free to pursue all of these rights without fear or intimidation, and the necessary policies and structures to impose those policies should be in place (Weaver, et al., 1997:30). Although freedom is inclusive, it comes with responsibility – in the words of Nelson Mandela (2010:1): *"For to be free is not merely to cast off one's chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others"*. Development focusing on people, strives to find ways of creating this (responsible) freedom on all levels of community. Respecting people's cultural understanding, listening to their narratives and definitions of freedom and learning from them with regard to the 'how to' create freedom, allow not only for building their capacity, but also for building into their sense of being in control of their 'now' and of their future.[16] It is the opposite of oppression, which describes to people what they should want and how they should live. To recognise people's ability to envision their future and to find creative strategies for realising their dreams, is to set them free from the shackles of oppression.[17]

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[16] An incident related by Paulo Freire (who worked primarily among the illiterate poor and began to embrace the non-orthodox form of what could be considered liberation theology) serves as an illustration of the importance to understand freedom in the various communities and contexts of development. Freire (2006:12–14) shares his experience as young researcher studying the relationships of parents with their children, asking questions about punishment, rewards and the children's reaction toward the punishment and consequent behavioural change. What astonished him was the difference between the emphasis in (violent) corporal punishment found in the inner-city of Recife (the capital of the State of Pernambuco, Brazil) and in the almost total absence thereof in the rural areas along the fishing coast. Here the fishermen's emphasis on freedom, conditioned by their cultural context, seems to be integral to their way of living: "[T]he fishers are simply relying on nature itself, on the world, on the sea, in and with which their children win an experience of themselves, to be the source of freedom's necessary limits. It was as if, softening or trimming down their duty as their children's educators, fathers and mothers shared them with the sea, with the world itself, to which it would fall, through their children's practice to delineate their responsibilities. In this fashion, the children would be expected to learn naturally what they might and might not do" (:13).

[17] Cf. Chapter 3, section 3.4.3, demonstrating how, as an unexpected outcome of the FH1-capacity building sessions, the sample group members invited a local councillor to address the international visitors on the topic of unfair treatment of labourers on farms owned by non-South African citizens.

- *Human potential, creativity and wisdom*

Development should allow for the notion that people should grow toward the realisation of human potential, creativity, wisdom (cf. Korten, 1984:300; Ife, 1998:96 Myers, 1999:91–92, 98; Frank & Smith, 1999:79). It requires from the 'developer' to come in not as the expert, but in humbleness, assisting people to articulate their own needs, insights and wisdom – thus contributing to their own growth and in "gathering of wisdom"   (Stehlik & Chenoweth, 2005:10; cf. Ife, 1998:96). The interaction between developer and community is one of reciprocating:

> [W]e mean using our reflective practice to come to a deeper understanding as to what works … [by] learn[ing] from each other and from our communities. We should also be open to ideas that do not necessarily 'fit' with our own world views. This is where the important component of reciprocity emerges. By working with people, by establishing trust and enabling empowerment, we are also in the active process of reciprocating. By drawing on others' wisdom, we build our own. By not having all the answers, by practising a little humility at times, innovative practice emerges (Stehlik & Chenoweth, 2005:10).

According to Ife (1998:96) true wisdom is forthcoming 'from below'. However, structures of domination resulted in legitimising the 'wisdom of the dominant groups' (senior managers, politicians, academics, the Christian Church leaders and media personalities) (Ife, 1998:96). Therefore, an essential component of community development – focused on the empowerment of people – requires the acknowledging of the wisdom of the oppressed and their right to define their own needs and aspirations; and their empowerment to share that wisdom in the public and political domain (cf. Ife, 1998:96). This is especially significant when working with oppressed groups, such as indigenous people, women, ethnic minorities or people with disabilities (Ife, 1998:95–98; Myers, 1999:190–192).[18]

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[18] Cf. Myers' (1999:190–192) stance on listening to the "voices that are not easily heard" – e.g. those of women and children – as critical to the transformation of community. Not only do women have a "disproportionate share of the productive work relating to the family and community", but they are extensively involved in key areas of development (:190). Women also bring intuitiveness and openness about "God at work" in everyday activities such as getting food and in restoring relationships (:190). Children should be involved if for no other reason that they are the future, and, given that "most life-shaping decision, including faith decisions, are made before the age of eighteen", could significantly contribute into shaping a better future if enabled to make more informed decisions (:191). Thus, children should be seen and listen to as potential 'agents of transformation' providing hope for a better future for all (:192).

- *Inter-connectedness of human beings and creation*

People-centred development acknowledges and respects the inter-connectedness of humans – with one another (also on global level), with creation, and with the Creator. On a human level, it encourages diversity of culture – complementing and enriching each other (Harman, 1984:17). On the level of person-environment, Gray (1984:78) foresees a highly satisfactory outcome,

> If [practitioners in development] would be humble enough to work with and alongside natural systems of which we are a part to design our human systems so responsively, so sensitively that we do with nature what we cannot do alone … shine, simmer and dance in a healthy symbiosis of those who together enjoy the goodness of creation.

Similarly, Fretheim's (2005:93) description of our creation in the image of God *and* as particles/dust of this earth, emphasises the 'naturalness' of this interconnectedness and our balanced interdependence and interdependence.[19]

- *Centrality of relationships*

Relationships are the foundation of social networks – operating within families, between families and within communities (Stehlik & Chenoweth, 2005:4). Indeed, authentic development is shaped or distorted by power, gender, ethnic and race relationships (Davids, 2005a:24). Nurturing relationships are established through dialogue, encouraging exchange, agreement and partnership. To succeed, dialogue should be founded on love, humility, faith and hope. Hope, according to Freire (1987:62), "…is rooted in our human incompleteness, from which we move out in constant search, a search which we can carry out only in communication with other people". In other words, we need dialogue to establish mutual trust in our relationships and we need relationships with other people to 'develop' into more complete human beings.

- *Nurturing of hope*

People-centred development is more than a means of improving one's material circumstances – it encompasses a vision of transformation and salvation (Coetzee, 1986a:8) and therefore generates hope. In addressing the "tumult of the soul" (Freire,

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[19] Cf. Christopher Wright's (2010:54–44) explanation of the Hebrew word for 'man' as *adam*; for 'soil' as *ădamah:* so, "…we are indeed 'earth-creatures', formed by the dust of the earth, and sharing the same basic 'stuff' …as all of the other creatures and the planet itself." We need to understand that the environment (earth) cares for us, but it also suffers with us if we life carelessly.

2006:24) – i.e. helping people to rebuild or restore their dreams – development becomes the focal point of people's aspirations or hope. People-centred development creates hope as it focuses not on weaknesses, poverty, and misery, but on the inherent capabilities and strengths. Hope-creating development can be seen as similar to "allowing life to flow through one rather than forcing it to a mould the will has already shaped…" (Gray, 1984:83).

- *Seeking alternative paradigms*

Ife (1998:98–99) lists a number of reasons why a utopian vision or "light on the hill" is called for to serve as a source of inspiration, providing a framework for interpreting and seeking alternative paradigms. Under the present circumstances it is quite obvious that the existing order cannot continue for very much longer – as the economic social and political order is blatantly unsustainable, as echoed in McLaren's (2007:5) 'suicide machine' theory[20] proposing that civilisation is on a self-destruction trend. Inevitably, change is about to happen and in some instances already taking place, opening the way for different, innovative and radical alternatives. Some of these changes take place at grassroots level, and are often unacknowledged, but nevertheless represent a turning away from stale mainstream structures. One such alternative 'hope-generating' initiative is that of *Farming God's Way*.[21] Practiced in a number of countries (e.g. South Africa, Lesotho, Zambia and Malawi), *Farming God's Way* not only provides food and work opportunities, but encourages cooperation and self-sufficiency, and, maybe most important of all, gives people a sense of esteem and self-fulfilment.[22]

- *'Outsider' involvement or external input*

Based on practice experience Frank and Smith (1999:21) comment that, even though communities may appear to have the characteristics that support community development, often there is no community development initiative or plan in place. They reason that this is due to the fact that "…the conditions that support community development are not, in and of themselves, enough to initiate community development"

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[20] Cf. Chapter 5, section 5.2.1, p. 213: McLaren's concept of the 'suicide machine' .

[21] Based on the proven techniques of conservation agriculture, Farming God's Way (FGW) is a 'hands on' way of farming, usually implemented by the local church, using principles of inclusivity and participation. The actual practice, based on the principles of zero tilling, no wastage and excellent management, involves that community farmers are trained and encouraged to utilise material and labour available in the immediate area (cf. personal visit to and discussion with director/field instructor, Foundation for Cross-cultural Education (FCE), Masaiti, Zambia, June 2008; Care of Creation, 2010, website: Kenya.careofcreation.net/what-we-do/farming-gods-way/).

[22] Ver Beek (2000:35) refers to the link between people's spirituality and their agricultural practices and the role religion plays in people's acceptance of agricultural innovation.

(:21). What is needed is a spark or catalyst: anyone (frequently an 'outsider') who believes change is possible and is willing to take the first steps needed to initiate action. This usually include asking questions, engaging in dialogue, gaining data and creating a vision of what is possible – thus inspiring the interested community members to become actively involved in taking the first steps towards change. It can be argued that, to ensure the momentum and lasting impact of the development process, an external change agent, such as a trained community member or indigenous worker, is essential for the facilitation of the mobilisation and organisation of the human and environmental resources. Chambers (1994:1255) stresses that the outsider's attitude should at all times be one of watching, listening and learning in order to encourage and allow the local people to dominate, to determine the agenda, to gather, to express and analyse information and to plan. In other words, to be aware of the needs and pace of the insiders so as to be able to gently facilitate the process in the direction they have chosen.

▪ *Reflecting on the tension between what is and what ought*

People confronted with the 'good news' of development should have a right to decide for themselves whether they agree with 'what ought to be' – and have the freedom to reject the development proposals if it does not concur with their concept of what ought to be. The creation of a "valued local process"[23] (Frank & Smith, 1999:30) will greatly contribute to ensuring that the 'ought to be' is owned by the community, thus easing the process with which the community overcome the tension between what is and what ought to be. This will ensure that the community see the development initiative as their process, with their involvement, drawing on their knowledge, input and leadership, and producing results that will benefit and suit them.

It is only realistic to anticipate that not all community members will be positive toward a proposed initiative and to reflect upon the reasons why they may feel threatened by it. Once these 'opponents' have been identified, the discord and division may be overcome by providing information or explanations that will respond to their possible concerns, keeping them well-informed with regard to the process and possible

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[23] Creating a 'valued local process' entails building on understanding your community; learning from other community development success stories; learning from past efforts that have not worked well; recognising the efforts, knowledge, skills and abilities of all involved; and being responsive and flexible so that the process can evolve (Frank & Smith, 1999:30).

outcome and benefits, by seeking for shared interests, and by inviting them to participate and co-operate (cf. Frank & Smith, 1999:30–31).[24]

- *Diversity and inclusivity*

Working inclusively with diverse communities entails reflecting on the totality of systems involved – from the micro-level (individuals from a variety of cultural backgrounds, beliefs, interests, talents, abilities) to that of the macro-level (various institutions, political parties, etc.). One of the considerable challenges is to find common ground and symbiosis in the midst of the diversity. Integrated (people-centred) development will not over-emphasise economics at the expense of ecology, culture, religion, or family structure and the psychological dimensions of existence (Toffler, 1984:26). Neither should one cultural or interest group be the 'exclusive' focus of development, but rather involve a cross-section of community members (Frank & Smith, 1999:16). The emphasis is on the value of diversity and inclusivity – the willingness to work alongside people who are different from you, to respect them, to learn from and grow with them, to value all contributions and utilise the differences in reaching new creative and inclusive solutions (Morrissey, 1997:39).[25]

- *Global nature of development issues*

It is imperative to acknowledge that development is a global issue and not solely a 'Third World' [sic] issue. Davids (2005a:23) states that the 'First World's' attitude about and practices of "[u]rbanisation, pollution, environmental degradation, HIV and AIDS, unfair trading practices and economic expansionism … are as much a form and cause of underdevelopment as the hunger, conflict and poverty in some African, Asian and Latin American societies." Similarly, Freire (2006:3) argues that the role of the 'First World' [sic] in the "injustices, abuses, extortion, illicit profits, influence of peddling, the use of offices and positions for the satisfaction of personal interests" cannot go uncorrected or be negated, but needs to be addressed and rectified.

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[24] It is here too that Freire's concept of "informed dialogue" has a place: people in communities have to be given the opportunity to voice their opinion, to be heard (without judgement), but also have to be educated into the 'reading of the world' – in other words, in reflecting upon other opinions and views (Freire, 2006:66–67).

[25] One way of obtaining inclusivity in Africa, is by means of a *kgotla. Kgotla* is an indispensable resource in social efforts in terms of involvement of the masses in decision-making, especially in village life. In Botswana the *kgotla* (consisting of the chief and the people in the village) is the central decision-making body where all present discuss community affairs and engage in planning by identifying need and priorities (Osei-Hwedie, 2003:6).

Another compelling argument for taking a global perspective on development is that of environmental care. The fact that the United States "cut down most of its forests during its development phase, [but] now argues that developing countries should conserve their forests", highlights the tension between achieving economic development while applying environmentalists' criteria (Weaver, et al., 1997:37). McLaren (2007:5) likens the global crises that surround us to the image of "a suicide machine … that co-opts the main mechanisms of our civilization – our economic, political, and military systems – and reprograms them to destroy those they should serve". This takes place by creating a society where the desires for prosperity, security and equity are driven to such a degree that it becomes unhealthy and unsustainable. For instance the hunger for prosperity compromises agriculture, manufacturing, transportation and ultimately the earth: to still the hunger a small percentage of the world's population is caught up in over-production and over-consumption, whilst the larger percentage (the poor) suffers the consequences. Harman (1984:16) warns that:

> [One of the] obsolete concept[s] that needs replacing is the concept of development toward a mass-consumption/full-employment society … the planet could not support that much mass-consumption society. We need the alternative approach: human development surpassing economic development in importance; development based on native cultural roots rather than substitution of an alien western culture.

To summarise, development can be likened to a forest: in an approach to development with people as its focus, each individual tree (representing an individual in the community) contributes to the formation of the forest. These contributions are all the more valuable if those 'who live in the forest' (and who will benefit) are involved from the very onset, forming part of the discussions and decision-making process regarding the need for a forest, the cultivation of the land for the planting of the trees and in the actual actions of cultivating the soil and planting the trees. A variety of trees could be planted – and there may be different requirements for tending these trees, similar to the different requirements and needs of individual community members. Yet, to reach the goal of cultivating a forest, an inclusive process is called for. Indigenous people may be able to bring a great deal of wisdom, experience and prior knowledge (e.g. rainfall, soil type) to the table, but the help of knowledgeable outsiders is likely to be needed. The sustainability of the forest will to a degree be dependent on what is happening on a global level, e.g. will the community be encouraged to have a long-term vision for the forest with multiple usages, or will they be urged to harvest (fell the trees) for wood production as soon as possible?

The 'cultivation' (or development) of healthy communities is a never-ending process of transactions between different groups of people and between people and the environment, ultimately striving for the best 'fit' (cf. Gitterman & Germain, 2008:52, 55). The inter-relatedness of human beings with one another and with their environment is emphasised throughout this transactional process. Individual needs, capabilities, wisdom, and aspirations on the one hand and, on the other, the resources, demands and opportunities characteristic of the environment are the two sets of factors which are on the table in the negotiation process to ensure well-being for people and the environment alike. It is clear from the preceding discussion that with a people-centred focus, the aspect of all-encompassing participation is crucial.

5.2.3   Indigenous participation in development

Participation – the freedom to active involvement in the activities, processes and structures of development – of everyone in the community is what is strived for in community development. The more people participate at the highest end of the scale of involvement,[26] the greater the likelihood that the ideals of full ownership and inclusivity will be realised. What is called for is a range of participatory activities to allow people to contribute in their unique ways. Ife (1998:198) has three suggestions to 'channel' participation: by offering people opportunities to learn and practise the skills needed to participate in those activities traditionally reserved for 'white, middle class men'; to change the nature of the activities and processes, incorporating local or indigenous processes (e.g. *kgotla*)[27] with which the people are more familiar and at ease to participate in; and by valuing all activities as equal (e.g. teaching sewing skills or cooking a meal is of equal value as chairing a meeting). Another effective tool for obtaining participation is by inviting the community to 'in their own voice' describe the change that is happening in their community. The community is given the opportunity to describe itself, define its own priorities and set its own goals and share the successes (Wheeler, et al., 2004:8). An attitude of being willing to listen to their stories conveys the 'outsider's' invitation to participate in the development process.

Apart from emphasising the community's inherent strengths and assets, being open to 'hear the voice of the people' is fundamental to a number of integral components or functions of participation. This includes a transformative function seeking to change

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[26] *The Participation Pyramid* (Kirsten 2005:99) depicts the continuum of participation ranging from the least 'involved participation' with community members as 'passive listeners', information givers, consultants, co-workers, interactive partners to the most involved participation of 'self mobilisation'.

[27] Cf. section 5.2.1, footnote 25.

fundamental societal structures and relationships "… in order to redress inequality and redistribute power … an educative function which raises the consciousness of its participants and a plan for action to improve the quality of their lives" (Cassano & Dunlop, 2005:1).

Osei-Hwedie (2003:4–5) refers to the essence of participation as "the exercising of voice and choice". This calls for activating the educational function of development through the sharing of information to increase participants' understanding of relevant issues; consultation with participants to inform them and seek their opinions on key issues; decision-making which improves their 'power range', and initiation of action. 'Developmental participation' becomes a reality once the stage is reached where the community has the ability to generate and implement self-initiated actions or solutions. The achievement of this level of participation requires the building of human and social capacity to increase the community's input in identifying and/or responding to the initial impetus or sign, their sharing of information and opinions, and their active input in decision-making and co-operative management. When this is accomplished, transformation of societal structures and relationships become a reality as an outcome of participative development.

Participative development is sensitive to the fact that we (as practitioners or researchers) are outsiders participating in the activities that belong to the community. The outsider (community development practitioner, facilitator or researcher) brings knowledge and expertise, but so do groups and communities with whom we work – their expertise (i.e. indigenous knowledge, know how) should be honoured, respected and utilised (Cassano & Dunlop, 2005:6). Accessing the insider-knowledge and information is more pronounced in cross-cultural work. The facilitator/community practitioner or researcher has to negotiate access to insider information and cultural meaning, casting aside stereotypical perceptions and attitudes – thus acknowledging and valuing 'the insiders' as equal partners (cf. Cassano & Dunlop, 2005:3; Sacco, 1999:3).

Examples of diverse viewpoints which could be potentially straining are firstly, constant reminders voiced by indigenous or insider members of community, to 'warn' outsiders (non-community practitioners) that they are ignoring the spiritual dimension of human interaction and of community – regarded as central by the indigenous people[28] (cf. Ife, 1998:131; Myers, 1999:141–142). A second example is the African

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[28] According to Hiebert, the 'middle or centre' of the circle of human experiences consists, for indigenous people, of a world of "…spirits, gods, demons, and ancestors", an unseen world presenting a challenge to development practitioners with Western worldviews (Myers, 1999:142).

perception that there is no division between the sacred and profane or between the spiritual and the material areas of living. Oppose to this African view of life constituting a single undifferentiated whole and the cherished principle of inclusion rather than separation, Western thinking embraces materialism, dualism (emphasising the distinction between the secular and the sacred) and individualism (cf. Sacco, 1999:1–2).

Heeding these potential constraints and acknowledging that development with a focus on people implies that *all* people – also those who are seen as indigenous – should be included in the development framework, the question is: What is the impact of the acknowledging and utilisation of 'indigenous' people in community development?

Ntusi's (1992:2) study on indigenous workers confirms the significant role of indigenous workers and networks in meeting the survival needs of rural communities (cf. Myers 1999:144–145). According to the Institute for Indigenous Theory and Practice (1992:4) the contribution of indigenous workers to planning and policy may be the difference between programmes that work and those that do not succeed.[29] This may be attributed to the fact that indigenous workers are those who are 'in tune' with the community and the people to be served, being able to utilise their knowledge and sensitivity of their community and culture in building the future of that community. Ife (1998:96) points out that these people, such as the Aboriginal people of Australia and the Maori of Aoreatoa, have shown that it is possible to live in harmony with natural resources by incorporating ecological values and adhering to trusted spiritual values and social structures. Odora Hoppers (2002:13) refers to indigenous knowledge as providing "the missing pieces" to make whole the partial or incomplete framework for societal development.

Although it is most common to define as 'indigenous' those who have as part of themselves the values, traditions, customs and stories of their families and communities, the Institute for Indigenous Theory and Practice states in their Special Report (1992:4) that 'indigenous' could also refer to "…those who have completed training which provides professional credentials". Thus both the specialists/professionals and the community members/indigenous workers should be given the opportunity to become

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[29] The fieldwork for this study confirmed Ntusi's findings: the pre-study carried out in the community of Franschhoek clearly indicated a lack of inclusion of the local leaders (e.g. indigenous helpers and community leaders) in previous programmes/projects as one of the key factors for non-sustainability of community initiatives. Therefore it was deemed crucial in the choice of sample group members, to reflect 'indigenous representation' (cf. Chapter 3, section 3.4.2).

focused on and equipped for a creative, participatory, people driven approach to development, as has been the case in this study.[30]

Apart from drawing on the indigenous people's 'insider-understanding' of the situation at hand, acknowledging people's inherent abilities and potential affirms that which is already taking place.[31] Furthermore, indigenous wisdom is free — no money can buy potential or creativity or wisdom — and opposes the assumption of scarcity, so prevalent in an 'economic development' paradigm (Francis, 1998:90). One of the built-in benefits from working with what is already available, is the fact that by acknowledging indigenous wisdom and knowledge you are re-connecting people to their broader community and environment. Kgarimetsa (1992:1) states that indigenous helping networks exist in the most 'undeveloped' rural areas, where "…individuals and groups of individuals … offer help to their friends, relatives and neighbours out of concern for other people's suffering". Being thus linked to each other in supporting networks, people start to take control over themselves and their environment — in Africa described with the concept of *letsema,* referring to "taking responsibility for one another and your environment" (Qalinge, 2003:1). The FH1 sample group's Parent to Parent Training initiative exemplifies this linking up to establish an inclusive and extensive support network.[32]

Community development practitioners have to learn from the community, says Chambers (1991b:3). This requires a shift in attitude from "We can help others" to one of "How can we discover by listening to and learning from them what we can contribute to the process of improving the degree of human dignity and quality of life for all of us?" By 'handing over the stick' practitioners learn from, with and by those whom they seek to develop — eliciting and using their criteria and categories, discovering the wealth of their experiences,[33] indigenous technological 'know how' and the heart of their expectations (Chambers, 1991b:3; Streeten 1991:37; Kgarimetsa, 1992:14). It is through the very process of providing community members the opportunity to share their insights that they experience growth, learning and a growing sense of taking control over their own lives and circumstances.

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[30] Cf. Chapter 3, section 3.5.3: Sample groups making decisions regarding the focus of community projects to be initiated as outcome of the study.

[31] Cf. Chapter 4, section 4.3.4: Example of the Lanquedoc community used to demonstrate how the indigenous knowledge of the sample group members was crucial in determining what was happening in the various communities — and thus for the planning of the projects (resulting form the research).

[32] Cf. Chapter 3, section 3.5.3: Parent to Parent Outreach.

[33] Cf. Chapter 4, section 4.3.5.3: *Co-operative Storywriting* were the indigenous people's experiences served as the raw material for the stories to be used as baseline for the project initiated as outcome of the development input from the 'outsiders' (in this case the researcher and local government).

In summary: Utilising indigenous wisdom and knowledge, is one of the basic principles of participative development – it sets the table for working 'bottom up', rather than 'top down' and for 'handing over the stick', rather than coming in as the 'expert'. Extending an invitation to all to participate in the development process, calls for a redefining of the concept participation. The relationship between outsiders and community members is complex, but the ideal of the subject-subject relationship should remain as a crucial component of the participatory process. Outsiders should be aware of the knowledge they possess, the choices they make in applying that knowledge, and of the impact of their emotions and values on those choices (Cassano & Dunlop, 2005:3). This requirement – to reflect on one's motives, actions and contributions – is even more relevant to those 'outsiders' who come from one of the social service professions or the ministry. As representatives of these professions one is charged to do no harm, implying that one has to be "cognizant about our motivations, speech and actions" (Moore, 2006:8).[34] Practitioners have to consider how the nature of their participation in community development hinders or helps the community, reflecting upon the questions (cf. Ife, 1998:13, 173): *Are we honouring the complexity of human experience and interaction? Are we taking cognisance of the multi-dimensional nature of community development?*

5.2.4   *The unexplored spiritual dimension of community development*

Jim Ife points out that, rather than following a multi-dimensional approach to development, many community development initiatives tend to favour one dimension while ignoring others. For example, community development which has its roots in conventional social work often concentrates on the provision of services such as a women's refuge or early childhood education, while community development which has its roots in the economical arena, will concentrate on the provision of job creation or housing to raise a community's level of expenditure (Ife, 1998:131). Such 'preferential' approaches fails to acknowledge the holistic nature of community, "…ignores the richness and complexity of human life and of the experience of the community", and is highly likely to fail (Ife, 1998:131). Ife lists six dimensions of development, namely social, economic, political, cultural, environmental and personal/spiritual, and states

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[34] Cf. Myers (1999:125) who describes one of the key principles of transformational community development as "that we do no harm", listing a number of 'good' actions and attitudes that could cause harm to communities if not executed with an attitude of sensitivity and 'listening to the people', e.g. targeting specific groups; preferential solidarity with one group above others; introducing resources without necessary consultation and sensitivity.

emphatically that it is critical to take all six dimensions of community development into account to arrive at a truly healthy and functioning community (:132–133).

One dimension of people's lives which has been demonstrated to play a significant role in development-related decisions and actions, is that of spirituality (cf. Chapter 1, section 1.3; Chapter 3, sections 3.2 & 3.4.5.2;[35] Ver Beek, 2000:31, 36; Sacco, 1999:1-3; Ife, 1998:131). In addition, many of the most successful, radical and innovative community development initiatives have had their roots in the church or faith-based organisations (Ife, 1998:134). Despite this, little attention is given to the spiritual dimension in development literature and theory (cf. Ver Beek, 2000:31, 36– 38; Chapter 1, section 1.3). Ver Beek (2000:36) states:

> Given the apparently integral link between spirituality and issues central to development, it would seem reasonable that spirituality would occupy a relatively prominent place in development theory and practice. However, the subject is conspicuously under-represented in development literature and in the policies and programmes of development organisations.

In the next section an overview of arguments for the exclusion of spirituality is given, followed by a discussion of practice experiences and research findings compelling the inclusion.

5.2.4.1 Arguments for the non-inclusion of spirituality

There are a number of possible factors contributing to the 'dismissal' of the spiritual dimension in development theory and practice. A primary contributing factor for the avoidance of the topic of spirituality in development theory and practice, is the fact that many practitioners (and those they work with) are *not clear on the difference between religion and spirituality* – mostly due to the fact that these concepts are often not clearly defined, frequently seen as synonyms and almost always as related (cf. Koenig, 2007:4; Canda & Furman, 1999:59–60). Thus the spiritual dimension is circumvented, though many of the factors for non-inclusion discussed below in actual fact centres on religion and not spirituality, and thus are erroneously used in this argument.

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[35] Cf. a sample group member's statement: *"I give so much of myself – one needs to create opportunities to replenish one – to connect with and confront oneself – and to see God's hand in everything. This prayer [Examen of Conscience] helped me to do this."*

A literature search clearly indicated that religious institutions do not have a pristine track record with regard to development. In fact, such institutions have been known to have *use or abuse 'development' programmes endeavouring to either manipulate or persuade their beneficiaries to accept their perspective or doctrines* (Ver Beek, 2000:39). In order not to be perceived to impose on those they work with or as partaking in such manipulative practices, many practitioners tend to avoid the entire topic of spirituality or religion.

A further reason for avoiding the topic of spirituality could be the *negative track record of religious institutions in civil society*. Weaver, et al. (1997:219) point out that the first organisations to take root in every society are those affiliated with the traditional religion (which could be linked to spiritual practices), providing certain benefits such as protection, connectedness and members taking social and moral responsibility in society. Yet, the downside often speaks louder, as religion may promote fanaticism, intolerance, prejudice, division of society between those who are practising their religion and those who are not religious, and can even spur social injustices (Hugen, 2001:12). In addition, the social control function of religion which fosters order, discipline and authority, has been known to be *exploited in power struggles or to dominate and manipulate minority groups*, e.g. as illustrated with the condoning of apartheid by the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa (cf. De Gruchy, 1995:89). Weaver, et al. (1997:219) state that "civil society based on religion reinforces and solidifies existing social cleavages based on religious differences", frequently resulting in strife and civil conflict. Practitioners, choosing to be seen as not affiliated in any manner with the institutions causing such harm to society, may circumvent the subject of religion and spirituality altogether.

The *perspective which practitioners adhere to* is another influencing factor. Practitioners working within the scientific/materialistic perspective (modernity) are expected to apply scientific thinking which requires the practitioner to be objective, using scientifically informed interventions. The argument for taking a 'scientific stance' is strengthened by the tendency in social science literature "to refer to spirituality and religion as belief systems based on myths" (Ver Beek, 2000:39). Furthermore, religion or spirituality is frequently seen to have negatively influenced society, e.g. by it legitimising traditional constraints on human freedom. It follows that practitioners would be likely to avoid the topic of religion[36] and rather focus on altering the circumstances

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[36] This correlates with the findings of research done in the health sector where, although patients rated faith in God as the second most influential factor (in there dealing with their situation) next to the

of the community (Fardella, 2005:2–3). Equally, when working from a post-modernistic perspective, practitioners are alerted to the role universal beliefs, cultural and religious narratives play in shaping our identities on a personal and professional level. Thomas Alan Parry describes this phenomenon as follows:

> [T]hese foundational beliefs – in such things as God, one objective reality, one truth – were themselves regarded as constraining, not only on individual behavior but on opportunities for expression and making choices by groups that have traditionally been marginalized – women, people of colour, gays and lesbians – in part, at least by some of those beliefs (Fardella, 2005:3).

The all too frequent result of the above tendencies is that practitioners, rather than sanctioning individuals' expression and making of choices based on their fundamental beliefs (such as a belief in God), choose to avoid religion and the spiritual dimension altogether (cf. Fardella, 2005:3). Thus practitioners are discouraging marginalised groups in the community to tap into their spirituality – a potential powerful source of strength and hope (Ver Beek, 2000:40). Practitioners may also justify their avoidance of the topic of spirituality on the grounds of *respect for local culture and the fear of imposing their views on the people in the communities* (Ver Beek, 2000:39). Yet, this 'respect' may, it in fact, mask a degree of condescension or social paternalism – implying that the 'weak spirituality' of the local (indigenous) culture needs to be protected (cf. Ver Beek, 2000:39; Villa-Vicencio, 1995:65). In turn, effectively prohibiting the community from putting their spirituality on the table – denying them the space to reflect on how their spirituality could co-exist with, conflict with or complement development (Ver Beek, 2000:39–40). In practice it has been found that all too frequently practitioners are inhibited by their own pre-conceived ideas about the community's spirituality and practices to the degree that they fail to broach the topic, hence dismissing the centrality of spirituality in communities.[37]

The *fear of conflict* may also lead to the avoidance of sensitive topics such as spirituality. Conflicts involving faith issues, e.g. as in Northern Ireland, Rwanda and the Middle East, are stark reminders of distrust, hatred and eventually war kindled by religious and spiritual themes. Yet, rather than staying clear of these topics, it is only through dialogue that communities come to a better understanding of how spirituality

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medical specialists' opinion, health care professionals ranked it as the least important (Heyman, Buchanan, Marlowe & Sealy, 2006:7).

[37] This has been true in the researcher's experience in the community where any focus on spirituality was dismissed by the organisations doing community development (cf. Chapter 1, section 1.6).

shape their lives and that a basis for making informed decisions is provided (Ver Beek, 2000:40).

The *dichotomising of the sacred and the secular* – predominant among Westerners – greatly contributes toward the exclusion of a spiritual dimension in development. Issues such as when and how to plant fields, deal with sick people, practices of healing and education or whether to participate in social action, are seen to be secular and not spiritual matters (Myers, 1999:142). Furthermore, people's spiritual practices and beliefs are deemed sacred and private – not to be referred to in the public arena (Ver Beek, 2000:40). The perception of *spirituality as an internal developmental experience* – therefore best dealt with privately, also leads to the avoidance of the topic of spirituality in community development. This viewpoint is enhanced by theories that underline the fact that people do not come into the world with their spirituality 'in tact', but have to 'grow' or develop into their spirituality.[38] In a society where we were sensitised to disconnect the sacred from the secular, many practitioners may in themselves struggle with the integration of spirituality in the public dimensions of their lives. They will feel even more uncomfortable with the notion of bringing spirituality into the public domain of community development – preferring to rather keep it private or, at best, refer all issues relating to spirituality to representatives of religious institutions.

Lastly, Ver Beek (2000:40) identifies the *lack of precedent and of models or frameworks for addressing spirituality* as the one overreaching reason for ignoring the topic in development literature and practice. In fact, this deficiency in existing community development frameworks was precisely what motivated the researcher's continued search for literature and exemplars for the inclusion of the spiritual dimension in related fields.

5.2.4.2 Arguments for the inclusion of spirituality

It would seem that there is both a practical and ethical motivation for the inclusion of spirituality in community development. The practical motivation includes the factual information based on research findings. Even though very little research findings on the impact of spirituality on development work has been forthcoming, the overwhelming evidence from studies in the field of health and medicine does provide sufficient ground for assuming that similar outcomes could be expected in the field of development. On the ethical side, the researcher has drawn from the evidence

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[38] Cf., e.g., James Fowler's six stages of faith development emphasising the interconnectedness of our 'internal spiritual' development with our 'external humanness' (Straughan, 2002:149–155).

provided in the current publications of Chili and Simpson (2004), Derezotes (2006), McKernan (2005), Tyndale (2000) and Koenig (2007).[39] Their work provided a platform for theorising on the correlation between spirituality and human well-being, and for arguing the inclusion of spirituality as an integral component of people and community development.

The argument for the integration of spirituality in community development is corroborated by the following two quotes illustrating the all-encompassing nature and connective force of spirituality:

> Spirituality is, at heart, living a human life in union with God. A human life is lived in a social context in which persons are each faced with moral choices and are part of a larger society. A human life lived in union with God is a life in which godly personal choices are made and in which responsibility for the condition of society is accepted (Richards, 1987:217).

> Spirituality is a dimension of human experience, development and environment that is interconnected and inseparable from all other human experiences, development dimensions and environments (Derezotes, 2006:2).

From these statements it is clear that spirit impacts on everything in the human world. The fact that we were misled by belief systems into separating our everyday or secular lives from our spiritual lives does not alter the fact of our embracing spirituality. Rather than avoiding our spirituality or trying to compartmentalise our lives, we should see spirituality as the *connective force* that can help us bridge the apparent dualities (Derezotes, 2006:3). The spiritual traditions or collective wisdom offer hope for re-connection, "recalling us to that wholeness in the midst of a torn world, to reweave us into the community that is so threadbare today" (Palmer, 1993:x; cf. Tyndale, 2000:9).

Similar, on the level of community development, spirituality can help heal the divide between people and their environment, between various community groups and between diverse cultures. Chili and Simpson (2004:318) argues for the inclusion of spirituality in community development, writing that spirituality "…dwells within every culture and every geographical community", providing them with a sense of connectedness, meaning, peace, consciousness, purpose and service (Derezotes, 2006:3). In our increasingly globalised and diverse world, where people are searching

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for ways to re-connect, acknowledging and utilising the transformational power inherent in spirituality seems to be a logical choice for community development.

Spirituality as concept, brings with it values (such as respect, truth and love); provides a sound basis for understanding the sacredness of working with people, communities and the environment; and leads (or directs the way) to the formation of community development practices founded on the values of respect and sustainability (cf. Chili & Simpson, 2004:318). Authentic spirituality steers us towards truth, that openness which enables the creation of a space in which 'the community of truth' is practiced. Such a 'community of truth' encompasses a network of rich and complex relationships, where people are willing to listen to one another, to respect diversity and to acknowledge that we are all created from the same source. It nurtures respect for the divine spark in every human being and enables people to live with integrity and in harmony with one another and the environment (cf. Tyndale, 2000:13; Palmer, 1997:xi–xii).

The value of *agape* is seen as the one underlying quality which can bring forth change (Green, 2003a:193). *Agape* is filled with a most profound and unusual meaning, indicating "…a selfless concern for the welfare of others that is not called forth by any quality of lovableness in the person loved, but is the product of a will to love in obedience of God's command" (Barker, 1985:1752). Represented by Christ's love manifested on the cross, *agape* not only requires a "radical revision of very fundamental knowledge and values" and of consciousness, but it also challenges the secular self-serving values so often underpinning most of the so-called development initiatives (cf. Chili & Simpson, 2004:324; Freire, 2006:3; McLaren, 2007:55–58).

The notion of truth confronts one with one's *willingness to acknowledge the reality of secular development* practices. Tyndale (2000:10) points out that even though government and multilateral development agencies are identifying what must be eradicated and setting targets in terms of economic growth, the greater reality which has to be faced is a lack of a deep understanding of what poverty and development entails on a global scale. Different faiths (and spiritualities) are bringing their visions for development to the table: "[T]he Hindus see development as the process of enabling a sustainable livelihood in harmony with all natural resources as foundation for spiritual progress" (Tyndale, 2000:10). Taoists emphasise the harmony or right balance as key ingredient of development goals, whilst the Christian faith calls for the application of kingdom rules which acknowledges that the whole of creation belongs to God and that human beings are stewards of one another and the environment (cf. Tyndale, 2000:10, 14; McLaren, 2007:294–301; Wright, 2010:48–62). In

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communicating these alternative visions for development to the secular development institutions such as the World Bank, the reality of the dismissal of 'sacred' needs and issues can be addressed.

Another area in which spirituality could help us to find new and creative solutions is in the arena of *globalisation*. McKernan (2005:1) states that:

> [W]e are living in times of pervasive anxiety that is calling for a new vision of life. The dominant current outlook based on the myth of "scientific progress" and control is simply not adequate to the challenges of global issues of terrorism, the ecology crisis, and astounding levels of strife including genocide and global poverty. In our local communities we observe the crisis of housing shortages, loneliness, and high rates of relationship breakdown, loss of confidence in institutional leadership and crippling poverty that exist in the midst of very wealthy communities.

On a global scale people are trying to find that 'something' to help them deal with these challenges. In our local communities people are on a daily basis trying to cope with the onslaught of poverty and degradation, dealing with the consequences of an extremely high rate of unemployment (30–50% in the economically active population), hunger and malnutrition suffered by a growing number of children and crime and violence continuing to plague the communities (Swart, 2008:112, 116–117). Finding solutions on a global scale will only become a reality if these issues are addressed by changing the prevailing economic model, starting with local initiatives. Tyndale (2000:11), in this regard, refers to examples of small scale faith-based attempts where different values have been deployed, such as micro-credit schemes where community members 'care and share' rather than profit. However, spiritual values need to be deployed in the public, global domain, requiring development practitioners to challenge the current models of economic growth, consumerism, and ecological destruction. As practitioners working in and with communities, we would act unethical if we did not turn to the possibilities the spiritual dimension was presenting.

According to Graham (2009:12), there is wide consensus – based on research findings and practice applications – on the fact that there is powerful 'added value' in religion/spirituality[40] when it concerns people's well-being. Although most of the

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[40] One complication in the process evaluating the value of spirituality is the fact that – especially in research involving members of the community – religion and spirituality is often intermingled. Many of the studies looked at 'religion' rather than 'spirituality', but the identified actual practices making a difference, namely prayer, rituals, spending time with God, and fellowship with co-believers – are similar to the practices identified as depicting one's spirituality. In terms of spirituality, the most central relationship is that of human being with Creator being realised in 'earthly actions' such as praying and 'earthly relationships', to be acted out in fellowship and showing compassion (cf. Graham,

studies focus on the correlation between people's general health (and thus the well-being of communities) and spirituality or religion, the findings do provide clear evidence of the positive impact of the inclusion of a spiritual dimension when dealing with people and communities. For example, a positive correlation between the effect of spirituality on health and illness had been reported in more than 70 percent of studies[41] in the field of health and medicine (Koenig, 2007:39–41).

A 2001-survey[42] by Jeff Levin on the health benefits of spiritual practices provided similar evidence. Of these findings, the following could be related to community development practices: (i) People who regularly attend religious services have lower rates of illness and death than do infrequent or non-attendees; (ii) Older adults who participate in private and congregational religious activities have fewer symptoms, less disability, and lower rates of depression, chronic anxiety, and dementia; (iii) Religious participation is the strongest determination of psychological well-being in African Americans – even more important than health or financial wealth; (iv) People who reported a religious affiliation had lower rates of heart disease, cancer, and hypertension; and (v) Actively religious people live longer, on average, than the non-religious. This holds true even controlling for the fact that religious folks tend to avoid such behaviors as smoking and drinking that increase the risk of disease and death (McKernan, 2005:6).

Granted that the above findings are based on mainly North American studies, the issues referred to are relevant to all communities, addressing some of the most basic human issues: the need to be connected, health, mortality, life style. If religion/spirituality plays such an important role in these areas of people's lives, it would not be far-fetched to assume it to be of relevance in all dimensions of people's communal living, as can be seen in the findings of two studies providing insight into the

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2009:13). Therefore the research on faith/religion and well-being or health is seen to be at least indicative of the impact of spirituality on human functioning and well-being.

[41] During his key-note presentation at the Second North American Conference on "Spirituality and Social Work" held at the Dominican University in Chicago from June 21–23, 2007, Harold Koenig referred to a variety of areas/topics covered, as well as the range of journals (e.g. *Journal of Gerontology, Health Psychology, Annals of Epidemiology, British Medical Journal, Aging & Mental Health Social Science, and the Medicine Journal of General Internal Medicine*) in which the studies were published.

[42] The survey covered more than 200 peer-reviewed articles (including work from leading USA universities such as Yale, Duke and Berkeley) reporting the statistical findings on the impact of religious involvement on health and illness.

experiences of different cultural groupings. The first study[43] reports on the impact of disability on women living in Khayelitsha, Cape Town:

> Disabled women who live in wooden shacks in the peri-urban areas of Khayelitsha in Cape Town, South Africa, participated in storytelling workshops over a two-and-a-half-year period. They shared experiences of what helped or hindered their social and economic development since becoming disabled. The workshops were part of a participatory action research (PAR) study of the Division of Occupational Therapy, University of Cape Town, together with Disabled People South Africa (DPSA) and the Zanempilo Health Trust [formerly South African Christian Leadership Assembly (SACLA) Primary Health Care Project]. The findings revealed the struggles and sadness, as well as the strengths and spirit that the women experienced within their everyday context at an individual, family and community level. The women spoke strongly about meeting physical, emotional, and spiritual needs as the means to social and economic development. Three themes discussed are building emotional resourcefulness; nurturing children and families in disability issues; and renewing spirituality and *ubuntu* in disability and development programmes (Lorenzo, 2003:759).

The research focusing on the well-being of rural elderly non-white people by Yoon and Lee (2004)[44] provides similar evidence on the integral role of spirituality in the lives of people:

> Little attention has been paid to subjective well-being among non-White elderly in rural areas where medical resources and financial support are deficient. The present study assessed a rural community sample of 215 elderly comprising 85 Caucasians, 75 African Americans, and 55 Native Americans, to examine roles of spirituality/religiousness on their subjective well-being. This study found ethnic differences in the reliance on religiosity/spirituality and a significant association between dimensions of religiousness/spirituality and subjective well-being among all ethnic rural elderly groups. The results of the study suggest that health providers, social workers, and faith communities need to provide rural elderly with religious and spiritual support in order to enhance their life satisfaction and lessen their emotional distress.

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[43] The study, *No African Renaissance without Disabled Women: a Communal Approach to Human Development in Cape Town South Africa,* was conducted by Theresa Lorenzo, Division of Occupational Therapy, School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences, Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Cape Town, South Africa.

[44] The study, *The Impact of Religiousness, Spirituality, and Social Support on Psychological Well-Being among Older Adults in Rural Areas*, was conducted by Dong Pil Yoon and Eun-Kyoung Othelia Lee.

Both the aforementioned studies indicate the positive and hope-generating role spirituality plays in the lives of people. Of even more significance is a specific request of the women in the first study for the incorporation of spirituality and *ubuntu* into their disability and development programmes.[45] Furthermore, these examples serve to demonstrate spirituality as a reality in the lives of people in communities: whether adding years to their lives, easing their anxiety about their fragility in old age and death, or helping them to live with the strains of a life-threatening illness such as AIDS. Ver Beek (2002:34) points out that for many people spirituality is central to their daily living, as is demonstrated in the Lenca's[46] traditional system of healing where the interrelatedness of spirituality and health reinforces social ties of interdependence and trust. During the current research study, the researcher was witness to numerous incidents or examples of a similar integration, e.g. the laying on of hands when a child at the crèche is feverish or not feeling well and the practice of *praying before acting* demonstrated by the women's group who saw *asking God's will* as their first step in project planning (cf. Chapter 3, section 3.2.).

But what do the people have to say about 'spiritual care'? Koenig (2007:46–47) presents interesting findings: Patients do want their spiritual needs attended to and believe that it will make a difference if the physicians would address it and become even actively involved, for example up to 78% indicated that they wanted the physician praying with them. These findings correlate with the researcher's experiences during the work with the pilot and sample groups, who clearly indicated their wish for the acknowledgement of their spirituality, e.g. by requesting the sessions to be opened with prayers and hymns (cf. Chapter 3, section 3.5.3). Based on these findings it could be argued that for most of the people encountered in the cause of our work in the communities, their spirituality is important and that, when under stressful circumstances, they would want these needs addressed by those who are in a helping or caring position.[47]

Lastly, religious or faith organisations have a tradition of caring for the sick, the old, the elderly and the marginalised. The final set of findings relates to health-care in

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[45] Cf. Chapter 3, section 3.4.1: The request for inclusion of an inner or healing aspect into the capacity building programme for the sample groups.

[46] Indigenous Indians from the Honduras.

[47] In this regard, it is significant that an institution such as the Joint Commission for the Accreditation of Hospital Organisations (JCAHO) requires from health-care professionals to do spiritual assessments. The JCAHO specifies that "spiritual assessment should, at minimum, determine the patient's denomination, beliefs and what spiritual practices are important to the patient". This basic information is used to determine the impact of spirituality on the care/services being provided and whether further assessment is called for (Koenig, 2007:55).

the community – looking at the correlation between religion/spirituality and reality of people's needs, the system's inability to respond and possible solutions for dealing with the identified needs (Koenig, 2007:52–53). The most significant findings point to the continuous role of religions institutions and faith communities in the well-being of all community members. It would seem that the inclusion of a spiritual dimension in caring for people in communities, is perceived to be crucial and life changing by a large number of the people themselves. Furthermore, what seems apparent from these data is the fact that caring for people's health and thus health issues are not restricted to hospitals and the medical and health-care professions. Therefore, how health needs affect people and how it is responded to, are of as much importance to practitioners working in the community. The second aspect is the requirement for meeting people's needs in a holistic and integrated framework: not only are the needs multi-dimensional, but so should the response be if we are striving to work toward the well-being of people and communities. Lastly, the data serve to remind us of the origins of the caring professions – and in doing so, require us to justify why we have left behind our spiritual roots.

Given that traditionally (in South Africa as in most other countries) many practitioners involved with community development have a background in social work and were deployed by church-based or religious institutions and agencies, it may be helpful to revisit the roots of our involvement in the community.[48] Hugen (2002:38) refers to *Calling* as a spiritual model for social work practice, and relates the dominance of this model to the fact that Protestantism was the dominant religious form at the time of the formation of the profession. He refers to a number of examples illustrating the prominence of the *Calling model*, such as that of Richard Cabot (1927). Cabot emphasised that social workers have to be aware that they are in alliance with forces greater than themselves (God) in their helping of people, stating:

> [S]piritual diagnosis [sic] … [is the] … glimpse of the central purpose of the person, unique and related to the total parts of the world. Spiritual treatment [sic] … is the attempt to

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[48] Cf. Derezotes's (2006:264) statement: "Social work has spiritual roots. The roots are historical: the first social workers were generally women in religious organizations who volunteered to help others." Also Poe (2002:67) reflecting that as early as the Middle Ages, the church took "…the lead role in the care of the poor as well as many other matters of political and economical interest". She further states, that although over time governments have taken over major responsibility for the care of the poor, more recently the there has been a turning back to viewing the care of the poor as an non-governmental (and frequently faith-based) responsibility. Pointing out the crucial influence of Jewish, Catholic, and Protestant thought on shaping the ideological basis of social work practice, Hugen and Scales (2002:1) put it even stronger: "Looking back … particularly at the history of social welfare, it would be hard for anyone to deny that the Christian church is one of the true originators of charity."

> open the channels … of understanding both within each person and between persons, and through these channels to favour the entrance of God's powers for the benefit of the individuals (Hugen, 2002:39–40).

Clearly, at least historically, practitioners working in the community were seen to have the task of dealing with the spiritual dimension of people in communities. Indeed, the belief that there can be no development without spiritual advancement still holds true for the majority of people in the world (Tyndale, 2000:9). This hidden expectation of people seem to resonate in the research findings regarding health and spirituality/religion: a high percentage of people want to have their spirituality needs acknowledged and addressed; the positive correlation between religion/spirituality and well-being, recovering from and coping with chronic and fatal illnesses; lower mortality rate and higher life expectancy; lower rates of depression and addictive behaviours. Apart from this, the inherent qualities of spirituality – encompassment, interconnectivity, inclusivity, integrity, acknowledging reality – are what is needed to provide us with a new vision for people and community development. Given the evidence – can we justify *not* integrating spirituality in community development, and giving it the prominence it so clearly deserves?

What is called for – in meeting the communities' pronounced need for interconnecting spirituality with development interventions – is increased attention to spirituality which will enable practitioners "to learn about and encourage people to tap into a potentially powerful source of strength and hope" (Ver Beek, 2002:40). A constructive way to do this would be to analyse, utilise and build on available research data and practice exemplars. The logical next question would be: "How do we integrate spirituality and community development?" The work of Fretheim (2005), Stevens and Green (2003), Chili and Simpson (2004) and Myers (1999) are helpful in terms of determining general theoretical guidelines and have uncovered a number of examples of Christian community development initiatives, to be discussed next (section 5.3.1). Moving closer to home, cognizance will be taken of a 'South African Spirituality', referring to the interwovenness of indigenous and Christian spirituality (section 5.3.2).

5.3   Spirituality and development: How do we stand?

Based on the preceding discussion, it can be argued that in the context of development, spirituality is the single most important and potentiality sustaining dimension of community development yet to be explored and deployed in most

community development initiatives. Chili and Simpson (2004:318) assert that "the underpinning link between community development and spirituality is the connection of the individual to the collective, acknowledging that the well-being of the individual influences and is influenced by the well-being of the community". Given the variety and diversity of spiritualities and faiths, such as Hinduism, Judaism, Taoism, Buddhism and Shamanism, it is clear that no one 'set of rules' will suffice. Nor should we allow the diversity to deter us from including spirituality in our work with communities. Rather, both the connectivity and boundlessness of the spiritual dimension should be optimised, drawing upon the commonalities amongst spiritual approaches to provide new possibilities. From the vantage of the *strength perspective*,[49] says Chili and Simpson (2004:324), "…diversity is promoted through shared knowledge that incorporates both the rational knowledge of scientific empiricism and the inner knowledge of spiritual experience…" Notwithstanding an attitude of openness towards diversity, community development practitioners owe it to themselves and the people they work with, to practise in a spiritually-conscious manner – i.e. to be aware of and attentive to how one's specific spirituality impacts on oneself and others (cf. Straughan, 2002:145).

Being spiritually conscious is no simple challenge, given that spirituality is the domain where issues of internal conflict and consistency at individual, family and community levels are the most pronounced. It follows that practitioners are often unsure how to 'blend' personal and professional activities, as diverse spiritualities may be at stake (Fatnowna & Pickett, 2002:277). What is required is a sensitivity regarding the faith and spirituality of oneself and others (McGrath, 1999:9). In essence, being spiritually conscious requires, in Christian terms, an openness toward the working of the Spirit – allowing oneself to be guided and coached by the Spirit. This implies that "Christians involved in community ministry [sic] need to be open to the possibility that their faith and their view of the world will be changed as a result of the dialogue and their encounter with those in need" (Morrissey, 1997:63).

McKernan (2005:3) describes two possible levels of integrating spirituality: The first level being that where the practitioner chooses to take a 'politically correct stance' – where no 'buy in' from the practitioner is expected. The only requirement is that the practitioner should acknowledge the spirituality of those he/she works with and employs language and strategies to encourage the utilisation of their spirituality as a resource. The second, more involved level would be that of subjective involvement –

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[49] The strength perspective emphasis a focus on what is, building on existing capabilities, drawing from indigenous knowledge and on unlocking the possibilities.

allowing the practitioner's beliefs and experiences to shape the way spirituality is introduced in practice. This, says McKernan (2005:3), though much more challenging and controversial "…is also the richest place of inquiry; it requires that we bring our fullest and deepest grasp of ourselves into the work we do – no holds barred."

What is called for in spiritual sensitive praxis is that the practitioner should function on both levels: be knowledgeable with regard to diverse spiritualities or, at the very least, be open to listening to and learning from the people in the communities. On the 'deeper' level, practitioners should become conscious of their own spirituality – how it shapes their relationships with others and the environment – and bring that, in humbleness and respectfully, to their practice. Paulo Freire (2006:65) explains respect in this context as follows:

> [Respecting] does not mean lying to them about my dreams [or spirituality] … to hide my opinions from them, as if it were a 'sin' to have a preference, to make an option, to draw a line, to decide, to dream. Respecting them means, on the one hand, testifying to them of my choice, and defending it; and on the other, it means showing them other options.

Being respectful of the spirituality of others requires from the practitioner to ask questions such as: How do we become more conscious of and learn or understand how our spirituality influences our practice? How do we contribute to the well-being of people and communities we work with? To begin, we need to heed the fact that most people acknowledge God and Jesus Christ, says McLaren (2007:13), given that the world's two largest religions are the Christian religion (about 33% of the world's population) and Islam (21% of the world's population), who revere Jesus as a great prophet. In South Africa by far the largest percentage of people proclaim that they are from a Christian faith (73.5%), whilst 15% adhere to African Traditional religions.[50] Looking at spirituality in community development from a Christian, or more specifically 'Christ-centred' perspective, would seem to be the point of departure that may be of most relevance to community practitioners in the South African context.

5.3.1 Toward a spirituality of Christ-centred development

All true spirituality requires a return to the roots or source. For Christians, the source of their spirituality is the Bible. As the metanarrative of God's involvement with

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[50] Information retrieved online at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religion_in_South_Africa, 14/05/2010.

humankind,[51] in particular as reflected in the life and actions of Jesus, the Bible is the foundation for how Christians see and live life and answers the question "Who are we and what are we here for?"[52] Stevens and Green (2003:ix) describe it as follows:

> The Bible contains the grand metanarrative of God's romance with the world – God's unquenchable and gratuitous love for humankind … it is the grand story of who we are, who is the God that we are dealing with, and what it all means … it enfolds our own stories in a grander narrative … by including us it changes our way of thinking and behavior.

The Bible not only *informs*, but *transforms* – it changes peoples' outlook and lives, by guiding and nurturing their primary relationships with God, self, others and the world (cf. Stevens & Green, 2003:xi; Myers, 1999:118–120).[53] Spirituality, seen as "…our lived experience of God in the multiple contexts of life in which the seeking Father finds us" (Stevens & Green, 2003:xi), implies a transcendent experience of God, which gives new meaning to our relationships, work and life in the community.[54] Three fundamental characteristics of this experience can be identified: firstly, it is a unique personal journey or exploration with as many experiences as there are people. Secondly, it leads to the disclosure of the heart of God, aligning our hearts with the merciful, loving heart of God, accepting our connectedness with our fellow-human beings. Thirdly, it brings with it the awareness that we (humans) are God's stewards, representing God's interests[55] and function as co-creators (Stevens & Green, 2003:xi–xii; Wright, 2010:49–53; Myers, 1999:118).

The implication of these factors for the praxis of community development is clear: it requires an alignment with 'the way of Love',[56] a nurturing of self in one's personal relationship with God. Concomitantly the relationship with God serves as an exemplar

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[51] Cf. Chapter 4, section 4.3.1: Scripture as source of spirituality. Cf. also Wright (2010:31) arguing that the Bible is the source of Christian spirituality, and that "[t]he mission of God's people flows from the uniqueness of the God of the Bible supremely revealed to us in the uniqueness of Christ."

[52] Cf. Wright (2010:17): "What does the Bible as a whole in both testaments have to tell us about why the people of God exist and what it is they are supposed to be and do in the world?"

[53] Cf. Chapter 4, section 4.3: Spirituality as relationship with God (Kourie & Kretzschmar, 2000a:12).

[54] Cf. Myers (1999:118) on the centrality of God in all our relationships: "From the chapters of the biblical narrative … we have identified a relational framework that links everyone to God, to themselves, to their community, to those who are 'other', and to environment." "The central relationship in need of restoration is one's *relationship with the triune God*, the God of the Bible."

[55] Cf. Wright (2010:51–52) (in reference to Genesis 2:15: *The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it),* states: "Ruling and serving creation is humanity's first mission on earth, and God never repealed the mandate."

[56] Love personified in God (cf. Chapter 4, section 4.3.1); Nouwen (2006:40–41) stressing the importance of "…seeing through the eyes of God" or having compassion – standing amidst the people, recognising their craving for love, breaking through boundaries of culture, language and status.

for our relationships with others,[57] providing a stable basis from which to enter into relationship with community. The basic Christian 'virtues' or fruits of the Spirit[58] such as love, joy, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness and self-control, are called forth, guiding all interaction with those one come across in the practice of community development. Green (2003a:193–197), referring to various texts,[59] points out that the New Testament provides ample guidelines such as treating others as you would want to be treated; loving your neighbour and your enemies as you love yourself; and praying for those who persecute you.[60] Called to follow the way of Jesus, practitioners in (Christian) community development are moved towards a 'loving self-giving', taking those they work with to their hearts and acting on their behalf, even to the point of suffering with them, as God and Jesus did[61] (cf. Green 2003a:200; Wright, 2010:239–241).[62]

Entering into the arena of community development would only be possible if, as stated above, one's heart is aligned with the heart of God. The practitioner, therefore, is called to live mindful or with a kingdom-consciousness, i.e. focused on God and on his kingdom rules.[63] Being thus aware of an 'open heaven' (Stevens, 2003:192) helps practitioners to live hopefully, keeping them from false messianism or 'a god complex', assuming that one's work, social action, ministry, and compassionate efforts will save society (cf. Stevens, 2003:192; Myers, 1999:88–89).

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[57] Cf. Chapter 4, section 4.3.2: Spirituality of the cross – depicting the relationship with God as exemplar of all other relationships.

[58] Galatians 5:22.

[59] Matthew 7:12: *Do to others what you would have them do to you;* James 2:8: *Love your neighbour as yourself*; Matthew 5:44: *Love your enemies...;* Matthew 5:44: *[P]ray for those who persecute you.*

[60] Cf. also Chapter 4, section 4.3.5.1: The drama of embrace; Volf's notion of 'inclusion and embrace'.

[61] Cf. Wright (2010:239) referring to Matthew 5:1: "*Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil things against you because of me*" and 2 Corinthians 12:10, *"...for Christ's sake, I delight in weakness, in insults, in hardships, in persecution, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong".*

[62] According to Keating (2006:110–111), following the example of Jesus is only possible when living and working in a close relationship with God. Being transformed – integrating spiritual communications within one's body, mind, soul and spirit – enables the practitioner to handle the task at hand. This requires as part of the practitioner's daily living the practicing of spiritual disciplines, e.g. prayerful meditation and contemplation – waiting upon God. In this silence one waits upon God, listens to God and learns "to see with the eyes of the spirit" (Kourie, 2000:21). Nouwen (2006:43–47) expands on the vital role prayer and specifically contemplation has in the life of the healer/practitioner. Those who has discovered in themselves "...the voice of the Spirit and has rediscovered [their] fellow men [sic] with compassion, might be able to look at the people [they] meet … in a different way". Contemplation enables the practitioner to see "the face of Him in whose image we are shaped" in the face of the other and to find "…signs of hope and promise in the situation…" (Nouwen, 2006:44–45).

[63] Cf. also Chapter 1, section 1.8.3: Praxis is thus action informed by the *telos* of God's Kingdom rules (Anderson, 2001: 21–20, 49–50; Pieterse, 1981:142). Chapter 4, section 4.3.2: 'Kingdom rule' as exemplified by the life and death of Christ; Chapter 5, section: 5.4.2: 'Rules' for transformational development.

5.3.1.1 In relationship with God and community

At the core of the relationship between God and humankind is the fact that it is personal – and 'different', setting the example for practitioners to truly respect differences, diversity, and the uniqueness in every person encountered in practice. Fretheim (2005:21–22) reminds us that though asymmetrical ("God is God and creatures are not"), the God-human relationship sets the example for all relationships, underlining several pertinent characteristics. Exemplified in this unique relationship are a number of characteristics: (i) the interactive nature of relationship (God not being the only one who has something important to say, but giving humankind prayer to address God); (ii) God sharing power with the creatures, both human and non-human; (iii) God being genuinely affected by what happens to the relationship and lamenting over what happens to both people and environment; (iv) God who, although his will is resistible, allows for his will not always getting done in the world, most especially because of continuing human resistance; and (v) God allowing the people of God and the larger creation the powers to contribute to and shape the future.[64]

Each of these characteristics has relevance for the praxis of community development: the importance of communication, sharing of power and action; for 'outsiders' to be committed (and therefore touched and transformed by what happens in the relationship); allowing for 'independent' thinking, decision-making and expression of opinion (for 'insiders'); and being open to and accept that the outcome is mutually determined and the future shaped by those involved. Fortunately, practitioners are not left alone to try and replicate this kind of relationship: God does not cease as Creator, but stays creatively involved, entering in space and time, filling the world with his divine presence and goodness. All we (as practitioners) have to do is to accept His invitation to enter into relationship with him and, under his guidance, fulfil our role as co-creators and 'bearers of the image of God'[65] – thus contributing to the well-being of the other and our environment (cf. Fretheim, 2005:24–25; Myers, 1999:26: Wright, 2010:49).

Throughout the Bible the importance of community as essential to human life and well-being is emphasised. The story of creation in Genesis also sheds light on human institutions and provides "…common foundation for all human enterprises we call

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[64] Cf. Wright (2010:83–91) describing the blessing of Abraham and the implications for all the nations and "for the mission of the people of God".

[65] Cf. Chapter 4, section 4.3.1 (last paragraph) on being co-creators and responsible for the good of the other. Also Wright (2010:49–50) on the mission of human beings, referring to Genesis 1:26: *"Then God said, 'let us make human beings in our image, our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals'."*

culture" (Myers, 1999:26). In fact, human beings are never presented as isolated individuals, but always as members of families, communities and nations, as shown in many of the narratives in the Old Testament portraying the conflicts, strife and triangulated relationships characteristic of dysfunctional families (Fretheim 2005:94). According to Fretheim, God's involvement in the range of family problems and possibilities – including matters on a spiritual and mundane level, such as marriage, love, birth, parent-child relationships, envy and violence – serves as a reminder that "to be concerned about the development and continuing dynamic of the family [and community] is a creational matter" (2005:94). Clearly, as stated by Eugene Petersen (2005a:226),

> [t]here can be no maturity in the spiritual life, no obedience in following Jesus, no wholeness in Christian life apart from an immersion and embrace of community. I am not myself by myself. Community, not the highly vaunted individualism of our culture, is the setting in which Christ is at play.

It follows that, as representatives of God, we are called to carry out 'duties' as *stewards of his creation.*

5.3.1.2 Called for stewardship

In the words of Douglas Hall (2005:3), "(t)he chief end of the human being is to be God's faithful steward in a profoundly threatened creation". From the very first moment in Genesis human beings are presented as individuals and communities concerned with creational issues.[66] Human and non-human orders are ordained by God to be 'co-existing' in the sense that they are interdependent. For instance, humans need the land for growing crops, but the ground is dependent upon humans for its proper development. Since God allows space for "…genuine decisions on the part of human beings" they have the power to influence the well-being of the other creatures and the environment – and are in a very real sense being held responsible for sustaining that which God has created, as illustrated in the story of Joseph (Fretheim, 2005:93):

> Joseph's careful attention to environmental issues, including the anticipation of times when the land will not produce because of famine, provides an exemplary way in which

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[66] Cf. Wright (2010:49–52, 54–55) humans as rulers, servants (keeping creation safe), and the earth as providing for us and suffering with us; Fretheim (2005:93–94 referring to the narrative of creation as told in Genesis 1–11, focusing on humans as co-creators and stewards of creation; Section 5.2.2.

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individual leadership can be harnessed on behalf of the best life for all in God's often precarious creation".[67]

As practitioners concerned with the well-being of humans, we are called upon to heed our responsibility towards the rest of the creation and to raise awareness amongst those we work with of their equally important role in these matters. Hall (2005:9–10) reminds us that we are not managers, dominating over others and working in total independence, but 'servants' to be held accountable to God and our co-creatures, "…working hard in a way that will care for creation and protect its best interests" (Wright, 2010:51). Spiritual-aware practitioners will develop these capacities in themselves (e.g. live ecologically conscious and recycle) and in those they encounter in their practices in the communities (e.g. educate people about their natural bio-psychosocial-spiritual connections by taking them on nature walks or involving them in environmental-friendly gardening projects) (Derezotes, 2006:259).

A second aspect of stewardship entails *care of the community*. On the community level issues such as economic, agriculture and the dynamics of political and governmental life are attended to. Again the story of Joseph[68] gives a detailed example of leadership for the development of social life for his community as well as for 'outsiders' – the Egyptians in this case (Fretheim, 2005:95). Meaningful caring for others, says Hall (2005:13–14), is the one capacity that differentiates human beings from other creatures: *homo sapiens* can understand, care and try to effect change because of their sensitivity of feelings and the capacity of their spirit for compassion and sacrifice. But there is far more to the care of community, says Christopher Wright, Old Testament scholar and renowned author of *The Mission of God's People*. He refers to the Genesis 1–11 description of how every dimension of human life seemed to became unhinged from the original goodness of creation, as posing the "cosmic question to which God must provide a cosmic answer". Wright then suggests that the rest of the Biblical story reveals God's answer, starting with the blessing of Abraham (Genesis 12), when God speaks again "…with words of blessing, first for Abraham, but then through him for all nations on earth" (Wright, 2010:67). Blessing refers to fruitfulness, abundance, and the harmoniousness of being in relationship with God and other, thus enjoying rest and peace – *shalom*. However, the Abrahamic blessing also infers what is required of humankind: to do righteousness and justice (:83).

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[67] Cf. Genesis 41:11–57.

[68] Cf. Genesis 37–50.

Thirdly, stewardship implies taking a stance for social justice. As has been pointed out previously,[69] both spirituality and community development acknowledge that contemporary social and economic arrangements are oppressive and in need of radical reform, which would include "…the reduction of inequality, enhancement of personal security, respect for individual human rights, recognition of personal values, and social justice and empowerment" (Chili & Simpson, 2004:323).

5.3.1.3 Committed to social justice

Social justice is an integral component of 'the mission of God's people',[70] which "…more than only caring for the poor … requires us to attack the sources of the injustice" (Richards, 1987:207). In the words of Chili and Simpson (2004:322–323), "…[t]he connection between spirituality and community development is the fire of social justice that brings about radical transformation of structures of society, through radical community development work". Nouwen (2006:36) refers to the words of Jesus in Matthew 10:16, instructing his followers: *I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves."* Therefore, although social justice is imperative, it cannot be violent and oppressive. Indeed, one of the underpinning principles for community development within a holistic, people focused perspective, is that of finding equilibrium. This implies that "…the development process and development outcomes are in harmony, socially just and sustainable, and achieved with respect for diversity, shared knowledge, and a re-imagining of the future" (Chili & Simpson, 2005:325).

The practice of 'doing justice' in society entails that development practitioners concern themselves with providing just policies and structures, and the political processes to change unjust social conditions. Based on the biblical guidelines of the Old Testament guidelines, Richards (1987:207–217) identifies five practices or 'mechanisms of justice' designed to protect individuals and societies from injustice and oppression: the preservation of capital;[71] voluntary servitude;[72] interest-free,

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[69] Cf. Chapter 4, section 4.2.1, footnote 14 on justice, liberation theology, the "Mosaic turn" and Jesus' liberating praxis; Chapter 5, section 5.2.

[70] Wright (2010:84–94) unpacks the implication of Abraham's blessing for our mission for community: the blessing God gave to Abraham reflects God's moral demand on Abraham's community. Abraham was required to teach his family (and community) "to walk in the way of the Lord". The Lord's way is that of hearing the outcry and protest of the victims (as in Sodom) and acting in righteousness, i.e. "doing all that one ought to do in the given relationships and circumstances" (:90); and, if needed, to do justice or "to put things right by intervening in a situation that is wrong, oppressive, or out of control, and to fix it" (:90). Finally, similar to Abraham's obedience to God being at stake in doing social justice, one's obedience to God (ethics) "stands as the mid-term between election and mission: (:93).

[71] Leviticus 25:23–24: Protecting the people's right to their land and what it could yield.

pardonable loans;[73] access to necessities;[74] and organised charity.[75] Similarly, Richards notes and gives examples of, the practice of installing justice through the sharing of sources in the larger community and a focus on human need evident throughout the New Testament, i.e. caring for the poor, ministering to the sick rather than supporting institutions.[76] On a personal level, practitioners should show concern and compassion for the poor and the needy – living the 'love thy neighbour commission' on a day to day basis.[77]

5.3.1.4 Engaging in 'radical practices' as exemplified by Christ

To demand from community practitioners to be in relationship with God, act as stewards and proclaim social justice, may not, at first glance, sound new or radical – until confronted with applying this in the praxis of working with communities. It is when practitioners strive to actively seek God's will in their practices, that famous twentieth-century theologian Dietrich Bonheoffer's explanation of discernment[78] provides some guidelines. Practitioners are encouraged to engage in confessing and telling the radical truth and to strive "…to concretely learn to recognise Christ in situations and people, especially those who are suffering from poverty, violence and oppression" (Osmer, 2008:138). It requires a double take: to be blatantly honest about the reality, whilst seeing the other through soft eyes.

McLaren (2007:12–127, 280–282) points to the life of Jesus (reflected in the gospel) as setting an example of one who was willing to engage with community on a radical level, stating that at heart, Jesus was (and is) a rebel, a liberator and the King of peace:[79] He came to set the oppressed free, to bring peace.[80] In public He taught,

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[72] Leviticus 25:39–55; Deuteronomy 15:13–14: Providing the poor with a unique 'apprenticeship' involving selling one's personal services while undergoing training for a limited period.

[73] Leviticus 25:35–37; Deuteronomy 15:7–11; Deuteronomy 23:19–20: Fellow-citizens were obliged to make interest-free loans to those in real need, to be cancelled each sabbatical (or seventh) year if the person in debt could not repay the amount.

[74] Leviticus 19:10; 23:22 and Exodus 23:10–11: Providing the poor with a legitimate option to pick up food from the fields of the landowners after regular harvest.

[75] Deuteronomy 14:28–29: A special tithe was collected every three years of which a tenth was to be stored locally for the care of the Aliens, widows and fatherless.

[76] Romans 15:25–28; 1 Corinthians 16:1–4: Sharing resources; James 2:14–16; 1 Timothy 5:1–16: Ministering to the poor.

[77] Cf. Richards (1987:215) offering some very practical suggestions for 'doing justice' on a personal level: the giving of a gift or loan, training the unemployed, businessmen setting up an apprenticeship programme, and not profiting at the expense of the labour of the poor.

[78] Cf. Chapter 4, section 4.4: Normative guidelines to TD – what is common good.

[79] Cf. Wright's (2010:187) statement, "God was reigning in and through Jesus, through his words and his works" based on the words of Jesus in Luke 11:20: *"If I drive out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you"*.

healed and informed the people about the norms (how should one behave towards one's neighbour, family, the authorities).[81] He shared meals with all kinds of people and attends their funerals and weddings. He showed compassion toward all – the old, the weak, children, friends and foes, the sinners and those who have been 'expelled' by the community (lepers, the Samaritans, the prostitutes). He cared for creation and notices even the tiniest of God's creatures. He used many stories and parables to talk to the people and was open to accept whatever they offer Him (e.g. the bread and fish). He constantly urged the people to *see*, to come to a new way of thinking and to renew their hearts. He lived the way of love – letting people know He liked them, that He was interested in them and that they did not have to be ashamed of who they were. He came close to them even in their illnesses, wept at their graves and listened to their suffering, requests and stories.[82]

Following the example of 'the radical Jesus', says McLaren, calls for the creation of a new metanarrative and new social formation (2007:5–7).[83] A willingness to think and do different – to dare to change – seems to be one of the prerequisites for spiritual-conscious community development.[84] A second prerequisite is for 'hands on' involvement. The only place to make a difference is in the community, 'out there' – implying that practitioners should be willing to spend significant time within the community, even to the point of relocation and integration, as seen in the work of the Christian Community Development Association (CCDA).[85] Based on extensive experience of living and working among the poor, CCDA practitioners identified

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[80] Cf. Luke 4:18-19: Jesus' reading of the words of Isaiah in the synagogue, referring to himself as the fulfilment of the scripture.

[81] Cf. Allan Ross's (2010) reference to Jesus' teaching of his followers, with Matthew 5:1–12 as the manifesto of His kingdom, pointing to "the quality of righteousness that characterizes the life in the kingdom"

[82] Cf. Also Sobrino referring to Jesus' radical actions, Chapter 1, section 1.8.3, footnote 53.

[83] Cf. the title of McLaren's book *Everything Must Change*; Chapter 1 section 1.3.

[84] Cf. the 'radical instruments' suggested by Chili and Simpson (2004:323) for the praxis of spiritual-conscious community development: (i) Consciousness raising amongst communities and providers regarding the nature of oppression and injustice; (ii) Organising to end hypocrisy of disempowering ideas, structures, power relations and discourse; (iii) Telling the 'truth' about issues of globalisation and exploitation through propaganda, militant campaigns; building links with organisations and between communities of interest; and seeking alternative solutions to issues of public interest. (iv) Creating theories within the radical framework and mobilisation of community resources through the organisation of new social formations. Many of these 'instruments' (and the methodology required for deployment) resonate with the work of Paulo Freire, for example the emphasis on 'telling the truth' (Freire, 2006: 53; Tyndale, 2000:13).

[85] The Christian Community Development Association (CCDA) was founded in 1989 as outcome of the community work in the rural town Mendenhall, Mississippi, then caught in the vice-grip of racism and poverty.

'loved-based' community development principles[86] for transforming people and enabling them to, in turn, "…share the gospel with others through social action, economic development and justice" (CCDA, 2005:2).

In summary: In the preceding discussion the emphasis has been on God, creation, social justice and radical practices, moving toward a Christ-centred praxis of community development. The high value placed on Biblical wisdom and the centrality of love has been noted. The challenge is for practitioners to ask themselves how they (and their institutions) shall fare when they are judged not by their gifts or learning, but by our love. Green (2003a:206) challenges practitioners to reflect upon their practices by asking:

> *Are we preoccupied, dividing our sources and time amongst painting buildings, meetings and other petty concerns or do we walk the path of love? How shall we fare as individuals, if judged by our giving, sharing, caring, and suffering? Are we working for 'our old age' worrying about our pension fund, or turning off the TV to avoid looking at the latest famine, the displaced people or the divorce rate? Or can we say that we have loved?*

How much we love, says Green, is the core, the heartbeat of spirituality: "Our identity as the beloved of God allows no other way of life than of loving others. Sin is the failure or refusal to love" (Eugene Peterson, 2005a:321).

McKernan (2005:2) predicts that there will come a time when the spiritual dimension "…will seem a self-evident truth and excluding it from practice will seem inappropriate and even unprofessional". Do we heed the people's voiced need for spirituality? If our answer is affirmative, are we as practitioners prepared to meet the challenge posed by working in a multicultural context, facing multiple spiritualities? South Africa has a history of diverse spiritualities merging and weaving the texture of a 'South African spirituality' presenting us with a very specific context for people and community development, which will now be discussed.

5.3.2   Spirituality in the South African context

To think, in Africa, hurts, bewilders, confuses and creates perplexity. There is no place for docetisms, because in its people is the prolongation, in history, of the passion of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. However, to do theology in Africa involves not only pain and suffering. It is,

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[86] (1) Affirmation of dignity; (2) Holism; (3) Relocation and integration; (4) Reconciliation; (5) Redistribution; (6) Leadership development; (7) Church-basedness; (8) Finding common ground; (9) Refusing invitation to division; (10) Embrace cultural values; (11) Encourage fair exchange (CCDA, 2002:1–6; Bracho, 2000:2–5).

above all, to realize that the Spirit of God has passed through the continent before…"
(Agenor Brighenti, 2008:523–524).

Brighenti's quote comes as a welcome reminder of the fact that God has been at work facing the complexities of the diverse (South) African context long before missionaries and community development practitioners entered into the picture. After 1994 the so-called *Rainbow Nation,* freed from the shackles of apartheid, became an international buzz concept for transformation, freedom, social justice – the peaceful rebirth of a nation. Yet, almost two decades down the line we are still struggling to find the strategies to deal with the development of this multi-coloured, multi-cultural, multi-spiritual nation. In this section spirituality is sought to be understood in the context of diverseness and merger, arriving at the roots of a spirituality that could serve as foundation for a process of transforming the hearts of a diverse people and the formation of an integrated community.

5.3.2.1 Diverse spiritualities: Indigenous, missionary and apartheid

Contributing to the brokenness of the South African society, is the history of diverse spiritual traditions clashing and, to a lesser degree, merging to weave the texture of a 'South African spirituality'. As background to the current context, brief reference is made to the Khoi and Bantu-speakers at the time of the first white settlement in South Africa. A number of issues related to the missionaries and the consequences of the Church's association with apartheid are also highlighted.

In his overview of the history of religion and spirituality in South Africa, Kiernan (1995a:16‑27) highlights some practices and beliefs of the Khoisan and Bantu religions. At the time of the settlement of the first white people in South Africa, the territory was largely occupied by two cultural traditions, namely the Khoisan people in the southwest and the Bantu-speakers living on either side of the Drakensberg. The Khoisan evolved into the Khoi or Hottentots, who were nomadic pastoralists, moving with their animals in tribal territory, and the hunter-gatherer San or Bushmen, relying on the uncultivated land for their supply of fruit and vegetables, supplementing this with meat. They were dependent on the movement of game and, for water supply, on the rainfall. Both these features brought with it a degree of unpredictability, which they contrived to control especially by religious means (Kiernan, 1995a:16). They recognised a supernatural creative being called *!Kaggen*, who was the master of all things, but seen as unpredictable. Connected to *!Kaggen* was a supernatural energy called *n/um*, which could be tapped by religious specialists for healing purposes.

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Characteristic of the Khoisan was their close connection to nature and the environment, as was the integration of their religion in their daily lives. Prominent in the religion of the Bantu-speakers was the role of the ancestors. The ancestors were seen to

> …inhabit a world of spirit in which they are endowed with the capacity to influence mystically the orderly life of the group or the individuals for whom they assume structural or instrumental significance. In religious terms, their function is to be supportive and protective of the living, to ensure an ordered and fruitful existence for them. As long as the ancestors fully discharged their assigned role, their descendants should enjoy a life of peace and prosperity (Kiernan, 1995a:22).

Kiernan points out that much of what we have formerly assumed to be true about these religions proved to be distorted, as our initial knowledge came through the early missionaries and other Christian observers. Coming from Europe, with vastly different worldviews, they interpreted what they saw through different lenses. For instance they 'discovered' elements of the Judeo-Christian religion in Africa, leading to the notion that Bantu-speakers recognised the existence of a Creator God. According to Kiernan this is not a true version of the religion of the Bantu-speakers, for as illustrated in the previous paragraph, at the heart of the Bantu-speakers' religion lies the cultivation of the ancestors, of human spirit released from the constraints of time and place" (Kiernan, 1995a:25–26).

The debate on missionary activity in South Africa is complex: on the one hand, it could be argued that the missionaries were worthy and honourable and contributed to the quest for social justice in the development of Southern Africa. On the other hand, they can be seen as promoting the settlers' interests overtly in disregard for the values and achievements of the (indigenous) others (Villa-Vicencio, 1995:64). Although there were some individuals (mainly from the London Missionary Society) who promoted the cause of the indigenous people against the racial exclusivism of the settlers, many others dismissed the African way of life as evidence of religious and cultural depravity, trying to replace it by their version of the gospel and their civilization (Villa-Vicencio, 1995:65). Converts were obliged to turn their backs on the ancestor veneration, polygamy and tribal solidarity. The missionaries often regarded the African society as being ignorant of spiritual subjects, with no idea of God.

The fact that most missionaries were compelled to work according to the policies of the authorities, since they were dependent on the authorities for being allowed to continue with their work, contributed to their conformity with the *status quo*. The few missionaries who committed themselves to striving for the political and economic rights

of the oppressed were rejected by their own missionary movement (Villa-Vicencio, 1995:67). What seems to have been absent from the practice of the missionaries, was the lack of reflection on their own values and the long-term effect of their input and the earnestness of the African voices of protest (Villa-Vicencio, 1995:68). This insensitivity[87] can be seen to serve as an example of ignorance of the spirituality of the other — and of the intricacies involved in merging different spiritualities, a reality we faced in the twentieth-century South Africa.

However, for the last two centuries Christianity and the church have been integrally involved in the social and political development of South Africa. It played a significant role in shaping our modern society, taking actively part in the discourse on race and racism (De Gruchy, 1995:83; De Gruchy & Ellis, 2008:9). Many of the significant developments served to place Christian and churches on opposing sides, as demonstrated by the following examples.

One of the most important developments was the reinterpretation of the Afrikaner history as 'sacred history', giving the Afrikaner nation (as 'God's chosen people') "…the mandate to remain separate from and rule over the heathen nations in the interest of the Christian civilization" (De Gruchy, 1995:89). The church's role in shaping and maintaining the apartheid regime and the relationship of Christianity to apartheid attracted much attention. It also led to opposing views, producing such documents as the Belhar Confession (adopted in 1989) — making an ethical commitment to justice central to Christian faith and church unity — and the launching of the Conservative Party under the leadership of a former Dutch Reformed minister, defending apartheid. De Gruchy's (1995:83) following statement highlights yet another shift from one spirituality to another:

> The transformation of Christianity, from a white, European—dominated settler religion, with expatriate missionaries engaged in evangelizing the indigenous people of the country, to a black-majority religion rooted in the African culture and engaged in the struggle against white social, political and ecclesiastical dominating, is undeniably the most significant development of the twentieth-century Christianity in South Africa.

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[87] The missionaries dismissed "…the African way of life as evidence of religious and cultural depravity, and reason for it to be replaced by their gospel and their civilisation. Converting souls to Christ meant, for many missionaries, a complete rejection by 'blacks' [converts] of the African worldview and a denial of traditional social custom". Many of the missionaries had a "romantic and naïve" understanding of evangelism, leading them "…to believe that the gospel was the immediate answer to all socio-economic and apolitical problems". As a result they were inclined to sanction almost anything that was necessary to convert souls, "including the colonial subjugation of indigenous people" (Villa-Vicencio, 1995:65– 67).

The influence of this watershed period and the contribution of indigenous spirituality in the formation of a 'South African spirituality' are discussed in more detail in a subsequent section.

5.3.2.2 Merging of Christianity and Indigenous African spirituality: The way forward

Most people (over 77%) in South Africa admit to being Christians – at least in name – and most South African women regularly attend church services and activities (cf. De Gruchy, 1995:83; Barrett, Dawber, Klugman, Obery, Shindler & Yawitch, 1985:219–220). For decades women gathered Sunday after Sunday in the mainline and Independent churches because "… we need people to share and to be free with … to pray[88] [and] discuss problems [with]…" (Barrett, et al., 1985:222–223). Thus these women created a spiritual 'community of support' where they took care of and prayed for the ill, their children and the elderly, and assisted one another at funerals, through financial hardship and violence. In essence, they "understood having faith and helping the destitute [one another] with prayer and love as making a positive difference" (cf. Haddad 2001:13).

These voices declaring women's need for a spiritual home, was born primarily out of their forlornness as Africans in cities, away from the cultural and communal support and care. Adding to their sense of social stress was the industrialised society that brought with it the emphasis on production, efficiency, regulated control of time, competitiveness and the expectancy that people should be able to read and write. Yearning for a spiritual home, they were attracted to churches such as the Zionist churches, which addressed the problems of dislocation and disorientation experienced by the people (men and women alike) who were uprooted from the close-knit homogenous rural communities (Kiernan, 1995b:123).

Over the years the political structures and accompanying oppressive policies and practices contributed hugely to the manifold maladies, such as impoverishment, malnutrition, loss of esteem and people falling prey to sorcery[89] (Kiernan, 1995b:123–124). "The Zionist Church provided intimate and supportive communities … [giving]

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[88] Cf. Chapter 3, section 3.2, footnote 15: "Prayer to God becomes a means through which women voice their burdens away from sites of struggle in their own safe space" (Haddad, 2001:44).

[89] Sorcery is divination by the assistance of evil spirits, prevalent in the African cultures. Sorcerers – described by Kiernan (1995a:23) as "fully human mystical agency" – generate their inherent potency by collecting and mixing substances ('medicines') which they arm with incantation. Thus they are given prominence in the explanation of misfortune. Whilst the ancestors' intervention is seen to be admonitory rather than vindictive and in a protective capacity, shielding their descendants from the depredation of nature, the sorcerers (and witches) may inflict harm and are seen as "living evil-doers" (Kiernan, 1995a:23).

attention to healing…" and had as their mission "the rescue and salvage of individuals on a voluntary basis, and … supporting them economically, socially and spiritually" (:124). Thus addressing the social realities and hearing the heartfelt needs of the people, the Zionist churches offered people a safe space where they found, through communal prayer and the engagement of the Holy Spirit, a collective solitude amidst a tumultuous world. Here they were also given strong guidelines according to which to live their daily lives amidst the disruptiveness of a heterogeneous social environment (Kiernan, 1995b:125–126).

The mainstream churches have not always been as effective in 'hearing the voice of the ordinary people'. De Gruchy and Ellis (2008:10) comment that since the Christian and church debate had for years focused on race and racism, scant reflection has been given to issues such as economic justice, ecological damage, domestic violence, food security, corruption, adult literacy, sexual orientation, mother-tongue education, forced migration, affordable housing and secure livelihoods. Indeed, even in the post-apartheid period there has been limited Christian engagement on public life, partly due to the need for a change in direction from 'resistance' to 'assistance', which Christian leaders are unprepared for (De Gruchy & Ellis, 2008:11). Another contributing factor – resulting from the struggle years – is the loss of a generation of church and religious leadership leaving a gap in knowledge, skills and experience. Opening dialogue and setting up spaces for exchange of knowledge, wisdom and experience are required to arrive at creative ways of integrating Christian spirituality – spanning the continuum of cultural groups represented in South Africa – and indigenous spiritualities (cf. De Gruchy & Ellis, 2008:14).

Currently there is – locally and on a global level – a growing acknowledgement of and dialogue between Western and indigenous societies, resulting in an emerging shift towards favouring the past wisdoms of indigenous cultures and awareness that much can be gained from understanding and accepting these perspectives (Fatnowna & Pickett, 2002:265). For Westerners to comprehend indigenous and African spirituality would require a basic understanding of the reality of the communal world. The following paraphrased description of African society by Menkiti (in Fatnowna & Pickett, 2002:257) helps with this conceptualization: In 'African society' the communal world takes precedent over the reality of individual life histories. Human beings are defined by reference to the environing community and personhood is achieved through processes of incorporation. Since individuals are being socially constructed (opposed to a society being constructed of individuals and not society), African society is not an addictive 'we' of individuals, but a fused collective 'we'. Acquiring of knowledge is for

the whole group's learning and communal and collective learning is seen to empower each member's role expectations within a system of reciprocal relationships. In essence, African society depends on the 'us', 'we' and 'together' feelings.

The inherent notion of interconnectedness of humankind, so predominant in this description of the African society, is captured in the African notion of *ubuntu*. *Ubuntu* encompasses the concepts of caring, support and community, counters segregation and violence with reconciliation and justice (Haws, 2009:477). In addition *"[u]buntu* creates a sense of belonging and sustains and is sustained by rituals and other praxes which bridge the past, present and future amidst cultural, religious, socio-economic challenges" (cf. Louw in Simon, 2007:7–8). Haws (2009:477), linking the concept with the theology of Desmond Tutu, refers to *ubuntu* as "the prophetic balance of a divine gift that transforms the wretchedness of human atrocities". The 'divine gift' being both the notion of the interconnectedness of human beings, as epitomised in Jesus' life and the notion of 'forgiveness' as exemplified by God's forgiveness of our sins (cf. Haws, 2009:482; 489). Counteracting the individualism of the West, *ubuntu* defines human life in terms of relationship: being a person through other persons; learning to be human from other human beings; in essence "…made for togetherness" (Tutu in Haws, 2009:42; cf. Chapter , section 4.3.4).

Christian leaders in South Africa (traditionally trained within a Western paradigm) have been slow to gain a comprehensive understanding of 'the African way' and wisdom of *ubuntu*. Although the struggle against apartheid and the practices of peace-making, reconciliation and nation-building enhanced this process of integration, what is currently required from Christian leaders in the South African community, is to present a more relevant, visible and vocal response declaring that the Christian church is not being indifferent to the needs of those who cry of hunger, who are homeless, who are imprisoned and who are (still) oppressed and disadvantaged (cf. De Gruchy & Ellis, 2008:9; Haws, 2009:482). According to De Gruchy and Ellis (2008:9), the leadership and representatives of the church and Christian community need to make themselves heard, to participate in making policies and in developing and implementing strategies addressing the wider socio-economic issues, such as the HIV and AIDS pandemic, genetic engineering, environmental issues and family breakdown.

Proclaiming an active interest and involvement in these issues is only possible if the church, its leadership, the Christian community and all practitioners working in afflicted communities – would start "…walking in the Spirit" (Holt, 1993:5). Archbishop Desmond Tutu, says Holt (1993:108), exemplifies someone who 'walks in the Spirit'. Apart from leading anti-apartheid marches and conducting funeral services for the victims of

apartheid Tutu writes on the topics of justice and reconciliation and acts as a spiritual leader for people across borders of culture and religion. On a personal level he is known to rise early every morning to spend time alone with God, praying for wisdom.

As for addressing needs on the grassroots level, Simon (2007:1–2) suggests that the African Initiated Churches (AICs) could be a valuable source of community support – providing individuals with a basis from which they can become more actively involved and experience *ubuntu*. The "AIC create a place where members can feel at home … through their concern for one another, [they] establish a place where members can overcome isolation, experience natural African fellowship, enjoy recognition as a fellow human being in need; and generally through consideration, care and love be made to feel at home" (Maboea in Simon, 2007:1).

However, the spiritual fabric of the South African society has changed radically over the past 15 years and Christianity has lost its privileged status in public life. De Gruchy and Ellis (2008:14) caution that contributing changes are a rising tide of secularism, and the church's no longer being in a position of socio-economic power. Thus, Christian leaders and scholars are under pressure to

> ...find ways to engage in ethics of development that are both true to their faith, and make sense to people of other faiths or of none. If we are going to take up this challenge, the need of inter-disciplinary and evidence-based work is crucial, and theologians in particular need to find language and frameworks to listen to and learn from non-theologians about reality of the world itself (De Gruchy & Ellis, 2008:14).

If we are indeed going to take up this challenge, what is truly needed is a framework for transformation of communities reaching across disciplines and religions focusing on praxis. Expanding on the issues introduced in the preceding narrative, in the next section practical theology is proposed as the conceptual space for people and community transformation. In the final section the focus is on the praxis of spiritual healing as strategy of people and community transformation.

5.4   Practical theology as conceptual space

In essence practical theology is about the bringing together of seemingly divergent entities – it is about building bridges and providing a safe space for forging new relationships, as exemplified by the Cross of Christ. If asked to summarise the research findings of this study in one word, the choice would fall on 'relationship'. Relationship seems to be the vessel for all meaningful interactions between human beings and

between humans and their environment. Most importantly, it is in the relationship with God that we find love, grace, peace (understood as the broad biblical concept of *shalom)* and wisdom. Everything else grows forth from this fundamental source. Facing people who have little else apart from their relationship with God, has the potential to sensitized one anew to the fact that "…all human activities of healing, nurturing, sustaining and transforming are, ultimately, varieties of 'God-talk' in action and the place where God's grace is shown forth in human relationships" (Graham, 2009:20). Spiritually-conscious practitioners will acknowledge that their wisdom come from working with people, listening to their stories, hearing their lament that they are "*the hidden people, living behind the others in their hokke*".[90] Christian practitioners will be urged to ask "what does the Bible as a whole have to tell us about why the people of God exist and what is it that they are supposed to be and do in the world?" (Wright, 2010:17). This, according to Hall (in Bevans, 1992:75), is what constitutes theology – a lived, practical wisdom "…thinking rooted in existence – and committed to its transformation".

Indeed, the question posed is not *if* practical theology could be seen as the conceptual space for transformation of people and communities, but rather *how* it contributes, supports and sustains spiritually conscious practitioners on the one hand and on the other, how the praxis of practical theology is acted out in community.

5.4.1   *Practical theology and a relational perspective on development*

Why do we need theology to do development? Acknowledging that God is the creator of the world, holds all things together; is actively at work in this world; sets an example for all relationships in this world and has "a stake in what we are making in the world" (Myers, 1999:20); as Christians in development, we need to be clear on God's story – we need a theology of development. People centred practitioners acknowledge that it has relationships as one of its most important assets.[91] However, human relationships are exposed to our inability to live together in justice, peace and freedom (Ackermann, 1998:13). We need to be transformed in our relationships – to come to loving, Christ-like relationships. Practical theology seems to be the field where we can experiment, learn and succeed in finding strategies for transforming

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[90] Feedback from participants of one FH2 group during the retreat (November 2007), referring to their informal shacks as "hokke".

[91] Cf. preceding sections 5.2.1; 5.2.2.

relationships, which, in turn, will lead to the transformation of communities – a lived experience of *shalom*.[92]

Firstly, the normative voice of practical theology invites us to reflect upon the theological meaning of development and development issues.[93] Such reflective actions should include spending time with God, coming into his presence, reading wisdom literature and growing in our spiritual consciousness.[94] It should also create opportunities for us to enter into dialogue with fellow practitioners, as a learning, sharing and creative venture.

Secondly, practical theology provides us with the space to grow in our own relationship with God and others. Practical theologian Denise Ackermann (1998:13–22) refers to "becoming fully human" as what is needed in answer to the human inability to live together in justice, freedom and peace. She argues for *communion* – the practicing of Christian relationship by embracing difference and otherness, thus becoming fully human. The starting point for the formation of Christ-like relationships is to confess and lament our unwillingness to love our neighbours. We have to welcome one another as Christ has welcomed us. To do this, we have to look away from ourselves and look in the face of the other – seeing a person created in the image of God.[95] Hearing the other is the next essential component – listening to their stories, sharing their pain, suffering and joys.[96]

Thirdly, practical theology invites us to reflect on and to enter into dialogue with others. The sharing of stories (referred to above) is a preamble to ongoing conversation in which we continue to try to understand and build lasting relationships of trust. It could prepare the way for a process of nurturing of leadership that is attentive to the concerns and wisdom of ordinary people. Both learners and teachers engage in dialogue, learning from one another, with knowledge and wisdom emerging from the conversation (De Gruchy & Ellis, 2008:19). This would require dialectic thinking –

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[92] Cf. Myers (1999:113) on *shalom* as outcome of transformational development, stating that "the kingdom vision for the better human future is summarized by the idea of *shalom*: just, peaceful, harmonious, enjoyable relationships with each other, ourselves, our environment and God."

[93] The question of the mission of God's people could be seen to be the preliminary question: What is it that we are called to do in our communities? According to John Stott, mission "…arises from the heart of God himself, and is communicated through his heart to ours. Mission is the global outreach of the global people of a global God" (Wright, 2010:24).

[94] Cf. Chapter 4, section 4.2: discussion on importance of theological reflection for praxis. Also as crucial to action/participative research, as outlined in discussion on TAR, Chapter 2, section 2.6.3; 2.6.5.

[95] Cf. Chapter 4, section 4.3.2, footnote 44: Peterson on Jesus who wept for the people.

[96] Cf. Chapter 4, section 4.3.3: The women's song referring to their 'big' hearts – because of their own suffering – which enable them to take care of the other.

described by Powell (2005:11) as "…thinking things together that are more easily thought of apart" such as body and soul, individual and community, or belief and action. Dialectic thinking takes place whenever we do not allow these related concepts to be separated, thus adhering to the call to "conquer, resist, and overcome the world by means of Christian practices" (Powell, 2005:11–12). For this to happen, it is important to provide a 'safe space' where practitioners (and those active in the field) can reflect upon their experiences in practice (Morrissey, 1997:8).

Fourthly, practical theology calls us to recon with the concept of sin, impacting on the whole of creation – both creatures and humankind (cf. Peterson, 2005a:315).[97] Sin should not be seen as 'condemning label' or accusation, but as a "… revelatory insight into our condition, so that we can know what to do and where to go to get in on a life of love…" – so that we can ask to be forgiven (Peterson, 2005a:319). Practical theology provides the normative dimension so brazenly absent from most secular development approaches, as it seeks what is normative in Jesus Christ, as the inspired source of the written Word and the objective reality of Christ as the praxis of the Holy Spirit (cf. Chapter 1, section 1.8.6; Anderson, 2001:38–39). Indeed, the gospel addresses every dimension of sin's impact on creation and provides clear guidelines for normative action (Wright, 2010:41).

Fifthly, praxis urges us to commit ourselves to be involved in the transformation of our world – to become stewards of God's creation. "Rather than succumb to the alternatives of despair and (more commonly) cynicism or repression and … suppression, the Christian is called upon to face the world today with a 'prophetic realism', ready to face the fact that … only a society based on truth can survive" (Bevans, 1992:75). The practitioner is called 'to take up arms', to face the reality and to become actively involved in transformative actions[98] – accepting our 'mission' as comprehensive as that of the gospel portrayed in the whole of the Bible (Wright, 2010;41). We need to ask ourselves whether we are relevant, as did Elaine Graham (2009:5) in a recent article:

> I ask whether specifically Christian accounts of human flourishing and the good life still
> have any bearing in the wider public domain, and what "rule of engagement" might we

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[97] Cf. also Wright (2010:40–41) describing the condition of sin as, amongst others, that "[s]*ocially*, every human relationship is fractured and disrupted... And *spiritually*, we are alienated form God, rejecting his goodness and authority."

[98] Cf. Chapter 4, section 4.3.2, & footnote 35: Bosch (1991) on not being overwhelmed by the world; Chapter 5, section 5.3.1: Chili and Simpson's (2004:322–323) remark "[t]he connection between spirituality and community development is the fire of social justice that brings about radical transformation of structures of society, through radical community development work".

need to be articulated in any dialogue between Christian values and the discourse of theology and a pluralistic society?

Graham's question is most relevant in the light of the stark facts on the human condition and development, depicted in the 'balance sheet of human development' covering the period 1990–97 in Table 2. Stating that it is widely acknowledged that development strategies have failed to bring the intended benefits to much of the world's population, Kothari and Minogue (2002a:4–5) single out the unevenness of the development process as one of the main contributing factors.

Table 2: A balance sheet of human development 1990–1997

Indicator	Development	Deprivation
Health	1997: People in 84 countries enjoyed life expectancy of more than 70 years.	1990–97: The number infected with HIV&AIDS increased from 15 million to more than 33 million.
Education	1990–97: The adult literacy rate rose from 64% to 76%.	More than 260 million children are out of school at the primary and secondary levels.
Food and nutrition	Food production per capita increased by nearly 25%.	About 840 million people are malnourished.
Income and poverty	1990–97: Real per capita GPD increased at an average annual rate of more than 1 %.	Nearly 1.3 billion people live on less than 1 USDr per day.
Women	1990–97: Women's economic activity rate rose from 34% to nearly 40%.	About 25–50% of all women has suffered physical abuse by an intimate partner.
Environment	1900–97: The share of heavily polluting fuels in total energy use fell by more than two fifths.	Anually nearly three million people die from air pollution and more than five million from diarrhoeal diseases resulting from contaminated water.
Human security	Between 66% and 75% of the people in the developing countries live under relatively pluralist or democratic regimes.	1997: There were nearly 12 million refugees.

(Adapted from Kothari and Minogue, 2002a:405.)

De Gruchy and Ellis (2008:10) and Swart (2008:113–115) paint a similar stark picture of the South African society, referring to forced migration and domestic violence, between 30 and 50% unemployment of the economically active people, close to 50% percent of the population living under conditions of poverty and the HIV and AIDS pandemic reaching its 'visible phase' with people wandering the street with open sores, dying undignified premature deaths and are suffering alone in their homes. There is, however, more internet hosts in South Africa than in any other country in Africa and at least ten percent (10%) of households with a very high income (Swart, 2008:117). These statistics all convey one message: that of the 'powerlessness of the poor' in terms of power (or lack thereof) in all six systems or dimensions of poverty which 'entangles the poor': material, poverty, physical weakness, isolation, vulnerability, powerlessness, and spiritual poverty. Apart from the resulting lack of strength, resources, choices, influence social power, healthy relationships, and lack of education and assets, the greatest danger is that the poor will fall into the trap to cling to "…deceptive self-justifying narratives" relating to their captivity and inability, reinforcing their powerlessness (Myers, 1999:66–67; 74–75). The culmination of these varied elements to powerlessness, is this: "Poverty is the world telling the poor that they are god-forsaken", which in turn 'allows' the children of the poor to grow up in circumstances that mimics this 'truth' – no loving parents, no-one to take responsibility for them or who teaches them what shared joy, pain, and happiness is. Rather, they grow up experiencing deviance, delinquency and criminality all around them – 'setting up' an environment prone to even greater powerlessness (:79).

Intriguingly, contrary to the expectation that those who are on the 'upside' of development are experiencing a feeling of well-being, there is a sense of stagnation, increased anxiety, and the perception of prosperity as being a problem. People are suffering from what is referred to as the "paradox of prosperity" (Graham, 2009:7–8). As stewards of God's kingdom, what do we have to proclaim to these people? Swart (2008:136) writes that "…the Christian community and church is just as much part of the life-world of the rich and likewise acts as the custodian of a socio-economic system that undermines the development aspirations of poor people and communities". The poor literally become captive to the god-complexes of the non-poor (Myers, 1999:73). So, what do Christian practitioners have to offer these people? "Stewardship requires from us to participate in the suffering of the world's victims, to identify with wounded nature, and to testify to the world…" (Bevans, 1992:74).

Interestingly the indicators of development correlate to a large degree with the key indicators of human well-being: family, relationships, income, work, health, social

networks, personal freedom and personal values and a philosophy of life (Graham, 2009:10). Indeed, it has been found that one of the most valuable outcomes of being in a faith community is that of experiencing social support and belonging – or, in the words of Eckersley, "being suspended in a web of relationships and interests" (Graham, 2009:10). The development of social capital – containing elements of networks, trust, values and norms and shared purpose – seems to be one strategy with which to tackle the question of human well-being (Graham, 2009:13). Guder urges for sharing the vision of the reign of God with others – within it are all the elements we long for in our search for meaning:

> [The reign of God] envisions a world characterised by peace, justice, and celebration. *Shalom,* the overarching vision of the future, means "peace", but not merely peace as the cessation of hostilities. Instead *shalom* envisions the full prosperity of a people of God living under the covenant of God's demanding care and compassionate rule … it comes hand in hand with justice … without justice there can be no real peace. Indeed, only in a social world full of a peace grounded in justice can there come the full expression of joy and celebration (Guder, 1998:90–91).

Wright (2010:277–278) stresses that the concept "integral mission" brings the understanding that our overall involvement in communities has evangelistic consequences as we bear witness to the transforming grace of Jesus Christ. Practitioners cannot proclaim the 'good news' without following through on it's social consequences, such as the radical inclusion and justice for all proclaimed by Jesus Christ.[99] Just as the spiritual and material, personal change and structural change are inseparable, proclaiming the 'good news' has social consequences. Therefore, the praxis of practical theology ranges from teaching and preaching, to care giving, counseling, education, and from community missions,[100] to environmental care. Likewise,

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[99] Wright (2010:276–277) is of the opinion that, as in the public ministry of Jesus, evangelism and social responsibility are inseparable. Social activity is a logical consequence and aim of evangelism and, since "evangelism relates to people's eternal destiny", it leaves Christians to do what nobody else can do – satisfying the spiritual hunger of those they work with by sharing the saving grace of Jesus Christ; and, in authentic love, serving the whole person by satisfying their physical hunger.

[100] Ann Morrissey (1997:10–12) refers to the Isaiah Agenda as community mission, which enables Christians and non-Christians to unite in their striving for the well-being of their community. Described by Raymond Fung in his book *The Isaiah Vision*, it requires that all sectors of the community work together towards concrete and clear objectives: children do not die; old people live in dignity; those who build houses live in them; and those who plant vineyards eat the fruit of their labour. Working together, dialoguing and sharing experiences, results in a new integrity and provides a rich environment for all to flourish. Cf. also Dennis Bratcher (2010) stressing the relevance of Isaiah's mission for today's development praxis: to preach the good news to the poor and the afflicted; to heal the physically and emotionally broken hearted; to provide care for those in grief; to proclaim freedom and liberation on both a physical and spiritual level; and to prophesy the "year of the Lord".

so does the praxis of people and community development, utilizing a range of mostly secular strategies in the quest to address the issues such as outlined in Table 2. What has been omitted, is addressing the issue of spiritual alienation of God or a Higher Power. In this regard authors like Anderson (2001), Bevans (1992), De Gruchy (1995); Marstin (1979), McLaren (2007), Morrissey (1997), Myers (1999); Osmer (2008), Swart (2008) and Wright (2010) are providing the much needed foundation for spiritually conscious practitioners. By the same token, practical theologians could benefit from becoming more involved in the practice of community development and in the participatory action mode of research (PAR) that such an involvement calls for. Quoting Hendriks, Swart (2008:138) stated this as follows:

> [PAR] could serve as an instrument enabling practical theologians to move away from abstract ideas, ideologies, and theories, to involve people, as image bearers of the triune God, "in naming problems and in finding solutions". "This implies going to the people and their problems, listening to them, living with them, finding oneself in a position where one can really covenant with others and speak from among them".

In the discussion on Theological Action Research[101] it has been argued that practical theologians should become emerged in the praxis of people and community development by implementing the 'instruments' of these participative methodologies. To truly make a difference in the world of the poor, the marginalized and the disregarded, practitioners have to work alongside them, respect and love them, thus fulfilling the requirements of both the 'great commission' and the 'great mission'.[102] This calls for transformative thinking and actions and the adherence to a Christian perspective on the praxis of people and community development. Such a perspective – drawing on the understanding of the 'spirituality of embrace' and the normative guidelines for the praxis of transformation (cf. Chapter 4) – is outlined next.

5.4.2   A Christian perspective: Transformational Development

St Irenaeus's words,[103] "The glory of God is man fully alive,"[104] offers in itself a concise motivation for Christian practitioners to become involved in community

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[101] Cf. Chapter 2, section 2.5.

[102] Cf. Wright (2010:23–24), referring to the Biblical grounds for mission as narrated in the Old Testament, lists a broad range of activities – e.g. famine relief, action for justice, healing, administration – comparable to current of community development practices.

[103] Quoted by John Eldredge in his book *Waking the Dead*.

[104] Cf. Myers (1999:86–87) on poverty as the result of relationships that work against well-being, are unjust, anti-life, disharmonious and unenjoyable; and his significant remark that "poverty is the absence of *shalom*" and the opposite of life abundant.

development on an alternative level – the level of proclaiming the glory of God.[105] God's glory is proclaimed by 'being fully alive', experiencing *shalom* and "…the full prosperity of a people of God..." (Guder, 1998:91). It is to acknowledge that development is about much more than merely trying to help people survive – it is "about discovering and exploring God's world" (Mask, 2008:1)[106] Clearly, here the emphasis is on God's transformational involvement – the quest to recover our humanity on a spiritual level – as central to the development process. The ultimate goal or purpose of such development is to meet God's design and purpose for humankind, or, to respond to his great saving act. Indeed, development approaches, theories and initiatives that do not address people's personal relationship with God and people in relationship to God and his creation, falls short of addressing the fullness of human well-being.

Bryant Myers (1999:3) views Transformational Development (TD) as such an inclusive approach, seeking positive change in the whole of human life – materially, socially and spiritually. TD is about people experiencing God's presence amidst their despair and hopelessness through his message of forgiveness and hope, and their renewal and restoration through his actions so that they may fulfill their mission or "…true vocation as productive steward … caring for the world and all the people in it" (Bratcher, 2010; cf. Myers, 1999:3). TD has as its goal the recovery of one's true identity, requiring a transformation and renewal of the mind, and implies that people will change the choices they make.[107] According to Mask (2008:1), it is about "…people changing attitudes and habits to restore relationships as God planned at creation … [thus behaving] … like Adam and Eve in Genesis 1–2, ruling as God planned." This implies that they are making the choice to take responsibility for their own lives by solving their problems and getting their needs met; and by choosing to use their God-given talents in service of other and creation.

Myers (1999:93) reminds practitioners that TD is informed by the wisdom of the cross – offering a different basis for hope, namely the basic truth about God as saviour and liberator of people, community and creation. The cross, being central to every aspect of the life and work of God's people (Wright, 2010:43), enable them to

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[105] Cf. Wright's (2010:53) linking of humankind to God's creational purpose: "Creation exists for the praise and glory of its creator God. We humans, being creatures ourselves, share in that reason for existence."

[106] Dr Russell Mask is involved with the Chalmers Center for Economic Development.

[107] Cf. Myers (1999:88–89) stating that at the bottom of poverty is sin as the root cause of "deception, distortion, and domination". Therefore, ultimately TD requires that people should hear the good news of the gospel (God's Story) and be given the opportunity to respond (to choose for life).

be "…channel[s] from God to the 'other' hurting, oppressed, and hopeless people of the world" (Bratcher, 2010, referring to Isaiah 61). It implies a transformational shift from being the victim to becoming the victor; being "…oaks of righteousness" – symbols of stability and strength in community (Bratcher, 2010 referring to Isaiah 61:3).

In essence, what differentiates transformational development from other developmental approaches is, according to Myers, the acknowledgement of the truth of relationship with and our identity in God – a focus on 'being' God's children: "Knowing who we truly are [God's children] and pursuing our true vocation [journeying toward God's kingdom], is the key to more life, not just more things or even more knowledge" (Myers, 1999:114). This journey of discovery, or the recomposing of individual's stories, entails healing or transformation on all levels of existence to displace the "distorted, disempowering sense of identity with the truth" (Myers, 1999:115).

Next, based on the work of Myers (1999) and Mask (2008), a brief outline of the components[108] of this transformational process is given: (i) In the first place, transformational development is grounded in the metanarrative of God's story,[109] indicating that God is keenly interested and actively participating in what happens in the lives of people and communities.[110] (ii) It adheres to biblical worldviews and values (or kingdom rules, requiring the practitioner to act in obedience to God) that are essential to human and community well-being.[111] (iii) Therefore TD is holistic, covering economic, social, psychological, political and spiritual objectives. It is also holistic in the sense that it includes all people.[112] (iv) As TD understands and strives to address "…the complicated and integrated nature of deprivation" (Mask, 2008:1) in the lives of people; the underlying 'why' questions are asked and addressed in ways that seeks out the causes,[113] rather than the symptoms or immediate problems and issues. (v) TD aims to be sustainable – recognizing that, though not the ultimate concern, it is

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[108] Cf. also Chapter 6, section 6.4: Discussion of the presuppositions, principles and main strategies proposed for the praxis of transformational development.

[109] Cf. McLaren (2007:21–2) on the metanarrative or 'bigger story' and section 5.3.1: Christ-centred development – Stevens and Green (2003:ix) on the importance of acknowledging the metanarrative.

[110] Cf. Wright (2010:44–45); Chapter 4, section 4.4: Where is God in this?

[111] Cf. Wright (2010:90) in section 5.3.1.3, footnote 70 on God excepting Abraham to be obedient, righteous and just.

[112] Cf. Wright (2010:70, 80) referring to the Genesis 12:1–3 text, portraying God's committal to bless all the people on earth and out commission to spread the blessing to all the nations is described: "The *glorious gospel* of the Abrahamic covenant is that God's mission is ultimately to bless all the nations."

[113] Cf. the "Why is it going on?" question of theological reflection, aiming to get to the root of things (Osmer & Schweikert, 2003:3); Chapter 4, section 4.2.1.

important that the growth, learning, and enduring transformation and reconciliation will perpetuate. (vi) The issues addressed in TD concern both the poor and the non-poor – challenging them "…to recover their identity as children of God and to discover their vocation as productive stewards of creation, working to use their gifts for individual, family, and social well-being (Mask, 2008:1). (vii) Relationship, reconciliation and restoration of the four essential relationships – with God, self, other/community and creation – is seen to be eminent. (viii) TD-practitioners are urged to acknowledge as one of their first concerns, the principle of 'doing no harm' – thus being willing to function as servant-learners, working hand in hand with the local people, listening to and building on their stories. (x) TD is inclusive and tolerant – rooted in the Spirituality of the Cross, it does not claim the absoluteness of the Christian religion, but proclaims the absolute love and healing of God for all.[114] (xi) TD seeks transformation on both a personal/private level (i.e. heals, empowers, gives hope)[115] and a public/societal level (social justice and restructuring). (xii) TD is non-coercive and peaceful, as portrayed by the Father quietly waiting to embrace the prodigal son on his voluntary return.[116] (ix) TD strives to work with and build the church, acknowledging that the church has a God-given transformative role in society.[117]

In summary, transformational development affirms the role of God and human beings as being able to exercise choices and commitments for their own benefit. Transformation in communities belongs to the people – not to outsiders. Yet, outsiders (practitioners) have a role to play in terms of helping the community to discover their God-given purpose and abilities, their true identity and vocation, and to heal their broken relationships. TD seeks to address the root causes of problems and issues, acknowledging the presence of 'pervasive evil', and striving to bring *shalom*, truth and justice – affirming the role of the local church in this. Expressing a bias towards peace, practitioners are keenly aware of the principle of 'doing no harm'. It is clear that to contemplate community development in this light, will require a paradigm shift in

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[114] Cf. Wright (2010:77), referring to Mark 16:15; Revelations 21:5; Genesis 1–11, but especially Genesis 12:1–3: "The blessing of Abraham will bring all nations into the *shalom* of Christ, the redeemer, saviour and healer of all."

[115] Cf. Chapter 4, section 4.3.3, footnote 52: The research findings where the women who had suffered much became the "…pillars of society".

[116] Cf. Chapter 4, section 4.3.5.2: The attitude of the Father; Volf (1996:105): The ultimate goal of the kingdom of God is love.

[117] Cf. Myers (1999:37–40): "At its best, the church is the sign, a witness, to the kingdom of God breaking into the world." Community practitioners have to realize that it is God – not them –who brings the kingdom; that it is the church – not the development agency – that is the sign of the kingdom on earth. Yet, the church is a community in which our life with Christ is nurtured; it has as its task to (theological and sociological) work "for the good of community in which God has placed it".

attitude, thinking, and the making of choices and the implementation of actions. Lastly, transformational development differs from other development approaches in the sense that it acknowledges the need for healing to take place. In Myers' view, the healing and restoration of relationships is central in the transformational process: "Healing the marred identity of the poor is the beginning of transformation" (Myers, 1999:115; 117). In addition, the long-term impact (or sustainability) of development is directly linked to the "…willingness and ability of the community to carry what they have discovered and learned over into transforming their personal lives, relationships and community" (:183).[118]

Therefore, transformational development requires new 'instruments of praxis' – a methodology and tools of engagement with the people/community on an equal level, giving them space to freely participate and to address the causes and possible solutions to the issues holistically: on a physical, emotional, cognitive and spiritual level. In the next sections, the focus is on spiritual healing as integral component of transformational development.

5.4.3 *Spiritual healing as integral component of transformational development*

At the root of the loss of identity, meaning and wellness, is the breakdown of relationships on a spiritual level (cf. Myers, 1999:88; Volf, 1990:18). It is only when individuals are able to re-dress their marred identity in the image of God – 'connecting with the breath of life' (cf. Swinton, 2001:23; Kourie & Kretzschmar, 2000a:12) – that healing takes place, and individuals grow more sensitive in all other relationships. The well-being of communities thus is directly linked to the spiritual healing of relationships.[119] Accumulative evidence of the significance of spirituality in human well-being has been forthcoming (cf. Koenig, 2007:13, 24; Anderson, 2003:63–65; Holt, 1993:92–94). Hodge (2003:13) refers to an impressive body of empirical findings documenting spirituality's salience in a wide range of areas, including mental health, coping ability, self-esteem, the realisation of personal strengths, divorce recovery, homelessness, sexual assault and substance abuse. In fact, he found that "…in total, several hundred studies exist on spirituality and religion, the majority of which suggest that spirituality is a key strength in personal well-being" (Hodge, 2003:14.).

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[118] Cf. Chapter 3, sections 3.4.6 & 3.6: Both sample groups' feedback with regard to the impact of them having undergone a healing process (during the retreats) on those around them: family and community.

[119] Cf. Chapter 4, section 4.3.4: Myers (1999:86–87) on the connection between relationships, *shalom* and well-being; section 4.3.1: Spirit of God as transforming agent; Chapter 5, section 5.2.4.2: The connection between spirituality and well-being.

Similarly, there is a renewed awareness of the effectiveness of the spiritual healing traditions and an acknowledgement that, based on the view that human beings need to re-connect with one another and with universal and spiritual purposes, these 'natural' or indigenous traditional healers seem to be able to make true connections with and help people to adjust the way they live (cf. Iron Cloud Two Dogs, 2001:10; Sollod 1993:404; De Gruchy & Ellis, 2008:16; Tyndale, 2000:13–14; Ife, 1998:159–162; Ver Beek, 2000:32–36; McKernan, 2005:8–9.)

As mentioned in the previous section, in entering into the praxis of spiritual healing (helping people and communities to re-dress their relationships), the practitioner need, apart from the theological norms to guide him/her, a more tangible framework, methodology and techniques. Moreover, in the community context of people from various cultural backgrounds (i.e. South African context), a cultural sensitive approach to spiritual or inner healing is required. Cultural diversity is reflected in the following discussion of the definition and principles of spiritual healing, as well as in the clarification of the concepts of healing, indigenous healing and well-being. The key elements of transformational spiritual healing from a Christian perspective are outlined, followed by a discussion of the ethos and role of the community facilitator/practitioner as spiritual healer. Lastly, reference is made to the impact of spiritual healing on the community and the adaptation of techniques/exercises for the community context.

5.4.3.1   *Spiritual or inner healing as process of personal and community well-being*

According to Sollod (1993:404) all spiritual healing traditions emphasise the central importance or the connection of all life to spiritual or cosmic realities. In this context healing is seen as restoring a condition of wholeness or harmony. Montgomery (1999:3) emphasises this inner process toward wholeness, stating:

> Our healing is about attending to our woundedness in a deeply compassionate way. It is the very act of bringing our loving attention, rather than our judgement, to our woundedness that brings about and continues our healing. This is an ongoing and lifelong process for each of us. It is about becoming more fully ourselves in mind, body, heart and spirit.

Most authors seem to concur that inner or spiritual healing is a process that takes place within an individual, becoming aware of his/her need to be healed and the self-healing energies locked up in each individual. The process is often guided by a helping person or practitioner, who could be a therapist, counsellor, 'change agent'/facilitator

or natural healer. Though the healing process is in essence an individual, inner process, involving all the dimensions of our being, it is also a communal process – encompassing those around us, our community. The healing process will never be complete in isolation – we are relational beings, shaped by the various relationships we find ourselves in, and we need others to aid us in our healing, to help us grow toward wholeness. Marstin (1979:71–73) emphasises that we have "to recognise that we are never *merely* individuals" – our most basic sense of reality (and thus our well-being) comes to us through our social relatedness.

Creating safe spaces in the community context – acknowledging the spiritual connectiveness of all present – is a natural 'phase' in the healing process, as has been demonstrated in most traditional wisdoms (Marstin, 1979:73–74).[120] In the healing process, the potential for change is emphasised – the individual is seen as a child of God, possessing rationality and free will to alter his/her situation. Visualisation, prayer and meditation, and even rituals are often central to the healing process – the nature and degree to which this play a role in the process will be determined by the specific spirituality adhered to (cf. Sollod, 1993:406–407). What is of the utmost importance is that the process should respect the spirituality of the person or community who is in need of healing – it therefore should be free of any actions or beliefs that are in contradiction to the individual's or community's spirituality. It should be essentially a 'healee-driven'[121] process. The reality of living and practising in communities composed of people from diverse spiritualities, implies an awareness of the ethics of healing, as illustrated in the discussion on spiritual healing in a multi-faith communities and on ethical issues (section 5.4.3.2).

5.4.3.2 *Spiritual healing in a multi-faith context*

In addition to the richness offered by traditional spiritual healers, in recent years there has been a strong movement amongst religious groups and churches, in South Africa as well as worldwide, to train lay counsellors (and re-train professionals) to provide 'Christian Counselling' or various forms of 'healing therapy'[122] for fellow churchgoers

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[120] Cf. Chapter 3, section 3.4.4.3: Creating a safe space for healing during the FH1 and FH2 retreats. Also Driskell (1999:58–59) on safe space.

[121] 'Healee' refers to the person of community in need of healing.

[122] There are numerous approaches to 'healing therapy' amongst Christians, mostly requiring specific training for practitioners (or lay counsellors). For example, Horrobin (1994:20–27) describes 'deliverance healing' (or ministry) as "being a normal part of Christian ministry throughout the history of the church" and refer to the ministry of Jesus as the exemplar for such healing: "For Jesus, and those being discipled by him, deliverance healing was normal and natural" (:24), flowing from the cross (:25, referring to Colossians 2:15). Deliverance healing is, according to Horrobin, what God intends for

and those yet to be reached – indicating the resurgence of "caring for our fellow members or community" (cf. Horrobin & Horrobin, 2003; Cloete & Cloete, 2003; Morrissey, 1997:2, 14–17, 27–28; Smith, 2002:15, 19–20). Yet, this is not surprising given the Jewish, Protestant and Catholic origins of most organised welfare and the social work profession (Hugen & Scales, 2002a:1). The evidence has been there all along that churches and faith-based organisations have been significant providers of counselling and community services – since loving service to others is at the centre of the Christian faith (Sherwood, 2003:3).[123]

In the multi-faith South African context, spiritual healing cannot be discussed without acknowledging the influence of indigenous (or traditional) healing practices. Traditional spiritual forms of healing consist in part of suggestion and placebo,[124] but also contain elements of active therapeutic ingredients that contribute to demonstrable changes in thinking, feeling and behaviour. The traditional healers are usually motivated by an urge to serve and to develop the power or know-how to change the lives of others, and are expected to undergo some kind of initiation or training. They often seem to have privileged access to the hidden experiential world of others and an awareness of their own and others' problems (the 'wounded healer'). There is also proof of a familiarity with and acceptance of a wide range of spiritual and anomalous (paranormal) experiences (cf. Sollod, 1993:403).

From a Christian perspective, spiritual healing can be defined as "a counselling and prayer based approach to delineate inner hurt or pain which is present due to negative experiences (i.e. sexual abuse, not properly loved or valued, rejection), causing emotional pain" (Walking Wounded.net, 2000a:1). The healing process is founded in the belief that God is the centre of our lives, that He cares about us and that He is able to heal, and comprises of praying and inviting the Holy Spirit to come in. This is done by entering a different state of consciousness in which one feels an inner wholeness or oneness with God. The focus on achieving this state of 'atonement' (as

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Christians, namely "to be naturally supernatural in their life and ministry", having the power and authority in Christ to deal with the powers of darkness (:27). Thomas Keating (2006:187) prefers the approach of "divine therapy" – defined by him as follows: "A paradigm in which the spiritual journey is presented as a form of psychotherapy designed to heal the emotional wounds of early childhood and our mechanisms for coping with them". Keating sees this therapy as taking place only under the direct guidance of the Holy Spirit.

[123] Cf. Sherwood (2002a:329–330) reminding (social work) practitioners of the opportunity they have "to demonstrate the gospel of Christ – to give our clients the grace-filled gift of knowing what it feels like to be treated with love and justice, what it feels like to experience caring, grace, forgiveness, trustworthiness, honesty, and fairness … with respect and dignity as a person with God-given value."

[124] Medicine given to humour, rather than cure, the patient, as is often done in control groups during clinical trials for new drugs to reduce the "placebo effect" of a patient's *belief* that the drug has been effective (Mark, 1996:156).

opposed to a focus on the type of illness or the problem) creates the inner stillness necessary for healing (Sollod, 1993:408: Keating, 2006:163). Horrobin and Horrobin (2003:3) emphasise the role of 'free will' and the need for the individual to make choices during the healing process. They stress the responsibility of the individual to choose to let go of the past (and sin), to repent and turn to God. In doing so, the individual accepts God's redemption and grace, and is freed from guilt (cf. Smith, 2002:63–63). Within the restored relationship the individual is then empowered to live a life of joy, hope, peace and fulfilment.[125]

To guide individuals through the process of spiritual healing the practitioner makes use of analytic skills to facilitate the individuals' understanding of the source of their problems, namely personal sins and the sins of others. Understanding 'personal sin' as the refusal to respond to God's grace and the deliberate neglect of our own genuine needs and those of others (cf. Keating, 2006:161), helps them to deal with the hurt caused by past experiences and personal sin. It opens their eyes (and mind) to the negative effects of life's tainted and damaging situations or circumstances on them as individual. Thus the main focus of Christian healing, according to Smith, is the role of sin in causing suffering (physical or emotionally); the 'renewal of the mind' (acknowledging the truth and dealing with the 'origin' of the pain and suffering); the need to go through the process of receiving forgiveness and of forgiving others; and the breaking of bondages (or release) in order to guide people towards spiritual and emotional freedom (cf. Smith, 2002:63–64, 120–131, 175–177).

Total reliance on God is seen to be central to spiritual healing, since only God is "… able to meet us at our point of need, and only He knows in the fullest sense what we are experiencing, and the true causes of our problems – as is written in Isaiah 53:4: 'He carried our sins'…" (Walking Wounded.net, 2000b:1) The "raging waves of our painful past" cannot be healed by restitution or "filling the vacuums": it can only be calmed by the truth from the Holy Spirit, spoken softly and gently (Smith, 2002:123). According to Smith (2002:123), spiritual healing based on the biblical and Christian principle that God is a loving and forgiving God, guides the individual through a process of accepting God's forgiveness – as is written in Ps 18:19: "He brought me out into a spacious place; He rescued me because he delighted in me". Throughout the healing process the significance of spiritual beliefs and practices in the individual's

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[125] Smith (2002:63) refers to Galatians 5:1 "Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again in the yoke of bondage."

search for wholeness, meaning, and reconciliation with God, self and others, is emphasised (Milner, 2003:81).

Although there are different models of Christian spiritual healing, the following key elements or steps are usually included (cf. Walking-Wounded.Net, 2000a:1–8; Walking-Wounded.Net, 2000b:1–5; Smith, 2002:84, 120–131; Horrobin & Horrobin, 2003): (i) The healing process begins with an opening prayer and conversation to enable the practitioner to know the individual and to establish trust. (ii) The practitioner explores the level of damage, pain and suffering – listening to the person's story. (iii) The need for total honesty and openness is stressed. (iv) The practitioner guides the individual/client through a process to become comfortable with whom they are, to accept their shortcomings; to embrace God's love in failure and sin; and to let go and allow God to be in control. (v) The individual/client may be guided through a process of forgiveness where he/she names different parties, which need his/her forgiveness, and then pray for them. (vi) The healing may involve the laying on of hands (the healer places his/her hands on the person's shoulders) or inviting the Holy Spirit to visit the person to take away the pain and negative effect of hurt. (vii) The practitioner once more prays for or with the individual/client and asks for God's guidance and insights.

It is implicit to Christian spiritual healing that the practitioner should be a practising Christian, forming his/her decisions about what to do, when to do it, how to do it and why one should do it, on Christian principles and values (Hugen & Scales, 2002a:1). In addition, the practitioner should – throughout the healing process – be open to the prompting of the Holy Spirit for insight and guidance into the cause of the person's problem and ways of providing help. Even if the practitioner does not do 'Christian healing' *per se*, being a Christian will determine the way he/she functions in the helping relationship. Allowing oneself to be guided by the basic principles of Christianity "...you can certainly give [the person you work with] the opportunity to experience what it is to receive grace, love, and justice; what it is like to experience respect, caring, support, trustworthiness, honesty; what it is not to be taken advantage of" (Sherwood, 2002b:7).

5.4.3.3 The community practitioner as spiritual healer: Ethos and role

One apparent difficulty is that, to comply with their codes of ethics, professional practitioners are required not to impose their values (religious, political or otherwise) on those they work with, in order to 'not do harm'. Thus the question can be posed whether it is ethical to bring any kind of 'spiritual' dimension into the professional relationship. Hugen and Scales (2002a:1) state that it is unfortunate that the question

of 'including' spirituality needs to be raised, since historically social work (and other helping professions such as health care) used the language of Christianity as a basis for its existence (Koenig, 2007:56–57). In fact, the Christian church was one of the true originators of charity – it was religious conviction and commitment which shaped and provided the foundations for organised welfare (cf. Derezotes, 2006:264; Koenig, 2007:51; section 5.4.3.2).

Despite the abovementioned apparent difficulty, in the context of working with people, whether in institutions or communities, practitioners are increasingly challenged to accept their responsibility to 'bring spirituality to the community'. Firstly, there is mounting pressure on (social work) practitioners from professional institutions (such as the JCAHO & CSWE)[126] to heed the spiritual needs of the people they work with. David Sherwood (the editor of *Social Work and Christianity*) states that "…our values inevitably influence our interactions with [the people we work with] and deliberately avoiding spiritual and religious issues is professional incompetence" (Sherwood, 2002b:7). He argues that practitioners are expected to deal with diversity and concludes that only in making appropriate allowances for such a fundamental kind of diversity (such as spiritual diversity), can they claim competence in dealing with diversity. Secondly, within the field of practical theology, there is an outcry for the involvement of 'representatives of religion' in the community; and a warning that the negligence to heed the call for ethical community development will surely contribute to the decline of our society (De Gruchy & Ellis, 2008:14).

What is the ethos of spiritual healing? Sherwood (2003:8) points out that core social work values and Christian values are highly congruent. In fact, it could be argued that to be truly understood, social work values – such as the dignity and value of each person, social justice, integrity, service and the importance of human relationships – ultimately require a spiritual or religious foundation. It follows that we should "…be guided by both our Christian faith and our social work code of ethics in handling complex issues ethically and with integrity" (Sherwood, 2003:8).[127] In working with people in community, practitioners have no choice but to follow the principles of being people-focused and people-led and being guided by the context – our role, the agency auspices, community expectations and people and community vulnerability

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[126] Cf. the already-mentioned view of the American Joint Commission for the Accreditation of Hospital Organisations, requiring from healthcare professionals (e.g. social workers working in hospitals) to do spiritual assessments (cf. Koenig, 2007:55). The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) recently also published several books and educational tools on the role of spirituality and religion in practice (Heyman, Buchanan, Marlowe & Sealy, 2006:3).

[127] Cf. Chapter 4, section 4.4: The normative guidelines and 'common good'.

(Sherwood, 2002b:7). This was the experience during this study when confronted with the sample groups' need for healing before they could, in confidence, enter the community and facilitate processes leading to significant and sustainable change. The planned 'capacity building sessions' had to be augmented with the healing retreats, providing the space for work on a spiritual level.[128]

Practitioners, needing to come to terms with what is required from them in their role as 'healer' in the community context, also have the responsibility to familiarise them with literature and practices of spiritual healing. A review of both popular and scientific literature on the subject of inner or spiritual healing yields an abundance of information on who 'spiritual healers' are and on their methods of healing/counselling.[129] However, there is no one definition or 'method' – in fact, the range of spiritual healers varies from well-educated ministers, psychologists and social workers on one end of the scale to lay people, 'natural' or indigenous healers on the other end. Despite the wide array of approaches, authorities on spiritual healing concur that, to be able to be "…a companion along the pilgrim's way" of connecting to God during the healing process, the practitioner (as healer) has to undergo a similar process of connecting with God (Edwards, 2001:3). The preparatory process will bring the practitioner to an awareness of the "Spirit-undercurrents flowing through … currents providing glimpses of divine love, beauty, callings for fuller commission and compassion…" (Edwards, 2001:3). During the healing process the practitioner will guide the healee through a similar process of exploration – being attentive to what the healee experiences as fear, suffering or hope-giving, and to what he/she seems to be waiting for and want to act upon (Edwards, 2001:4).

In essence, the role of the practitioner as healer, is one of guiding and supporting those in need through the healing process. According to Paul Tournier,[130] circumstances are "…unforeseen calamities (which like a nutcracker) apply force that can break through the hard outer shell of personal security" (in Yancey, 1998:116). Yet, life-changing as it may be, what really counts is not what happens, but how we react to it. Although the unforeseen circumstance or "…act of cracking or breaking open" will cause pain, it needs not to destroy. To the contrary, in the right environment the disarray can lead to creative growth if the person is willing to seek new routines and

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[128] Cf. Chapter 3, section 3.4.1: Motivation for retreats; section 3.4.4.1: Researcher/facilitator as 'healer'.

[129] Cf. Chapter 3, sections 3.4.4.1 & 3.4.4.2: Methodology for spiritual healing utilised during this research.

[130] Dr Paul Tournier is a well-known Swiss physician and counsellor who also worked in Africa, amongst other in communities of people with leprosy.

behavioural patterns. The role of the practitioner (doctor, minister, social worker) is to keep the 'nutcracker of circumstances' from destroying, and to help the sufferer see that even the worst hardships open up the potential for growth and development (Yancey, 1998:116).

It stands to reason that spiritual healers need the correct attitude and specific skills to fulfil this function, and have to be astutely aware of the potential to harm those they are working with. Myers (1999:125) stresses that "doing no harm" is the absolute minimum standard practitioners have to meet, listing a variety of actions that should be avoided – the key to which seems to be an deep awareness of one's own attitudes, perspectives, and woundedness. Henry Nouwen is well known for writings on healing, and especially for his use of the 'wounded healer' metaphor. He believes that the healer "…can make his own wounds available as a source of healing" (Nouwen, 2006:xvi). As healers, we have to "…enter into the core of our existence and become familiar with the complexities of our inner lives" (:38). Using the metaphor of a house, Nouwen (2006:38) refers to the healer growing to feel at home in his/her own house, through discovering and articulating the dark corners and the light spots, thus becoming able to engage in creative healing work. It calls for contemplation or "resting in the naked trust of God's loving mystery" (Edwards, 2001:4), so as to discover in him/herself the voice of the Spirit (Nouwen, 2006:43). This process enables the practitioner to not only create space for God within, but to contemplate God's 'bigger than our heart' (Nouwen, 2006:38). In doing so, the practitioner will learn to see through the eyes of God: be open to the other and, in humility and with compassion, listen sensitively for what is happening in the other; and focus on the positive potential of the other as opposed to 'labelling the disease' or become caught up in a sense of the person's limitations. As mentioned (in section 5.4.3.2, last paragraph), another key ability of the healer is that of being able to alter the state of consciousness; relying on the guidance of the Spirit to facilitate healing (cf. Sollod, 1993:411–414; Anderson, 2003:21).

Lastly, the intention of the practitioner plays an important role – love and a desire to serve, or a 'calling' should motivate the healing (cf. Sollod 1993:407; Sherwood, 2003:4). Anderson (2003:24) sees the task of the practitioner or caregiver within the community context as follows:

> To be a caregiver is to be committed to the task of seeing and seeking the good of human existence within the context of a community which both supports and sustains human life at

its fullest … humanity which exists fraternally, in mutual consolation, so as to nurture and sustain persons in particular.

The practitioner (as healer) is in a position to create the environment and relationship conducive to the healing process. Yet, it is exactly because of this privileged position that practitioners have to be aware of their power to influence the process. Sherwood (2002b:7) states "…that the very nature of our role and relationship means that you have a special responsibility not to exploit your role". Integrity as healer can be achieved by being people-focused and willing to follow their lead and by entering the relationship in such a way that the person will have an experience of grace, acceptance, receptiveness and understanding (Sherwood, 2002b:7; Nouwen, 2006:38–43). The role of the practitioner/healer in the spiritual healing process is therefore one of providing a safe, supportive space; of guiding individuals – in a group setting – through an introspective process to address their spiritual needs and to discover their spiritual assets; and of creating an awareness of the value of these spiritual assets in dealing with life's challenges. This is especially relevant in the context of the community. When dealing with communities addressing multi-level issues, it is of the utmost importance to have an understanding of people's (and communities') strengths, challenges and resources. A 'new' approach that integrates traditional healing methodologies and local wisdom with western empirical models, implies a mind shift and change in attitudes amongst the professionals in the field – moving away from an attitude of 'helping them' toward one of 'handing over the stick'. Wessel (in McLaughlin & Briggs, 1996:7) states that "…in order to be a healing influence, the healer must cultivate a basic sort of humility and respect, where it is not appropriate to show up as an expert". If the healer/practitioner displays such an attitude of 'openness to learn from' it will facilitate self-confidence, self-dependence and a feeling of 'we have what it takes' amongst community members (NETWAS, 2002:1–2).

One of the attributes required from a practitioner/healer is, according to Nouwen (2006:40–41), that of compassion, i.e. the ability to, when standing amidst people, recognize as critical their craving for love and their longing to break through boundaries of culture, language and status. Other important qualities for working with people and communities are the ability to forgive and the quality of humility: being aware of one's limitations and being willing and open to learn from the other (cf. Nouwen, 2006:40–41; Derezotes, 2006:142; Morrissey, 1997:69–70). Practitioners have as their role model the life and actions of Jesus. Heeding his example is only possible when living and working in a close relationship with God – being transformed.

Ultimately, what is required of the practitioner as healer, is the integration of spiritual communications within one's body, mind, soul and spirit (cf. Keating, 2006:110–111). It entails as part of the practitioner's daily living and disciplines, prayerful meditation and contemplation[131] or 'waiting upon God': listening and learning "to see with the eyes of the spirit" (Kourie, 2002:21). Nouwen (2006:43–47) expands on the vital role prayer and specifically contemplation has in the life of the healer/practitioner. Those who has discovered in themselves "...the voice of the Spirit and has rediscovered [their] fellow men [sic] with compassion, might be able to look at the people [they] meet … in a different way". Contemplation enables the healer to see "the face of Him in whose image we are shaped" in the face of the other and to find "…signs of hope and promise in the situation…" (Nouwen, 2006:44–45). Christian community development and transformation begin and end in relationship with and living the example of a loving God.

5.4.3.4 Spiritual healing in the context of community development

It becomes apparent that the way in which 'spiritual healing' is defined, depends largely on the underlying perspective that is taken. For the purpose of working with individuals in the community context, a bio-psycho-social-spiritual perspective to spiritual healing was taken and the following working definition composed by the researcher, in reference to the work of Anderson (2003), Edwards (2001), Nouwen (2006) and Smith (2002):

> Spiritual healing — in the community context — can be defined as a method whereby the practitioner ('healer') creates a safe space within the community context for facilitating/guiding individuals – under the guidance of God or the Holy Spirit – through a reflective and intuitive or spiritual process toward the understanding and delineation of the source of their negative experiences/problems/blockages (resulting from physical or mental trauma) in their search for wholeness, meaning, and reconciliation with God, self, others and their environment.

True to the action research process,[132] this definition for spiritual healing in communities was derived at through various cycles of reflecting, planning, action and observation

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[131] Cf. Appendix B, Exercise 4d: *Examen of Conscience*.

[132] Cf. Chapter 2, section 2.6.4: The action research spiral: reflecting (or critical reflection), planning, action (implementing plans) and (systematically) observation (cf. Wadsworth, 1997:79; O'Brien, 2001:1; Robson, 2002:218); Chapter 1, section 1.5: TAR providing the component of theological reflection, crucial in the development of a framework for spiritual healing: insertion, data-gathering and analysis (What is going on? Why is it going on?); theological reflection (What does it mean? What should be going on?); participative learning (What have we learned? What should we change or

and renewed planning and action.[133] Initially, in order to introduce elements of spiritual healing in work with groups in the community, the researcher worked within a people-centred development framework, incorporating what (in her view) are the main components of spiritual healing,[134] namely being truthful to oneself and others; accepting God's personal blessing; being able to make peace with things in the past (through forgiveness); finding one's purpose in life; and developing a vision and action plan towards the future.

Whether working with one person or a whole community, the inclusion of the spiritual healing process, was found to be energy releasing and sustainable, since it takes into account who each person, group or community is – the total spectrum of their being: physical, social, mental, emotional and spiritual.[135] In addition, the basic principles and methods of the people-centred participatory community development approaches (such as Rapid Rural Appraisal, Participatory Rural Appraisal, Participatory Learning and Action, Participatory Action Research, Appreciative Inquiry in Action, Community Water Management and Community Economic Development) were found to be of great value in shifting the focus away from 'professional-problem-centred' to 'people-potential-centred'.

These participatory approaches share a number of principles that served to uphold the spiritual healing component in the work with people and communities: (i) Acknowledging the right and ability of the individual (or community) to play a leading and an active role in their own destiny ('practising free will' as required by the spiritual healing process). (ii) Acknowledging people's inherent possibilities, affirming that which is already taking place and which inspires people to pursue dreams and possibilities of 'what could be' (finding wholeness). (iii) Emphasising the mobilisation and organisation of people's potential, independent actions, skills, self-initiative and creativity. (iv) Focusing on processes which facilitate the identification of the strengths, passions and life-giving forces that are found in any community. (v) Deploying of external 'change agents' or facilitators, such as trained community members (or indigenous workers) or trained 'outsiders' (i.e. development professionals/practitioners) to ensure the momentum of the process of mobilisation and organisation of the human and environmental resources (cf. Chambers, 1994:1253–1268; Chambers, 1991a;

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invent?); action (Knowing what we know now, how should we respond? What should we do?) (cf. Karecki, 2005:140; Cameron, et. al., 2010:50; Wijsen, 2003:113; Osmer, 2008:11).

[133] Cf. Chapter 3, section 3.3.3: Process followed in the development of the spiritual healing methodology; section 3.4.4.1: Spiritual healing during the retreats.

[134] Cf. feedback received during the work with the sample groups, section 5.4.3.5.

[135] Cf. Chapter 3, section 3.4, and discussed in more detail in this chapter, section 5.4.3.5.

Ekins, 1992:1–7; Ford & Ashford, 2000:1; IISDnet, 2002a; 2002b; 2002c; 2002d; Kirsten, 2002:66–77; Moriarty & Schouten, 2002:1–4).

5.4.3.5   Impact of spiritual healing on the community

Prior to and during the course of this study, techniques and exercises relevant and applicable to the work in the community addressing spirituality and inner healing[136] were identified. These exercises were included in the research retreats and community development workshops – and further adapted and developed as the research progressed.[137] Feedback received from the participants[138] confirmed the impact of these exercises, e.g. workshop participants frequently remarked on how a focus on the spiritual dimension helped them to uncover strengths previously ignored or minimised – only to realise that in essence it is precisely these assets that help them cope under the most strenuous circumstances:

▸ *The sessions helped me to grow in all areas. It urged me to discover all my inner feelings and to work through everything, whether positive or negative. It gave me a deeper insight into 'being human'. I feel that I have something positive to contribute toward my fellow men and my community* (cf. Chapter 3, section 3.5.1).

▸ *The … sessions helped me to open up, to pour out my heart, but also to keep quiet and listen – to look inside and then react. For example in conflict situations, I now first do introspection before I react[139]* (cf. Chapter 3, section 3.5.2).

Similarly, participants indicated that having gone through a healing process themselves,[140] enabled them to implement these exercises (focusing on the spiritual healing) in the communities they work with.[141] Participation in these exercises changed

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[136] Cf. *Weaving a Basket*, *Body Mapping*, *Blessing*, *Lighting a Candle*, *Healing of Memories*, *Face of God* and *Touch Dance* (Appendix B, Exercises 16, 17, 33, 2, 30, 4b, 34).

[137] Cf. Appendix A8: People centred healing and capacity building process.

[138] Feedback statements taken from various workbooks compiled by the researcher after each of the (pilot group and FH1/FH2) capacity building sessions. It represents the actual material recorded in writing during the sessions. All workbooks were printed and participants each received a whole 'set of workbooks' according to the requirements of Action Research.

[139] Not recorded verbatim, but noted (in the FH1 capacity building session workbook) was the context during which this statement was made: the participant reflected on Jesus' words in Matthew 7:3–5 referring to dealing with the plank in one's own eye before trying to 'relief' the other of their spec: *"You hypocrite, first take the plank our your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye"* (:5).

[140] At various stages during the capacity building process almost every FH1 and FH2 sample group member reported on the value of learning to become quiet, "listening to God" and "seeing others through God's eyes" (cf. Chapter 3, section 3.5.1 & Appendix B, Exercise 13: *Forgiveness*).

[141] For example, a number of the 'trainees' gave feedback on how they have utilised exercises such as *Life Line* and *Relationship Wheel* with people in their community who had to deal with losses or

their attitude and way of relating to others in their immediate families, at work and in the community, for example:

‣ *In the community, people often come to talk to me – now we can become silent together, meditate and then talk* (Chapter 3, section 3.5.1)[142].

‣ *After the retreat, I could talk things over with my daughter and put things straight. I was able to give her space to talk, also about her (and my) feelings* (Chapter 3, section 3.5.1).

‣ *The first day when I arrived at Olyfhuis the light was lit – it symbolised love. We went back to share the love with others in the community* (Chapter 3).

In Chapter 3 it has been described and illustrated how techniques and tools for working on a spiritual level with groups were adapted or developed, and how adjustments of individual exercises enabled the 'workability' in a group and community setting. The research findings reflect the degree of success obtained.[143] However, the most important aspect is not what technique is used, but the practitioner's attitude, intention and humility. Freire (2006) is often quoted as having said that without love, there is no dialogue. Similar, without deep humility, an attitude of servanthood and compassion, no 'spiritual work' is possible. Listening and inner-reflection[144] should be the main tools, utilised by the practitioner to fully discern the other's need and level of spiritual development.

5.5   Summary

Notwithstanding the relative undocumented role of spirituality in community development, it is clear that much of the work focussed on individuals, are just as applicable in working with groups and communities. Actually, the scope and impact of spiritual healing is enlarged by acknowledging that all work has to start with the individual – who are in turn, interconnected with other individuals. It requires a

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difficult personal relationships. Florah Buthelezi reported that in dealing with families with marital problems, she utilised the *Relationship Wheel*-exercise with resounding success. Florah was the eldest participant of the Pietermaritzburg group, a very experienced community caregiver, with no formal training. She handed in an exceptional assignment showing great insight into community involvement and her role as community facilitator (cf. Chapter 3, section3.5.4).

[142] Cf. Appendix A6 for verbatim feedback as final assessments of capacity building sessions (FH2).

[143] Cf. Chapter 3, sections 3.4.6 & 3.5.2: Analysis of impact (retreat and capacity building).

[144] Cf. Appendix A8, Figure 4: Depiction of the healing process, indicating the centrality given to the practitioner/facilitators' task of connecting with God and listening to the participants.

sensitivity for individual differences and the ability to focus on similarities and growth opportunities; the necessary adaptation of techniques, exercises and process; and, acknowledging that the spiritual resources of whole communities could be utilised to equip them with the 'ability to survive against the odds' and to deal with the challenges life throws at them – working toward the establishment of strong, healthy communities.

Though disillusioned with secular models of development, the literature and praxis of practical theology and spirituality provided an excellent foundation for spiritual or inner-healing and the refinement of a 'community-based' approach toward transformational development. However, on reading Kiernan and Villa-Vicencio's reflections[145] on the impact of Christian missions and evangelisation on especially South African indigenous people and the political, social, economical and educational foundation and structures – the researcher realized that practitioners in multi-faith communities, should question the predominance given to a purely 'Christian' (or any other religion inspired) approach. Would such a narrow or biased approach in fact, be any better (for the community) than those secular models? As practitioner in a diverse, multi-spiritual society, one needs to reflect upon one's own contribution and heed the lessons embedded in our South African history. At this point, practical theology's most valuable contribution comes in: to make us aware of the need for constant, continuous self-reflection and theological reflection. We cannot take one step in our intervening, development, capacity building, and therapeutic, educational interactions with the community without reflecting on the impact, consequences, value of our practices, and underlying premise. Who do we really serve?

In the final chapter a praxis framework for relational interaction in the community is presented. It should be seen as an attempt to conceptualise not only the outcome of this study (and work with the sample groups), but also the accumulative 'wisdom' gained from the interactive and reflective nature of the creative process between researcher and thousands of people encountered during prolonged community involvement. Furthermore, frequent reference has been made to input from the community reflecting their acknowledgement of the 'spiritual' aspects, as well as the 'realness' of God in their lives. Certainly this should be taken into account, as should the researcher's acknowledgement of her Christian worldview (influencing her approach to work in the community). Yet, these diverse perspectives are but attempts to provide some answers as to the specific choice of approach and the conclusions drawn. Practitioners should be

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[145] Cf. section 5.3.2.

open to the fact that there is no one 'real' answer, no 'one' model, no ultimate approach. Indeed, openness of mind and a non-judgmental and loving attitude is of the utmost importance. Thus, when utilizing the suggestions, the framework and the components described in the next chapter, practitioners should continuously reflect on the impact of their involvement and input, by asking, *"Who am I serving? Whose interest do I have at heart? Do my actions reveal love and compassion?"*

CHAPTER 6

THE CONVERSATION CONTINUES: ORTHODOXY, ORTHOPRAXY AND ORTHOKARDIA AS KEY TO THE PRAXIS OF (RELATIONAL) COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

In these concrete conditions the process of conversions occurs, the nodal point of all spirituality. Conversion means going out of oneself, being open to God and others; it implies a break, but above all it means following a new path. For that very reason, it is not an inward-looking, private attitude, but a process which occurs in the socio-economic, political and cultural medium in which life goes on, and which is to be transformed.
Gustavo Gutiérrez (1974:66)

6.1   Introduction

"Everybody embodies a spirituality", says South African theologian Celia Kourie, "[Since] spirituality refers to the *raison-d'être* of one's existence, the meaning and values to which one subscribes" (2006:19).[1] Given the apparent importance of the spiritual dimension in people's lives, the aim of this study was to investigate – from a basis of findings by way of action research within the context of community development practices in social work – the possible practical theological rationale for greater regard for people's spiritual needs and for the spiritual resources embedded in the community by the inclusion of a spiritual dimension in community development praxis. The eventual intension being one of providing practitioners in the field of community development with the underlying theory and practical and theological guidelines for people and community transformation.[2]

The interdisciplinary approach to the study required that, throughout the study, the dialogue between the three voices of the disciplines of social work community development, spirituality and practical theology had to be heeded. But, even more crucial, was a sensitivity to how these voices interacted with the 'voice of the people'. Consequently, recognition had been given to the intrinsic need of people to be seen, to be heard and to be treated as worthy and dignified human beings, capable and ardent to participate in community development interventions that directly influence their lives. In the words of Archbishop Ndungane (2003:33), it is above all a voice of hope and human dignity:[3]

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[1] Cf. Chapter 1, section 1.8.1.

[2] Cf. Chapter 1, section 1.4.

[3] Ndungane is referring to his experience of listening to 'the voice of the people' during the 1998 National Poverty Hearings.

> [I came across] … people of hope and dignity, with resilience, who … spoke with the same voice proclaiming that they do not want handouts or charity, saying: "We have brains. We have hands. So give us skills; give us the resources; give us the capacity to work out our own existence in order that we might have dignity, that we may be fully human".

Similarly, Beverly Haddad (2001:5) points to the self-derived strategies of the women involved in the *manyano* movement "…harnass[ing] the resources of both the spiritual and material realms".[4] In the field research 'the people's voice' was heard in the words of project members submitting to God's presence in their lives:

> *We have to ask God to give us spiritual ears to truly understand people, to listen to and teach others. We also have to listen to God – like Noah* (Members of 'external group', Pietermaritzburg).[5]

The choice of an inter-disciplinary action research design[6] was an outflow of the multiple voices involved and the threefold aim of the study,[7] namely (i) to explore the practice of transforming people and communities through incorporating a spiritual dimension into an integrated community development approach; (ii) to theorise the inter-relationship between spirituality, theology and community development, building a triangular theoretical construct between the disciplines of social work, spirituality and practical theology; and (iii) to propose a praxis framework and methodology for the incorporation of spirituality in community development. Osmer's (2008:11) four tasks for practical theological interpretation was found to be expedient to the aim and methodology of the study and, finally, the structuring of the dissertation – each chapter depicting a response to one of his four focus questions.

In answer to the question *"What is going on?"* the research questions and definitions of the key concepts were posed in Chapter 1. In view of the proposed alternative research design integrating social work and theological action research, in Chapter 2 the focus shifted to a discussion of the underlying theoretical basis, evolution and methodology of the proposed alternative 'interdisciplinary action research design'[8] utilized during this study. It was indicated how Theological Action Research (TAR) – and to some extend the practical-theological spiral – provided a 'bridge' for

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[4] Cf. Chapter 1, section 1.1.

[5] Cf. Chapter 1, section 1.2, footnote 12: Input from the 'external group' (cf. Chapter 3, section 3.5.4).

[6] Cf. Chapter 1, section 1.5.

[7] Cf. Chapter 1, section 1.4.

[8] Cf. Chapter 1, section 1.5, Figure 1.

linking (social work) action research with practical-theological action research.[9] The question: *"What is going on in this context?"* was addressed in Chapter 3, which described the field research and its findings. The interpretative task of situation analysis, asking *"Why is it going on?*, was also partly addressed by analysing the participants' response regarding the place of spirituality in their lives.

In Chapter 4 the interpretative task continued and overlapped with the normative task, as the field findings were brought into conversation with the 'voice of theology', utilising theological reflection to answer the question: *"What should be going on and what can we learn from Scripture regarding this?"* Further analysis of literature leading to the development of the triangular theoretical construct (incorporating the disciplines of social work community development, practical theology and spirituality) was depicted in Chapter 5. A specific focus was the delineation of practical theology as contextual space for the inclusion of spirituality in transformational development, and the critical/distinguishing strategy of inner or spiritual healing of transformation.

The current chapter constitutes a final reflection on the process and findings of this study, in answer to the questions, *"How could the inclusion of spirituality contribute to the development of people and communities?"* and *"How might this practice be shaped?"* Firstly, by reflecting upon the paradox of praxis: *orthodoxy*, *orthopraxy* and *orthokardia*. In the light of this understanding asking the questions: "What is the right thing to do?" and "What is the disposition (for the practitioner) in which to do it?" the focus shifts from a Christian theological understanding of spirituality and community development – with a strong emphasis on *love* – to the centrality of the concepts *hope* in creating a better future and *relationship* as vital in community well-being and transformation. Secondly, by a discussion of the incorporation of a spiritual dimension unpacking the proposed praxis framework for transforming people and communities; and lastly, by a way forward for the praxis of transformational development, by suggesting a number of recommendations for practitioners with regard to the implementation of spiritual component.

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[9] Cf. Chapter 1, sections 1.3; 1.5; Chapter 2, section 2.6.4 & 2.6.5, Table 1.

6.2   Reflection upon the paradox of praxis: *Orthodoxy, orthopraxy and orthokardia*

This study has its roots in real-life situations[10] – amongst others, a vignette of rural life with women cultivating the soil to plant *mealies* just outside the window of the classroom where their sons and daughters were being prepared for caring for those in need in their community. These real-life situations lead to a long, tedious process which finally resulted in the writing of this research report – the conclusion of this research process. And yet, in actual fact, it is but the beginning of a new cycle of reflection, for, having been exposed to 'community' and poverty on numerous levels, the question of understanding/believing correctly how (*orthodoxy*) in order to do the right thing *(orthopraxis)* with the right disposition, in the right spirit and "seeing with the eyes of the heart/spirit"[11](*orthokardia*) becomes crucial.

With regard to involvement in the praxis of community, it will do practitioners well to contemplate the words of theologian Dirk Smit (2009:474–491), shedding light on the inter-connectedness of *orthodoxy, orthopraxy or orthokardia*. Smit cautions against the danger of allowing those who suffer from poverty to become mere statistics, reiterating that "…Christian ethics begins with the act of seeing". This implies both *listening* to people's stories in order to *see* (i.e. perceiving the problem) and *acting* upon suffering/poverty. According to Smit, *seeing* entails the perception of the problem, the acceptance of it as a moral challenge and the interpretation of it in a preliminary way – each of these moments impacting on the making of ethical decisions – such as are needed in developing and implementing strategies to address the people and community development in the midst of adverse conditions of suffering poverty and violence:

> Without this act of seeing, of shared experience of common discovery and observation, any such reflection and discussion would be meaningless. Seeing comes first (Smit, 2009:482).[12]

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[10] Cf. Chapter 2, section 2.2, footnote 8: This vignette refers to the researcher's exposure to the Social Work students in Venda.

[11] Cf. Celia Kourie's (2000:22–23, 28) description of silence as a conscious attending to God in order to see with the "eyes of the spirit"; as creating a "space surpassing all boundaries" where a losing of the self takes place, resulting in "saintly compassion". Silence is, in a sense, preliminary to "right heartedness toward God", as it enables one to "open the eyes of the heart…"

[12] Cf. Chapter 4, section 4.1, footnote 3: Referring to 'seeing' (Dirk Smit). Cf. also Robert Barron (1998) on 'seeing': "Christianity is, above all, a way of seeing. What unites figures as diverse as James Joyce, Caravaggio, John Milton, the architect of Chartres, Dorothy Day, Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the later Bob Dylan is a peculiar and distinctive take on things, a style, a way, which flows finally from Jesus of Nazareth. Origen remarked that holiness is seeing with the eyes of Christ. Teilhard de Chardin said, with great passion, that his mission as a Christian thinker was to help people see. And Thomas

The emphasis on seeing is well-grounded in Scripture, as both St. Augustine's commentary on Psalm 26: "But what you want to see is that light, which is seen by the eye of the heart, for that light is God," and the worlds of Paul in Ephesians 1:18 illustrates: "I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people…"

Therefore, all the more the paradox of action research, of praxis, confronts one with the question that, if one is listening to the people's voice, heeding their deep-felt yearnings and lamentations, *seeing* their suffering, should one not be 'out there', applying one's energy to walk alongside them, reaching out to those in need of care and justice, rather than spending months on compiling yet another research report which may gather dust on some unnoticed shelf? In this regard Bosch's (1991:443) caveat rings clear: there is a need to integrate *orthodoxy* and *orthopraxy*, to correlate words and deeds. But what is needed all the more is, as Kourie (2000:28) asserts, an opening of "…*the eyes of the heart to perceive God's presence pervading the world*".[13] And, since *orthodoxy, orthopraxy* and *orthokardia* need each other and, in the words of Bosch (1991:443), "each is adversely affected if sight is lost of the other", reflection on the following questions has to take place anew:

> *How can this study have an impact on the lives of people that will enhance their ability to have hope and meet their own needs? Should a spiritual healing component be (officially) incorporate into work with communities?*

> *Could one own up to a personal Christian spiritual paradigm when interacting with people from various other spiritual frameworks? What are the practical and ethical implications of such an interaction?*[14]

First, *orthopraxis*. Justification for the integration of a spiritual dimension in the theory and praxis of community development has been forthcoming from both the analysis of the fieldwork data (confirming the awareness and 'people's praxis' of spirituality as life affirming force)[15] and the literature study (claiming, from a Christian perspective at least, spirituality as God's personal engagement with humanity).[16] Nonetheless,

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Aquinas said that the ultimate goal of the Christian life is a 'beatific vision,' an act of seeing" (from the Prelude to *And now I may see… A theology of transformation*).

[13] Cf. Chapter 4, section 4.4: Where is God in this? (Bosch, 1991:443; Kourie, 2000:27–29).

[14] Cf. Chapter 1, section 1.4: Research questions.

[15] Cf. Chapter 3, sections 3.4.5.8 & 3.5.4; Chapter 4, section 4.3.4: Verbatim statements.

[16] Cf. Chapter 4, section 4.3; Chapter 5, sections 5.2.5.2; 5.3.1 & 5.4.2.1.

although 'spiritual work' can bring with it, in Derezotes' (2006:30) words, "the highest ecstasy possible in life", is not to be taken lightly. It requires of one to face the most serious life challenges and the most painful experiences, demanding from the practitioner (and academic alike) an alertness of mind, emotions and spirit; a willingness to be exposed to and involve with people in communities; whilst, simultaneously, being open to go through a process of (personal) growth to create space for 'the one' amidst (cultural and personal) differences. Only then will one be truly able to listen to stories of the numerous individuals in diverse communities and hear, embedded in their stories, multiple examples of how inner strength (or weakness) accounts in the last instance for how one responds to circumstances and personal disposition. One will begin to discern how these stories are underscoring the nature of human beings as *spiritual* beings, with vast, frequently unnoticed, resources to sustain them through life's often hazardous journey. And, in a most humble sense, catch a glimpse of the reign of God (cf. Guder, 1998:95–97). As a practitioner striving to also work on a spiritual level, one needs to ask oneself daily how one "…may move more squarely into the realm of God's reign and how one may welcome and receive it into the fabric of one's life this day more than ever before" (Guder, 1998:97).

Second, *orthodoxy*. How would practitioners know what is 'the right thing' to do? Osmer (2008:10–11) urges practitioners to develop normative theological perspectives to interpret their realities, by asking questions, such as "*What is going on? What ought to be going on? What are we to do and be as (Christian) practitioners in response to the events of our shared life and world?*" According to Osmer (2008:8) "[t]hese questions lie at the heart of the normative task of practical theological interpretation", inviting practitioners to reflect on how, in the light of what we know about God, He would be acting if in our position (cf. Osmer, 2008:8).[17] In addition it urges practitioners to reflect upon past practices and traditions to guide them in determining the ethical principles and guidelines for praxis (cf. Osmer, 2008:8).

The practice of interpreting one's situation is part of being human, as humans are hermeneutical beings given to interpreting and making sense of the world as experienced by themselves (Osmer, 2008:20–21). As a practitioner one partakes in a process of interpretation, following the hermeneutical circle.[18] In this research study the pre-understanding (those judgements and understandings coming to us from the past) of being a social worker initially led to the conviction that work in the communities had

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[17] Cf. Chapter 4, section 4.2: Theological reflection as transformation inducing methodology.
[18] Cf. Chapter 2, section 2.3.1: Discussion of the hermeneutical circle.

to adhere strictly to the secular activities related to development. It was only when being confronted by people in the community who, so to speak, brought their spirituality into the space of community facilitation worksessions/training, that this pre-understanding was challenged. The incidences of being challenged by something (a text, person, or an object) that questioned this pre-understanding, called for further investigation. By entering into dialogical interplay – the confrontation with 'the voice of the people' (and at a later stage, the literature in the fields of development, social work and practical theology) and engaging into a back-and-forth dialogue – new horizons opened up. The Gadamarian 'fusion of horizons' finally came to pass through the merging of social development practices with that of practical theology, and, as a result, the development of a praxis framework, employing a new way of thinking and acting (cf. Gadamer in Osmer, 2008:23). It also led to the formulation of ethical guidelines for practitioners involved with transformational development.[19] Yet, these are processes of the mind, whereas ultimately, what is required in transformational development, is to 'do right before God, but with the right disposition' in the sense that the yardstick we need to use for our praxis, is the love of God – *orthokardia*.

Third, *orthokardia*. Being true to one's calling as Christian practitioner not merely compels the practitioner to move into the presence of God, but also to be more involved in this world, pledging oneself to "the overcoming of the (after all artificial) gap between thought and act…" (Hall in Bevans, 1992:75). It prompts the practitioner to implement spiritual resources in the attempt to open the interconnecting channels for the entrance of God's power to benefit people and communities (cf. Guder, 1998:97, Derezotes, 2006:10–11; McKernan, 2005:1; Hugen, 2002:39–40). It involves a 'right heartedness' or *orthokardia* (Kourie, 2000:29)[20] and a "listening to one's calling" in the fullest sense of the word. Westley, Zimmerman and Paton (2006:36) define a 'calling' as "the inward feeling of conviction of a divine call; the strong impulse to any course of action as the right thing to do". One may ignore or respond to a calling. However, once one decides to respond to a calling, one is often to realise that it requires at times both an immediate response and long-term involvement; a belief in what one is doing, conviction, courage, devotion and perseverance. As was reflected in the discussion on 'calling' as a theoretical concept,[21] and again in the work with the sample groups who,

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[19] Cf. Chapter 4, section 4.4: Normative guidelines; Chapter 5, section 5.4.3.3: Community practitioner as spiritual healer: Ethos and role.

[20] Cf. Chapter 4, section 4.4: Where is God in this?

[21] Cf. Chapter 5, section 5.2.4.2: Richard Cabot's (1927) "Calling model" – social workers have to be aware that they are in alliance with forces greater than themselves (God) in their helping of people.

almost in spite of themselves, felt their responsibility to reach out to others less fortunate,[22] 'calling' may also impel one to initiate change, doing things differently, without the assurance of an acceptable outcome (cf. Westley, et al., 2006:36–37).

How then do practitioners fulfil the calling for spiritual involvement? There seems to be only one unqualified answer to this: through entering into (a loving) relationship – with God, with oneself, with others and with community (cf. Osmer, 2008:17; section 6.3.1). In paraphrasing Barker's commentary on love (1985:1725),[23] love is the synthesis of God's creation and his ongoing relationship with us: God is love. He has communicated his love to us and commands us to love one another. Love is now and into the future the governing principle that controls all that God and his redeemed people are and do. In the words of Paul (1 Cor. 13:1), it is the most excellent way, requiring us to be selfless in our concern for others, even at a cost to ourselves.[24]

6.3   Toward the praxis of transformation

How then can the "…social and ecological transformation" needed to establish "[n]ew kinds of faith communities – virile, nurturing and courageous, and of profound spiritual formation" (McLaren, 2007:132, 97) be brought about? The relational praxis framework for people and community development presented in this study – one that may assist in forming these communities – provides guidelines or 'a map', inviting the practitioner to enter into an ongoing, reflective process (journey), asking about the situation/reality, "What is this?" Asking about the expected outcome or dream, "What is expected to change?" and about the process of getting there, "What – obstacles, issues, needs – stand in the way?" and "What then should we do?" It seeks to provide a framework for facilitators and communities to – on a personal level – discover the means of harnessing one's spiritual resources towards the finding and fulfilling of one's nature and destiny in a symbiotic relation with the created world and its environment. And on an inter-personal level – to connect with the similar in others, moving toward the transformation of community, creating a more responsive and nurturing environment for all (cf. Anderson, 2001:170; Lewis & Lewis, 1990:146).

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[22] Cf. Chapter 3, section 3.5.3: One of sample group FH2 making her home available for starting a crèche for the neglected children in the community. Also Chapter 4, section 4.3.5.2: The discussion on the Father urging the elder son to, since all that the Father has belongs to him as eldest son, accept responsibility for his brother and family.

[23] Cf. Commentary on 'love' in the NIV Study Bible.

[24] Cf. Chapter 4, section 4.3.5.3: The sample group's 'dreams of hope' for the youth in a hopeless situation.

Christians believe that this should be done with reference to God as to be the source of their spiritual resources and under the guidance of the Spirit of God, who is also a Spirit of mutuality, relation and connection, drawing people together even as friend[25] (cf. Carr, 1982:102; Derezotes, 2006:29). In addition, embracing the Spirit brings with it a set of beliefs and values and a way of life to inform the practice – embedding all practices in a strong normative basis (cf. McGrath, 1999:3; Osmer, 2008:8).[26] For in the final analysis it is this intended consciousness – the being open to the needs, following the pace, listening to the stories, respecting the suffering and victories, heeding the wisdom of 'the other' – that helps provide the space for reshaping the relations and identities of all involved. Being respected as equal partners,[27] individuals begin to see how they are connected to one another through significant shared attributes (cf. Derezotez, 2006:27–28, 185; Myers, 1999:114).

Indeed, one of the principal findings of this study is the centrality of (equal and dignified) relationships in all work with people and communities.[28] Predictably, relationship is key to the praxis of people and community transformation, as is reiterated in the next section.

6.3.1 Relationship as key to people and community transformation

Relationship is at the core of transformative work with people and communities. From a Christian perspective we see the potency of relationship in the cross. The cross is "…a statement about the world and God's abiding love[29] for the world and all its creatures … [symbolising at once] … humankind's movement away from God and … God's gracious movement towards fallen humankind" (Hall, 2006:4). As has been shown in

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[25] Cf. Ann Carr's (1982:96–97; 102) writing on feminist spirituality, saying that "[a]lthough spirituality is deeply personal, spirituality is not necessarily individualistic, because within the relationship to the ultimate, to God, it touches on everything: our relations to others, to community, to politics, society, the world". And from a feminist perspective, the relationship with God is seen as co-creative, co-shaping, as if God is envisioned as a friend to the individual.

[26] Cf. Chapter 5, section 5.3: Spiritual consciousness.

[27] Cf. Chapter 5, sections 5.2.3 & 5.4.2; Chapter 6, section 6.4.1: Discussion of the presuppositions of the framework; Appendix A, Table 7; Table 8 & Table 9: Foci and principles of integrated people and community transformation; characteristics of the praxis framework.

[28] Cf. Chapter 1, sections 1.3; 1.8.1 & 1.8.2; Chapter 3, sections 3.4.5.1; 3.4.5.6 9 (e.g. *Relationship Graph*); 3.4.5.7 & 3.5.2: Inner/spiritual healing transforms relationships; Chapter 4, sections 4.3; 4.3.2 (e.g. importance of relationship) & 4.3.5.2 (e.g. the parable of the Prodigal son and the Fathers' relationship with both his sons as portrayed in the parable, also from an African perspective); Chapter 5, sections 5.3.1.1; 5.4.1 & 5.4.3: Spiritual healing.

[29] God's love is, according to Green (2003c:106), described as *agape, "the outworking of God's own love for the unlovely"*.

the field study[30] and literature research,[31] the core of the practitioner's practice should be the development of relationships: horizontal relationships between oneself and the people in the communities, drawing them closer as equal partners; between co-workers;[32] and the facilitation of the development of people's vertical relationship with God, connecting them with the source of healing and change (cf. Derezotes, 2006:9).

An initiative resulting from the work with the FH2-sample group, namely the COMFIKID-story and project, personifies the interconnectedness and relationship as the core of transformational development:

> The seed was sown when one of the FH2 group members, Zuki (a FH2 member) voiced her need for blankets for the babies and small children attending the day-care at her *hok*.[33] The 'blanket-bed' was designed by a young local designer (Saskia Wicomb) who, after visiting Zuki's day-care to make contact with the children whom were to benefit from the blankets, realized that they actually needed a mattress as well. Financial contributions came from individuals in Denmark,[34] as well as from the choir members of the Senior Choir, Cambridge, Ontario, Canada, in response to sharing Zuki's story with one member. An agreement was reached with Minnie (a FH1 group member who runs an early childhood education programme), that the mothers of the children, who received the COMFIKIDS, will attend edu-care sessions.

This was not an earthmoving event, it is but merely the delicate strings of humanness woven into the tapestry of Zuki's life, the lives of the young children who sleep comforted,[35] covered in 'butterfly wings'[36] Minnie's life and the lives of her volunteers

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[30] Cf. Chapter 3, section 3.4.5.6: Exercises of relational healing and the impact healed relationships had on the group's families, work and community interactions.

[31] Cf. Chapter 4, sections 4.3.1 & 4.3.5: Relationship as praxis of spirituality: we are called to enter into this communal life of love: "Under the image of the Trinity we discover that we do not know God by defining him, but by being loved by him and loving in return … [and by discovering] … that another does not know me, nor do I know another … only relationally, by accepting and loving, by giving and receiving (Peterson, 2005a:7); Chapter 5, section 5.1: Importance of re-connecting with God, other and self; section 5.2.1: Relationships in people-focussed community development; & section 5.2.1.1: Relationship between God and community. Also Wright (2010:93) on the vertical and horizontal relationships as exemplified in the story of Abraham's blessing.

[32] Cf. Chapter 4, section 4.4.3: "The relationship between the facilitators – being one of total trust, openness and commitment to one another and to the process – was picked up by the participants and referred to as a motivational and positive factor throughout the retreat".

[33] Informal shack.

[34] Cf. Chapter 4, section 4.2.3: Detail of their visit to Zuki's day-care.

[35] The scripture on the COMFIKID reads: *"As a mother comforts her child, so will I comfort you"* (Isaiah 66:13).

[36] The butterfly-concept was partially inspired by the following story of Allan, related by Anderson (2003:145–147): Allan suffered a spinal cord injury leaving him a paraplegic. In his agonising rehabilitation process and brokenness of his spiritual life "he had the profound sense of touching the

as they reach out to more mothers the lives of the ladies from the sewing project who produce the COMFIKIDS with great enthusiasm and professionalism, the lives of Canadian choir members who now have a connection with these children from Africa. It is a witness to the reverberations of interrelatedness.

Transformational development is about connecting – through the cross – lives of people, with each act reverberating and affecting the whole (Fretheim, 2005:19).[37] Therefore, it is possible for the transformation of people and communities to take place at the interface of the secular and the sacred. It is here, where the horizontal paths of human beings cross the vertical path of God that true transformation becomes a reality.

6.3.2   *Radical change happens on the secular-sacred interface*

Ife's (1998:94) definition of community development (as referred to in Chapter 1, section 1.8.5) depicts development as a complex, ongoing process aimed at helping people to determine their own version of community. This takes place by means of "exchange, consciousness raising, education and action". As was mentioned in Chapter 1, the variety of people's ideas of community is likely to cover a wide spectrum of possibilities. What may be not so varied are people's ideas about well-being,[38] being whole, being 'good'[39] (as opposed to being 'not good') (cf. Fretheim, 2005:24–25).

The key indicators of well-being – family, relationships, income, work, health, social networks, personal freedom and personal values and a philosophy of life (Graham, 2009:10, Chapter 5, section 5.4) – also echo the need of the human being to belong, to be connected. This once more draws the attention to the importance of people's inner-world – their spirituality. Certainly this is what the literature review and the fieldwork in this study pointed at: well-being is not so much about *where* one is, but *who* one is. And if this is so, could it be that our focus on community development has all

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face of God. 'I felt like part of me had wings', he said, 'and I was lifted by an invisible breath so that I could see my situation from a different perspective'… the wings of his spirit carry him farther than he ever dreamed possible" (Anderson, 2003:146).

[37] Cf. chapter 3, section 3.4.5.6: Impact of spiritual healing on the families and communities of the sample group members.

[38] Cf. Chapter 5, section 5.5.1: Discussion on well-being; Eckersley's (in Graham, 2009:12) statement: "All in all, well-being comes from being connected and engaged, from being suspended in a web of relationships and interests. This gives meaning to people's lives". Fretheim (2005:12) describes healing as the process of being redeemed by God, being freed up to become what God intended – whole, good – which may infer that we will never reach the state of well-being, but are journeying towards becoming well/whole.

[39] Cf. Chapter 4, section 4.4: What is common good.

along erroneously focused on the "*where* people are" and the "*what* people have"[40] rather than on the "*who* they are"?[41] In the light of McLaren's (2007) metaphor of the suicide machine[42] – working its destructive way through the world we have created, if one heeds the arguments of Kothari and Minogue (2002a:1–15) – observing the facts surrounding the current state of development (Chapter 5, section 5.4, Table 3), then one can not but think that this is what has been done for long.

McLaren (2007) makes the appeal that "everything must change". Hall (2006) urges a turn to the cross so as to be enlightened. Anderson (2003), Guder (1998), Steven and Green (2003) counsels "…live under Kingdom reign and rules". Tutu (in Haws, 2008) pleads for a spirit of *ubuntu* and Peterson (1989:235) argues that to overcome the spiritual crisis of values, we need a theology of Spirit to re-awaken the power of dreaming, imagination and vision. In the words of Morrissey (1997:6) writing about community mission, the challenge is one of devising a "model of community involvement which allows us to be open about the potent contribution of the Christian gospel and the experience that faith has played in our own lives, without abusing the sensitively established relationship with those who are vulnerable and who, for the most part, already have to dance to other people's tunes".

The purpose of community development is to facilitate or guide people towards equity, growth and well-being, by acknowledging and encompassing the richness and complexity of human life and of the experience of community (cf. Ife, 1998:131; Korten, 1984:299; Graham, 2009:10; Chapter 1, section 1.8.5; Chapter 5, section 5.2). Furthermore, one needs to acknowledge the fact that "*A burning hut affects those in close proximity*", meaning that what affects me, affects my neighbour (Qalinge, 2003:3) – again an element of relationality. This awareness is reflected in one of the principles of the Christian Community Development Association[43] requiring of practitioners to live in the communities where they work so as to become affected by the same circumstances, by one another's lives. Our 'practice lessons'[44] seem to

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[40] Graham (2009:5) states: "Yet experience and research widely recognize that above certain income levels, greater prosperity is not matched by greater happiness, but is accompanied instead by greater social and individual distress, manifested for example in increasing crime and ill-health, such as depression".

[41] Cf. Volf's (1996:18) notion of importance of identity and otherness (Chapter 4.3.1, footnote 29); Myers' (1999) focus on 'identity and vocation' as key to transformational development (Chapter 5, section 5.4.2).

[42] Cf. Chapter 5, section 5.2.2: Alternative paradigms – Suicide machine.

[43] Cf. Chapter 5, section 5.3.1.4: "*[R]elocating* – live with the poor; be transformed by being part of the community, facing the real problems they face. Living the gospel means sharing in the suffering and pain of others."

[44] Cf. Chapter 3, section 3.4.

resonate with these notions: people want to be heard, accommodated, empowered, treated with respect, to contribute to have self-actualisation, to have the right to self-determination, to be part of (to belong), to receive practical guidance and to have responsibility and ownership. In a preceding chapter (Chapter 5, section 5.4), it has been stated that:

> The praxis of practical theology ranges from care giving, counseling, education, and community missions, to environmental care. Development of people and communities entails all these areas and many strategies for meeting the challenges that have been forthcoming. What has been omitted is the heart of development, the only true link to sustainable development – the relationship with God, spirituality.

In Chapter 1 (section 1.8.4) Graham (2009:20–21) was quoted saying that "[t]he primary language of theology is articulated in the practical wisdom of human care" – which, from a Christian perspective, refer to all human activities, such as healing and transforming as "varieties of 'God-talk' in action and the place where God's grace is shown forth in human relations." Thus a praxis framework informed by (Christian) practical theology would address – in addition to the practice (orthopraxy) and theory (orthodoxy) – the "spirit in which the action has to take place" (orthokardia).[45] Therefore a praxis framework addresses the *practice* – what could be done and how should it be done; the *theory* – a conceptual development, indicating clearly what the underpinning theory of the framework is (e.g. it might include the various theories about social and human capital or spiritual healing); the *context* – where these strategies could be deployed; and the '*spirit*' – with what disposition should the practitioner be involved (cf. Wheeler, Wilson, Blue & Beard, 2004:5; Osmer, 2008:27–29).[46] In the next section these components (practice, theory, context and spirit) of the proposed relational praxis framework for people and community transformation are outlined, focusing on the four main strategies of transformation – healing, restoring, hope-giving and

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[45] Osmer (2008:27) refers to leadership in the Christian community (which could include practitioners involved with facilitating people and community transformation) as "inherently a spiritual matter" – being open to the Holy Spirit for guidance: "There being and becoming in the Spirit are integrally related to their doing and leading in Christ's body and this body's service of the world"(:29).

[46] Cf. also Chapter 1, section 1.8.4: "A praxis model or framework helps to inform practice … This guides practitioners in the sense that it provides definitions and descriptions as well as what can be expected under specific circumstances. By focusing on the process, values, relationships and techniques practice … make knowledge more accessible and practical; help to analyse complicated and complex practical situations; and provide broad guidelines for implementation (cf. Weyers, 1991:131; Hefferman, 1979:47; Compton & Galaway, 1989:1–4)."

stewardship/serving. It is argued that, rather than viewing spirituality as another component or dimension, all dimensions should be informed by spirituality.[47]

6.4   A relational praxis framework for people and community transformation

The main purpose for developing a praxis framework (in the discipline of social community development) is to present a body of information as guideline for practitioners within the praxis of development.[48] The intention then is not to present a 'foolproof recipe', but to provide ample material, based on years of observations, implementation and reflection, as a stepping stone for practitioners desiring to enter into communities from a different vantage point. The relational praxis framework for people and community transformation is one such an exemplar.[49]

True transformation radiates outwards from one's core relationship with God. Peterson (2005:318) poses the question: "What is wrong with the world?" And answers: "Me". He motivates his answer by stating that *God created human beings and all of creation* – to live in relationship and responsibility with one another and with our Creator. If we do not do this, it is soon apparent that "something is wrong with this world" – and "that somewhere in that 'wrong', there is 'me'… the place … to start doing something about it" (Peterson, 2005:318). On the one hand, this simplifies one's task as practitioner working with people and communities, since taking the first step towards transformation leads to oneself, the inimitable place to start. On the other hand, it implies a complete 'make-over' – requiring a totally revolutionary renewal of mind and boldness action, such as lived out by Jesus, a "radical re-ordering of one's life" (Bevans, 1997:66).[50]

As mentioned already, at the core of the life of community is love of God and love of neighbour or *philadelphia*[51] (Green, 2003c:106). Since this is lived out in the midst of sin (choosing not to love) and "antichrists" (people choosing to reduce others around them to roles and objects so that they can use them and manipulate them), it is no easy task (Peterson, 2005:324). Yet we are commanded to love – freely, living lives of

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[47] Cf. Section 6.4.3, Figure 3: God/Creator as the centre of transformational development, informing all other actions.

[48] Cf. Weyers (1991:130–149); Kirsten (1992:58–59; 68–77; 124–126).

[49] Building on the work on practice models (Weyers, 1991:130–149; Lewis & Lewis, 1990:1–33). Cf. also Appendix A12: Characteristics of the relational praxis framework

[50] Cf. Chapter 5, section 5.3.1.4: Engaging in 'radical practices' as exemplified by Christ.

[51] Green (2003c:106) describes *philadelphia* as "the heaven-sent family love for the others of the family".

acting out this love as servants of one another.[52] "Every act of love requires creative and personal giving, responding, and serving appropriate to – context specific to – both the person doing the loving and the person being loved" (Peterson, 2005:327). This calls for transformation on a personal and community level. This calls for a 'new take' on working with people in communities – an approach where relationships built on trust and love and compassion are key to all practices or input.[53]

6.4.1   *Presuppositions and principles of transformation*

In accordance with the work of Weyers (1991) on (social work) praxis frameworks, the characteristics of the relational praxis framework has been described according to 18 criteria.[54] The following brief overview of the presuppositions and principles for this framework may serve to guide practitioners toward the understanding and implementation of this approach. What is clear from these presuppositions, is the centrality our relationship with and identity in God as basis for a relational approach to transformation (cf. Myers, 1999:114),[55] and the call for 'a new take' – namely to 'act in love' – in the work with communities (cf. Peterson, 2005:327). The following *presuppositions* for the relational praxis framework have been identified:

- God created all – human beings, non-human beings and the environment (earth) – "…and God saw that it was good" (Gen. 1:31) and effective. This was God's work, and it (creation and the care of creation) continues through the creative activity of us, human beings, who have efficacy or the power to produce and to be effective (cf. Peterson, 2005:115–116; Fretheim, 2005:9, 24–25).

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[52] Cf. Chapter 4, section 4.4: What should we as practitioners do? & section 4.3.5.1, footnote 104: Kritzinger on the 'Great command'; Chapter 5, section 5.3.1: Wright (2010:49–53); Myers (1999:118).

[53] One such 'new voice' was that of Paulo Freire[53] who wrote about the education for hope, expressing his faith in people's ability to fulfil their vocation – to become more fully human (Morrissey, 1997:67). He insisted that no development can take place without approaching and educating people with humbleness and love – which entails respecting their wisdom and getting to know and understand their reality (cf. Freire, 1987:62; Freire 2006:2–3; Morrissey, 1997:69–71). Cf. also Chapter 1, section 1.8.6.

[54] Cf. Appendix A12: Characteristics of the relational praxis framework, identifying 18 criteria for praxis framework based on the work of Weyers (1991) & Kirsten (1992). Cf. also Appendix A10: Foci of relational transformation, indicating how this framework is supported by the findings of this study.

[55] Cf. Chapter 5, section 5.4.2: The discussion on a Christian perspective of transformational development contributing to the (theoretical) formation of the praxis framework.

- We have free will and choose to not always follow God's purpose – therefore "sin and evil is a powerful reality in the world and has become systemic, built up over time into the very infrastructure of creation" (Fretheim 2005:13).[56]

- God stays creatively involved in an 'ongoing development' of those earthly conditions that are most conducive to the flourishing of life in view of new times and places. In His compassion over all that He has created, He stays creatively at work in the often tragic effects of such overt and covert resistance, "seeking to bring 'good' out of evil, to liberate the captives and to build up communities" (Fretheim, 2005:8).

- God's redemptive purpose is to free people to become what God intended for them – what He created in His image, to re-discover their true identity in God and to fulfil their vocation – thus the well-being of individuals and communities (cf. Fretheim, 2005:10–12; Myers, 1999; Volf, 1996).[57]

- God's relationship with the world is comprehensive. He is present and active throughout creation, wherever there is world;[58] and his redemptive activity involves bringing transformation and healing to people and renewal to the larger non-human environment (Fretheim 2005:11, 23).[59]

- We are relational beings living in a world (and communities) in which interrelatedness is basic to the nature of reality (Fretheim, 2005:16). All of creation is embedded in this web of interrelatedness – human and non-human being alike – therefore human sin has adverse cosmic effects (cf. Fretheim, 2005:9; Peterson, 2005:315; Hall 2005:1). But God's intention is for us (individuals and communities) to have just and peaceful relationships (Myers, 1999:118–120).[60]

- Love is the axis of all work in the community, since love is what God showed us. "Love names the way of life congruent with … the community of God's people" (Peterson, 2005:310; Green, 2003c:106).

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[56] Cf. Chapter 1, section 1.8.4: Sin as a spiritual phenomenon; as not loving God and other as commanded – 'turning away from God'; as reverberating in all of creation (cf. Peterson, 2005:315–317; Fretheim, 2005:9); Chapter 5, sections 5.4.1: Practical theology & 5.4.3.2: Spiritual healing.

[57] Cf. Chapter 1, section 1.8.3; Fretheim (2005:17, 93); Anderson (2001:170); Hall (2005:2); Anderson (2001:163–164).

[58] Cf. Chapter 5, section 5.3.2: Brighenti (2008:2008:523–524) referring to the Sprit of God at work in Africa long before the first missionaries' arrival.

[59] Fretheim is referring to Psalm 145:9: *The Lord is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made*.

[60] Cf. Chapter 1, section 1.8.3: Coulton (1981:26): The person-environment concept (the inter-relatedness of human beings with one another and with their environment) emphasises our dependence on biodiversity for our survival and quality of life. The 'fit' or balanced give-and-take between people and the environment determines to a large degree the well-being of the community.

McLaren (2007:295) states that in order to transform "…the community into Beloved Community" we need to adhere to the values of creativity, harmony, reconciliation, justice, virtue, integrity, compassion and peace which are characteristic of God's nature,[61] as reflected in the life of Jesus. Jesus' life is "the supreme example of a life lived in close fellowship with God" (McGrath, 1999:3), demonstrating the value loving other people and denying yourself. The appearance of Jesus in our midst has made it undeniably clear that changing the human heart and changing human society are not separate tasks, but are as interconnected as the two beams of the cross (Nouwen, 2006:20). Neither can transformational conversion and revolution be separated – it belongs together just as theology and ethics belong together, ensuring that revolution take place in the spirit of *orthokardia* – right heartedness toward God and 'the other'. Bosch (1991:439) stresses that "[o]nce we recognize the identification of Jesus with the poor, we cannot any longer consider our own relation to the poor as a social ethics question; it is a gospel question."

Practicing from a gospel perspective, requires living a spirit-filled life, reflecting and embodying Christian values, portraying a way of everyday living that encompasses the whole person – body, mind, soul, and relationships (cf. McGrath, 1999:3). It also relates to the person's way of connecting with the whole of creation. This understanding of wholeness and interconnectedness underlies the bio-psychosocial-environmental perspective of this study[62] and contributed to the formation of principles serving to support the assumption that people (and communities) are able to perform core-functions, solve problems, define and achieve their objectives and aspirations – if shown respect and given the needed positive support and facilitation or guidance.[63] These principles of integrated people and community transformation[64] include amongst others, the acceptance of the working and guidance of the Holy Spirit; the centrality of God's love and forgiveness in one's conduct; the concept of approaching community as a living-system; accelerating people's ability to realise their full potential, and the principle of holism – working on multiple levels for the good of all. Though not all-inclusive, these principles serve to give an indication of the intention with which development as transformative process should be approached, and are supportive of the presuppositions.

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[61] Cf. Chapter 5, section 5.3.1, footnote 54: Kingdom Rules; footnote 53:'Following Jesus'.

[62] Cf. Chapter 1, sections 1.3 & 1.8.2.

[63] Cf. Chapter 5, section 5.2: Community development focused on people.

[64] Cf. Appendix A11: Principles of integrated people and community transformation.

In summary then, human beings are created by God, in His image, diverse, but equal, spiritual *and* physical and with potential to contribute to their own and the well-being of others and this earth. The interrelatedness of human beings and the rest of creation is a given, thus community is an inter-connected web of systems – inferring both that 'sin' and 'creative actions' in one system could influence many other systems. Current strategies to develop communities have failed, due to an over-emphasis on the economic dimension and the adherence to secular rules. What is needed is the infusion of a spirituality which truly acknowledges the interrelatedness of all of creation. The relational praxis framework proposes such an approach.

6.4.2   *Relational transformation as healing circle*

The complexity of our life on earth is by no small degree attributed to the fact of our dual dependency: being dependent on material resources (this physical earth we inhabit) to meet our physical needs and on God for our spiritual needs. Earlier in this chapter the statement was made that "[o]ur spirituality enables us to live a life in union with God, keeping physical needs and material possessions in perspective, helping us to understand our role with regard to justice, stewardship, compassion and servanthood … [and] calls on us to live in interaction with one another." Working with people in communities cannot be separated from this reality and requires a multi-faceted, multi-leveled, spiritually based approach.[65]

One model allowing us to 'view' or perceive each community from at least four different vantage points or 'windows', is the Model for Integrated Social Development (ISD-model).[66] The focus of this model is on a holistic approach integrating interventions by working on four levels concurrently, namely direct and in direct work with individuals and communities. However, both the need for the inclusion of a

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[65] Cf. The 'kingdom frame' of transformational development proposed by Myers (1999:113), giving as example such diverse actions as immunizing children, improving food security, developing just social systems, stress counselling, peace-building and value formation: "Whatever heals and restores body, mind, spirit, and community all can be part of the better future toward which transformational development should point".

[66] Cf. Appendix A9: Model for Integrated Social Development (ISD-model). The ISD-model is founded in a strengths perspective and, based on the *Community counselling-model* of Lewis and Lewis (1990), was adapted by the researcher during the 1990's for assisting/facilitating welfare organisations and community-based organisations in their task to redistribute their sources and services towards working holistically and inclusively with people – from all cultural backgrounds – and their environments/communities. It has been utilised extensively in facilitating community capacity building.

spiritual/healing component and for the framework to be presented in a more community-friendly and 'Africanised' format required further adaption.[67]

According to Mtata and Draper (2009:1),[68] in the African Indigenous Churches (AIC) space is used in worship and healing services, with the circle the symbolic uncontrolled infinite – a spiritual space. Within the freedom of this sacred space the sacrality of the land can be tapped into and be concentrated in one locality to incur healing. The creation of the circle is central in the traditional healing processes – as can be witnessed where Africans actually created a circle even within the (Western-style) rectangular or square church building. Mtata and Draper (2009:2) point out that this is inherent to the African tradition of building a *kraal* in a circular form, placing the most sacred hut at the opposite end from the entrance into the *kraal* (circle), leaving the inner circle open as the most holy space. When performing healing ceremonies (in the AIC) the congregation forms a circle – placing those who are in need of healing in the centre, while those who are singing and praying for the healing to take place form the outer circle.

This concept of the use of space and the meaning attached to the circle of healing, served as motivation in this study to visualise (and finally conceptualise) the components of an integrated, relational model as a 'healing circle' or space.[69] Innermost of the circle – in the 'most holy place' – is Creator (The Father, Son and Holy Spirit). As practitioners we are called upon to perform activities in the community – and the best example of community action is to be found in the actions of Jesus. Apart from showing us during his life on earth how to interact with God, others and creation, He is still active:

> [I]n everything that has to do with living, which is the large context in which everything we do and say takes place, Jesus is working at the center. Jesus is far more active than any one of us: it is Jesus who provides the energy (Peterson, 2005:19).

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[67] The adaptation of the ISD-model into a praxis framework, took place while using it as training material in firstly, the capacity building worksessions for the pilot group and secondly, the further refinement took place whilst utilising the 'new' framework in both the retreats and capacity building sessions for the sample groups included in this study. The final 'testing' took place during the work with the external group (cf. Chapter 3, section 3.5.4).

[68] Worksession, *Use and Conception of Space in the Worship and Healing of the AICs*, attended during the Joint Conference of Academic Societies in the Fields of Religion and Theology on 22–26 June, 2009 at the Faculty of Theology, Stellenbosch University, Stellenbosch.

[69] Cf. Chapter 3, section 3.4.5.4: Using the circle as sacred space during the inner/spiritual healing retreat, e.g. *Circle of Hands* exercise.

Centred in Christ, practitioners are provided with the energy to serve and act, to care for community.[70] The four sub-divisions or components form the outer circle, leaving an open channel for the reflective processes to flow through undeterred. Thus allowing a free flowing-process of action, reflection, transformation, adaptation and renewed action – all subject to the inter-relatedness of the four components and influenced or impregnated by the transformative power of God/Christ/Holy Spirit, as illustrated in Figure 3.

The four components (representing the *orthopraxis*) are focusing on (1) direct work with people who are in need of more intensive input such as healing and caring; (2) indirect work with people in the community who may be at risk and would benefit from being drawn in by means of outreaches and empowerment training (giving hope); (3) direct work with the community where the focus is on restoring community – renewing of thinking, doing and being by providing a new metanarrative; and (4) indirect community work where the focus is on social justice and the making and implementation of policies and structures to support the other input – promoting servanthood or responsible stewardship of community and environment.

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[70] Cf. Chapter 5, section 5.3.1: Christ-centred development. Christ is also the exemplifying the spirit in which all should happen: in a relationship of right-heartedness toward God – *orthokardia*.
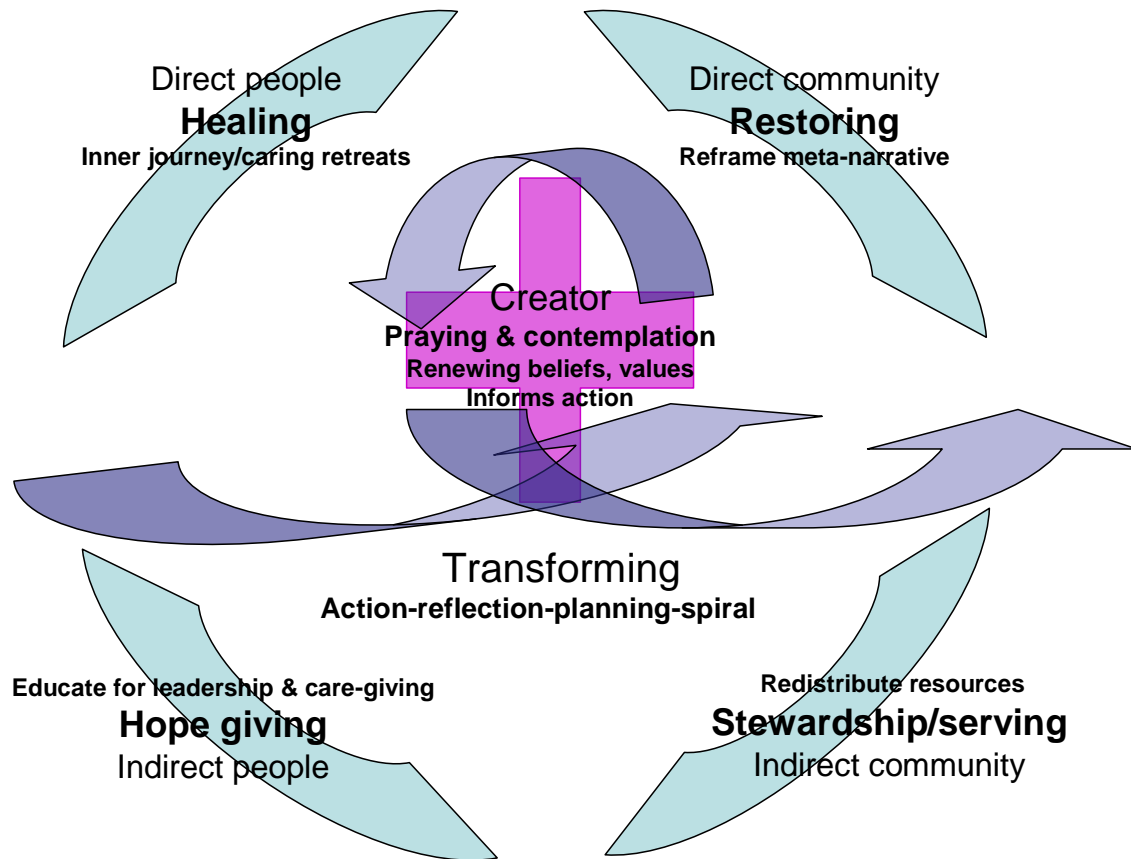
Figure 3: Praxis Framework for People and Community Transformation

The praxis of people and community transformation implies a holistic, inclusive focus – looking 'through all four windows' when assessing a community[71] to determine the nature and scope of the input and actions. This does not only refer to the need for determining "What is the present situation?" and "What should we?", but also to determine "Who should be involved". Transformation requires people to 'take hands' and work together towards the betterment of all. Doing a preliminary observational tour, village walk or even a visualisation (e.g. using *A Day in the Life of…* or *Mapping* exercises),[72] or inviting interested parties to join in the making of a community map or in a story circle – sharing stories about the specific community – is of great value, since it helps one to 'see beyond the surface', to become more conscious and to become

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[71] The community could be a geographical or functional community such as a congregation or student campus.

[72] Cf. Appendix B, Exercises 41 & 42.

attuned to the voice of the community, rather than to one's own preconceived ideas.[73] It will unveil previously hidden riches in terms of resources (e.g. professionals and lay people to co-operate with) and possibilities. Once the initial information is gathered, it is applied to the four components of the circle of healing – providing the practitioner and all those involved with a platform from which to proceed, adhering to the principles of integrated people and community transformation (cf. Appendix A11).

6.4.2.1 *Direct people involvement: Spiritual or inner healing*

Here the focus is on those people who are the direct concern of the practitioner. If working for a welfare organisation, it would be the identified clients or client groups in the community towards which the organisation has the responsibility of providing direct services (e.g. children afflicted with AIDS) to enable them to function on a level of well-being, or to prevent potential problems. It could also entail the addressing of factors influencing their normal developmental processes (e.g. children without sufficient parental care), impairing their physical, mental, emotional or spiritual health and functioning. If working for a church or community based organisation, the focus would be on those members who have indicated that they are in need of specific (healing/counseling or pastoral counselling) services or interventions. Great care must be taken not to impose services or help on people without them specifically asking for or consenting to such input. People's right to decline services or intervention should be respected. Strategies for intervention – which could be directed to individuals, but is likely to entail working with groups – include early identification, counseling and healing.[74] As demonstrated in Chapter 3, facilitating healing retreats[75] for small groups is one way to deal with community groups in need of healing. Another option is to include sessions on healing and spiritual- or healing-exercises as integral part of capacity building sessions for larger groups, as we have done in Pietermaritzburg.[76]

Working from a spiritual basis, healing is integral to all intervention. However, it does not have to be the exclusive field of the professional practitioner, as "[h]ealing is not the elimination of suffering, but the loving care and inclusion of the body-mind-spirit-environmental whole" (Derezotes, 2006:8). A lay counsellor with the sincere

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[73] Cf. Chapter 5, section 5.3.1.4: Christian Community Development Association requiring the practitioner to become part of the community – even by living there in order to truly understand their situation and life.

[74] Cf. Chapter 5, section 5.5: Detailed discussion on spiritual healing. Also cf. Chapter 1, section 1.3, footnote 24: Tasks of practical theology (Osmer, 2008:1–29).

[75] Cf. Chapter 3, sections 3.4.4.4 & 3.4.6: Retreat as healing process (formation/analysis).

[76] Cf. Chapter 3, section 3.5.4: External group, Pietermaritzburg.

intention may be more adept in giving 'loving care' than a professional who relies on the 'therapeutic process of healing'. Given that despite the power of Western science and medicine it has limited ability to address disease rooted in grief and despair, and since indigenous or traditional healers are very adept in making true connections with and helping people to adjust the way they live, the integration of natural or traditional healing methods (or indigenous healers) may be to the benefit of all (cf. Iron Cloud Two Dogs, 2001:10; Butterbrot, 2001:3).[77]

As has been clearly demonstrated in Chapter 5 (section 5.2.5.2), there is a significant body of evidence affirming that spirituality and religious beliefs are integral to the nature of the person and have a vital influence on human behaviour (Hugen & Scales, 2002a:1), e.g. the observations of Beverly Haddad regarding poor women.[78] Bauer (2003) reports on another study focusing on women in poverty: their views with regard to poverty and their relationship with God reflected that faith was seen to be a source of strength and an integral part of their everyday lives that provided meaning, comfort and help to cope in adversity by most of the women. They saw themselves – in partnership with God – actively involved in the unfolding of their lives. Rather than passive recipients waiting for God's blessings, they are "…active prayers to a God who hears and concretely answers…" (Bauer, 2003:76).[79] The practitioner should be sensitive to this 'healing partnership' and enable the person in need of healing to participate fully in this process, while bearing in mind that God, and not the practitioner, is the healer.

God made humankind perfect and, on the first suggestions of man's suffering, immediately stepped in – covering the nakedness of Adam and Eve with skins. His healing (*yasha*) is not only spiritual but "…embarrassingly physical" – aiming for the restoration of the whole person (Green 2003b:161).[80] God is at work "seeking to remove anything that inhibits and threatens the well-being of his covenant people". He heals through the natural recuperative powers of the body, through medicine or

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[77] Cf. Chapter 5, section 5.2.3: Indigenous participation; Chapter 5, section 5.4.3.2: Spiritual healing in multi-faith context.

[78] Cf. Chapter 1, section 1.1: Haddad on the work amongst women from the *manyano* movement.

[79] Cf. also the research findings where the sample group members reported similar views, e.g. Chapter 3, section .3.4.5.4: *"As we were telling our stories, I sensed God's presence – when we closed our eyes afterwards, I was able to talk to my God so that He could show me the way out.",* section 3.4.5.5: God's presence in nature, God 'talking 'to then through the leaves, birds and mountains. Chapter 4, section 4.3.3: "We are the women…"

[80] Cf. Chapter 5, section 5.4.2: Myers (1999:115; 117) referring to the critical importance of the healing of the "marred identity of the poor".

without (Green 2003b:161). As practitioners we need to acknowledge this and turn to the Lord before we enter into a healing process[81] (cf. Green, 2003b:166).

6.4.2.2   *Direct community involvement:Restoring*

Direct community involvement focuses on the community as a whole, identifying deficiencies in their equipment for healthy social functioning that need to be restored. Faith- or church-based initiatives would typically include drop-in centres, Bible schools and a community centre (open to all) for after school activities. Strategies could also include open lectures on current/popular actual topics provided as part of community ministry create opportunities for community members to experience "…venturesome love" and for Christian and non-Christians to become connected by sharing ideas, knowledge and wisdom as they work together (cf. Morrissey, 1997:15–21). On a 'secular level', strategies to employ include training and retraining opportunities, discussion groups, educational groups, talks and lectures, and life-skills education. Examples of these activities are voter education, art and drama classes, healthy living lectures, ABET classes and life skills training (cf. Lewis & Lewis, 1990:165, 167, 175).[82]

On a spiritual level it challenges the practitioner to first of all build relationships and secondly, to help the community to unravel the truth – to face the realities of community (also on a global scale).[83] This implies a confrontation with the crises of our times, namely the equity, security, prosperity and spiritual crises. Facing this, people tend to feel victimised, and, once they have fallen into a mode of victimhood they assume no responsibility and agency for their lives and community – they have lost their dreams. Restoring people's dreams[84] – by means of sharing the truth, providing educational and training opportunities and by involving people in the creation of a new metanarrative, are important strategies of the practitioner. Fretheim and McLaren provide helpful insights into how this can be done, starting with the story of creation and proclaiming God's ongoing restorative involvement.

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[81] Cf. Chapter 3, section 3.2.4: Comment of members for the Moreleta Worship HIV and AIDS Project when discussing their process of helping others *"We get our strength from God, through reading the Bible, praying, praising God and having fellowship with other Christians".* When asked what the first step in project planning was, they answered: *"We pray, and ask God to show us His will".*

[82] Cf. the 'wishes' and proposals for the youth of their community made by sample group FH1, reflected in the discussion on the 'spirituality of embrace', Chapter 4, section 4.3.5.3.

[83] Cf. Chapter 5, section 5.4.2: The acknowledgement of the truth of relationship with and our identity in God (Myers, 1999:114).

[84] Cf. Chapter 5, section 5.4.2: The recovery of one's true identity, requires a transformation and renewal of the mind, and implies that people will change the choices they make.

God created … and it was good is the refrain we hear in the story of the creation (cf. Fretheim, 2005:269). Humankind, endowed with free will, rebelled and disaster struck, capturing all of humankind and the earth in suffering, disease, sin and death (cf. Green, 2003b:161). But God is a loving God and concerned for the whole of his creation:

> God calls us to reconcile with God, one another, and creation, to defect from the false stories that divide and destroy us, and to join God in the healing of the world through love and the pursuit of justice and the common good (McLaren, 2007:295).

Jesus brings us a metanarrative of restoration, using different metaphors for healing or restoring the creation – each showing how the "forces of injustice are defeated and justice reshapes and transforms the world for the common good" (McLaren, 2007:39, 295–296). This informs and inspires a new spirituality which is a new way of living "…in which the sacred presence of God is integrated with all of life and not confined to the temples…" We are invited to live in a *eu-topia* – meaning a good place, a new-topia, a renewed and restored place – the beginning of the world as God desires it – a new story (McLaren, 2007:296). Here we are to experience collaboration, virtue, aligning of our will with God's wisdom and dreams for us – experiencing God's blessing and recovering our dreams (cf. McLaren, 2007:67; Wright, 2010:75–77). Anderson (2001:105) refers to the world being informed by the Holy Spirit – as practitioners we should be listening for this guidance, our practices be informed by *telos*.[85]

McLaren (2007:297–298) once again remind practitioners that restoration (healing) of the community begins with personal action, such as praying differently, being 'agents' of God, builders of a new world; and realising that the most powerful world-changing work we can do is simply to believe in the good news.[86] Similarly, on a community level, the practitioner should working toward a profound spiritual formation that will lead to liberating social transformation and encourage the creation of "…virile, courageous, nurturing communities that centre their theology on Jesus' revolutionary message of the kingdom and that centre their lives on living out that radical message" (McLaren, 2007:299)[87] Jesus brings us a meta-narrative of restoration, using different metaphors for healing or restoring the creation – each

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[85] Cf. Chapter 1, section 1.8.4: *Telos* as the final meaning of goal informing one's actions.

[86] Cf. Chapter 5, section 5.4.3.3: Keating (2006:110–111) emphasising the value of spiritual discipline.

[87] Cf. Chapter 5, section 5.3.1.4: Radical actions exemplified by Jesus' life. Cf. also Wright (2010:78) saying that the "New Story" requires a radical new start on all levels: spiritual, material and attitudinal.

showing how the "forces of injustice are defeated and justice reshapes and transforms the world for the common good", exemplified, according to McLaren (2007:39, 295-296), in the Scripture.[88]

If practitioners can succeed in helping the community to transfer their trust from its *old* story (the kingdom of earth) to the story and framing of the good news of Jesus, a radical and transforming hope begins to happen. This hopeful vision of the Kingdom of God will reshape the community's inner ecology, inevitably manifesting itself in a hopeful change in their lives and, eventually, in their environment – which is now addressed under indirect community involvement.

6.4.2.3   *Indirect community involvement: Stewardship*

In this component the focus is on the healing of the people-environment relationship and balance. Stewardship (to take care of something on behalf of the owner) brings with it the concepts of relationship with God (as Creator of the world), self, others and the environment. It also requires accountability, being responsive to and responsible for 'the other; (cf. Hall, 2005:9; McGrath, 1999:30).[89] Marstin (1979:12) reminds one that since God is the guarantor of human rights – the rights to protection and respect accruing equality – to *all* people solely on the basis of their humanity, worship of God is inextricably tied to the equality of our care for one another – stranger and own.[90]

However, individual 'charity' is *not* a substitute for the struggle to build a just society – the church, practical theologians and spiritual minded practitioners have to face the *causes* of injustices (Marstin, 1979:12–13).[91] On a secular level, the practitioner is urged to focus on the needs and rights of the oppressed, deprived and disadvantaged, responding by challenging the social, economic and political systems and policies which have a suppressive influence on the functioning of specific groups within the community. This may require the formulation and implementation of the necessary public policies to improve the responsivity of the community toward the

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[88] Matthew 13:18–32: The seed that germinates under the soil – brings forth an unimaginable harvest; Matthew 13:33: the yeast that transforms – enabling the dough to become bread; Matthew 13:44–46: The pearl/treasure that is hidden in the vacant lot which gives unimaginable value; Matthew 13:47–50: The net which is hidden under the surface of the water, quietly gathering a huge catch of fish.

[89] Cf. Chapter 5, section 5.3.1.2: Called for stewardship.

[90] Cf. Chapter 5, section 5.3.1.1: In relationship with God and community: "The Christian faith calls for the application of kingdom rules which acknowledges that the whole of creation belongs to God and that human beings are stewards of one another and the environment" (cf. Tyndale, 2000:10, 14; McLaren, 2007:294–301; Wright, 2010:48–62).

[91] Cf. Chapter 5, section 5.4.2: Transformational development focus on the causes (and not just the 'symptoms').

community needs. Effective strategies involve policy management, lobbying, public speaking, office holding and organising of community forums (Kirsten, 1992:62).

On a sacred level, stewardship entails "spiritual care [which entails] ... to lead people along on their own struggle to the point where they can break through it on their own" (Bonhoeffer in Anderson, 2003:108). Addressing "the structural sin to which we all contribute" (e.g. buying inexpensive clothing from outlets that are using child labour or support oppressive policies) is part of the committed public action required from the practitioner (Bonhoeffer in Morrissey, 1997:15). This is in line with Freire's emphasis on linking the personal and political and Bonhoeffer's concept of linking private faith to public action (cf. Ife, 1998:95; Morrissey, 1997:15, 67), and the concept the expansion of freedom as the right to and possibility of accessing resources in the political, social, security and transparency spheres necessary for human well-being (cf. Senn, 1999:8, 14).[92]

Being stewards of the whole of creation, creating a symbiotic relationship between human beings and the non-human creatures, encompasses the concept of social justice (cf. Freire, 2006:3; McLaren, 2005:96–97,130–140; Hall, 2005:10; Fretheim, 2005:93–97; Richards, 1987:207). Social justice "requires us to do more than only caring for the poor – it requires us to attack the sources of the injustice" (Richards, 1987:207 as quoted in Chapter 5; Marstin, 1997:13). Although policy management and office holding can be powerful strategies for redistributing resources, there are other less public yet very practical strategies available to all practitioners seeking to live with a sense of stewardship in God's world, and with an interest to care for creation as a whole – human, nonhuman, living and nonliving.[93] For example, *'Framing our (community) story in values of creativity, harmony, reconciliation, virtue, integrity and peace'*, as was done during the capacity building sessions with both sample groups

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[92] Cf. Chapter 5, section 5.2.1: Development as 'freedom process'.

[93] Cf. Richards (1987:207–217) and McLaren (2007:94–295) propose the following: Protecting the people's right to their land and what it could yield and training them to produce environment-friendly crops (e.g. promote the food garden-concept or *Farming God's Way*); Providing the poor with apprenticeship or training mechanisms; Setting up a system to make interest-free loans available to those in real need; Setting up systems for training and mentoring people towards own enterprises (e.g. entrepreneurial training); Make provision (in terms of policy, structures) for organised charity; Transforming the security system by focusing less on weapons and more on the alleviation of human suffering; Concerning oneself with safety from disease, epidemics and from natural disaster – e.g. get policies in place to deal with such occurrences; Living more humbly and responsibility within creaturely limits, working in cooperation with the equity system, and investing the community's energy for common good; Remembering the community's most vulnerable and weakest.

when they completed *Village Walks* and *Community Maps*[94] – admitting to the reality of poverty and numerous problems, but then, through exercises such as *Interactive Storywriting* and the *Youth Profile*[95] came up with a 'new narrative' of hope, growth and a peaceful and safe future for the young in their communities.[96]

6.4.2.4   Indirect people involvement: Education of hope

> [T]he deepest motivation for leading our fellow-man into the future is hope. For hope makes it possible to look beyond the fulfilment or urgent wishes and pressing desires and offers a vision beyond human suffering and even death (Nouwen, 2006:76).

The focus of this component is groups in the community with specific needs. Keeping in mind that the whole of our modern community is, to a greater or lesser degree, at risk of losing heart and hope and in need of a reframing story,[97] it is important to have an understanding of the backdrop against which community groups may need their hope to be rekindled.

McLaren (2007:66–67) explains that people are constantly sharing stories about the world they live in, explaining where they come from, what's going on and where they are headed for. Given the many-faceted crises people are faced with on a global scale, the framing stories they share tend to be dysfunctional, weak, false, unrealistic and destructive and are sending them in a downward arc. It influences thoughts, decisions, actions, emotions, relationships and hope for (or rather despair of) the future.[98] Palmer (1993:x) points out that the pain of de-construction and disconnection leaves people empty. Practitioners have a task to educate others according to the spiritual traditions, which offer hope and that are ultimately concerned with getting us reconnected.

> These spiritual wisdom traditions build on the great truth that beneath the broken surface of our lives there remains – in the words of Thomas Merton – "a hidden wholeness". The

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[94] Cf. Chapter 3, section 3.4.3: *Community Maps*; section 3.4.3: *Village Walks*; Chapter 4, section 4.3.4. Lanquedoc 'profile' detailing the problems in the community.

[95] Cf. Chapter 3, sections 3.1 & 3.5.3. Since the aim was to make a difference in the life of children and young people in the various communities they represented, the *Youth Profiles* were made. Cf. also Chapter 4 , section 4.3.5.3: Discussion on *Youth profiles; Co-operative storywriting*

[96] Cf. Chapter 3, sections 3.5.1, footnote 142 & 3.5.3: Projects planned to create hope for the children and youth.

[97] Or new metanarrative as has been indicated in the section direct work with the community.

[98] Cf. Chapter 4, section 4.3.3 & footnote 58: Perception the poor have of themselves.

hope of every wisdom tradition is to recall us to that wholeness in the midst of our torn world, to reweave us into the community that is so threadbare today (Palmer, 1993:x).

Freire's call for consciousness raising and the education of hope echoes this thought (Ife, 1998:96–99). The practitioner will have to use the strategies of advocating and consultancy on behalf of groups in dire circumstances or who are beyond hope, e.g. starting a housing forum for the homeless. Co-ordination and linking or networking are other important strategies for re-establishing groups in the position where they are no longer disconnected and hope-less, e.g. initiating a network to link, train and support mothers who provide day-care from their homes in the informal settlements. Offering opportunities for people to undergo empowerment or capacity building training and helping them to establish and sustain self-help groups are other important strategies. Training community members to reach out to others or to function as facilitators and self-help group leaders, will also fall into this component.[99]

Nouwen (2006:92–93), Guder (1998:176–179) and Peterson (2005:212–216) emphasise the important role the biblical hospitality plays in the re-connecting of people. Hospitality in this context refers to the creation of a space where people meet and connect, where their loneliness can be shared. As a re-enactment of God's care, love and blessing of community, it is one of the most effective strategies for 'weaving' people back into the tapestry of community.[100] By providing a free, fearless space for healing, for raising hope and for giving people a vision for the future, the 'hostility' (of this world) is changed into 'hospitality' (cf. Guder, 1998:176; Nouwen, 2006:94). In this safe and peaceful space, people experience warmth, care and comfort – interaction with 'no facades'. What is thus created is a "gracious and caring space where people reach out and invite fellow humans into relationship with God (Guder, 1998:179).

Hospitality – in practice – could be the invitation to community members or groups to share in a simple meal or a church festival open to the whole community. Peterson (2005:214) reminds as that in Jesus' life, the breaking of the bread or sharing of a meal with his disciples, close friends and even strangers, played a significant role.[101]

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[99] Cf. Chapter 3, sections 3.5.1 & 3.5.2: Capacity building sessions for sample groups which led to them taking on the facilitating role in their respective projects (as outflow of the action research process).

[100] Cf. Chapter 3, section 3.4.4.3: Importance of creating a welcoming space of acceptance for the healing retreats.

[101] Cf. Chapter 4, section: 4.3.5: Volf and Kritzinger on the important role of *Eucharist* in welcoming and connecting people.

Spending time sitting around a table to eat a meal, both invites and 'forces' people to look each other in the face and to engage in dialogue. It is an inefficient, non-productive, but enriching give-and-take experience – the opposite of the deconstructive machine-metaphor referring to all which is pre-made, fast, and impersonal. A life of hospitality adds value to people's lives and keeps them in intimate touch with their families and traditions. It contributes to the creation of a metanarrative of hope.

In summary: A praxis framework is developed by becoming involved with communities, implementing strategies and reflecting on the outcome. The resulting guidelines serve to facilitate practitioners with regard to the praxis of, in this case, transformational community development. As had been indicated, throughout this study the sample communities were active as partners in shaping the framework, but simultaneously benefitting form the input and process, indicating that the addition of a 'spiritual dimension' – in this case as core of all input – positively contributed to the well-being of the individual participants and the communities they represented (cf. Chapter 3, sections 3.4.6; 3.5.2; 3.5.3 & 3.6; Chapter 4, section 4.3.5.3).

6.5   Final conclusions and recommendations

The findings of this study provided ample evidence on both a theoretical and praxis level regarding the extent to which spirituality serves or may serve as an intuitive resource in communities in situations of adversity, specifically with regard to community development (Chapter 3 & 5). In Chapters 4 and 5 different approaches to incorporated spirituality into a framework for community development a) from the perspective of the community and b) from a Christian Practical Theological perspective was explored, and in Chapter 5 a triangular theoretical construct between the disciplines of Social Work (and community development), Spirituality and Practical Theology was developed. In this final chapter, a relational praxis framework for people and community transformation – based on the preliminary findings and the literature search and further developed and 'field tested' during the study – was proposed. In the final proposal for a relational framework, the decision was made to use the term 'transformation', rather than development. The researcher based this decision on the belief that *transformation* allows for a larger degree of freedom, it is a more open and transcending concept than merely that of 'development', and encompasses the spiritual dimension – which 'development' does not.

Thus, to conclude the main recommendations of this study are presented in the following statements:

- All humankind is all created in the image of God – in both spirit and body. The question should therefore not be *whether* a spiritual dimension should be included in work with people and communities, but: *How can one possibly justify the exclusion of this dimension in so much of our work?* All people are spiritual creatures – how does one justify the disregard for this most valuable source of life, energy, creativity and factor of their well-being?

- Spiritually-conscious Christian practitioners will acknowledge that their wisdom comes from God, from working with people, listening to their stories, hearing them lamenting that *"we are the hidden people, living behind the others in their hokke"*. According to Hall (in Bevans, 1992:75; Chap 5, section 5.4) this is what constitutes theology – a lived, practical wisdom, "thinking rooted in existence – and committed to its transformation". Are practitioners truly equipped to practise accordingly? If not, how is this to be changed?

- Relationships, based in love as demonstrated to us by God, are the most important asset of people and community transformation.[102] However, we are exposed to our inability to live together in justice, peace and freedom (Ackermann, 1998:13). We need to be transformed in our relationships – to come to loving, Christ-like relationships. Practical theology seems to be the field where we can experiment, learn and succeed in finding strategies for transforming relationships that will lead to the transformation of communities. Currently there does not seem to be an acknowledgement for the need for inter-departmental co-operation with regard to the equipping of students in the fields of social work, community development and practical theology. What is needed is the willingness to open up the divides to offer the practitioners of the future opportunities to "draw closer to God" in their personal lives and in their praxis.

- There is a need for 'spiritual leadership' in the praxis of community development. Since, although there is an acknowledged obligation for ministering to the needs of the poor, the sick, the powerless; engaging in the struggle to free people from fear, oppression, hunger and injustice; working for fair laws, the decrease of

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[102] Chapter 1, section 1.8.1: Spirituality as essence of the 'me-and-God'-relationship and foundation of the 'me-in-community' relationship; Chapter 4, section 4.3.1; Chapter 5, section 5.3.1.1: Relationship with God as key to Christian spirituality.

disparity between the rich and poor; and bearing witness against political oppression and exploitation – in short, transforming communities according to Kingdom rules – the (informed, visionary) leadership to implement this is lacking. Spiritually-based inner healing and capacity building worksessions could provide an excellent basis from which to grow such visionary leaders, by equipping community members with the necessary skills, knowledge and capabilities to contribute toward reaching the goals of community transformation. Such a transformational experiential healing and learning process towards personal and community well-being, requires inter-active and participatory processes. Based on the experiences with community groups over the years and the findings of this study, it is proposed that the 'leadership training' should focus on: (i) Providing a values-based training process for leaders, e.g. professionals, para-professionals and volunteers attached to CBOs, NGOs, churches, government departments and faith-based institutions, equipping them with the necessary skills and practical know-how to facilitate the healing and development process in communities; and (ii) Providing individuals and groups with a transformational experiential healing and learning process – enabling them to grow into personal, spiritual, social and economical competencies for dealing with life's challenges.

▪ The anticipation is that the 'second phase data' presented in this study – specifically the inter-disciplinary action research design (Chapter1) the proposed normative guidelines (Chapter 4) and the integrated praxis framework (Chapter 6) – would provide the theoretical foundation for a normative-based, innovative and transformative approach to people and community development and research and could contribute to the development of training material for students, practitioners and leaders involved with people and community transformation.

▪ Since this study did not have its roots in a church- or faith-based organisation, there was little focus on the role of the church. However, from a Christian perspective the church is the 'Body of Christ' and the mission of the people of God is to be a blessing to all nations (Wright 2010:72). Yet, as receptor of the Holy Spirit's guidance and power toward real change in the lives and societies, the church as institution could most certainly greatly contribute to the transformation of community. In addition, the church could play a crucial role in bringing the 'normative voice' to the secular-sacred interface (e.g. Myers, 1999:103). Finally, female theologians have a vital role in re-dressing the unbalanced representation

of God and spirituality from a mostly male consciousness (e.g. Carr, 1982:99-100).

6.6   A final word

Problems are not necessarily Christian problems requiring Christian answers, but human problems that must be addressed together by all human beings (Wesley Ariarajah in Graham, 2009:23). We are reminded that there is no us and they – we are all human beings, created in the image of God, in relationship to Him and one another, the non-human creatures – earth. God has given us – alongside him – an important role to play in the creative enterprise. We have the will to choose how we make use of our creative power. We could, as Christians, keep to ourselves and heal our own – or we could choose to embrace the gift of Love, to stand firm on the foundations of the scriptures – listen to the 'whispering of the Holy Spirit' and respond to those around us, sharing our knowledge and our time to create space where they may feel safe to see, share and be nurtured. We may choose to enter the political offices, the boardrooms or to make ourselves heard in the media, reclaim people, communities and the environment. In this study but one possibility of reaching out and entering into the multi-faceted complexity of our society has been proposed. This possibility has embedded in a process, in the manifold exercises and suggested activities, the sheaf of wisdoms gathered over many years, contributed in the trust that where one has suffered, at least one other may benefit from the vicarious experience.

So we stand challenged: to fully accept the God-given vocation and to partake as care-givers, facilitators and practitioners in the challenge to be instrumental in the transformation of people and the community and to do so in co-partnership with God, who is already present in and transforming communities.

The final word belongs to the participants of this research. One sample group member describe how experienced God during the retreat: *"Solitude and silence (shutting out everything else) brings me closer to God and gives you different insights regarding the day that lies ahead."* It seemed that living in a spiritual dimension came to these women as a natural occurrence, serving as an underlying power for dealing with life's challenges – as is exemplified by a community member's response to the question of what her task at a day-care centre entails:

Each morning I go early to pray before the children come. Then, when they arrive, I stand at the door and I hug each child and give him a blessing. If the child feels warm, I call the others and we pray and lay the hands on the child so that (s)he will be healed.[103]

Beverley Haddad (2001:14) reports similar attitude amongst marginalised woman in KwaZulu-Natal attributing "… their very survival to God". This 'way of seeing' was clearly reflected in many of the statements made by the community members participating in this study, as seen in these words reminding us of our mission:

This whole weekend (and the prayer) gives us the opportunity for silence, quietness, deeper self-examination. Then one can say, "Lord, here I am – bring your plan to fruition, give me the self-confidence to obey."

But even more compelling was the enthusiastic response given when asked what they as leaders could actually do to change things in their communities:

All we need to do is be clean, open channels for God. If we get all obstacles out of the way, He will use us to channel his living water through to the people in the community, and they will feel his love.[104]

Above all, their spirituality is a transformation toward *orthokardia*, 'right heartedness toward God' – determining how they, as stewards of God's love, live in community.

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[103] Member of the Worship Center Community Group, Nelmapius, attending our Capacity Building for Community Facilitator worksessions. Pretoria, 2003.

[104] WOF 10 Facilitators Workshop: Community Leaders, Pretoria, August 2001.

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APPENDIX A1: CAPACITY BUILDING ASSESSMENT OF INDIVIDUAL PROGRESS A

WORKSHOP ASESSMENT
COMMUNITY CAPACITY BUILDING WORKSHOPS FOR FACILITATORS

1. **PRE-WORKSHOP ASSESSMENT:** PLEASE TELL US HOW YOU HAVE BENEFITED FROM YOUR STUDIES SO FAR – RATE YOURSELF AT THIS POINT IN TIME / DUI ASSEBLIEF AAN HOE U TOT DUSVER BY U STUDIES GEBAAT HET - HOE BEOORDEEL U USELF TANS?
2. **POST-WORKSHOP ASSESSMENT:** PLEASE INDICATE HOW YOU FEEL AT THE COMPLETION OF THE WORKSHOP/ DUI ASSEBLEIF AAN HOE U USELF NA AFLOOP VAN DIE WERKSESSIES BEOORDEEL

		Not at all Glad nie			Very much 		Bale
1	I have learned about myself Ek het van myself geleer	1	2	3	4	5	6
2	I have gained confidence in myself Ek het meer selfvertroue gekry	1	2	3	4	5	6
3	I enjoyed the exercises Ek het die oefeninge geniet	1	2	3	4	5	6
4	I find it easy to participate in worksessions Ek vind dit maklik om deel te neem aan werksessies	1	2	3	4	5	6
5	I have grown as a leader Ek het as leier gegroei	1	2	3	4	5	6
6	I have gained facilitation skills Ek het fasiliteringsvaardighede ontwikkel	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	I have learned how to find a market Ek het geleer hoe om 'n mark te vind	1	2	3	4	5	6
8	I have learned by 'doing things' Ek het geleer deur dinge 'te doen	1	2	3	4	5	6
9	I have gained confidence to go out into the community Ek het meer vertroue om in die gemeenskap uit te gaan	1	2	3	4	5	6
10	I know how to teach people communication skills Ek kan vir mense kommunikasie-vaardighede leer	1	2	3	4	5	6
11	I know what my strengths are Ek weet wat my sterkpunte is	1	2	3	4	5	6
12	I will be able to empower others Ek sal ander kan bemagtig	1	2	3	4	5	6
13	I have learned more about practical problem solving Ek het meer geleer oor praktiese probleemoplossing	1	2	3	4	5	6
14	I have learned how to plan for a project Ek het geleer hoe om vir 'n projek te beplan	1	2	3	4	5	6
15	I have learned from sharing with others Ek het geleer deur met ander te deel/praat	1	2	3	4	5	6
16	I have learned more about leadership Ek het meer van leierskap geleer	1	2	3	4	5	6
17	I have gained decision-making skills Ek het besluitnemingsvaardighede ontwikkel	1	2	3	4	5	6
18	I will now be able to decide on which product to make Ek sal nou kan besluit watter produk om te maak	1	2	3	4	5	6
19	I have learned how to lead a team or group Ek het geleer hoe om 'n span of groep te lei	1	2	3	4	5	6
20	I now feel competent to run projects Ek voel nou toegerus om projekte te bestuur	1	2	3	4	5	6
21	I will now be able to start a self-help group Ek voel nou in staat om 'n self-helpgroep te begin	1	2	3	4	5	6

22	I will now be able to work out a budget for my project Ek sal nou in staat wees om 'n begroting vir my projek op te stel	1	2	3	4	5	6
23	I will be able to write a business plan Ek sal in staat wees om 'n sakeplan te skryf	1	2	3	4	5	6
24	I now understand the principles of running a business Ek verstaan die beginsels van die bestuur van 'n besigheid	1	2	3	4	5	6
25	I have learned what I should do to make money Ek het geleer wat om te doen om geld te maak	1	2	3	4	5	6
26	I will now be able to sell my product Ek sal nou in staat wees om my produk te verkoop	1	2	3	4	5	6
27	I have learned assessing the community Ek het geleer hoe om die gemeenskap te assesseer	1	2	3	4	5	6
28	I will be able to guide a group to identify their 'dream' Ek sal 'n groep kan lei om hulle droom te identifiseer	1	2	3	4	5	6
29	I have learned about my role as 'outsider' in the community Ek het geleer van my rol as 'buitestander' in die gemeenskap	1	2	3	4	5	6
30	I feel better equipped for my job in the community Ek voel beter toegerus vir my taak in die gemeenskap	1	2	3	4	5	6

NAME/NAAM ....

DATE/DATUM.....................................

II

APPENDIX A2: CAPACITY BUILDING ASSESSMENT OF INDIVIDUAL PROGRESS B

CAPACITY BUILDING FOR PROJECTS:

INDIVIDUAL ASSESSMENT

Read the statements and tick all those you agree with.

I.e. To start a library   we need books   √

we need a building   ☐

we need a trained librarian   ☐

we need lots of money   ☐

To network …
- ▸ we need a leader   ☐
- ▸ takes time   ☐
- ▸ means everyone should participate   ☐
- ▸ we should respect each other   ☐

If we want to start a project …
- ▸ we should assess the community's needs   ☐
- ▸ ask other people what they think   ☐
- ▸ get money from the government   ☐
- ▸ have one leader   ☐
- ▸ agree on what we want to do   ☐

To take ownership …
- ▸ you have to start taking care of yourself   ☐
- ▸ You have to take responsibility of your own family ☐
- ▸ you have to look out for your neighbours   ☐
- ▸ you only have to follow the leader   ☐

A leader is a person …
- ▸ who is learned   ☐
- ▸ who always knows all the answers   ☐
- ▸ who listens to others   ☐
- ▸ who respects others   ☐
- ▸ who does all the work himself   ☐
- ▸ who sits in the office and tells others what to do   ☐

III

Teamwork means …
- we make decisions together ☐
- each person has a contribution to make ☐
- we support each other ☐
- there is only one leader ☐
- we can tell others what to do ☐
- only the leader knows where we are going ☐

When we reach out to others …
- we have to force them to join us ☐
- we have to visit them ☐
- we have to show them why we need them in our project ☐
- we have to tell them what we can offer them ☐
- we need to listen to their needs ☐

If we assess a community …
- we can accept that all communities have the same needs ☐
- we look only at the problems ☐
- we need to look at the resources ☐
- we need to ask the people what they want ☐

If we plan for a project …
- we need to have a vision ☐
- we need to look at the problems ☐
- we should always wait for government to take the first step ☐
- we cannot do anything without money ☐

If we do a family or project budget …
- one person has to make all the decisions ☐
- we have to talk about what we need ☐
- we have to save money ☐
- we have to put money aside for each different item ☐

Name ……………………………………….

Date …………………………………………….

IV

APPENDIX A3: SELF-ASSESSMENT CIRCLE
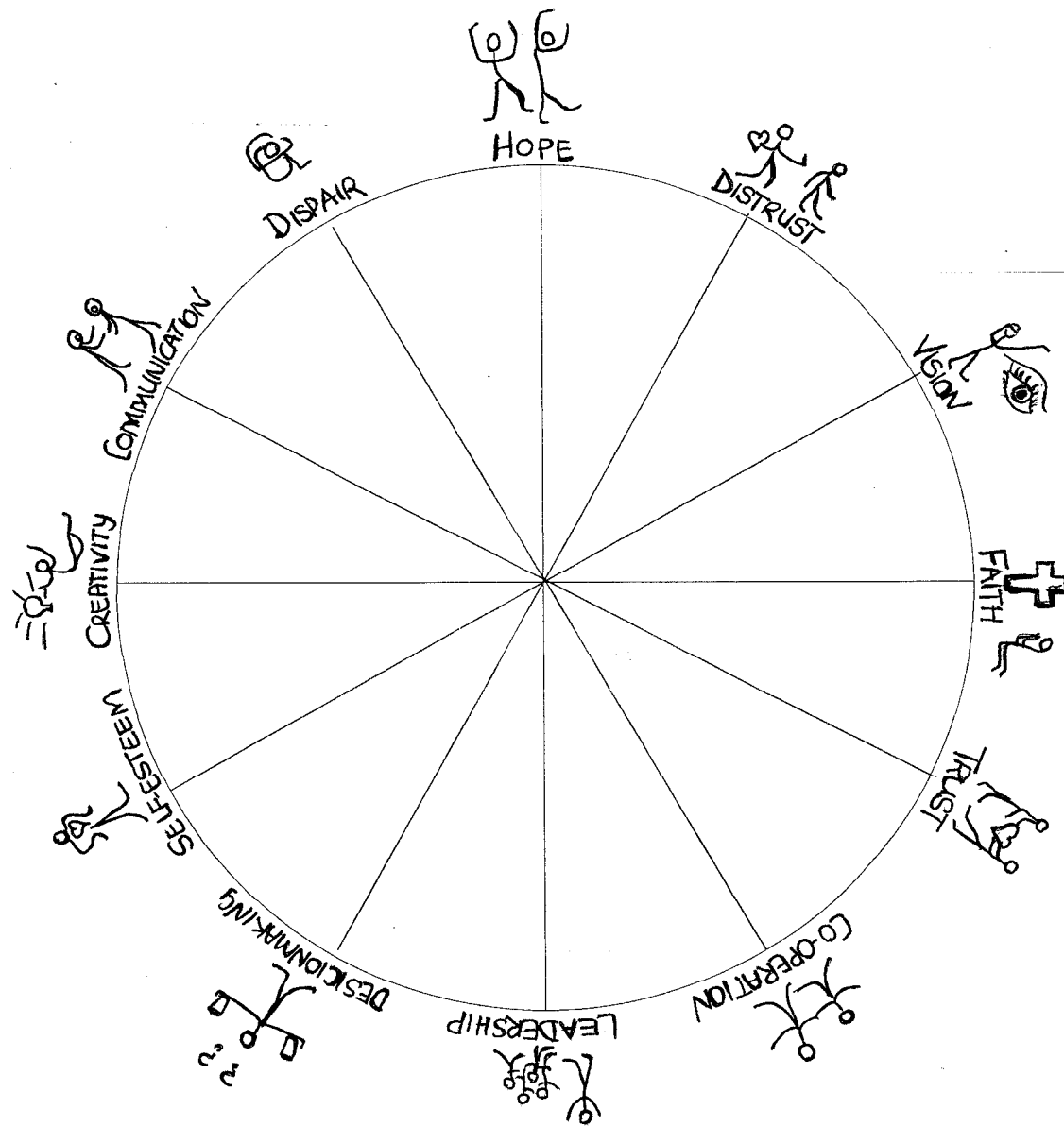
Ask the participants to rate themselves on the "spokes" of the wheel according to "where" they feel they currently are, e.g. co-operation: *"Do you feel you are co-operating on the project? If you feel you are co-operating a lot, draw a cross on the spoke towards the outside, but if you feel you are not really co-operating, draw the cross toward the middle."*

v

APPENDIX A4: WORKHSOP ASSESSMENT – PILOT GROUP VERBATIM RESPONSE

PILOT STUDY: SAVF/NVCC CAPACITY BUILDING WORKSHOP ASSESSMENT
Individual assessment done at the closure of the 3 rd follow-up session, 16th September 2004

DETAILED RESPONSES TO OPEN ENDED STATEMENTS

STATEMENT	RESPONSE
At the work-sessions I have learned	1. Community empowerment, starting a project, self-fulfilment, role-plays relating to your session or problem, marketing, business plans 2. Many good things that I could follow in my project 3. Communication; how to start a project 4. How to develop my project planning; how to overcome certain obstacles in my way 5. To be true to myself so that I can motivate my group members to stand on their own 6. How to follow one's dream; how to overcome obstacles towards reaching one's dream 7. The importance of the journey, which includes planning, organizing and focus 8. How to overcome the stumbling blocks 9. Today (3rd follow-up session) I learned that we al all doing the same projects without much success 10. To plan my projects to the end, and to prepare for any down falls 11. To communicate with different people and how to run a business 12. Guidelines to start and maintain projects and how to find solutions to problems 13. How to network together, how to make sure you have people who are committed and have leadership qualities 14. Fun role-plays, relax and learn importance of every aspect in the CLBT process and the value 15. Handling sick people in the project 16. Reaching the project's dream 17. Choosing committee members who will be our mouth-piece 18. Prioritizing the needs of the project 19. No response 20. Networking with other projects
I have enjoyed it to	1. Sharing different ideas to take back to my area 2. To learn many things that I did not know before 3. Share our ideas with other persons 4. Present the exercises that we have done; correct our mistakes 5. Participate on some of the exercises, to do the role play, do budgeting and also (the) sweets 6. Contribute, participate and to share some new ideas /experiences from other participants 7. Get different opinions form other participants 8. Learn form different people and different experiences

	9. Play the games and to hear that I don't have to feel frustrated - we just have to work together towards solving problems
	10. Watch the role-play - it was interesting
	11. Role-play, play games and to get different ideas from other people
	12. Meet people who were accepting of each other and where people were allowed to participate freely
	13. Very much as it was an eye opener for me to help people how to realize their own potential
	14. Meet all of the participants , to hear what they are doing and how they practiced
	15. Learning about leadership
	16. Problem solving
	17. Community involvement
	18. Sharing of ideas
	19. No response
	20. Whom to speak to before starting a project
I know now I can	1. Write proposals and plan for my project. Lead the community effectively
	2. Start a project with my community and motivate other members
	3. Run my own project
	4. Empower people in (a) good way, that I did not know before
	5. Empower the community to stand on their own
	6. Make a budget for the projects; plan marketing strategies, follow the project's dream using appropriate paths
	7. Start of with a dream and make that dream to be a reality
	8. Start a project with planning about marketing and even look through the people's problems
	9. Do a lot to make a difference though it won't be so much but to the communities a lot and I'll try and be positive about my work
	10. Not give up
	11. Draw (up a) business plan and do market research for my projects and my business
	12. Start projects with more confidence and can refer to the notes received as necessary
	13. Use this workshop experience and related issues in our won situation
	14. Do this program practically – I must stop worrying how other people use and apply this and just do this the best I can
	15. Work harmoniously with project members
	16. Reach our project dreams
	17. The community must sit down and talk
	18. We can have our own factory
	19. No response
	20. Involving the community for every project dream
My	1. Sharing of experience I've got

contribu-tion to the workshop was	2. To show my dreams and talk about it
	3. Participation
	4. To raise the community objectives about the workshop that I facilitate to them and I have the ideas to work with their opinions and make the booklet
	5. To give ideas, participate and network with other people
	6. To participate, share new ideas, interact with the colleagues
	7. Blank
	8. Participation and listening to others and respect them as they are
	9. That I got to tell my story and the dilemma's that I've encountered during my work
	10. Planning with my group – we did not role-play, but it was good sharing ideas
	11. To listen to other people and proposed to play games when people were tired (the participant shared a new game with the group and facilitated the implementation much to the enjoyment of all)
	12. My experience in working in the rural areas and running projects there
	13. How to organize and arrange with the council to assist with ID documents and certificates
	14. Observant more than participating because I wanted the people to express how they feel and what they understand
	15. Participation in the group discussions
	16. I was able to make a story
	17. Tell about the needs of my community
	18. Participated in a role-play
	19. No response
	20. Working hard to achieve my dream
I think the facilita-tors did	1. Empowered us enough to overcome problems and poverty alleviation
	2. Teach all the members of the workshop well
	3. Open my mind
	4. To be honest they did very well and I wish to copy from them
	5. Them best to make us aware of the things that are needed in the community
	6. Extremely excellent by bringing slides to stimulate our understanding
	7. Know how to communicate with people who speak different languages, i.e. English & Zulu
	8. Their work by encouraging us to participate with respect
	9. their best to motivate the group
	10. A great job
	11. Prepare everyone who attended the workshop to be able to start their own business
	12. A very god job! The information given was clear, well presented, well planned and interesting. Well done.
	13. An excellent job in getting the participants motivated;

	14. A good job! Kept it going?
	15. Did a thorough job as far as managing projects
	16. Opened my eyes I was blind but now I can see
	17. Taught me to listen to other people
	18. Gave us the light and opened our thoughts
	19. Taught us well
	20. They have helped with this workshop because I have learned a lot
I am going to work on/start a	1. More projects where people can work effectively
	2. A better business or project in my community
	3. Sewing project
	4. (I am going to) work on actively and be helpful to the community and my organization will be improved from this empowerment modules
	5. Teach my group members to belief in themselves and cooperate with each other
	6. New project – vegetable garden project
	7. (Work on) getting the members to be responsible and participate fully on their project they do
	8. People in my community to get their birth certificates and identity documents first before other things
	9. ID and certificate campaign
	10. Work on my proposals
	11. Work on my listening skills
	12. New projects using the guidelines provided
	13. My organization to become more goal directed and to achieve your dream
	14. The inner journey healing self empowerment and follow the process through in a effort to see and experience what difference it can make
	15. Motivating the community in our project
	16. Making role-plays for examples
	17. Bring the community together
	18. Work even harder in my community
	19. I am going to work
	20. I am going to be focused and persevere
I know now that I am good at	1. Working with the community because I can see change
	2. Showing my interest in the workshop
	3. My community
	4. Participation – upgrade my knowledge and the way of facilitation workshops
	5. Communicating with other people and also to give ideas
	6. Making contacts especially with the people in the leadership, authorities and other stake holders
	7. How to plan, strategize the project
	8. Working with people

	9. Talking to people
	10. Planning and persevering
	11. Acting
	12. Being able to deal with problems rather than becoming demotivated when things are difficult
	13. Organizing and facilitating – I will persist on getting the organization to perform well
	14. Working with the community I must spend much more time there. Focus my attention on them and truly understand them and do what will bear fruit and results.
	15. Applying funds
	16. Role-playing and listening
	17. See the needs of our community and taking them further
	18. Now I can think, listen, see and persevere
	19. Helping the children to find food and clothing
	20. I am important I can mix with different people
I think the slide presentati on was	1. I think the slide presentation was refreshing my memory on what we have done and need to re-visit
	2. Reminded me what I have learned before
	3. Good
	4. Make it clearly and it helpful It gives the big hope for future development
	5. Interesting because I've learned that I can use the information that the group members gave to do the notes (workbook) for them
	6. Extremely organized and informative
	7. Informative and well organized – it helped us to see the practicality of the work they do in the community
	8. Fantastic & helpful and makes me to look back where I am and what I'm going to do as from now.
	9. To show us about where the facilitators have been, but they must change the language (text in slide presentation was in Afrikaans)
	10. Participant was not present during the slide presentation
	11. Good and well prepared to take me back where we started
	12. Very beneficial as it showed the various projects/training done in the different areas
	13. No response
	14. It was good to see the review to remind us about what is valuable and how it fits together
	15. Good method of education I know of many things I did not know about
	16. I learned by just looking and listening
	17. Opened my thought like I was in a school classroom
	18. I learned a lot from the slides
	19. I was lost but the slides brought me back
	20. I was able to learn on how to work with the community

APPENDIX A5: VERBATIM DESCRIPTIONS OF SPIRITUAL SYMBOLS

PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK RETREAT SESSION 8 :SPIRITUAL MAP EXERCISE

		Exercise 15: Spiritual Map/Collage
Session 8: Power of Possibility & Holistic Participatory Development		
f	Symbol	Meaning
	Natural objects as symbols (37)	
8	Flower	‣ It symbolises happiness, peace. ‣ The Spirit of God wants us to bloom, unfolding petol for petal, shine like this. ‣ We are encirled with beauty like a flower. ‣ God cleanses everything that He touches. ‣ It brings us close to God. ‣ I use to go away from the people and walk in the field of flowers to find peace.
6	Nature	‣ In nature I get close to God, experience the beauty and peace of God's creation.
3	Water /Sea	‣ God's creation connects us to God. ‣ When you're worried and you sit next to the water and sit and listen to God, the sound of the water is like the voice of God.
2	Animals	‣ God's creatures; I am playing a part in keeping them healthy, sharing the love for animals with my husband.
2	Birds	‣ Their song in the early hours of morning – joyful. ‣ Mother bird feeding the babies – we need to feed (teach) the community.
2	Walking in nature	‣ Exercise, enjoy what you do. ‣ Silence – listen to God.
2	Cloud with silver lining	‣ It portrays God's grace. ‣ We (as a family) will drift/glide like a cloud.
2	Tree/plant	‣ We grow like this when God comes into your heart.
1	Ants	‣ Like the ants carry reeds, we are carrying the peoples' burdens.
1	Moon	‣ At night when the moon lights up, I experience the presence of God.
1	Rainbow	‣ Feel the presence of God.
1	Stone Arch	‣ Reminds me of the nature walk – it is a special place which reminds me of God's creation - like the workshop stones.
1	Sun setting	‣ God's light going down – it will be dark – don't be afraid because God is on your side
1	Picture of grass	‣ I will put it in my house and will be reminded of God's grace.
1	Rocks	‣ Creation of God – we discuss it in church.
1	Green lawn/veldt	‣ God's grace enables one to grow – even if you have started in the shade. Today, I am a green, open veldt.
1	Closed oyster	‣ I was like that, but God opened me up.
1	Naartjie	‣ Reminding me to take notice of what I do (like the exercise)
	Humans as symbols (49)	
8	Family	‣ Being together/meeting as a family. ‣ Family & their happiness. ‣ Being with my brother and sister-in-law. ‣ My dream is a happy family. ‣ Cannot be a family when the parents are not happy and are disconnected from God.
5	Children	‣ Sign of God's grace. ‣ We should become like little children ... believe like a child ‣ Sometimes one's childhood dreams are realised – but not necessarily

		‣	like you thught it would.
		‣	I have a dream about all children – to have a pool where they can cool off.
		‣	Gift from God. They can bring you closer to God.
5	Woman relaxing, laughing	‣	Being happy "Me".
		‣	Relaxing, reflecting on my life.
4	Baby	‣	My first born – my love.
		‣	When I get smiling babies from their mothers to look after, I feel so good.
		‣	Picking up and caring for an orphaned baby & taking it to the clinic, sustains me.
3	Men	‣	My two brothers who are diseased, but were important in my life.
		‣	My father who lead me to church.
		‣	My father who, despite his faults, gave me guidlines.
3	Friends (female)	‣	My friends sustained me – they remembered me.
		‣	Enjoying friendship.
3	Home	‣	I want to go back home – I want to heal myself and work in the open with my family.
3	Man & child	‣	Husband working & being involved with baby.
		‣	It inspires me when the fathers are involved and give love.
2	Mother & children	‣	My humanity and womanhood are important spirtual experiences.
		‣	My relationship with my children
2	Husband/ partner	‣	Doing things with my husband.
		‣	Relationship with my husband/partner
2	Community	‣	People happy out on the beach – they are relaxing because God is with them.
		‣	Meeting: this is what I will do in my community – take my information from here to them.
2	People studying	‣	Studying & supporting together in a group.
		‣	Discussion – gaining knowledge.
1	Two people walking	‣	It is me and God traveling down the road
1	Person dancing	‣	Enjoying life, happiness.
1	Bride	‣	Love.
1	Smiling mouth	‣	Sunshine smile.
1	Pregnant woman	‣	God knew me even before I was born – in my mother's womb.
1	My granny	‣	She was alwyas there – a light n my road.
1	Cyclists	‣	We travel day by day like cyclists – where do we head towards? Sometimes we are unstabel and stumble, but God travels the road with us all the way.
	Religious/Biblical objects as symbols (37)		
5	Love	‣	For my husband and God sustains me.
		‣	Created/loved by God.
		‣	Love is important
4	Church	‣	God's love is experienced here.
		‣	Where God gives a high priest or reverend to help us interpret and understand God's law.
		‣	Where we worship God.
4	People praying	‣	Others who believe (and pray) help me to be strong.
		‣	Mother praying with candle – faith.
		‣	It connects you to God and the churches.
4	Bible	‣	Word of God, God's love and warmth.
		‣	It connects me with God.

		‣ You should not fall asleep before reading the Bible – it gives you peace and direction.
		‣ It reminds one that there is nothing you can do without God.
4	Peace	‣ To live in peace with others.
		‣ People who are at peace.
4	Fruits (of the spirit)	‣ Words in Gal 5:22: love, peace, faith, happiness.
4	God	‣ God gives daily power.
		‣ I believe in God's grace.
		‣ God is there for everyone.
		‣ God looking upon us in happiness
3	Silence/ Quiet time	‣ May there be more opportunities for silence/silent weekends.
		‣ Says thank you
		‣ New refreshing life giving water flows out of silence.
		‣ Helps me to relax, relieve stress, to be still.
2	Cross	‣ The crucifixion of Christ
2	Wings	‣ I feel myself saved and free - I give thanks for that.
		‣ I have grown new wings this wekend.
2	Candles	‣ Burning candles – bringing (God's) light.
2	Grave/ tombstone	‣ Death of loved one (grave) is through someone's death, I might meet the Lord.
		‣ The sudden death makes one think about life – our limited time and how to live optimally every moment on earth.
1	Anchor	‣ God is my anchor.
1	Forgive	‣ To forgive: it starts from the heart – you can give flowers or shake hands.
1	Ancestors	‣ The ancestors can bring peace
1	Music	‣ Gospel music connects us to God.
1	Picture of Hell	‣ If you do not pray, you will go into the fire.
	Other objects	
2	Book	‣ Reading and getting information and knowledge.
1	Masks	‣ Confronts us.
1	STOP sign	‣ It is your choice to stop/do.
1	Shoe	‣ The footprints we leave – what do they look like? God is walking the road with us.
1	Air balloon	‣ God's Spirit: we cannot determine where and how if moves, but it is there. Gliding above us.
1	'Road map' with places	‣ I have traveled to many places and saw much, expriences mauch – some of it good, some bad.
1	Vehicles on a journey	‣ Community – going to church.
1	Gifts	‣ Celebrate life.

XIII

APPENDIX A6: CAPACITY BUILDING WORKSESSIONS FEEDBACK (FH1)

Reflective statements during 1st Follow-up session
Inner change due to ability to do introspection and then openly talk about their feelings such as hurt
‣ *I can discuss my questions on inner turmoil and pain more openly. In the past, I did not share my feelings because I felt it was "only mine". Now I am able to share.* ‣ *In the past when I felt depressed, I would walk up the mountain and sit on a rock – but I did not truly become quiet – I was still aware of everything around me. Now I can "become quiet", cut the "noise" out – and become quiet before God.* ‣ *In the community, people often come to talk to me – now we can become silent together, meditate and then talk.* ‣ *I realised that I should look inside first, become quiet, re-load my "battery" – then, as I find peace within, I am open and transparent for others.* ‣ *The self-development sessions helped me to open up, to pour out my heart, but also to keep quiet and listen – to look inside and then react. For example in conflict situations, I now first do introspection before I react.*
Improved family relationships due to these changes (e.g. being open, listen to others) in themselves
‣ *I went back as a new person to my family. In the past, I always tried to break away and to forget - just to get away from my problem. Now I am busy to move with my family. I no longer "break away" on my own. We are once more going to church as a family.* ‣ *Even in my family things changed – I give others (like my husband) the opportunity to talk while I listen.* ‣ *I spent far more time on introspection and my relationships with my children are far more open. I give more love and hugs. We discuss our feelings and relationships more openly. The children are also doing it now, since I have been doing it.* ‣ *After the retreat, I could talk things over with my daughter and put things straight. I was able to give her space to talk, also about her (and my) feelings.*

APPENDIX A7: CAPACITY BUILDING WORKSESSIONS ASSESSMENT (FH2)

Group assessment
Feedback on what the group has learned and how they have changed since the beginning of these sessions.
I have learned…

‣ *That sharing my problem with someone I trust helps. If I don't have such a person, I can write it down in my journal.*

‣ *You can share your private things with others – I have never before had this experience – these people can keep/share a secret.*

‣ *To start where I am – with small ("easy") steps, before moving unto my big dream.*

‣ *Sometimes it is okay to leave my house/chores/children behind to come to something good/something which will feed me.*

‣ *The first day when I arrived at Olyfhuis the light was lit – it symbolises love – we went back to share the love with others in the community.*

‣ *If you show respect to others, they feel appreciated and valued.*

‣ *About communication in a team.*

‣ *To adjust myself when faced with a problem – I will now compromise rather than fight (as I did in the past).*

‣ *Since we come from one community, we are now a team – and we can start something because we <u>trust one another</u> and because we have <u>shared knowledge.</u>*

‣ *To no longer believe in myself alone, but to share with others – I am more open and no longer lonely.*

‣ *That we cannot all be leaders, but from this team we can have a leader or co-ordinator.*

‣ *That for different projects people in this group can have different roles (e.g. leader, organiser).*

What has changed?

‣ *I have improved self-esteem and more trust in myself.*

‣ *I feel stronger and empowered – I feel I can do things and go on. I have been "kick-started"!*

‣ *I have a clearer vision of what it is that I should do and I believe in what I want to do now.*

‣ *The love I experienced here, gave me strength*

‣ *I have gained so much trust in myself so that I can reach out to others and believe in them (that they have the ability to do things).*

‣ *I know now that I am special; I can talk/listen to others, helping them to face their problems (which I could not do before) and to deal with it.*

‣ *I'm changed because I have learned so much – I can now sit down to talk/listen to other people.*

‣ *I have learned that I can benefit from workshops – before I felt "let the others go…" But now I will be able to share with others what I have learned.*

‣ *I am more community orientated and more knowledgeable regarding community work.*

‣ *I am beginning to think and talk like a community facilitator!*

This is what we want to thank (GOD) for…
‣ *The person (Heidi) reaching out to help us come together to "activate" our life long dreams.*
‣ *The Word of God – it gives us clear messages about what we are here for and about what we should do.*
‣ *For opening these sessions with the Word of God.*
‣ *The light (candle) which is no longer hidden – it is shared with us.*
‣ *Sharing the Word gives us 'padkos' for the road ahead.*
‣ *Thank you, Buli, for inviting me – even though I am in a wheelchair.*

APPENDIX A8: THE PEOPLE-CENTRED HEALING AND CAPACITY BUILDING PROCESS

Figure 4 outlines the healing/capacity building process as utilised during worksessions/retreats to assist individuals and groups in their growth and healing. Whether taking place over one or five days, the 12-stages or "moments", depicted in Figure 4, serve as a guideline for the healing/capacity building process. As with all efficient processes, there is a stage of preparation, engagement, active work and evaluation or disengagement. Throughout the whole process, constant reflection and the active involvement of all are emphasised. This process embodies the principles (outlined in both Chapter 5 and Appendix A, Table 8) for transformation and embraces the belief that all people have something to offer and contribute to the process of learning, thus growing into their full potential.

Figure 4: The People-centred Healing and Capacity Building Process

APPENDIX A9: INTEGRATED SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT (ISD) MODEL

The ISD-model's main focus is on the whole of the community, encompassing both the human and non-human components. Acknowledging 'what is' and striving for 'what can become', people are seen as full partners and resources. Heeding their voice and needs, their abilities, strengths, potential and wisdom are fully harnessed by means of participatory processes of training, development and empowerment. A range of services are provided to include individuals and groups, the whole of community and the environment, as well as involvement in the formulation and implementation of supportive policies and structures.

Table 3: Model for Integrated Social Development (ISD)

DIRECT CLIENT SERVICES	DIRECT COMMUNITY SERVICES
Focus on: ■ Identified clients/client groups in the community towards which the organisation has the responsibility of providing direct services in order ‣ To enable them to function on an acceptable level; ‣ To prevent potential problems; ‣ To prevent factors influencing their normal developmental processes and thus their physical and mental health and functioning. **Main strategies:** ⇨ Reaching out ⇨ Counselling & therapy ⇨ Early identification ⇨ Working with groups ⇨ Prevention	**Focus on:** ■ The community as a whole in order to identify gaps in their education and equipment for healthy social functioning. **Main strategies:** ⇨ Discussion groups ⇨ Educational groups ⇨ Adult education ⇨ Talks and lectures ⇨ Life-skills education ⇨ Training opportunities ⇨ Retraining opportunities
INDIRECT CLIENT SERVICES	INDIRECT COMMUNITY SERVICES
Focus on: ■ Community groups with specific needs or problems. **Main strategies:** ⇨ Consultation ⇨ Advocacy (cause) ⇨ Co-ordination ⇨ Linking ⇨ Empowering ⇨ Influencing public opinions (Kirsten, 1992: 71, as adapted from Lewis & Lewis, 1990.)	**Focus on:** ■ Social, economic and political policies which have a suppressive influence on the functioning of specific groups within the community. ■ Public policies necessary to improve the responsivity of the community towards the community needs. **Main strategies:** ⇨ Policy management ⇨ Lobbying ⇨ Public speaking ⇨ Office holding ⇨ Organising of community forums

APPENDIX A10: FOCI OF RELATIONAL TRANSFORMAITON

Table 4: Foci of relational transformation

Focus on	Reference
Holism, Inclusivity	
▪ Approaching and envisioning the community as a whole.	Chapter 4, section 4.3.5.3; Chapter 5, section 5.2.2
▪ Increasing responsiveness of social and physical environments	Kirsten, 1992:71; Chapter 5, section 5.3.1.2
Presence of God	
▪ Believing in people acknowledging the presence of God at the heart of our humanity.	Morrissey, 1997:71; Chapter 4, section 4.3
▪ Reconciling people to God, neighbour to neighbour – racial, ethnic and economical barriers are broken down in love.	Chapter 5, section 5.3.1.1.
▪ Affirming dignity of people and their capability to contribute by encouraging fair exchange. ⇨ Jesus "takes" what we bring him, (e.g. He took the fishes and bread), then blesses it, breaks it and gives/shares it – thus modeling how we participate in a cycle take/bless/break/give as enacted in the Eucharist, as symbol of our communion with Father, Son and Holy Ghost.	Bracho, 2000:2-5; Chapter 5, section 5.2.2; Morrissey, 1997:72. Chapter 4, section 4.3.5; Peterson, 2005; 206-211.
▪ Loving people, believe in them, and treat them with respect, as equal, created with full potential by God.	Chapter 5, section 5.3.1.1; Freire in Morrissey, 1997:72; Chapter 6, section 6.2
Relationships	
▪ Establishing relationships with all involved – relationships are the vessel for all meaningful interactions between human beings and between humans and their environment.	Chapter 5, section 5.3.1.1; Chapter 6, section 6.3.1
▪ Honouring *ubuntu* – defining life in terms of relationship and encompassing the concepts of caring, support and community. ▪ Countering segregation and violence with reconciliation and justice.	Haws, 2009:477, Chapter 5, section 5.3.2.2
Multi-sectorial, diverseness	
▪ Adapting a multi-organisational and multidisciplinary approach – build social coalitions between the public, private and volunteer sectors.	Chenoweth & Stehlik 2004:6; Chapter 5, section 5.3.1.3
▪ Seeking common ground, drawing together people from various backgrounds – working with, not against, cultural values – including people from the "indigenous" and professional categories, in the search for ways to mobilise people's initiatives and skill.	Chapter 5, section 5.3.2, section 5.4.3.2; Chapter 6, section 6.3.2
Needs/issues as seen by community	
▪ Acknowledging unfulfilled needs and existing issues/problems.	Kirsten, 1992:70; Chapter 5, section 5.4.1; Chapter 6,

	section 6.2
▪ Performing a total participative community assessment and prioritising of needs, problems and target groups and areas.	Kirsten, 1992:72; Chapter 5, section 5.2
Strengths, abilities and possibilities	
▪ Promoting co-operation and participation. ▪ Turning to the community to help with finding solutions, solving their problems and meeting their needs. ▪ Identifying potential solutions/"what ought to be"-scenario's.	Kirsten, 1992:72; Chapter 5, sections 5.2 & 5.3.1.4
Renewed, multi-level strategies	
▪ Re-thinking and updating practitioners' strategies and skills.	Kirsten, 1992:70, Chapter 3, section 5.4.3.3
▪ Working towards multi-level "interventions', e.g. healing, therapeutic, preventative, community ministry, educational, enrichment.	Morrissey, 1997:10; Chapter 5, section 5.4
▪ Empowering the community as a whole – building personal, spiritual, social, economical, environmental capacity.	Chapter 5, section 5.4.2
▪ Practising inclusive (participative) sharing of information and opinions, decision-making and transparency.	Chapter 5, section 5.4.2.
▪ Releasing people's capacities, wisdom, creativity and potential.	Chapter 5, sections 5.2.3 & 5.4.2
▪ Engaging with freedom's possibilities (human well-being on all levels and dimensions of society).	Chapter 5, sections 5.2.1 & 5.4.3.4
▪ Redistributing and sharing skills and resources.	Chapter 4, sections 4.3.4 & 4.4

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APPENDIX A11: PRINCIPLES OF INTEGRATED PEOPLE AND COMMUNITY TRANSFORMATION

Table 5: Principles of integrated people and community transformation

PRINCIPLE	DESCRIPTION
The principle of the gift of the Holy Spirit	▪ The Spirit is the "breath of life" to all of creation – life giving. ▪ The Spirit is love, hope and fruit giving. ▪ The Spirit is the connecting force – "one-ness giving". ▪ The Spirit is support giving – upholding the concept of *Koinoniai*. ▪ The Spirit is the source of creativity.
The principle of an holistic focus: Whole systems/ ecological thinking	▪ Viewing the individual as person-in-environment or bio-social-spiritual being. ▪ Honouring the inter-connectedness of all life. ▪ Acknowledging the total spectrum (human and non-human) of needs, concerns and aspirations.
The principle of accepting that God is loving and forgiving	▪ Receiving and giving forgiveness. ▪ Sharing compassion. ▪ Accepting God's love, forgiveness and blessing (for all). ▪ Being open to God's revelations and guidance.
The principle of the self-fulfilment and purpose	▪ Promoting a sense of destiny, purpose and vision. ▪ Visualisation of fulfilment of expectations and aspirations. ▪ Supporting the highest in people, thus accelerating their development.
The principle of health and potential	▪ Stimulating healing and growth rather than attacking the problem. ▪ Focusing on the positive and a sense of hope. ▪ Focusing on the strengths, abilities, creativity, wisdom and resources of individuals and the community/environment.
The principle of participation, self-determination and full-partnership	▪ Promoting a spirit of trust, partnership and shared vision. ▪ Empowering people to become self-reliant rather than dependent. ▪ Allowing the individual/community to determine the direction and pace of the process. ▪ Acknowledging the individual's or community's experience, wisdom and survival skills, as well as limitations (e.g. illiteracy). ▪ Turning to the individual/community for participation and help with regard to finding solutions, solving their problems and meeting their needs.
The principle of stewardship	▪ Acknowledging individual and social responsibility. ▪ Focusing on a higher purpose, thus helping to transcend conflict and greed. ▪ Serving the good of the whole (rather than inequality or "piecemeal") – including community and environment/creation.
The principle of an inclusive,	▪ Providing a range of "interventions", e.g. facilitation, support, healing, learning, skills and capacity development opportunities.

multi-level approach	- Utilising all available resources – including the individual's inner strengths, skills, creativity, community wisdom and spiritual resources. - Focusing on the community as a whole – adapting a multi-organisational and multidisciplinary approach.
The principle of working for the good of all	- Accessing and prioritising the real needs/aspirations. - Showing tolerance and respect for different points of view - win/win rather than win/lose thinking. - Honouring the grain of truth in the opponent's position. - Empowering the community as a whole (building social, economical, spiritual and environmental capacity). - Having a "Kingdom" focus – working towards a better future.
The principle of a process-orientation, rather than a results-orientation	- Guaranteeing equality of opportunity, not results. - Sacrifice short-term goals for long- term benefits. - Detachment from outcomes and from recognition and reward – honouring the process, determined by the pace of the stakeholders/ all parties.

(Based on Kirsten, 1996:10-11, Kirsten, 2002:20; Guder, 1998:142-156, 179-180; McLaren, 2007:104-105; McLaughlin & Davidson, 1997:4-7.)

APPENDIX A12: CHARACTERISTICS OF THE RELATIPONAL PRAXIS FRAMEWORK FOR PEOPLE AND COMMUNITY TRANSFORMATION

Table 6: Characteristics of the relational praxis framework

Criteria	Description
1. Basic perception of the human nature and community	‣ God is the ultimate Source of creation – His actions in both redemption and creations bring to life, stability and well-being for both individuals and communities. ‣ God also brings healing and renewal to the larger environment. ‣ All of creation – and human beings – are in a process of becoming and human beings play an important role in the becoming of the world (Fretheim, 2005: 8–11). ‣ The community consists of basically "healthy" people with the potential to function fully, in a state of "well being". ‣ If given the resources and opportunity, community members are all able to contribute – to a lesser or greater degree – towards the improvement of the quality of their own lives as well as that of the community/environment (cf. Chapter 5, section 5.2).
2. Assumptions regarding the role/value of different subsystems of the community	‣ Subsystems are interconnected and in balanced interdependence with each other and with nature, requiring sensitivity to and an understanding of the delicacy of that balance of these interconnected webs (Gray, 1984:79; Osmer, 2008:16–17; Chapter 4, section 4.4). ‣ Fitting life within natural cycles is essential for future new human settlements (Gray, 1984:80).
3. Assumptions regarding the problems and needs of the community	The communities are exposed to the influences of the global crises: McLaren (2007:5) suggests that our plethora of critical global crises can be traced to four deep dysfunctions, namely: ‣ The prosperity crisis[1] – environmental breakdown caused by our unsustainable global economy, failing to respect environmental limits even as it succeeds in producing great wealth for about one-third of the world's population. ‣ The equity crisis – the growing gap or inequality between the rich and the poor, promoting envy, resentment and hate in the poor majority and fear and anger in the rich. ‣ The security crisis – danger of war arising from the intensified resentment and fear amongst the various groups at opposite ends of the economic spectrum. ‣ Spiritual crisis – failure of the world's religions to provide a framing story capable of healing and restoring the previous three crises. ‣ South African communities have specific issues, such as the HIV and AIDS pandemic, the escalation of crime and violence,

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[1] Compare with Oliver James's term "selfish capitalism" that reflects the perception that "prosperity has become to be perceived as a problem, a disease or disorder threatening social cohesion and inhibiting human fulfilment" (Graham, 2009:9).

		rising unemployment and widespread poverty, hunger and malnutrition suffered by a growing number of children; high teenage pregnancy rate and increased numbers of younger children abusing drugs and alcohol; broken families and poor parent child relationships, leading to dislocation and disconnectedness in communities (cf. Swart, 2008:113–115; Nouwen, 2006:9–10; Chapter 5, section 5.4). ‣ Human beings all long for connectedness, belonging, and a sense of well-being – of which meaningful, loving relationships are the foundation (cf. Graham, 2009:12, Peterson, 2005:310).
4.	Defining of the consumer system	‣ The whole of the community (individuals, groups, institutions) – which does not necessarily refer to a geographical community – it could be a school or work community. ‣ "Community [is] a system of interdependent persons, groups, and organizations that (1) meets the individual's primary needs, (2) affects the individual's daily life. And (3) mediates between the individual and society as a whole" (Lewis & Lewis, 1990:7).
5.	View of the role of the community	‣ The community are active partners and determine the direction and pace of the process/action.
6.	Attitude with regard to the power structure	‣ The power lies with the participants.
7.	Level on which the primary intervention takes place	‣ Primary intervention could take place on any of the four main facets, namely ⇨ Direct people (healing, counselling, caring). ⇨ Indirect people (advocacy, self-help, support networks). ⇨ Direct community (preventative education, literacy, skills training). ⇨ Indirect community (influencing public policy, environmental modification – aim for more responsive social environment). ‣ Intervention/engagement should always be either in response to a request from any person or group (representing the community) who approach the practitioner with an identified issue, need or problem; or ‣ In reaction to a stimulus (observation) or praxis question resulting from being involved in the community in some or other capacity. ‣ Both scenarios require that the practitioner should make contact and build a relationship with representatives from the group or community in order to engage them in the identification of "the real issue/need/problem" and to begin strategising.

8.	Characteristic constraints that are focused on	‣ Lack of acknowledgement of the spiritual dimension and co-operation from institutions and organisations who are responsible for or involved with the community (e.g. do not want to have "spiritual" input; are outcome and not process orientated).
		‣ Development approaches and strategies which focus mainly on economic development, to the disadvantage of people who have emotional and spiritual needs.
9.	Assumptions with regard to the basic values relevant to the intervention	‣ Adhere to the values of creativity, harmony, reconciliation, justice, virtue, integrity and peace, which are characteristic of God's nature (McLaren, 2007:295).
		‣ Jesus' life and death made it undeniably clear that changing the human heart and changing human society are not separate task, but are as interconnected as the two beams of the cross (Nouwen, 2006:20). He manifests that revolution and conversion cannot be separated.
10.	Goals towards which one is striving	‣ Transformation of people and community – by reconnecting, redistributing and re-deployment of resources.
		‣ Reaching a people-environment balance - moving towards well-being of Individuals and community, by becoming whole and experiencing *shalom*, contentment (Wright, 2010:83).
		‣ Finding meaning – setting in motion the dynamic process where the history plays an integral role. Creating space for "listening" to people's [hi]stories to help them find meaning, experience purpose, forgiveness, reconciliation of opposites, faith, love for others, humility, honesty, self-discipline and genuineness, assertiveness, responsibility (for self, others and the environment).
11.	Characteristic strategies	‣ People and community transformation by means of participatory "listening to" (hearing); healing; and enlightenment processes.
		‣ Re-connecting of people with
		⇨ God (retreats, spiritual practises, hope, creation).
		⇨ Themselves (their own inner qualities, strengths, capabilities, efficacy and creativity through experiential equipment sessions/retreats).
		⇨ Other people (self-help groups, support systems, networking).
		⇨ The environment (awareness campaigns, nature walks, "river clean-up" drives).
		‣ Key to every intervention/involvement is the *inter-active relationship* that needs to be established between the "change agent" or practitioner and the individual, group or community (cf. Peterson, 2005:320).
		‣ "Handing over the stick"- be guided by and respect and incorporate the wisdom of all participants.
12.	Medium or instrument used to obtain change	‣ A multi-faceted approach, encompassing a range of interventions/involvement on a continuum from working with individuals in crisis (e.g. dealing with trauma), self-help groups and community education, to office holding and input on changing global policies, to environmental care. Thus on micro-

	, meso- and macro-level.
	‣ People-sensitive community interventions focusing on individuals in community and community as a whole.
	‣ Utilising existing structures such as churches or faith based organisations – e.g. community missions are excellent "vehicles" for people and community transformation (see Morrissey, 1997) or community based "missionary" organisations, such as Foundation for Cross-Cultural Education's "campus" at Masaiti, Zambia.
13. Characteristic intervention objectives	‣ To facilitate an inner healing process.
	‣ To empower individuals, groups and communities through a capacity building and equipping process.
	‣ To encourage self-development and self-reliance, focusing on the strengths and abilities present in the individuals, groups and communities.
	‣ To build a basis for future development by utilising objective measuring instruments which will give all involved a clear indication of progress and possible areas for future development.
	‣ To improve the person-environment fit by creating or making accessible more resources and by facilitating and training.
	‣ To raise the consciousness of the community members regarding their responsibility towards the environment (on a social and physical level).
14. Characteristic forms/methods of intervention	‣ Direct and indirect work with people and communities: healing, restoration, education, transformation, stewardship, capacity building, empowerment.
	‣ Reaching out to vulnerable groups (prevention).
	‣ Community re-structuring and education.
	‣ "On site" interventions or actions, e.g. village walks.
	‣ Experiential learning, participatory workshop experiences, art, spiritual practices.
	‣ Active involvement in social justice, policy making and office holding.
15. Characteristic techniques	‣ Experiential workshops, story telling, memory boxes, journaling, dramas and role-plays, rituals and activities, self- and group assessments, blessing, forgiveness, encouragement, prayer, reflection and meditation.
16. Characteristic roles of the professional/prac- titioner	‣ The role of the practitioner (community developer, theologian, social worker and any other "outsider") is that of a change agent, a facilitator, a healer (in the sense that the healing process is facilitated) and a catalyst.
	‣ Typical roles of practitioner: facilitator, mediator, healer (relationship work, forgiveness, praying, blessing), retreat leader (spiritual director), visionary leader, advocate, educator, manager, policy maker/manager.
17. Characteristic process which is being followed	‣ Long term, many phases, similar to the research steps (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.6, Figure 2 & Chapter 6, section 6.4 Figure 3).
	‣ Continuous cycles of the reflective spiral: "becoming conscious

	of" problem/idea; relationship building and engagement; data gathering, reflection, adaptation of plans/intervention/programme, deployment, ongoing assessment (cf. Chapter 2, section 2.6) and final evaluation (feedback). Also theological reflection as transformation inducing methodology (cf. Chapter 4, section 4.2). ‣ To embrace the indwelling of the Holey Spirit, the practitioner has to have a discipline of "spiritual practises" – working towards becoming more conscious and to be open to (and ready for) the guidance of the Spirit (e.g. Exam of Conscience; Morning Reflections, Meditation, Contemplative Prayer).
18. Principles/foundation	‣ "Kingdom rules": living a new spirituality following the rules of love, grace and abundance; a new way of living in the sacred presence of God, integrated with all of life – not a different space-time universe – but in the here and now (McLaren, 2007:296). ‣ We love because he first loved us (1 John 4:19). We ought to lay down our lives for [one another] (1 John 3:16). Let us love one another, for love comes from God (1 John 4:7).[2]
19. Examples of typical programmes	‣ Inner healing and Capacity Building Workshops: Growing Leaders for Transformation.[3] ‣ Inner Healing Journey (retreats).[4] ‣ Self-care Strategies for Caregivers.[5]

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[2] Scriptures taken from NIV Bible.

[3] Refer to Chapter 6, section 6.5.

[4] Refer to Chaper 3, section 3.4.4: Healing retreats.

APPENDIX A: EXERCISES

SPIRITUALITY AS DIMENSION OF INTEGRATED

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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Dissertation presented for the degree of Doctor of Practical
Theology at the University of Stellenbosch

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1
Masks

Purpose of the exercise	An 'Ice breaker' exercise to guide people through the opening phases of the workshop situation – getting to know each other and 'getting in touch' in a 'fun'-way. Also to demonstrate how we cannot really work together if we keep on hiding behind masks.
What do you need	1 Piece (a bit larger than an A4 sheet) of aluminium foil per person.
How long does it take	About 20 minutes.

What to do

☺ Have the group seated in a half-circle or horseshoe format. Hand out the pieces of aluminium foil and give the following instructions:

🕮 *You are now going to make a mask of yourself by using the aluminium foil to mould your face. Take you time and gently form your face – until you feel you have a good image of yourself.*

🕮 *Once you have done it, keep the mask on your face with your left hand and stand up. Now move around, trying to find a new partner. Use your right hand to guide you and don't take off your mask – keep going until you have a partner. Once you have a partner – still keep your mask on your face with your left hand and use your right hand to identify your partner.*

☺ Allow a couple of minutes for this and then the following instructions:

🕮 *You may now take off your masks. Take a good look at the other people's masks – does it look like them? Ask questions such as:*

  ⇨ *How did it feel to make a mask?*

  ⇨ *Was it easy, difficult?*

  ⇨ *Did you find it easy to move around behind your mask? Was it comfortable?*

  ⇨ *Do you think we use mask in our every day life? In projects? In organisations?*

  ⇨ *Why do you think do we use masks?*

NOTE: This exercise also works very well in situations were people know each other – such as on committee's – but are not honest and open. It helps them to 'see' how they are hiding and not communicating openly and truthfully.

2
Lighting a Candle

Purpose of the exercise	Group exercise: An atmosphere setting exercise – create the idea of "welcome" and peacefulness. To invite God's presence into the space. Individual exercise: To allow participants to remember someone, to make peace or forgive someone or to bring them to God.
What do you need	A box of matches and 1 candle. If doing this as an individual exercise, one small candle and a piece of paper* to keep the candle from dripping, for each participant.
How long does it take	About 5 minutes.
What to do	* Take small squares of paper and cut a hole just big enough for the candle to fit, in the middle of the paper.

☺ Have the group seated in a half-circle or horseshoe format.

☺   For the <u>group exercises</u>: Place an unlit candle in the centre of the semi-circle. Wait until every body has settled down and then light the candle.

🕯 Ask them the following question(s): '*What does a candle symbolise?*' '*What meaning does it have for you?*'

☺ If they are hesitant to participate, share what other groups have contributed:

⇨ *We see light.*

⇨ *It helps us to see the beauty.*

⇨ *It makes me think of God – He is giving us light.*

⇨ *The light may open our insides.*

⇨ *It helps us to open our minds - to see what we could not see before.*

⇨ *We are here to become the light, so that we can give the light to the community.*

☺ Keep the candle burning throughout the healing session(s). At the beginning of each new session, ask a participant (volunteer) to light the candle anew.

☺ For the <u>individual exercise</u>: Hand out a candle and piece of paper to each participant, and ask the above questions. Then ask them to light the candle for a person they want to forgive or bring to God. Allow time for silent prayer.

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3
Journaling

Purpose of the exercise	To help people to get in touch with their inner-self. It is a good 'centring' exercise - individuals are helped to be calm, focussed and to 'sit and listen' instead of running around in circles. It helps with self-discipline - to work daily on changes you want to bring about in your life. It helps you to express your inner feelings and thoughts without being judged or interrupted or interpreted by any one else. To help individuals work through suffering.
What do you need	An inexpensive school exercise book (lined) and pencil for each participant.
How long does it take	About 20-30 minutes to give people the opportunity to experience what it feels like to write their first page. After this each person should spend at least 15-30 minutes per day writing in their journal.

What to do

☺ Have the group seated in a half-circle or horseshoe format. Hand out the exercise books and pencils. Ask the group what they know/feel about keeping a journal.

🕭 Share this information with them:

> There are several benefits of keeping a journal, such as: stress reduction, goal setting, focussing, it gives you 'time out', helps you to keep track of your life, improves your understanding of yourself and others, creates a record, organizes your life and it becomes a 'keepsake' reflecting you memories. Julia Cameron (The Vein of Gold. 1996. Putnam, New York, 14-18) sees the 'writing of morning pages' as an important tool in centring, empowering and enlightening. As a 'habit' it is comforting, stimulating, challenging and activating. In a sense the writing of pages every morning is like meditation: your quiet time with your inner-self and listening to God's voice. You may write anything that comes into your head – without censoring or judging it and without asking whether it is 'correct'. Writing by hand makes it 'part' of you – something you 'own'- like a written/verbalised confession.

☺ Now give the following instructions:

🕭 *'Pick up your pencil in the hand you usually do not write with. Go to your first page, and at the top - using your 'wrong hand', write your name and the date. If you are able, also write your first sentence i.e.* "This morning when I woke up I was really hungry so I raided the fridge. Then I felt real bad – why do I stuff myself like that?" *Reflect on how strange it feels to write with the 'wrong' hand.*

🕭 *Now switch to your 'right' hand (which will feel far more comfortable!) and continue to write - writing whatever comes into you head. Remember - this is private - 'for your eyes only' - don't share this with any one.*

☺ Get feedback after 10 minutes. Remind them to spend 15-20 minutes every morning for the next week, writing a page per day - experiencing whatever happens within them.

NOTE: When people are depressed or tend to focus on the negative only, we have found it very effective to urge the individual to find one positive thing to write down in their journal at the end of each day. It could be as simple as a good cup of coffee, or as complicated as a vision.

Writing down the 'positive', not only helps to turn the focus away from the negative and the problems, but also serves as an affirmation of that which is (still) positive in their lives. We call this the 'One Good Thing' exercise. An illiterate person could ask the help of someone or even draw (or cut and glue) a picture of the 'good' thing.

4
Reflective Prayer/Meditation

Purpose of the exercise	To bring people in touch with their inner-self (and God) and to help them relax. Meditation also helps people to 'see' things more clearly and to make better decisions.
What do you need	The 'Meditative Prayer' exercise sheet.
How long does it take	About 15-30 minutes. Another 10 minutes if you do the 'Examen of Conscience'.

What to do

☺ Have the group seated in a half-circle or horseshoe format. Ask the group what they think is meant by 'meditation'. Give them some information regarding what meditation is an how it can be beneficial to meditate or pray on a regular basis – use the information given below:

Prayer and Meditation

Christian meditation can be defined as '*…the activity of calling to mind and thinking over and dwelling on and applying to oneself the various things that one knows about the works and ways and purposes and promises of God. It is an activity of holy thought consciously performed in the presence of God… with the help of God as a means of communication with God.*' Packer (in Howard & Lash, 1998:40-41).

The purpose of such meditation is to clear one's vision of God and to let His truth make its full and proper impact on one's mind and heart – getting a clear apprehension of God's truth, power and grace. It is a technique for anyone who wishes to listen to the inner self and connect with God. If one is willing to relax one's body and mind and to unite your heart and soul, meditation also results in greater relaxation, dis-identification, alertness, awareness, empathy, sensitivity and openness to change. One can also use meditation to reflect on and gain insight into on one's life or on specific aspects in one's life.

✊ Guide the group through the following meditative-prayer with these instructions:

✊ *Find a quiet spot. Close your eyes and start breathing in and out slowly. Begin to 'chant' the word 'Light'** with every beat of the heart. Picture a brilliant pure white light starting to glow from inside your mind. Now repeat the word 'Light' with every single breath. On the inhale you draw the light into your mind and on the exhale you feel the light spreading throughout your body. Now do the same with the word 'Love'; concentrating on a feeling of pure, selfless love - bask in this beautiful and caring feeling. Focus on the experience of the connection between light and love - a feeling of being at one with the Creator. Open yourself to Him and the Holy Spirit.*

   **If you prefer you can chant the words 'God the Father', 'Jesus Christ' and 'Holy Spirit'.

☺ Now follow the instructions given in the EXAMEN OF CONSCIENCE. Then discuss how it can help one to deal with difficulties in one's life.

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4a
Scriptures

Purpose of the exercise	To bring people in touch with their inner-self (and God) and to help them become conscious. Meditation or reflection on the Biblical text also helps people to 'see' things more clearly and to make better decisions. A good exercise to lead people into the first phase of healing.
What do you need	A candle and scriptures form the Bible. If available, meditative music (e.g. from Taizé).
How long does it take	About 15 minutes.
What to do	If you are working with people from different backgrounds/religions tell them that you are going to use scriptures from the Bible and invite them to leave the group for the duration of the exercise if they are not comfortable with that.[1]
	Choose scriptures that either focus on healing or God's relationship with human beings, such as care, love or comforting. [2]

☺ Have the group seated in a half-circle or horseshoe format. Light the candle (or ask one of the group to do so) and play the meditative music. Then give the following instructions:

🕭 *Our walk with God may be as natural and as joyful as a walk in sunshine. It is up to us to make that choice every day: we choose whether we want to hear from God or not. One way of 'connecting' with God is through his Word.*

🕭 *I want you to sit relaxed – feet on the floor, back up straight and hands resting on your knees. I am going to read some scriptures from … (give the reference, e.g. 1 John 1:1-3). I want you to close your eyes and listen to the scripture. Pay attention to anything that you 'hear', that catches your attention or that you feel a 'connection' with and reflect on what God is saying to you.*

☺ Read the bible passage (2-3 verses) - once slowly and repeated twice more. Allow about 10 minutes for silent reflection and then invite then to give feedback - this is totally voluntary. If nobody wants to give feedback, close the session with reflecting on how being silent helps one to focus 'inwards' and become aware of what one needs to address.

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[1] One should always be open with the participants as to what one's own religious/spiritual background is – they have to feel free to not participate if they choose so. I have found that when showing respect for others, they respect what you are doing – in all our experiences only once did someone choose to leave the group – all other participants expressed their appreciation for and value of these exercises.

[2] 1 John 1:1-3: 'That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that you may have fellowship with us … and with the Father and with his son Jesus Christ.'

John 20:15-16: Jesus said unto her, Woman, why are you crying? Whom are you seeking? …Jesus said to her, Mary.' (Scriptures: *The One Year Bible*, King James Version. Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers.)

4b
Face of God

Purpose of the exercise	This exercise is one form of meditation: using images to guide the individual to focus on God. It is a simple centring exercise, and creates the necessary inner stillness for healing work.
What do you need	Images of God/Jesus (copied/printed in colour and laminated). A candle.
How long does it take	About 15 minutes.
What to do	Light the candle in the middle of a small table in the middle of the circle/room and lay out the cards with the images circling the candle.

☺ Have the group seated in a half-circle or horseshoe format. Tell them that the next exercise is a meditative exercise where they are going to – in quietness – spend some time reflecting on who God is to them and on what God is saying to them – here and now. Give the following instructions:

🎤 *In the middle of this circle you can see the candle and the small cards. On these cards are various images of God/Jesus. I want you to stand up and quietly walk around the table – and just look at the images.*

🎤 *Then I want you to pick up any one image that "speaks" to you or that you feel you can relate to.*

🎤 *Go back to your seat and spend some time (about 10 minutes) reflecting in silence on the meaning of the image, of who God is to you, and on about what God is saying to you here, now.*

☺ Allow about 5-10 minutes for this ask:

🎤 *Is there anyone who would like to share why you have picked the specific image or what you have experienced during the exercise?*

🎤 *How do you think can we use what we have learned/experienced through this exercise in our daily lives?*

4c
Stone/Nature Walk

Purpose of the exercise	To bring people in touch with their inner-self (and God) and to help them relax. Meditation or reflection on the creation – as act of God - also helps people to 'see' things more clearly and to make better decisions.
	The 'Silent Walk'[1] is a good exercise to use as part of the healing journey – for instance after doing the 'Loss History Graph' as it give people time to 'be on their own' with God and to reflect on what is happening within themselves.
What do you need	'Walk': A safe path (in nature) where the group can walk on their own (without other people interrupting), in silence, for about 30 minutes. 'Stone': A small smooth, round stone for each participant in a container/basket.
How long does it take	About 30-45 minutes. ('Silent Walk' about 30 minutes: walk 10 minutes, sit and reflect in silence for 10 minutes, return to starting point and then uses 15 minutes for verbal reflection).
What to do	If doing the walk, walk single file, with you leading the group and a co-facilitator walking at the rear. This helps the participants to feel secure.

'Silent/Nature Walk'

☺ Get the group together and give the following instructions: Ask them if they can relate to this and then give the following instructions:

🎤 *We are going for a short walk up the mountain slope. I will walk in front and … (co-facilitator) will walk at the back of group. We are requesting you to stick to one rule: that of keeping absolutely quiet – no talking, no non-verbal communication.*

🎤 *If all of us respect this rule for the duration of the walk (until we are back at Olyfhuis/the departing point), it will allow each of us some 'quiet, personal space' - allowing each individual to see, listen, feel and hear what Nature and God are saying to him/her.*

🎤 *By doing this, we try to become deeply aware of the "here and now"; we try to "get away" from the daily noises and the routine of "doing"; we try to focus on what is happening inside ourselves, and*

🎤 *We listen to nature/God "speaking to us".*

🎤 *While you are walking, pick up anything that draws your attention, e.g. a leave, stone, blade of grass – and see it as part of God's creation.*

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[1] Exercises developed by IPSO©2005 based on ideas from sessions offered by the Centre for Christian Spirituality in Stellenbosch during 2004-2005.

☺ Lead the group for about 10 minutes of slow, silent walking. Then sit down for about 10 minutes of silent reflection. Walk back to the point of departure.

☺ Ask for feedback on the walk, the objects they have collected. This is totally voluntarily- if nobody wants to give feedback, close the exercise by re-focusing on the importance of "listening to God' while on the inner healing journey – only God's voice can uncover the truth and help one with true healing.

'Stone'

☺ Have the group seated in a half-circle or horseshoe format. Give the following instructions:

🎤 I want each of you to take a stone form the container. Then sit relaxed and look at the stone – become aware of its colour, shape, size.

🎤 Now I want you to close your eyes and concentrate on the stone resting in your hand. Become aware of the feeling of the stone resting in your hand – feel the shape, weight, temperature, and texture.

🎤 As you are sitting in silence, reflect upon what God is saying to you.

☺ Allow about 5-10 minutes and then ask for feedback.

☺ Remember this is totally voluntarily. If nobody gives feedback, close the exercise with reminding them of how important it is to be aware of what is going on in our lives and that we need time by ourselves to be quiet and reflect on what is happening within us and what our next step/action should be.

4d
Examen of Conscience

Purpose of the exercise	To bring people in touch with their inner-self (and God) and to help them relax. Meditation also helps people to 'see' things more clearly and to make better decisions.
What do you need	The 'Meditative Prayer' exercise sheet.
How long does it take	About 20 minutes.

What to do

☺ Have the group seated in a half-circle or horseshoe format. Ask them to relax and be comfortable. Ask them if they are comfortable with following the reflective-process indicated in the prayer. Then read through the prayer, allowing time after each section for quiet reflection.

<table>
<tr><td colspan="2" align="center">The Five Steps of the 'Examen of Conscience'</td></tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 1:
Relax</td>
<td>

Give yourself a sense of calm by finding a comfortable setting and praying for God's light on your experience.

</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2:
Review the day</td>
<td>

What happened during the day (week, month)?
Look back over a given period of time (a day, a week, a month) and note significant events.
Pray in gratitude for God's gifts – offer a prayer of thanksgiving.

</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 3:
Reflect</td>
<td>

Think about your response to the events of the day.
Review the feelings you had and remember that all feelings are valid.
Reflect on the movement of feelings in terms of being drawn towards God and the service of others (consolation) or the opposite – being drawn away from God and wrapped in one's own selfish concerns (desolation).
Pray about your response (feelings & reactions) to people and events during the day.

</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 4:
Consider changes</td>
<td>

Choose one specific response (feeling, reaction) and pray for God's forgiveness.
Pray for understanding with regards to what can be learned from the experience.
Pray for insight into how the situation and be dealt with differently in the future.

</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 5:
Anticipate the next day</td>
<td>

Pray about people and events that will be part of your life the next day.
This helps one to develop a focus and to ask for help in facing the next day, and to put closure on the day's (week's, month's) events.

<div align="right">(Staral, 2003:40, 45-46)</div>
</td>
</tr>
</table>

5

When I'm Alone in the Night

Purpose of the exercise	To help people in the helping professions or in any care-giving capacity to identify their state of mind – helping them to become aware of the effect trauma/helping others to deal with it, may have on them. It helps them to recognise the 'danger signals'.
What do you need	A flip chart. 'When I'm alone' checklist and pencil for each participant.
How long does it take	About 15 minutes.

What to do

☺ Have the group seated in a half-circle or horseshoe format. Give the definition of 'vicarious' (or 'secondary') trauma: ***'Vicarious trauma** is a transformation of the helper's inner experience, resulting from empathetic engagement with client's trauma material. It is the stress that comes from helping (or wanting to help) a traumatized person. It affects our sense of safety, trust, intimacy, competence and belief system.'* [2]

☺ Ask them if they can relate to this and then give the following instructions:

🕊 *Close your eyes and sit quietly, relaxed in your chair. Become aware of how your body rests in the chair. Try to remember a recent incident when you were very upset and angry. Think about what happened and who was involved. Think about what you said and did. Now focus on your body – what reactions do you experience in your body when you think about this anger? Note any stiffness in you muscles, any change in your breathing.*

🕊 *Next I want you to let your mind go back to an occasion in which you experienced that you were successful, that you have accomplished something. What happened? What did you do, say? What were your main feelings? Once again I want you to focus on your body – how does your body react when you think these 'good' thoughts? What happens to your breathing and muscles?*

🕊 *You have experienced the difference in your body's response to your thoughts. Every time you hear a traumatic story, listen to someone sharing their pain hurt, anxiety, your body reacts to that. You may not be aware of it, but your body 'stores' all those feelings and then, when you least expect it, it boils over. We need to recognise the 'danger signals' our body gives. Go through the 'When I'm Alone in the Night'-checklist and see if you recognise any of the signals in you.*

☺ Hand out the 'checklists' and a pencil to each person and ask them to complete it in silence. Once they have done that, ask for input or feedback – it is often a big relief to be able to say openly that you are affected by the work and the stories you have to deal with. By hearing that others are experiencing similar feelings, you may experience a release of you feelings of guilt, 'I am not good enough' or 'I am not up to this'.

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[2] Collins B. J. & Laughlin T. M. 2005. *The Power of Story,* 133, Minnesota: Whole Person Associates.

'WHEN I'M ALONE' CHECKLIST[3]

Read carefully through the following statements. Be honest with yourself: is this how you have been acting lately? Do you recognise any of these behaviours of feelings in yourself? For each statement, tick the box which is most true for you at this stage.

	STATEMENT	HOW OFTEN DO YOU FEEL LIKE THIS		
		OFTEN	SELDOM	NEVER
1	I feel that I have no time or energy for myself			
2	I feel disconnected from loved ones			
3	I experience social withdrawal			
4	I experience an increased sensitivity to violence			
5	I have an exaggerated sense of 'a world gone bad'			
6	I experience a feeling of generalized despair and hopelessness			
7	I have fears and nightmares about my own safety			
8	I have experienced changes in my identity, worldview and spirituality			
9	I feel that nothing in my life is as important as my relationship with the people I work with			
10	I have been working too much, too long, too late			
11	I am experiencing a diminished sense of competence			
12	I am loosing my capacity to have fun			

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[3] Based on the work on 'Vicarious Trauma' by Collins B. J. & Laughlin, T. M. 2005. *The Power of Story,* 133, Duluth, Minnesota: Whole Person Associates.

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Vicarious trauma: Thembi explaining the concept and the statements on the checklist and the participants reflecting on how it is true/not true for them.

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6
Circle of Hands

Purpose of the exercise	The exercise with which the sharing of stories[1] and healing process is 'opened' - it helps to visualise the creation of a 'safe space' which without one cannot proceed onto the healing exercises. It can also be used for team-building, since it is a very powerful, visual symbol of 'one-ness'.
What do you need	Depending on the size of the group, one or two sheets of 'flip chart' or 'newsprint' paper. If you are using two sheets (a group larger than 10), stick them together to form one large sheet. Different coloured thick Koki's. One candle.
How long does it take	About 20 minutes.
What to do	Place the sheet of paper on a table in the middle of the circle and the candle in the middle of the sheet.

☺ Have the group seated in a half-circle or horseshoe format. Light the candle once the whole group is seated. The candle serves to centre the focus of the group on the sheet of paper and stays burning for the duration of the healing exercises.

☺ Ask the participants to sit comfortably, but upright. Guide them through a few 'intentional breathings'. When they are relaxed, give the following instructions:

🎤 *I want you to think about (reflect upon) your life and the lives and stories of the people you encounter in your work or community situation. Sometimes we feel we really mean something to the people we work with, but at other times we may feel the pain, hurt and suffering becoming too much for us. I want you to concentrate on whatever situation or "story" comes to your mind first. Who were involved? What happened? What did you do, say and think? What feelings did you experience?*

☺ Allow a minute or two for them to reflect. Then give the follow instructions:

🎤 *In the middle of our circle I have place the candle and a sheet of paper and Koki's. Each person should draw an outline of their one hand on a large piece of paper – in a circle so that each hand touches another hand.*

🎤 *Once you have done that, each person should write one word describing what you are feeling at this moment, in his/her hand.*

☺ Ask the group to stay standing around the "circle of hands" and ask:

🎤 *What do you see? What does the circle remind you of?*

☺ Then explain to them that we need to create a safe space for sharing our stories – the circle of hands symbolises that space, with the fingers all pointing inwards: there, in the middle, is where we share and where what we have shared stays. Thus, the information we share in this circle stays in the circle and does not leave this safe space.

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[1] Based on the work of Collins B. J. and Laughlin, T. M. 2005. *The Power of Story.* Duluth, Minnesota: Whole Person Associates.

☺ Ask the participants if they agree to this and are willing to participate further, sharing their stories.

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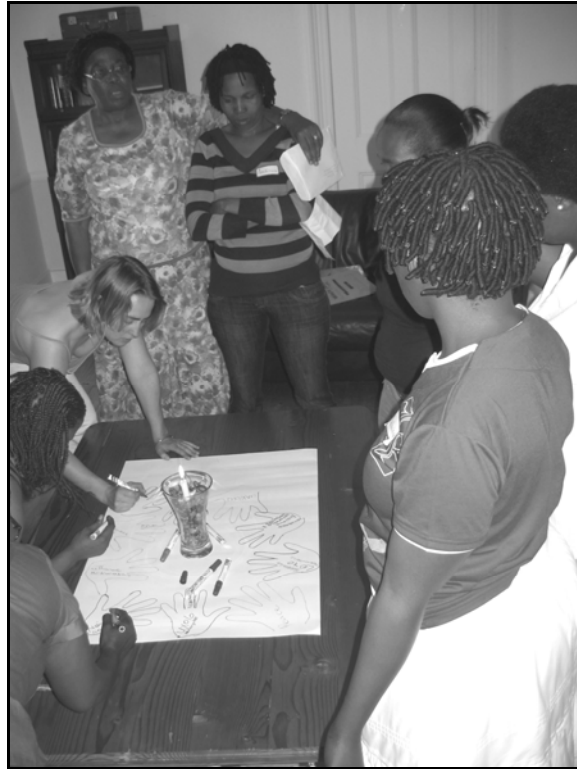
7
Take a Deep Breath

Purpose of the exercise   The 'intentional breathing'-exercises helps people to relax, to get in touch with themselves and to learn to 'stay in the moment'. Practiced daily, it helps one to stay focussed and to concentrate.

What do you need

How long does it take   About 10 minutes.

What to do   *NOTE: This work is based on the suggestions of Edward Canda.[1]*

☺ Have the group seated in a half-circle or horseshoe format. Ask them to sit up straight, with their backs touching the chair's back and both their feet flat on the floor, a little apart from each other. Their arms should rest lightly on their laps, with their hands opened/relaxed.

☺ Give the following instructions:

🎤 *It is natural to breathe automatically most of the time. But with 'intentional breathing', we first pay attention to the fact that we are breathing. To do this, we need to set aside several minutes without demanding activity. While you are sitting relaxed and comfortable, just notice that you are breathing. Notice the rate of breaths; in and out. How deep or how shallow are the breaths? How do the tummy and the chest move?*

🎤 *Now, take a gentle but deep breath from the tummy. Bring in the breath to a comfortable extent; then release it slowly and gently for about twice as long as it took you to inhale. Notice how your body and your mind feel, already calming and clearing of distractions and distress.*

🎤 *Take a brief pause, and then breathe in deeply from the tummy. Bring in the breath to a comfortable extent, hold it - and release it slowly. Breathe in, hold it, and breathe out.* (Repeat this 7 more times.)

🎤 *Rest for a few moments in a sense of quiet peace and calm. Then let your breathing settle into a gentle natural rhythm.*

☺ Reflect on how such a simple act of paying attention to your breathing, can help you to counteract distractions, uncomfortable sensations or being unable to pay attention. Doing this – taking a few 'intentional breaths' whenever you feel physically, emotionally mentally of spiritually taxed, helps you to 'restart' and focus again.

☺ Talk about when one could use this in everyday life situations.

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[1] Canda E. R. & Furman L. D. 1999. *Spritual Diversity in Social Work Practice*, 296-298, New York: The Free Press.

8
Story Telling/Sharing

Purpose of the exercise	To make people aware of the value of their own experiences and to help to share something about themselves, their background, hopes, pain or expectations. Also an excellent way to get different groups or communities or stake holders to share their expectations or problems (without getting negative).
What do you need	Flip chart.
How long does it take	About 30-50 minutes – depending on the number of participants and purpose.
What to do	**VERY IMPORTANT: If this is used with the 'Loss History Graph' –– the participants work two-two, using the rules of confidentiality: no talking back, no questions asked – only listening to one another. Don't share individual feedback in the larger group. (See 'Note'.)**

☺ Have the group seated in a half-circle or horseshoe format. Talk about the value of our personal experiences and how each person has a unique life – only I can know what exactly I lived through, felt, believe or hope for. For this reason it is important for each person to get the opportunity to tell his/her story.

☺ Depending on the exact purpose of the exercise (individual story of a painful experience or getting different groups to work together on a project, etc.) ask each participant to share a story about

⇨ A funny or interesting event during his/her youth – if you want them to get to know each other.

⇨ His/her life – if you want to help them work through a painful experience (e.g. the birth of a disabled child).

⇨ A 'family story' or what their grandparents/parent taught them about what is important in life – if you want to get to family values

⇨ What their organisation/project/group is all about (where do they come from, what do they want to achieve, who are they, etc) – if you want to get different people or groups to work together on one project.

☺ As the participants tell their stories, try writing the essential 'story line' on the flip chart. Once everyone has told her/his story, go through the similarities in the stories, pointing out that although we are different and have unique experiences, we can always find things in common that link us together.

NOTE: If the stories were told to work through painful experiences, it is necessary to talk about the pain and other feelings. Acknowledge the fact that one may still have hurt inside. Talk about the value of sharing these hurtful experiences in a safe and trusting group situation. Then also focus on the positive aspects in the story – the fact that the person has lived through it and is still coping.

STORY TELLING / NARRATIVES

For many indigenous communities and cultural groups the art of story telling has been one of the traditions that sustained their values and transferred coping skills. Thus inviting individuals into a dialogue regarding the spiritual aspects of their lives, creates possibilities for intervention on a level that have remained largely untapped in traditional therapy and in working with groups or the community. It can be a powerful tool, helping individuals (and communities) to find strength and coping mechanisms within themselves. When inviting an individual to tell ''spiritual stories', the key is to create a safe environment and atmosphere by approaching individuals with an attitude of 'wonder' – an intentional curiosity, openness and receptivity. The facilitator has to 'free' the individual to bring into the dialogue whatever is real for him/her, while remaining culturally sensitive and without assuming any previous knowledge about the person's religious background. This is done by staying attuned to the individual's own language, metaphors, rituals and spiritual practices and an attitude of receptiveness and willingness to follow the leads given by the individual. (Compare Milner [on Griffith & Griffith], 2003:79-81.)

➢ *In our work with the community, we found that similar work can be done in a group situation, given that the 'ground-rules' are firmly in place: everything that is said is valid; there are no 'wrong' ideas or answers; group members are free to speak in any language (and it will be translated for the group); there are no 'experts' – we are all here to share and learn from each other; and we respect each other's views, though we need not to agree with it. Apart from opening up individual (or community) strengths, sharing stories can also serve to bring forward and reflect on past experiences, such as violence in townships.*

➢ *An added benefit of story telling is that it gives each participant a voice - without really realising that they are participating in 'public speaking', they are taking the floor, thus having a firsthand experience of sharing with others and being listened to. In the group situation we also use story telling as a means of getting to know each other (e.g. sharing with the group a true life story of one's youth) and to understand more about what is important (e.g. sharing the story of the birth and life of one's disabled child). Through these stories, meaningful information is gathered in a non-threatening manner and at the same time the individual (and often the group) has the benefit of a contained catharsis in a safe environment.*

9
Peeling a 'Naartjie'

Purpose of the exercise	To help people to understand and experience the concept of 'paying attention' and 'being in the here and now'. To help them practice really listening to others.
What do you need	A flip chart. An orange of naartjie for each participant.
How long does it take	About 15 minutes

What to do

☺ Have the group seated in a half-circle or horseshoe format. Share the following information (taken from Canda)[2] with them.

🕊 *The simple act of attention has a healing and restoring effect. When we notice something we are affected by it. When we pay attention to ourselves - we are alert to our thoughts, feelings, sensations and practices. When we pay attention to others, we can perceive them accurately and empathize. When we pay attention, noticing everything very carefully, we discover new things and we experience even familiar things freshly and vividly. Let's experience that.*

☺ Hand out an orange/naartjie to each participant. Give them the following instructions, allowing time after each step for 'doing and reflecting':

🕊 *Take the orange/naartjie in your hand. Look at it closely. Notice the subtle colours of its peel. Do not assume what it looks like - note every shade of colour, every rumple. See the individual little holes in the peel. Touch the peel and note its texture. Smell it. Now begin to peel the orange, like a gift you are opening. Allow yourself to be surprised by what is wrapped within. Be vividly aware of the pungent smell, the soft liquid texture, the veins running through the flesh. Then, taste. Move the piece or orange around in your mouth to sense it with every part of your tongue. Discover the variations of flavour that come with each piece. If you do this, you will discover a new kind of orange, even if you have eaten a thousand of the same kind before.*

☺ Discuss what they have experienced and ask: *'How could you apply this to all aspects of life?' 'How will you apply this in a helping situation?'*

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[2] Canda E. R. & Furman L. D. 2000. *Spiritual Diversity in Social Work Practice*, 295-296, New York: The Free Press.

10
Napkin Folding

Purpose of the exercise	Can be used as an ice-breaker to get everybody to participate and set the scene for 'there is no wrong way or answer'. Helps to let people experience how we listen, hear and do things differently - but still correctly. Helps us to understand that we learn in different ways; we may get the same instructions, but end up with different outcomes or result.
What do you need	Paper napkins: 1 for every participant.
How long does it take	About 15 minutes.

What to do

☺ Have the group seated in a half-circle or horseshoe format. Hand out a paper napkin to each person and give the following instructions:

🖢 *I want you to close your eyes and to keep them closed for the duration of this exercise. Please listen closely to the instructions I am going to give you and follow them as accurately as you can.*

🖢 *Hold the napkin in front of you, in both your hands. Now take the upper end of the napkin and fold the napkin in half. Remember to keep your eyes closed.*

🖢 *Now take the upper right hand corner and fold in over to the bottom left hand corner. Are you still listening closely?*

🖢 *Tear off the top right hand corner. Now take your left hand and tear off the bottom left hand corner.*

🖢 *You may now open your eyes. Please open up your napkin.*

🖢 *While the group are looking at their napkins – which will each look differently – ask them:*

    ⇨ *What do you see - do your napkins look alike?*

    ⇨ *Did you really listen?*

    ⇨ *Did you follow the instructions?*

    ⇨ *Did you really try to do what I have asked you to do?*

    ⇨ *Why do your napkins each look differently?*

    ⇨ *What does this teach us about how people listen, hear, and follow instructions?*

    ⇨ *Would it help if people were shown how to do it - and if they could follow each instruction step by step?*

    ⇨ *What does this exercise teach us about working with people, in a project, in a community?*

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11
Loss History Graph

Purpose of the exercise   Helps individuals to come to terms with past losses.

What do you need   Paper & pens/pencils for each person, tissues.

How long does it take   About 45-60 minutes.

What to do

☺ Have the group seated in a half-circle or horseshoe format. Tell them that this is an individual exercise that will help them reflect on their past losses. Hand each person a pen, paper and some tissues.

☺ Use the example 'loss history graph'[3] (see next page) to explain to them what to do and then allow enough time (20-30 minutes) for people to work on their own, drawing their personal loss graphs. Tell them it is okay to cry while remembering some of the painful experiences – that's why they have tissues.

☺ Once they have completed it, ask them to choose a partner – someone with whom they feel safe, comfortable.

☺ Read through the instructions for sharing (see sheet on Instructions for listening and talking partners).

☺ **Remember to stress the rules for sharing:**

⇨ One person talks – the other <u>only listens - no comments, no questions, no advice</u>

⇨ <u>No touching</u> – this usually stops the talking

⇨ <u>Complete confidentiality</u> – what is shared, stays between the two people and is not discussed at any time with each other or with 'outsiders'

⇨ <u>The 'hug' is optional and only given once both partners has shared their graph and both are comfortable with it.</u>

☺ Allow sufficient time for sharing (20-30 minutes).

☺ Once all the group members have finished sharing, get them back in to the larger group and briefly ask them about their reactions/experiences during the exercise – don't go into personal accounts of the loss graphs – focus only on how doing this exercise felt and if they feel it is helpful on their journey to deal with grief. Remind them that it is a long, painful journey and that they need time to themselves in working through this process.

NOTE: This exercise should be followed with exercises helping the individual to deal with the pain that was brought up, i.e. 'forgiving', 'spiritual history' (identifying inner coping strengths).

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[3] Based on James John W. & Friedman R.1998. *The Grief Recovery Handbook.* New York: Harper Perennial.

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Isabel's Loss History Graph

5	9	13	16	17	30	45	50	51

Grand mother
died
(very sad)

Not class
captain (disappointed)

Moved
left friend
(very upset
& angry)

Sister died
(shock &denial)

Not allowed to study
medicine
(wiped out)

Dad died
(deep hurt
& depressed)

Divorce
(sad &
relieved)

Daughter left
(despair)

Marriage broke down
(felt dead)
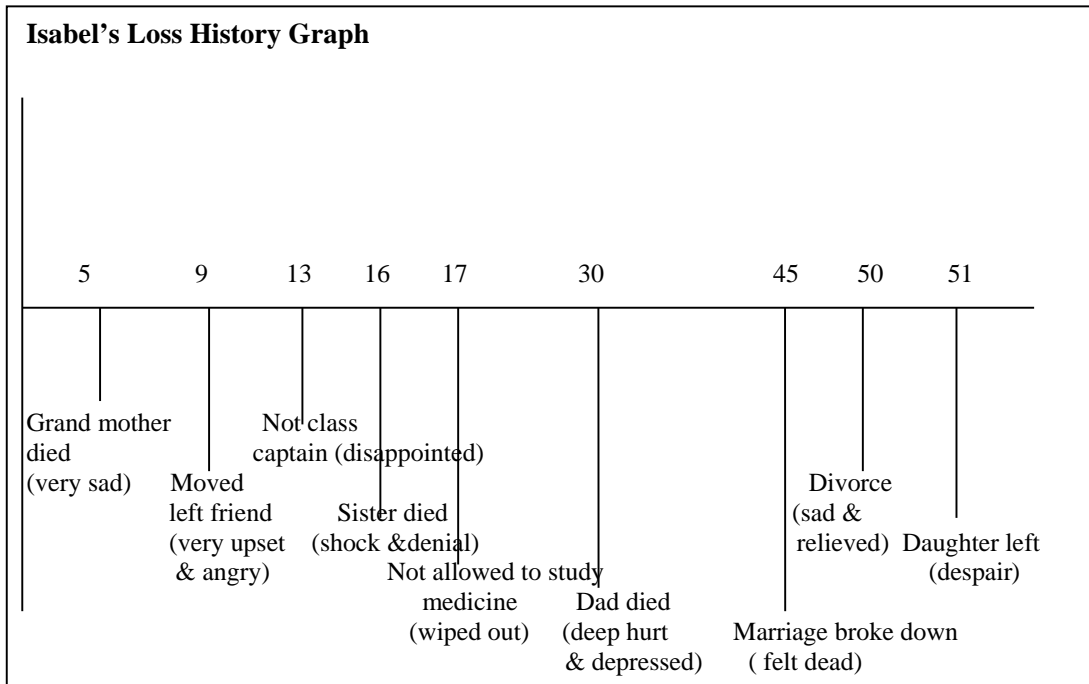
EXAMPLE OF LOSS HISTORY GRAPH
Adapted from: James John W. & Friedman R.1998. *The Grief Recovery Handbook.* New York:
Harper Perennial.

12
Relationship Graph

Purpose of the exercise	Helps individuals to come to terms with past or present relationships and unfinished issues in the relationships. Finding closure.
What do you need	Paper & pens/pencils for each person, tissues.
How long does it take	About 45-60 minutes.
What to do	**Be very sensitive and careful when you use this - only do it if the participants are ready and if they feel comfortable with one another.**

☺ Have the group seated in a half-circle or horseshoe format. Tell them that this is an individual exercise that will help them reflect on their past losses. Hand each person a pen, paper and some tissues.

☺ Share the information about relationship graphs[4] with the group:

What happens when a relationship ends?

The idea behind the relationship graph is to help us deal with incompleteness. Incompleteness is anything which we still feel needed to be said. To resolve an incomplete loss, you must complete it – which does not mean that you 'forget' a loved (or despised) one, but that you are completing your relationship to the pain caused by the loss (which could be a death, but which could also be loss of freedom, loss of your privacy/womanhood(e.g. as in the case of rape). You are completing that which was left unfinished by the time the relationship was ended (whether by death or any other cause).

Relationships end on three levels:

- *Physical: by death, moving away, having a totally different type of contact, e.g. as with a divorce;*

- *Emotionally: all feelings - positive happy or negative hateful emotions. The emotional relationship tends to 'live on in our heads' even after a physical 'cut off' – therefore we need to finish that memory;*

- *Spiritually: those aspects which are neither physical of emotional – it is that intangible something which makes you a sense connection to others – and it does not end with a physical 'cut off'.*

We cannot change the fact that the relationship existed or anything which happened (whether good or bad), but you can change how you feel about it, what you do about it. The truth is the key to recovery; we have to be totally honest about ourselves in relation to others. We need to look at what we wish had ended different, better or more – as well as look at the unrealised dreams, hopes and expectations about the future. In looking at this, being totally honest about it, and then communicating this we can complete our past relationships.

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[4] [4] Based on James John W. & Friedman R.1998. *The Grief Recovery Handbook*. New York: Harper Perennial.

☺ Use the example 'relationship graph' (see below) & give the instructions:

🕭 *Take your loss history graph and choose one relationship to work on. Use a sheet of paper and draw a line across - see example. The left end represents the beginning of the relationship and the right end the current year. Go to the beginning and reconstruct the relationship to the best of your ability. Try to identify undelivered communications. Mark down whatever pops in your head. Decide what events should go under the line (negative events) and what should go above (positive). It need not really be chronological. Don't judge, and weigh - just recall and write/draw. Don't intellectualise - just jot everything down for about an hour and a half - not longer because then you are beginning to judge.*

☺ Allow enough time (20-30 minutes) for people to work on their own, drawing their relationship graphs. Tell them it is okay to cry while remembering some of the painful experiences - that's why they have tissues. After they have completed it, they share it with their chosen partner - following the rules (no talking, no touching, just listening…)

ISABEL'S RELATIONSHIP WITH HER DAD

Dad present to hear
I'm school prefect
(Very Proud)   (Joy)
Dad visits me in Canada

Dad teaches me
to ride bicycle
(proud)

Divorce
(relieved dad does not live to see)

| 4 | 5 | 16 | 24 | 26 | 30 | 38 | 49 | 50 |

Move to Stellenbosch
(miss dad)

Dad met husband –not
positive (disappointed)

Sister born, Dad likes her
(I am jealous)

Children at school – dad can't share that
(lonely, sad)

Dad died 1 week before my first child is born
(very sad, totally depressed0

EXAMPLE OF RELATIONSHIP GRAPH
Adapted from: James John W. & Friedman R.1998. *The Grief Recovery Handbook*. New York: Harper Perennial.

13
God's View/Forgiving

Purpose of the exercise	To help people work through things that they have to forgive. Also to help them deal with difficult relationships in their lives.
What do you need	'Rather talk to God'-posters, flip chart.
How long does it take	About 20-30 minutes.

What to do

☺ Have the group seated in a half-circle or horseshoe format. Talk about what it means to 'forgive'. Ask the group for their definition of 'forgiveness' and write it on the flip chart. Then share with them what the literature says about forgiving:

### Steps or guidelines for the process of forgiving

- Forgiveness is a decision or act of will, requiring total honesty and truthfulness.
- The first step the individual has to take is to make the decision that he/she wants to walk the road of forgiveness.
- The person has to acknowledge and face the hurt or pain and not try to 'gloss over' or hide some of the feelings.
- Forgiveness must also be unconditional – it can not be dependent on the other party saying he is sorry, changing his behaviour etc.
- Follow a process of 'talking' through the hurt-experiences:
- ⇨   Make a list of the names of people you want to forgive;
- ⇨   Talk about it and pray for each 'transgressor';
- ⇨   Then burn or tear up the list.
- It could be helpful to actually face the person that caused the hurt and verbally express your forgiveness, but always bearing in mind that forgiveness is letting go of the need for vengeance.
- Acknowledge any discontent that was felt against God – for allowing the trauma, hurt – and accept His loving-kindness.
- Forgiving oneself for festering these 'pet hates' and unforgiveness for such a long period, is the last step towards unconditional forgiveness.

☺ Show them the 'Rather talk to God'-poster. Use an example of a mother and daughter who do not get along. Ask the group what they say to each other in order to build a wall between then - write down those words/phrases (i.e. *'you never listen'*, *'you don't understand'*, *'pest'*, *'I hate you'*). Now the mother and daughter cannot see each other. Then ask them to talk to God: *'God see what she is doing - can you deal with it?'* You no longer build walls, but look at the other person through God's eyes and learn to forgive and get along.

NOTE: In the workshop setting, it is seldom possible to guide individuals through this process. However, we do share information about forgiveness, discuss real situations and create an atmosphere of acceptance were people feel free to talk about their feelings and hurts. We have also found that the use of visualisation – 'seeing' their community on a different level – often bring forward deep feelings of hurt and painful past experiences. This is then dealt with in the workshop process using the 'Rather talk to God'–picture (based on Cloete's model) to 'practice' how we can forgive other community groups, etc.

FORGIVENESS: RATHER TALK TO GOD (A)[5]

GOD 👁

Go away
Nag!
Pest
Liar
Bad girl
Hate

You are a bad girl

She hates me
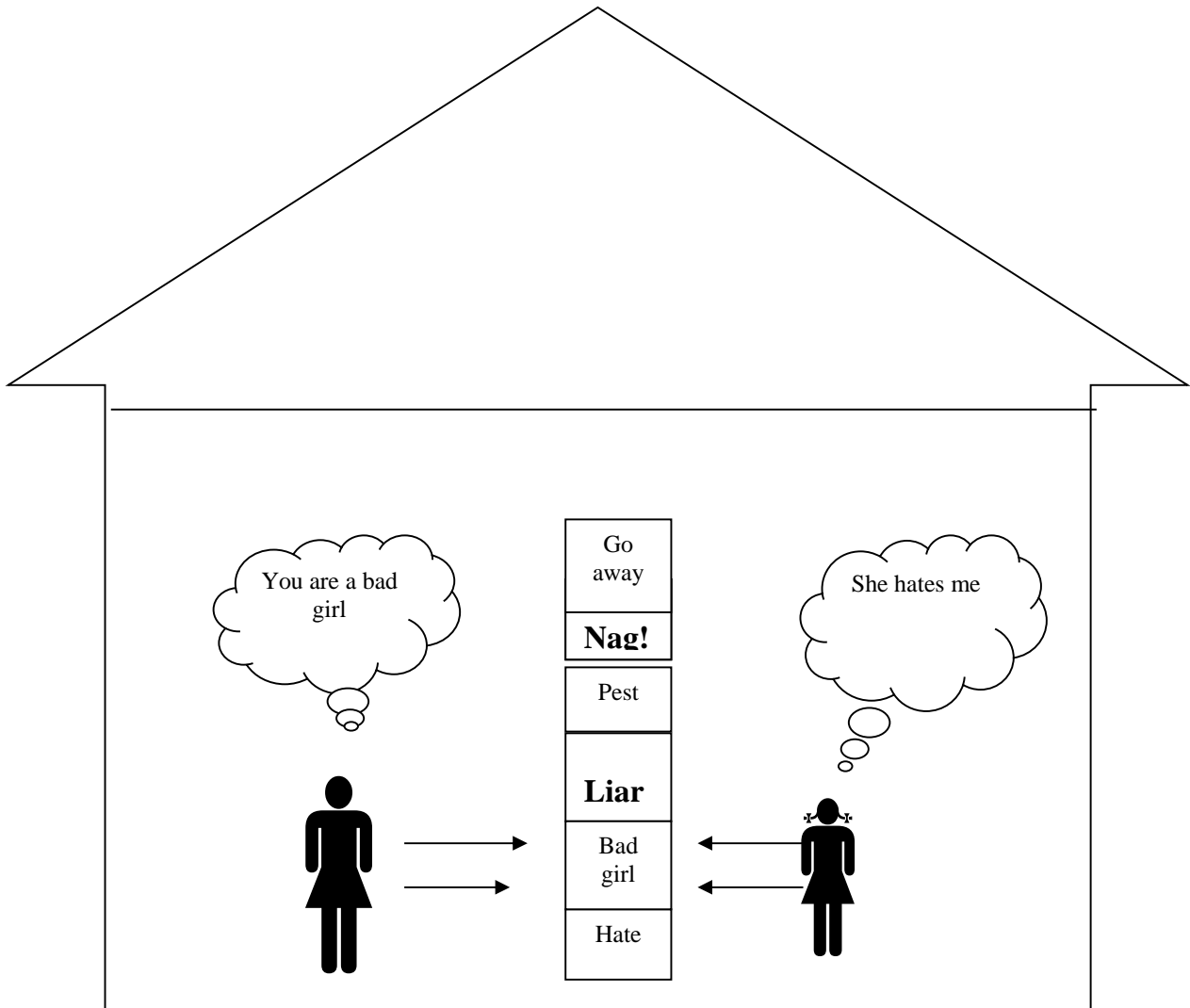
UNFORGIVENESS = BUILDING A WALL BETWEEN YOURSELF AND OTHERS, LOOKING ONLY AT THE NEGATIVES AND NO LONGER SEEING THE OTHER PERSON

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[5] Based on the work by Cloete C. & Cloete M. L. 2003. *Geestelike Groei. (Spiritual Growth).* Unpublished notes. Pretoria.

FORGIVENESS: RATHER TALK TO GOD (B)

👁 GOD

God, hear what she is saying and see what she is doing. Will you please deal with her and help me to forgive?

God's love comes between us
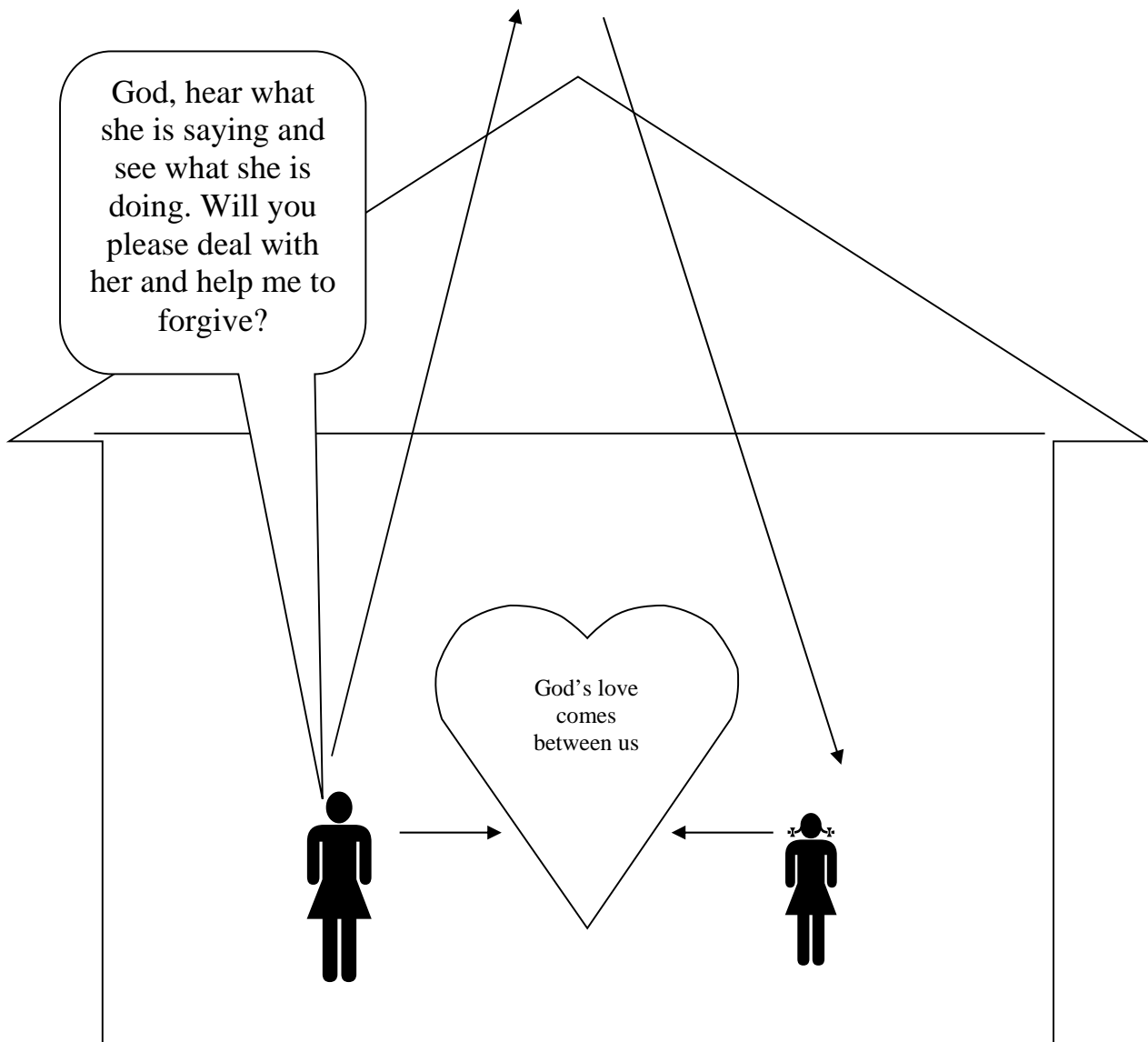
FORGIVENESS = TO GIVE EVERYTHING TO GOD - LET HIM DEAL WITH THE OTHER PERSON AND SEE EACH OTHER THROUGH HIS LOVING EYES.

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14
Final Letter

Purpose of the exercise	To help people to think about their past or present relationships. Used with the relationship graph, it helps people to deal with unfinished business. <u>Use with Relationship Graph exercise.</u>
What do you need	A sheet of paper* and pencil for each participant (*you could also prepare sheets of paper with the outline of the letter typed out).
How long does it take	About 50 minutes: 25 minutes for participants to write their letter, 10 for reading the letters to one another and 15 minutes for reflection.
What to do	**Be very sensitive and careful when you use this – only do it if the participants are ready and if they feel comfortable with one another. Allow time for individual follow-up if required.** Based on James & Freidman.[1]

☺ Have the group seated in a half-circle or horseshoe format. Hand out the sheets of paper and pencils and give the following instructions:

🕬 *Take a minute to reflect on the relationship you have dealt with in your relationship graph. Think about what unfinished business you still want to deal with – what is it you feel you should have said? What is it you wanted different, more of less of? If you could deal with these un-uttered statements, you may come to peace with this person. Also think about what it is you really want the people to remember about you – your final 'words' to them.*

🕬 *Now contemplate the following situation: you were just told that you have only a few hours left before your final day on earth. Tomorrow, you will die. You have only got these couple of minutes to write your 'Final Letter' to those significant others (i.e. you family, parents, special friend or the person who really hurt you). Use the following format for your letter: (see next page).*

☺ Allow enough time for each person to complete the letter and ask them to read it out loud for the partner they have chosen; **following the rules of not touching, not interrupting, no comments – just listening like a heart with two ears. Have some tissues available – this is an emotional exercise and people have to be sensitive for each others' pain.**

☺ Allow some individual reflection on how people felt doing the exercise (not the content, the process).

NOTE: the two guidelines for the final letter is (1) dealing with your values (2) dealing with unfinished business/with getting closure on past/broken/relationships. Be sure which format you want to use for your specific exercise. With the loss history and relationship graph, you will use the second format.

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[1] James John W. & Friedman R.1998. *The Grief Recovery Handbook.* New York: Harper Perennial.

Final Letter (First format)

Dear ……………………………………. (name of significant other)

I want you to remember me for believing that……………………………………………….

………………………………………………………………………………………………………..

………………………………………………………………………………………………………..

……

………………………………………………………………………………………………………..

………………………………………………………………………………………………………..

I always wanted to live according to the principle of…………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………………..

………………………………………………………………………………………………………..

……

………………………………………………………………………………………………………..

………………………………………………………………………………………………………..

I wish others to remember that I lived my life valuing the following ………..

………………………………………………………………………………………………………..

………………………………………………………………………………………………………..

……

………………………………………………………………………………………………………..

If I could, I would also adhere to the following values in the future…………..

………………………………………………………………………………………………………..

………………………………………………………………………………………………………..

……

………………………………………………………………………………………………………..

Thank you for listening to me.

With all my love/ May God bless you/ (or any other wish you want to give this person)

………………………………………………………………………………………………………..

………………………………………………………………………………………………………..

……

………………………………………………………………………………………………………..

Your name…………………………………………………………………………………………..

Final Letter (Second Format)

Dear X…………………………. (the name or title of significant other, e.g. 'Dad')

I have been looking at/thinking about our relationship, and I have discovered some things that I want to tell you.

I always wanted to live according to the principle of………………………………..

………………………………………………………………………………………………………..

………………………………………………………………………………………………………..

………………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………………..

I want you to remember me for living my life believing and valuing the following ………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………………..

………………………………………………………………………………………………………..

………………………………………………………………………………………………………

X…………………I want you to know   ………………………………….…………………………..

………………………………………………………………………………….…………………….

………………………………………………………………………………………………………

X……….……..I want to apologize for ……………………………………………………..

………………………………………………………………………………………………………..

………………………………………………………………………………………………………..

X ……………….I forgive you for ………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………………..

………………………………………………………………………………………………………..

………………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………………..

Thank you for listening to me.

With all my love/ May God bless you/ (or any other wish you want to give this person)

………………………………………………………………………………………………………..

………………………………………………………………………………………………………..

………………………………………………………………………………………………………..

My final greeting to you is ………………………………………………………………………

Your name………………………………………………………………………………………

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15
Spiritual Map/Collage

|	
Purpose of the exercise	The value of this exercise lies in its ability to give a pictorial map of the individual's or family's current spiritual relationships. It concurrently visually organises and presents a great amount of factual information, as well as the relationships between the various systems. Ecomaps portrays families or individuals in space – showing to whom and how they are interlinked with other systems. It raises the awareness of the inter-active processes between systems and how external ('outside') systems influence the functioning of the family (or individual). It provides a 'picture' of connectedness and possible alliances which could assist the family (or individual) in the addressing of needs and challenging life issues.
What do you need	Paper and pencils for each participant.
How long does it take	About 45 minutes.
What to do	Based on work by Hodge.[1]

☺ Before explaining to participants what to do, the facilitator should familiarise herself with the keys to constructing an ecomap (give an illustration):

⇨ The family is represented by a big circle and inside the circle the different family members are shown – squares for males and circles for females.

⇨ Connections to the outside (such as divorced husbands, wives) are shown outside the main family circle - see example.

⇨ Other circles surrounding the family circle indicate different systems with who the family is in interaction – such as the church, spiritual leaders, families of origin.

⇨ The relationships between the different systems (and sub-systems) are indicated with lines: the thickness of the lines indicates the strength of the relationship i.e. a straight, thick line = good, strong relationship; a jagged line indicates a conflicted relationship; broken relationships are indicated with a slashed line

⇨ Arrows indicate the flow of resources, energy or interest i.e. if the church offers a lot of support or material help, the arrow would indicate a flow from the church to the family system.

⇨ The most important relationships/systems to focus on are families of origin, individuals within the religious community and spiritual leaders. In instances where transpersonal beings (angels, forefather spirits, demons, saints) or rituals (baptism, coming of age) play a role, it is indicated.

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[1] Hodge D. R. 2003. *Spiritual Assessment.* Botsford: North American Association of Christians in Social Work.

⇨ Individuals should feel free to clarify any relationship or system by adding descriptive words next to it.

☺ Once an individual has completed her/his ecomap, they discuss it with the facilitator. The facilitator uses the questions from the 'spiritual domain' sheet to obtain more information to help the individual to identify strengths and assets indicated in the ecomap.
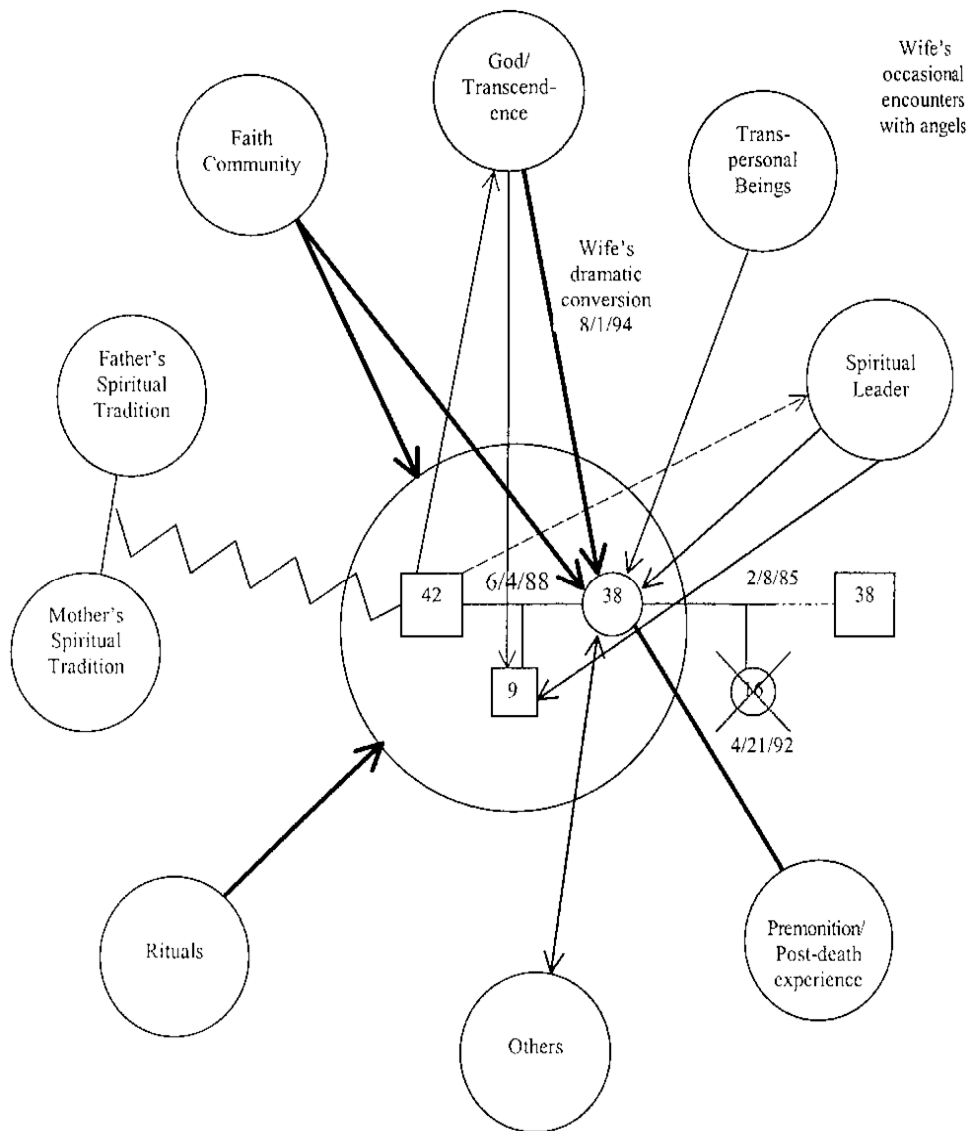
ECOMAP (Hodge, 2003:70)

16
Weaving a Basket

Purpose of the exercise	To help people to understand the concept of community development and to give them the opportunity to get a 'feel' of how one has to give something of oneself in the process.
What do you need	Enough strips of strong paper for every participant to weave a small basket. Glue (Pritt). A flip chart.
How long does it take	About 15 minutes, for participants to 'weave' their baskets and another 15 minutes to discuss what happened, how they see community development and to reflect on the experience.
What to do	NB Practice beforehand weaving a basket to enable you to demonstrate it to the participants.

☺   Have the group seated in a half-circle or horseshoe format. Hand out the strips of paper and the glue. Give a demonstration of how the participants could start weaving their baskets, and while they work, share the following information.

Background information to the Weaving the basket-exercise and concept[2]
Tshepo Khumbane grew up in Soekmekaar, a small rural village in Limpopo. The community lived off the land and community life was reasonably intact. Then came the apartheid government's 'betterment schemes' and later the land dispossessions and the removal of people to the Bantustans. She became a social worker working at a state hospital, but when she saw the malnourishment of thousands of people, she started to help people to harvest water and to make vegetable gardens. That was the beginning of her mass mobilization of thousands of rural women which grew to become the Water for Food Movement. She views the work in the community like a basket which holds together the foodstuff contained in it. She compares this to the Sprit of Life which holds together all living beings. Her own work and the Water for Food Movement she likens to bringing back the safety nets, the values, the livelihoods, the sustenance, the food security, the water resources and the respect for and care of nature which was there before things started to fall apart. In this way the women restore the network of society, they re-weave the badly frayed "baskets" of local communities and ecosystems. Through weaving of baskets, they help women to find food security and to establish viable farms and small businesses, they re-forest certain areas, they establish sustainable livelihoods for many families and they work for environmental justice in the face of unhelpful state policies and local leaders.

☺ Get input from the participants: How do they view community development? What did they experience while weaving their baskets? Do they think it will help 'contain' community life?

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[2] Van Schalkwyk, A. 2006. Women, ecofeminist theology and sustainability in a post apartheid South-Africa. Unpublished Paper, UNISA:15-16.

17
Body Mapping

Purpose of the exercise	To help individuals to 'look inside' in a creative way – using their 'body-map' to share their story. It can be used to facilitate various specific issues, e.g. to work through painful past experiences; to help them to identify specific characteristics and qualities that will serve them as leaders.
What do you need	Role of brown wrapping paper - a 'man size piece' for each participant; pencils, felt tip pens, acrylic student's' paint (5 colours), water and 'paint mix' containers, news paper (for the mess), paint brushes for each participant.
How long does it take	About 90 minutes (if done for the first time). As follow up to work with an issue – 30 minutes.
What to do	Do you own body map first and get use to and comfortable with sharing your map with the group.

☺ Have the group seated in a half-circle or horseshoe format. Stick your body map up in the front. Share you map with the participants – for example:

☺   *Katelin's story[3]*

🗣 *'This is my body map which I have done last week. I have used some symbols to share how I feel and what I have experienced. The log in my leg shows the strength that I need to stand firm in a new situation. The closed curtains in my stomach show that there are some things that I do not want to share with others; the 'screw' in my head shows the connection with my country (America) which is now far away, but I can still be connected by thinking about it…'*

🗣 Now give the following instructions: *'I want you to lay down on a piece of paper and ask a friend to draw the outline of your body with pencil. Then use a felt tip pen to go over it. Use the paint to help you illustrate something of what is going on inside you - use any symbol or picture to show what you are feeling inside – what hurts are there, what do you struggle with, but also what positive things or strengths or strategies to cope do you have inside you. On the outside of your body, you can draw anything with which you feel a connection or that you feel you have a link with or get support from.'*

☺ Allow about 60 minutes for doing the body maps, and then ask them to finish up and place the body maps in front of them in the big circle. Ask them what they think of the experience of painting the body maps. Then ask them to one by one share whatever they want about their body maps with the rest of the group. Reflect on similarities, differences and on what 'patterns' (e.g. strategies of coping) you see in these maps.

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[3] Katelin and Nicole were two students from USA who offered Body Mapping workshops during July 2007. The exercise is based on their work.

☺ You can also use the body maps in follow-up sessions: participants continue to work on /add to the original map, focussing on specific aspects – such as pain, traumatic events, growth experiences of leadership strengths and skills. Then ask questions related to the specific issue in the feed back session, e.g. 'W*hat did you find inside yourself which will help you to be a leader in the community? What lessons have you learned that will help you to facilitate?*

The children and students getting 'down to work' on their body maps.

The 'end product' – enjoying the colourful display of symbols and meaningful insights with the rest of the group.

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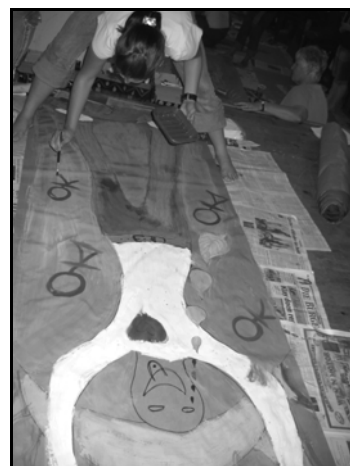
18
Co-operative Story Writing

Purpose of the exercise — To create a space for thinking about a specific topic or issue such as children's safety. Through co-operating with one another, every participant adds ideas, thoughts and 'words' to the idea (storyline). It is stimulating, creative and often fun – thus it can be used when a group of people have difficulties in to focus and work together on a project.

What do you need — A sheet of paper and pen or pencil for each participant.

How long does it take — About 20 minutes (longer for more than 10 participants).

What to do — This could be used with or in the place of the 'Youth Profile', since it helps the group to focus on issues/possible solutions.

☺ Have the group seated in a half-circle. Talk about the issue the group is working on, e.g. children. Reflect on how we often think we 'know' (the children, their problems and even solutions), but if we are truly honest, there are things that we do not know. It is important to really know what the situation/problem/issue is before we start acting on 'solutions'. Give the following instructions:

🎤 *I am going to give each of you a sheet of paper and pencil. Then I will lead you through a short visualisation, focusing on the children* (or whatever issue needs to be the focus) *in your community, to 'step into their shoes'. Afterwards, we are going to write stories about the children – one line at a time.*

🎤 *Sit back, with your feet on the floor, knees bend and back up straight. Begin to feel how the stress and tenseness flows from your head, down to your toes and disappears into the floor and then into the earth. Feel your muscles relax and your mind becoming quiet. Now focus on the children in your community: Where are they? What are they doing? Who is looking after them? Where do they play? Do you hear them laughing, crying of fighting? How do you feel when you hear this?*

🎤 *Now begin to write your story: start with the line 'Once upon a time there was a little boy/girl….' Write just one line to begin your story. When you have completed the line, pass your sheet of paper on to the person sitting at your left. Take the new sheet of paper, read the line on in and add a second line. Once you have completed the second line, pass the sheet of paper on to the person sitting at your left and write the third line.*

☺ Continue with the process until the sheets/stories have been handed to all of the members once (if a group 8-10) and twice (if a smaller group). Warn the group when they get to the last line, and ask then to write a final line. Now return the sheets to the person who wrote the top line on each sheet – that person read the story to the group. Listen to all the stories and reflect on what these stories have to say about the children (or what ever issues you focused on). How does it help with the vision?

☺ Remind the participants that each one has contributed something to each story - just as it should be in a project.

19
Tied Up

Purpose of the exercise	To help people to develop an understanding of how powerful our thoughts are. To make them aware of their negative thinking patterns and to teach them how to change it. Also a good exercise to demonstrate how 'outsiders' sometimes look 'negatively' at the community.
What do you need	A long piece (about 5 meters) of thick (about 100mm) rope. Flip chart. 'Locked In'-poster.
How long does it take	About 10 minutes.

What to do

☺ Have the group seated in a half-circle or horseshoe format. Talk about negative thinking and how it influences what we do and how we feel. It often immobilises us. Sketch a situation relevant to the group (i.e. in the project, in the community, etc) and ask them to give examples of the negative things that one could think about this situation. Write the negative thoughts on the flip chart. Show them the 'Locked In'-poster.

☺ Now ask a volunteer to come forward and ask the person to sit on a chair in front of the group – facing the group. Take the one end of the rope and ask the volunteer to hold onto it. Read the negative thoughts one by one and while doing this, begin to 'bind' the person to the chair – making sure that the rope goes over his/her face, around the chair's back and also around the person's feet. Once you have finished reading all the thoughts – secure the other end of the rope so that it cannot be loosened easily.

☺ Then ask the volunteer: *'How does it feel to be 'bonded by negative thoughts?' 'Can you move around easily?' 'Can you stand up?' 'Is there anything you can do about this?'*

☺ Talk about how we have the power to change the situation – we can choose to think positively. Ask the group to 're-formulate' the negative thoughts into positive thoughts. Write these positives down on the flip chart.

☺ Then read the positives, while helping the volunteer to get himself/herself untangled or freed from the chair. Don't do all the work – only untie the first knot and let the volunteer undo the rest of the rope. Talk about how we have the power to free ourselves from negative thinking. Ask the volunteer: *'How does it make you feel to be able to free yourself from these 'negative thoughts?' 'Are you now able to stand up and take action?'*

☺ Ask the group if we can do the same thing in real life (I.e. in the project, work or family situation).

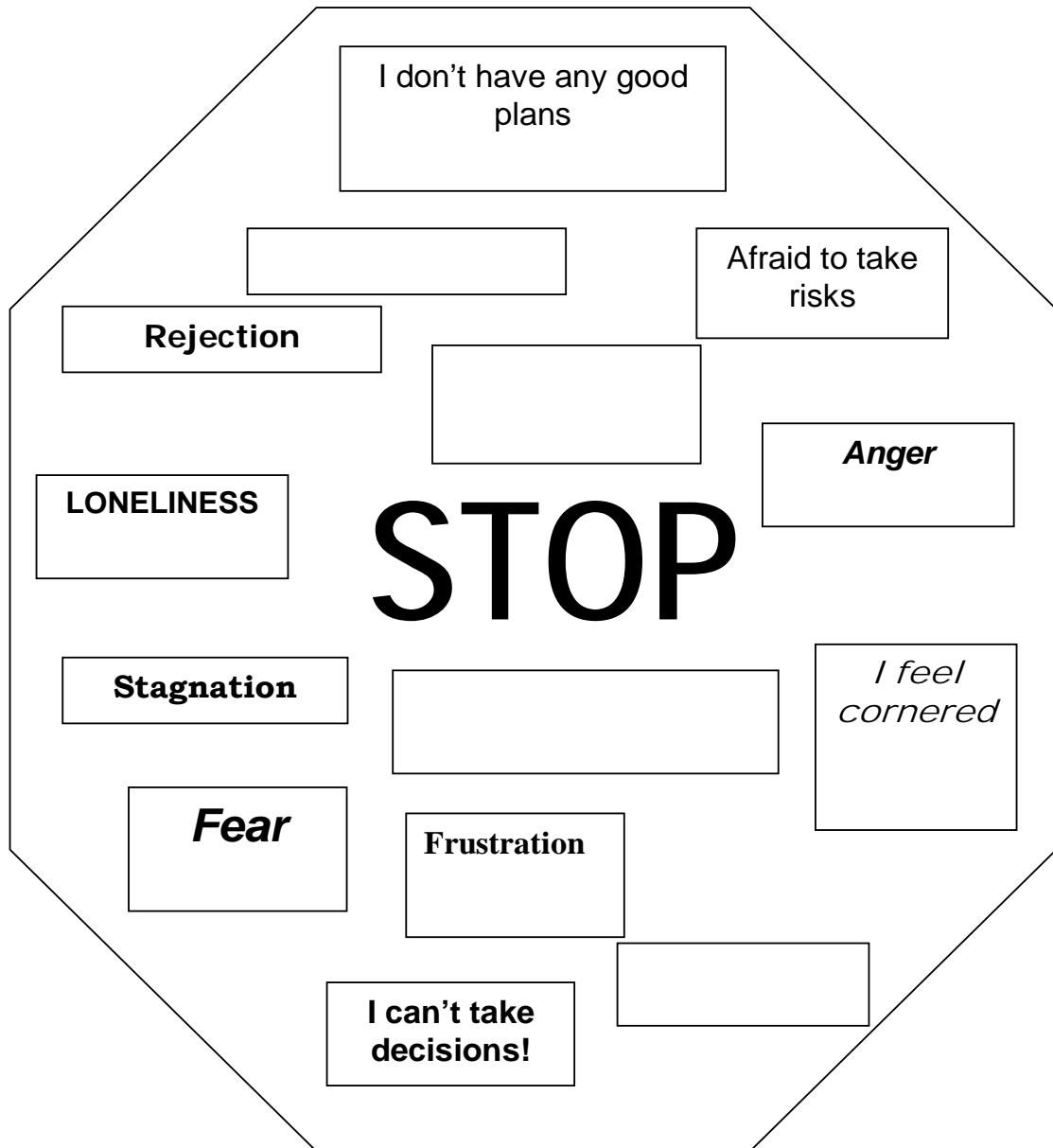IPSO©2008

20
STOP! Life's Journey

Purpose of the exercise	To help people focus on the fact that each of us should take responsibility for our own life and way of living. Also to reflect on what prevents us from living our life to the fullest and of ways to overcome these 'obstacles'.
What do you need	The 'STOP'-poster, a flip chart and pens.
How long does it take	About 10- 20 minutes.
What to do	The idea was taken from a publication titled "Life's Journey.[1]

☺ Have the group seated in a half-circle or horseshoe format, and read the following slowly. (If the group has difficulty with English, translate it into their language and make sure they understand the meaning.)

🎤 *WELCOME TO THE CHALLENGE OF YOUR LIFE!*

🎤 *We often hear people claim that life is but a journey. Do you really believe this? Do you realise that this actually is the most important journey you will ever undertake and that every step you give, each day of your life, you are travelling along your life's path? And do you realise that once you have taken these steps, there is no way of un-doing them? No way of re-tracing your steps?*

🎤 *However, with each step you take, you also have the challenge of choosing your future. It is your choice to take a step forwards or stay stuck in one place.*

🎤 *Today we are challenging you to experience change by taking a few steps forward. If you are willing to do this, to take the risk of stepping out into the unknown, we guarantee you will be different. You will come to the realisation that each risk you are willing to take contributes something towards your life's journey.*

🎤 *Remember:* **IT'IS MY CHOICE: I DECIDE HOW I TRAVEL THOURGH LIFE**

☺ Ask the group the following two important questions:
   ⇨ *Who is responsible for living your life?*
   ⇨ *Are you living every day to the fullest?*
   ⇨ *If not, what stops you from doing it?*

☺ Now show them the 'STOP'-poster with typical 'rocks' or excuses for not getting forward on life's path. Ask the group to add some of their own excuses. Write it down on the poster of on the flip chart.

☺ Now ask them what they can do to get these 'rocks' or excuses out of the way. List all their ideas under the heading: 'TIPS FOR A SMOOTH LIFE'S JOURNEY'.

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[1] Wiele B., Lawler P. & Dean P. 1980. *The Great Journey of a Lifetime Challenge*. Ontario, Canada: Ministry of Culture and Recreation.
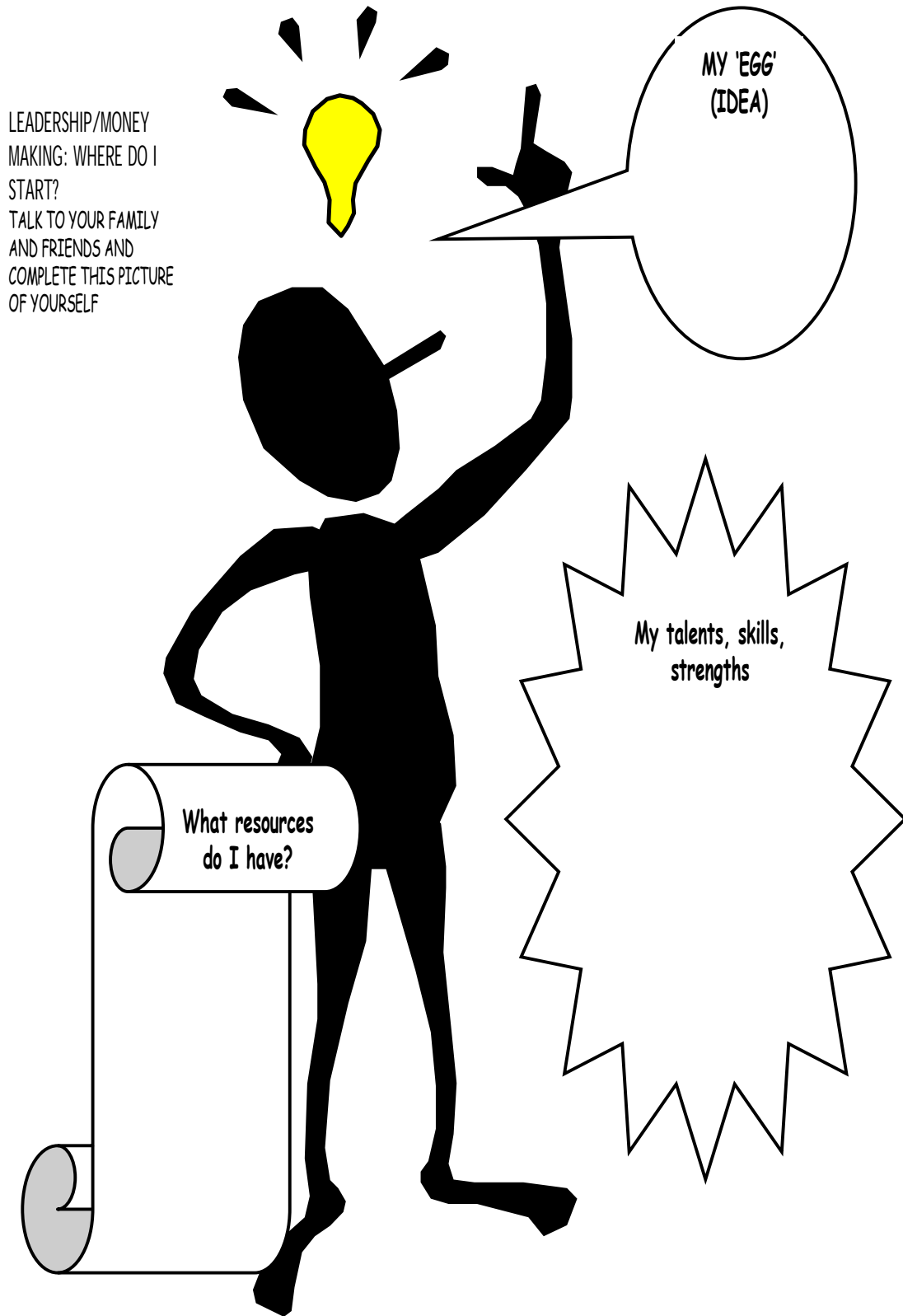
I don't have any good plans

Afraid to take risks

Rejection

Anger

LONELINESS

STOP

Stagnation

I feel cornered

Fear

Frustration

I can't take decisions!

21

Screen Bean/I've Got What It Takes

Purpose of the exercise	To help people to realise that they have to start with themselves – using their own ideas, talents and skills also for making money. In a group project, this exercise helps to generate many ideas and to 'take stock' of all the skills and talents that are 'pooled' for starting a money-generating project or a business.
What do you need	'Screen Bean'-sheet for everybody, pencils, flip chart.
How long does it take	About 10- 20 minutes &30 minutes for feed back the next day for follow-up.

What to do

☺ Have the group seated in a half-circle or horseshoe format. Ask them: *'Where do you think should you start if you want to start a money-generating project or a business?'* If they do not bring it up, guide them to focus on two things: MYSELF and MY IDEAS.

🕊 Give the following 'picture': a business can be compared to raising chickens

- 💰 *there has to be an egg before the chicks are born…*
- 💰 *and then the small chicks have to be looked after and fed…*
- 💰 *to grow into large chickens…*
- 💰 *which you can sell to make money.*

🕊 *Your business (like every business) starts with an idea or an 'egg'. This 'egg' comes from you. Once you have laid the 'egg' you have to take good care of it - so that it is born (like the chick).*

🕊 *How do you take care of your 'egg'? One takes care of the 'egg' by keeping it warm and safe by hiding it in a nest until it is ready to hatch. You have to do the same with your 'business egg' – think about it, develop it and don't give it to everybody (they may steal your 'egg' or idea!).*

🕊 *How do we do this? We look around us to see where is a good place for the chick to be born – where will it be able to grow bigger and bigger. This means that we have to look out for a place to start our business and also for people who will support us - usually our friends or family, or our project members. You also have to get yourself ready to be the 'mother' of the young chick. You have to work on your skills and talents – to be a good 'business mother'.*

🕊 *Each of you will get a 'Screen Bean'-exercise sheet to work on. Go and talk to friends and family and complete your picture: Ask them what they think your strengths talents and skills are. At the next session we will give each of you time for feedback and ask the other participants if they agree with what their friends have said.*

NOTE: If there is not time to take the sheets home, get the group to talk in 2's. They have to list two strengths, one talent & two skills for each. Then they have to get back to large group and share. The facilitator lists the information given on flip chart, under the topics: 'Business Eggs', 'Skills' 'Talents' 'Strengths'. Then discuss: *'How can we turn skills/talents/strengths into a money-making project?'*

LEADERSHIP/MONEY
MAKING: WHERE DO I
START?
TALK TO YOUR FAMILY
AND FRIENDS AND
COMPLETE THIS PICTURE
OF YOURSELF

MY 'EGG'
(IDEA)

My talents, skills,
strengths

What resources
do I have?

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22
Tiger Hunt

Purpose of the exercise	To focus on team building, planning decision-making and to help team interaction. It is also used as a creative thinking exercise, since participants are confronted with an unusual situation.
What do you need	Picture of the 'forest', flip chart.
How long does it take	About 30 minutes.

What to do

☺ Have the group seated in a half-circle or horseshoe format. Divide the group into groups of 5-7 people. Each group should sit in a small circle. Give each group a picture of a forest.

🗣 Give the following instructions:

Somewhere in the forest a big treasure is hidden. Each group has 10 minutes to plan their search for the treasure, bearing in mind the following obstacles:

⇨ *A fierce tiger lurking in the forest*

⇨ *A huge river you have to cross*

⇨ *A heavy rainstorm*

⇨ *Poisonous trees and snakes.*

You have one box of matches, raincoat and a pocket-knife. For the rest you have to focus on what you have amongst yourselves to overcome these obstacles.

☺ Write the 'obstacles' and 'aids' on the flip chart and allow the groups about 15 minutes to 'search for the treasure'. Then ask the groups to return to the larger group and report back on their plans and the outcome of their 'hunt'.

☺ Ask questions such as: *Did you find the treasure? 'Did you enjoy working as a group? Did everybody participate? What was difficult? Are you satisfied that you have worked out the best possible plan?*

☺ List the most important features of each group's plan and 'hunt' on the flip chart. Then ask the group how this applies to project and team work.

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23
Spinning a Web

Purpose of the exercise	To focus on networking – how do we reach out to others who can assist us with our project of group? Also good to use as a team-building exercise – it demonstrates how we work together and communicate in a team and how each one has to be part of the 'web'
What do you need	A ball of thin rope.
How long does it take	About 15-20 minutes.
What to do	See notes on 'Network' on next page.

☺ Have the group form a circle. One person (the facilitator) stands in the middle with a ball of rope. Throw the ball of rope to someone in the circle – that person should catch it, hold onto a piece of rope and throw it to some one else. Each person should hold onto a piece of rope once they have caught it and continue to throw the ball to other persons in the circle.

☺ Continue like this until the rope is finished. Ask the group what they think happened. Ask those who do not have a piece of rope to hold onto*: How do you feel about not having a piece of rope / about being left out? 'Would you like to become part of the network or web?* Ask each of them to also take hold of the rope – now everybody is 'in' on the web.

☺ Go up to one individual and ask them to let go of the rope – this person is now no longer part of the web. Ask the group: *What happens if some-one lets go of the rope? Is it okay if someone decides to no longer be part of the web? 'What happens to the web if a person lets go?* Ask the individual*: How does it feel to be 'outside'? What can you do to get back in?*

☺ Now ask a couple of people to step into the middle of the circle – they are now standing next to the facilitator. Ask the group: *What is happening here? What are these people doing in the middle of the circle? Are they contributing something to the network? Who is the leader in this network? Can there be this many leaders?*

☺ Ask the people in the middle: *How do you feel about standing around in the middle? Do you want to stay here or go back into the network?*

☺ Now ask one person to pull very hard on the rope – the person should actually move away from the circle, but should continue to hold onto the rope. Ask the group: *What is happening here? Is it okay if someone starts to take more and more rope and to pull it in his/her direction?* LIST what they have learned about networking on the flip chart.

NOTE: Use it as a team building exercise - as one person throws the rope to another, he/she should tell that person what he/she wants to learn from him or her. They then change places – keeping onto the rope – and repeat

the process. This not only gives people the opportunity to learn from each other, but also help them to communicate to one another.
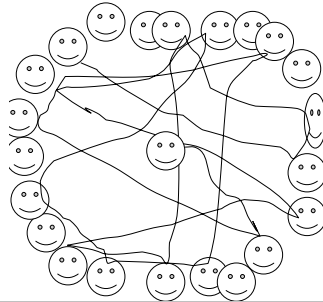
What we learned about NETWORKING:

‣ *'Networking' takes a lot of time.*

‣ *We need to have a leader in the middle that is willing to make a decision.*

‣ *We need a facilitator to guide the process.*

‣ *Those who did not form part of the network, felt left out.*

‣ *When the rope got messed up, it had to be cut – which broke the network.*

‣ *If the network is broken, one should 'tie the knot' to make the network whole again.*

‣ *One should respect each other when building a network – one has to 'bend your knees and climb under the rope'.*

‣ *Each of the participants had something to contribute something that the others could learn from him/her.*

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24
Let's Feast

Purpose of the exercise	To help people to think creatively and to come up with original ideas. Also to help them see opportunities and possibilities for projects and money-generation. The process also helps planning, co-operation and is fun – thus good for getting people to work as a team.
What do you need	Sheets of paper and pens for each smaller group, flip chart. Magazines, scissors and Pritt.
How long does it take	About 30-50 minutes
What to do	This idea comes from a creativity worksessions offered by Kobus Neethling during the 1990's In Pretoria.

☺ Have the group seated in a half-circle or horseshoe format. Talk about how we often think that we are not ready to start with something, because we do not have everything we need. We want everything to be perfect before we are willing to give the first step.

☺ Tell the participants that they are going to do a group exercise '*Let's Feast!'* to help them look at this.

☺ Divide the group into smaller groups of 4-7 people (by counting 1,2,3,4 etc. and 1,2,3,4, etc. and placing all the number1's in one group, nr 2's in the next group, etc.). Each group should sit together in a small circle. Give each group a sheet of paper, pens, magazines, scissors and glue.

☺ Give the following instructions:

🎤 *Each group is a management team who is going to open a new 'place to eat' or 'restaurant'. Let's start by listing all the things that you need for a restaurant. What do you think is essential or really needed to open a restaurant?* List all the items on the flip chart- allow at least 12 items to be listed.

🎤 *Then ask: What are the 4-5 most important items? Underline the 5 most important items on the list and ask: Are you sure that without these items one cannot open a restaurant? I now give you the challenge to start a restaurant without one of these items.* (Usually the items listed are food, a place, plates, a cook, etc.*) Group number 1 has to go without food, number two without a place, number 3 without plates, etc.*

🎤 *You have to develop a plan for opening a restaurant – 'the best in town where everybody would like to go'. You also have to come up with a name and an idea to 'advertise' your new restaurant for the 'opening night'.*

🎤 *Allow 20-30 minutes and ask them to report back to the larger group. Each small group then shares their plan and 'advertises' their new restaurant.*

🎤 *Ask them what 'business-lessons' they have learned from this exercise – and if everything really has to 'perfect' before you take the first step... The most popular "restaurant"-group may be rewarded with something small like chocolates.*

25
Youth Profile

Purpose of the exercise	Making a profile of the youth (or any other specific group of people within the community) help with focus, participation and 'buy-in'. It ensures that everyone contributes, bringing more issues, problems, points of view, resources and possible solutions to the table. It could be the first step in a strategic planning process (for projects, interventions, etc.)
What do you need	A flip chart. Magazines, coloured pens, glue, scissors. Additional: balloons, coloured string/wool.
How long does it take	About 30-45 minutes.

What to do

☺ Have the group seated in a half-circle or horseshoe format. Ask them if they all agree on what the topic/issues of their focus should be (e.g. focusing on the youth). If the group is more than 12, it is advisable to divide then into groups of 5-7 to ensure full participation. However, if they are all working on the same project, it may be a better idea to divide them according to topics, e.g. youth 8-12 years, youth 13-18 or youth from different areas. They then work separately for the first part, making "mini-profiles" and come together in the end to make one Youth Profile. Give them the following instructions:

🎤 *Think about the youth in your community – identify a couple of young people you know well and care about. Who are they – age, gender, 'status'? Think about their day: When and where does it begin? What do they do? Where do they go? Who "watches out" for them? What obstacles/challenges/problems do they face?*

🎤 *Now find words or pictures to 'make a picture' of these young people. Remember the people, places, problems and resources that are important in their lives. Also concentrate their possibilities and potential.*

🎤 *Each participant has to contribute at least 3 'pieces' of the profile – so work together in making the 'bigger picture' or Youth Profile.*

☺ If working in different groups, allow enough time for feedback form each group once they have completed the 'mini-profiles' – if possible these could be glued onto one huge profile. Each member or group has to explain to the others how they see the 'picture'.

☺ Get the whole group to reflect on: *Who are our Youth? What are the main issues that need to be dealt with/addressed?*

☺ Guide the group to come up with a vision/dream based on what they have learned form the Youth Profile (remember the dream has to be specific – stating what, where, how, for whom, and when).

☺ The groups can then use the balloons to write the interventions/initiatives/dreams and tie it with the coloured string to the Youth Profile – thus showing visually how they are going to make a difference.

26
Bean Budget

Purpose of the exercise	To help people to understand the basics of budgeting. Getting them to see the process of drawing up a personal (or project) budget. It is done in a fun and very basic way – helping people to overcome their anxiety about budgeting. Every one participates – thus helping people to experience that they can do it.
What do you need	Small pieces of paper, felt tip pens (blue, black and red), a bag of dried beans. 'Tips for Budgeting'-exercise sheet
How long does it take	About 30 minutes (Longer for a project budget).

What to do

☺ Have the group seated around a table, with the facilitator. If the group is too large, the facilitator sits on the floor with the group seated around her in a circle. Tell the group you are going to illustrate efficient budgeting by doing a personal budget. Once we have learned to be responsible with our own money, we can apply the same principles when we do a project budget.

☺ Use dried beans for 'money' and work with the group (as a 'family') through the process of doing a personal budget. Ask the group to be very realistic – they should tell you what the income of an average family in their community is. Don't try to 'make things better' – we have to work with what is real. Decide on a realistic income and ask participants to count out the number of beans (one bean is R10.00).

☺ Then ask the question: *What items do we need to buy each month?* Every body should participate and say which items they think a family should have. Ask the participants to write each item on a small piece of paper (one item per paper).

☺ Place all the pieces of paper in front of the facilitator. Now ask the 'family': *Which items do we really need?* Go through the items one by one and ask: *'Do we need this every month?'*

☺ Allow discussion and place the items on which the group agreed, in front of the facilitator. The other items are turned face down and put on the side.

☺ Go back to the items in front of the facilitator and ask: *'How much money should we spend on each item?'* Go through the items one by one and decide on the amount of money the family should spend on each. Once they have agreed on the amount, ask participants to count the money (beans) and place it on the item. Allow discussion on the amount of money to be spent on each item – in the end the 'family' has to decide what they want and can do.

☺ Now the 'family' has to decide if they can spend money on the items which was put aside – those things they 'want'. Discuss ways of saving money and also talk about the values: '*Who decides on what to spend?'; 'Are we open and honest?'* *"Once we have made a decision, what/ whom can change it?'*

☺ Finally talk about budgeting for a project – do the same process and principles apply?

Getting down to Business – doing the 'Bean Budget'.

GUIDELINES FOR PROJECT OR PERSONAL BUDGETING

Get all the people involved (project members/family) around the table to discuss the budget – TAKE TIME TO DISCUSS, THINK & PLAN.

Write down how much money you really have - don't pretend to have more or less, but BE REALISTIC & HONEST.

List all the items which you need money for – EACH PERSON SHOULD CONTRIBUTE AND SAY WHAT THEY THINK IS NEEDED

⇨ If it is a **project budget** you list everything you need for the project;

⇨ If it is a **personal/family budget**, you list everything you think you need for yourselves.

Now go through these items and talk about which items you NEED TO HAVE and which items you WANT TO HAVE. Put THOSE YOU NEED TO HAVE, IN FRONT OF YOU and put those items which you WANT to have away on one side.

Now look at those items which you NEED TO HAVE and discuss what and how much are you going to pay – PUT THE MONEY FOR EACH ITEM DOWN.

✉ You can also put the money for each item in an envelope, seal it an only open it when you have to make the payment.

Now look at those items, which you WANT to have - decide how/when to pay these. Maybe you can save a little each month until you have enough for one extra item.

Finally, talk about WAYS TO SAVE MONEY, such as buying cash, second-hand, by in bulk, NEVER BUY ON CREDIT, buy from second-hand shops, don't borrow money, always prioritise.

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27
Dream Balloons/Map

Purpose of the exercise	To help people to claim and visualise their dreams and expectations. Also a good exercise to help a group of people to come up with a shared dream or vision for their project.
What do you need	Balloons, coloured felt tip pens for writing on the balloons, flip chart and 'Dream Maker'-worksheet.
How long does it take	About 20 minutes.
What to do	Read through the 'Dream Maker'-worksheet.

☺ Have the group seated in a half-circle or horseshoe format. If focussing on a project**, give the following instructions:

🗣 Form groups of two by turning to the person next to you. Each two participants will be given a balloon and a coloured felt tip pen. Close your eyes and think about your project: what are your expectations for the project, what it is you want to do, how many people should be involved, when you want to do it… Tell your partner about your dream for the project. Talk about it and see if the two of you can agree on a 'dream'. Then blow the balloon as big as you want/can. Write your dream on the balloon.

☺ Allow about 10 minutes for participants to talk about and write their dreams on the balloons. Then invite each 'partnership' to bring their balloon to the front and share their dream with the rest of the group.

☺ Write all the dreams on the flip chart. If all the participants are working in the same project ask them to formulate 'ONE BIG BALLOON DREAM' for the project which is acceptable for all. If they are all working in different projects, look for similarities and differences in the dreams.

** *For individual dreams – give each person a balloon – they do the exercise as an individual, looking at their personal dream*. Use the 'DREAM MAKER' worksheet to make your dream into a reality.

'DREAM MAKER' ★★✦ ❋ WORKSHEET

① Dream wild	Think about what you really like – what makes your heart beat wild and your pulse race? Work, your secret wishes, hobbies, relationships – is there any thing in there which make you want to go wild? Jot down these 'loves' and make them into your 'wildest dreams' e.g. *love flying = I want to become a fighter pilot.*
② Claim your dream	Now seek God's will – talk to your friends, those who know you well and understand you, pray, read your Bible. Listen to what God is saying. Seek God's clear guidance. Remember: God said that for Him, anything is possible – and for those who follow him also. *Matt 17:20-21(Jesus said to his disciples)...Remember this! If you have faith as big as a mustard seed, you can say to this hill, 'Go from here to there!' and it will go. You could do anything!'*
③ Contain your dream	Now you have to move from wishing to deciding: Once you're sure of what it is you want, write it down. Write exactly what your dream is – with the date. This means that you are 'claiming' the dream to be yours from this date on. Then write down the date on which you want to realise the dream. This helps you to move from 'wishing in your head' (dreaming) to 'taking matters in your own hands' (deciding).
④ Plan your dream	Write your dream on a small piece of paper and stick it onto a larger peace of paper – in the top right hand corner. Now write your 'reality' (where you are today) on another small piece of paper, and stick in onto the bottom left hand corner. Next start to think about what is between your 'now' and your 'dream'. What are the different steps you will need to take in order to get from the bottom to the top? Write each step down – making your 'stepping stones' for reaching your dream.
⑤ Research your dream	Get all the information you need in order to reach your dream – go to magazines, the internet, newspapers, anyone who knows more about what it is you want to do (i.e. a friend who use to be in the Air Force may know more about becoming a fighter pilot). Don't sound like 'welfare' = don't make your lack of information or your 'need to know' someone else's problem - only ask for information. Have your questions ready and be to the point. Use all your networks, contacts. Get creative.
⑥ Fulfil your Dream	Now is the time to get creative – utilise all your skills, talents and assets to the fullest and make your dream into a reality. DO IT! ★★✦❋

28
Path to the Future

Purpose of the exercise	To help people to visualise the path forward – identify the reality, the problems and the possible solutions in reaching their dream. Excellent exercise to do as a group, since everybody can co-operate in visualising and planning for the future.
What do you need	'Path to the Future' exercise sheet, 'Guideline to Success' - sheet, flip chart.
How long does it take	About 30-60 minutes
What to do	Read through the notes on 'Vision' and 'Guideline to Success'

☺ Have the group seated in a half-circle or horseshoe format. Ask them where they think 'success' starts. If they do not mention it, introduce the idea that all success starts with having a dream or vision. Discuss the power of a vision.

☺ Now guide the participants through the process of completing their 'Path to my Future':

⇨ **IDENTIIFY YOUR DREAM**: Discuss the importance of having a clear vision or dream of what you want and hope for. Having a clear dream gives us direction – something we are moving towards. In small groups of 3 participants should discuss and write down their vision or goal. It should be specific: exactly what you want to do, where, how, when & with whom.

⇨ **LOOK AT YOUR REALITY**: The next step is to 'take stock' of where you are now – what is your reality. Make a list of what you have: skills, talents, training, knowledge, resources (like a house, stove, friend who wants to help, instructors at the project, your health.

⇨ **IDENTIFY POTENTIAL PROBLEMS OR ANXIETIES:** List your fears, problems or 'obstacles' – things, which are barring you from getting to where you want to be. Discuss your fears and how to deal with it. (See 'Throw Away'- exercise).

⇨ **FORMULATE YOUR STRATEGIES:** Discuss ways to overcome the 'obstacles' or problems. For every 'obstacle/problem' there is a way of overcoming it - like 'bridges' to go across. Write down your strategies in the 'bridges' over the obstacles.

☺ Talk about how this exercise helps – as an individual or group.

NOTE: It is a good idea to use one participant's dream as an example and to complete that participant's 'Path to the Future' so that everybody can learn form that and then do his/her own 'Path to the Future'.

MY DREAM / GOAL
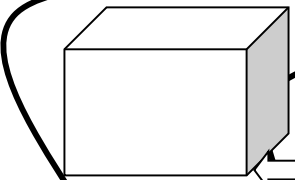
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MY PATH TO THE FUTURE
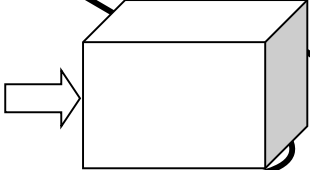
MY STRATEGY to overcome this
obstacle is ....
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My strategy to overcome this
obstacle is ....
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My strategy to overcome this
obstacle is ....
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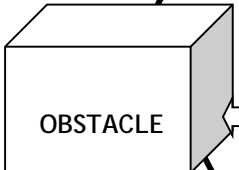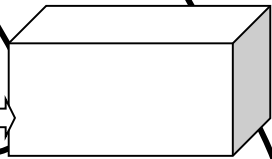
My strategy to overcome this
obstacle is ....
....
....
....

OBSTACLE

START HERE
MY REALITY...................................
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VISION

* Vision is the ability to see things with your mind's eye. It is not the material things which you see with you eyes, but rather the things which you 'see in you head'.

* Vision is that which helps us to believe in the future – because in our mind's eye we can see how things change; how we are reaching what we really would like to reach.

* Vision is the ability to see today what you believe is going to happen tomorrow.

Visualisation becomes easy if you practice how to visualise every day:

* Decide what you want to do, i.e. *'I want to build my own house'.*

* See in your mind's eye how you have already done it, i.e*. see how you move into the house you have built for yourself.*

* Experience the feeling you had while you did that which you wanted to do, i.e. *experience the feeling you have when unlocking the front door of the house you have built.*

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GUIDELINE FOR PATH TO THE FUTURE

☞ **IDENTIFY THE PROJECT (YOUR DREAM)**
☆ Think about what your dream is for your project's future (or your own future).
☆ Make sure that you know exactly what you want to do, how many people you want to involve, how, where and when you want to start. Write it down.

☞ **IDENTIFY YOUR REALITY – WHERE YOU ARE NOW**
☆ Now it is time that you take stock; you have to take a good look at where you are and what you have.
☆ Think about yourself: your skills, talents, strengths, experience, knowledge, courses you have done.
☆ Think about what you have, such as a house, a sewing machine, a little money.
☆ Think about those around you – your family and friends. Do they have something that will help you? Maybe they will support you or work with you.
☆ Think about your community – what is there in your community that could be of help to you, such as other organisations; experts; places you could use?
☆ BE VERY REALISTIC – only write down those things you really have to help you.
☆ Now also write down other things about yourself and your circumstances which will have an influence on your project, such as whether you are old/young/married/have children/have a lot of time.

☞ **IDENTIFY POSSIBLE PROBLEMS**
☆ Very often there are so many problems or stumbling blocks in our way that we feel we will never get our project / business off the ground.
☆ We have to identify and talk about these problems, so that we can prepare to overcome them.
☆ Think about and list possible problems – now they are out in the open one can deal with them.

☞ **IDENTIFY WAYS /STRATEGIES TO OVERCOME THESE PROBLEMS**

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☆ Take action!

☆ Get the right attitude – determination and confidence that you will be able to deal with these problems.

☆ Prioritise the problems – write down which one is the biggest or the most urgent; decide which problem you will deal with 1st 2nd 3rd.

☆ Work on the problems step by step; tackle them one at a time.

☆ Get more information; do your research; make sure you know everything you can about the problem or situation.

☆ Ask other people how they have dealt with similar problems.

☆ Work out an action plan: What / Who / Where / When / How.

☝ **IDENTIFY YOUR GOALS**

☝ You have already written down your dream – now you have to think about your specific goals.

☝ Write it down so that you know exactly which results you expect, such as: 'By the end of August I want to start a community project in the community I live in for 15 mothers with pre-school children. The aim of the project is to guide the mothers for the next 4 months in preparing their children for school.'

☝ **IDENTIFY TASKS AND TARGET DATES**

☆ The important thing is to work out small steps for reaching your goal.

☆ Think about everything you will have to do – write each task down.

☆ Work out which task you will have to do 1st, 2nd, 3rd and work out target dates for completing each task.

☝ **TAKE ACTION!**

☆ Stop worrying and take action – take that first step and you are on your way to success!

☝ **EVALUATE YOUR PROGRESS**

☆ Check up on yourself: are you following your plan; are you keeping your target dates; are you still focussing on your dream.

☆ Be kind to yourself – if you have made a mistake, it is not the end of the world – you can still reach your dream.

☆ Remember to praise yourself for each little success you have had!

29

Steps to Success

Purpose of the exercise   To help a group or team (or an individual) to work out a step-by-step plan for reaching their goal. An excellent exercise to do in a group/project since everybody gets to see exactly what has to be done and what is involved in the process. Also a good tool for assessing progress – since the process and tasks are allocated to specific people to be completed on a specific date.

What do you need   'Steps to Success' -sheet, Example, flip chart.

How long does it take   About 30-40 minutes

What to do

☺ Have the group seated in a half-circle or horseshoe format. Now that they have identified their dream(s), they should work out a plan for reaching their goal and succeeding with their project.

☺ Work with the whole group and choose one project to use as an example. Use the 'Steps to Success' to work through the process of initiating and implementing a project. Draw the 'steps' on the flip chart and facilitate the discussion of each of these steps.

☺ Some of the steps will have been covered (like 'community assessment' which was done with the community map) – but go through the steps and use it to re-cap what the group has already done. Then continue with the next step, i.e. prioritising the needs.

☺ Emphasise that this is the process we always work through – whether in forming a care group, starting a sewing group or food-garden or organising a money generating business.

☺ Refer to the example (Steps to Success) which was done by a community group. If the group suggest other steps, check with them that they still cover the basic ten steps.

☺ Once you have the completed the ten steps, ask the group whether they are now clear on what they should do next, and whether they will be able to put their dream into action.

30a
Throw Away

Purpose of the exercise	To help people to acknowledge and face their fears. To give them the opportunity to 'get rid of' the fear. In a group/project situation – to give the members the opportunity to list all their unspoken fears about the projects and to bring it into the open.
What do you need	Pencil and a piece of paper for each participant.
How long does it take	About 15 - 20 minutes.
What to do	**If you use it as a group exercise, focus on fears related to the specific group.**

☺ Have the group seated in a half-circle or horseshoe format. Ask the group: *'What is the single thing that most often stands between us and success?'*

☺ If the group does not mention it – the facilitator should mention 'fear' as one of the biggest things which keep us from going forward taking the next step. Talk about how we 'hide' our fear – and then cannot deal with it because it is not out in the open. Ask:

> ⇨ *How does fear present itself? Discuss excuses /resistance/anger/negativity/passivity/blaming.*

> ⇨ *How does fear appear to us?*

> ⇨ *How do we overcome our fears?*

F alse
E vidence
A ppearing
R eal

☺ Do the following individual exercise: Confronting my Fear

☺ Hand a piece of paper and pencil to each participant. Give the instructions:

🕊 *This is an individual exercise. You do not have to share the information with anyone else but yourself. Think about your fears - those things, which prevent you from going forward, from taking the next step on your 'Path to the Future'. What is your biggest fear? Think about it for a while. Now write it on a piece of paper.* (If they cannot write, they can draw it or just think about it.)

🕊 *I want you to close your eyes. See that thing - The Biggest Fear (you have just written down) in front of you. What does it look like? What colour is it? Does it have a name? How do you feel when The Biggest Fear is standing in front of you? Do you feel afraid, small, overpowered, as if you can't breathe or want to run?*

🕊 *With your eyes still closed, look the Biggest Fear right in the eye. In you head say to the Biggest Fear: "I can over-power you. I am bigger than you are. I am stronger than you are. I am cleverer than you are. I do not need you in my life. I will go on without you. I am now going to get rid of you!"*

🕊 *Now take your piece of paper and do whatever you want with it - you can tear it, of make it into a ball or step on it. Finally throw it away over your shoulder so that it is behind you.*

☺ Ask the group how it felt to do this exercise and if it will help them in future to confront their fears.

30b
Sweep Away

Purpose of the exercise	To help a group or team (or an individual) to work through the 'project'-problems that they are aware of. It brings the problems into the open and gives everyone the opportunity to contribute and give their opinion. It also empowers the community /team since they come up with possible solutions /strategies to deal with the problems.
What do you need	A broom, flip chart.
How long does it take	About 20-30 minutes.

What to do

☺ Have the group-members form in a circle. One member is in the middle of the circle, holding a broom. She 'puts the first problem in the circle' (or mentions the first problem). Ask the group to quickly come up with a possible solution (do not discuss it in detail or talk about the benefits of the 'solution' – it is important to get the participants to understand that there is a 'solution' to every problem). As soon as they have found a 'solution' or strategy to deal with it, the member who has brought up the problem, 'sweeps it away' and gives the broom to the next person who wants to 'put a problem in the middle'. Continue like this until all members have had a turn to mentioned and sweep away a problem.

☺ While they are mentioning the problems, the facilitator lists the problems and given 'solutions' or strategies on the flip chart.

Here is an example of problems brought into the circle & strategies to deal with it

1. No place to work/venue	1. Start in your own house
2. Lack of understanding of the goal	2. Sit in a circle and talk about the goal
3. No peace in the project	3. Ask those members who do not want to co-operate to make peace to leave the project
4. Lack of co-operation	4. Divide the tasks so that every one must help
5. Name of the project	5. Discuss it and re-name the project
6. No electricity / water	6. Apply for water and buy electricity from neighbours
7. Culture & language	7. Get someone to translate
8. Lack of commitment	8. Give people something to keep them involved
9. Lack of communication	9. Talk about the problems as a team

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Sweeping away the problem...

31
W-Questions/Business Plan

Purpose of the exercise	To guide people step by step through the process of coming up with an idea, putting it into a 'business frame' or concept and planning to actually start the business. An excellent exercise for a team or project business, since everybody has to participate and 'grows' with the concept.
What do you need	'W-Questions'–exercise sheet, pens, paper for each group.
How long does it take	About 45-60 minutes.

What to do

☺ Divide the group into smaller groups of 4-5 people. Each group should sit in a small circle and have things to write handy. Hand each group a 'W-QUESTION" sheet to guide then in the exercise.

☺ Give them the following instructions:

🎤 *You are now a group of business people, planning to get a business of the ground. The exercise 'Let's do it!' will take you through the whole process of starting your business. Follow the guideline step by step, making sure that you find the answers to all the W-Questions.*

⇨ *What do we have?*

⇨ *What are we going to sell?*

⇨ *What business are we in?*

⇨ *What are we going to call ourselves?*

⇨ *Who is our customer?*

☺ Allow 20 minutes for this discussion. Move amongst the groups and make sure that they are actually following the correct process and answering the questions.

☺ Then tell them to get back to the larger group and role-play 'HOOKING' A CUSTOMER': One of the groups come to the front and play the role of the 'business person'. The rest of the participants are the 'potential customer'. 'Hook' them by telling them all about you product. Test the reaction of the 'customers' by asking questions: *Does the name of the business work for the product they want to sell? Do you feel you want to buy the product? Does the product fit any of your needs?*

☺ Allow discussion and then give the following instructions:

🎤 *Now get back to your smaller groups and continue to 'shape' your business, asking:*

⇨ *What do we need to get started?*

⇨ *Why should my Customer buy the product from us?*

⇨ *How are we going to attract our customer?*

☺ Allow 15 minutes. Get back to the larger group and invite the groups to show how they are going to attract the customers - 'to sell their products'.

PLANNING YOUR BUSINESS: 'W'-QUESTIONS

Let's do it! Start by working through the following questions:

- **What do we have?**
  ‣ Talents
  ‣ Skills
  ‣ Resources (personal/community) which can help you to do business <u>now</u>
  ‣ Needs (community/market)
  ‣ Existing businesses/projects for linking

- **What are we going to sell?**
  ‣ Look at the 'seed' identified by each individual
  ‣ Now choose one you as a group would like to produce and sell (it could be a concrete product or a service)
  ‣ Make sure you're very clear/specific on what the product is you're going to sell

- **What business are we in?**
  ♦ Are you producing food/clothing/ entertainment/ educational programmes?
  ♦ Be sure to identify what you actually are doing, because this determines whom you should try to sell it to

- **What are we going to call ourselves?**
  ‣ Give your business a name
  ‣ Remember it should tell your customers about your product/service
  ‣ It should get the attention of others

- **Who is our customer?**
  ‣ Who is going to pay to get hold of your product/service?
  ‣ Who is going to use it?

Get back to the larger group and role-play 'Hooking the Customer' – sell your product to the rest of the group

Now get back to your smaller groups and continue to 'shape' your business, asking:

- **What do we need to get started?**
  ‣ Resources
  ‣ Money
  ‣ A Market

- **Why should my Customer buy the product from us?**
  ‣ Remember there is a difference between whether the customer needs or wants the product
  ‣ Ask yourselves whether the customer could buy the same product from someone else – if yes, why should he rather buy it from you?

- **How are we going to attract our customer?**
  ‣ Think about different methods of attracting the customer's attention
  ‣ Remember that the customer should be allowed to become familiar with your product/service
  ‣ Think of a 'marketing strategy' which should include the initial launching of your service as well as an ongoing marketing awareness campaign

🎤 *Get back to larger group and sell your product*

Summary & Assignment

‣ Identify the 'Pointers' of today – what do you think is important?

Assignment

‣ Work out our personal business plan – thinking about your product and your market needs and what you have learned today.
‣ Use the 'Guidelines for a Step-by-Step Personal Money Generating Plan' to guide you.

32
Healing of Memories

Purpose of the exercise   Helps individuals to come to terms with past losses.

What do you need   Tissues. A burning candle.

How long does it take   About 15 minutes.

What to do

☺ Have the group seated in a half-circle or horseshoe format. Explain to them that this is an individual healing exercise[2] that will help them to deal with past hurts – focusing specifically on some of the people in their past who caused the hurt or with whom they still have 'unfinished business'. Tell them that it may be a painful exercise and that it is okay to cry - have a box of tissues available and hand each person some tissues. Give the following instructions:

🕯 *Sit relaxed, close your eyes and allow yourself to be open to the experience. The more you embrace the experience, the more meaningful it will be in helping you to deal with past hurt, pain, unfinished business.*

🕯 *Speak to God from the heart expressing your desire to work through this pain. Ask His guidance to show you where and with whom you should start on this journey. Is there anyone (from your past) you feel you need to 'talk to' about this pain and suffering?*

🕯 *In your imagination see yourself with the person you feel is the cause of the pain, anger, hurt or resentment…*

🕯 *Take time to 'see' them in a situation which would be familiar…*

🕯 *When you are ready (no forcing) say everything you want to say to that person …. don't deny or censor any feelings you have … speak your mind … you may use strong language … allow yourself to 'get it off the chest'….*

🕯 *Now take the time to listen to anything that the other person might want to say…*

🕯 *Then let Jesus/GOD come into the place where you are together and talk to Him about what you are feeling … listen to Him as He speaks to you … listen to what He says to the other person … see Jesus/God with the other person … speak through Jesus to the other person from the heart … Stay with this in any way which feels helpful…*

🕯 *However you are feeling at the end of the prayer time or whatever has happened, take time to 'say it as it is'…*

🕯 *Now let go of the person you have been 'seeing'… say to the person that you have finished what you wanted to deal with today and say goodbye to him/her… take time to thank Jesus/God for his presence and guidance…*

🕯 *When you are ready, you may open your eyes…*

☺ Allow some quiet time after the exercise and then remind the group that healing is a gradual process and that they may want to repeat this prayer/exercise on their own at a later stage.

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[2] Adapted from Anthony de Mello Sadhana.

33
Life Line

Purpose of the exercise	To help people to take a look at events in their life and how they have coped with it. It can be used to work through hurt and loss but also to help them focus on the future.
What do you need	Sheet of paper, pen for each participant, flip chart.
How long does it take	About 30 minutes.

What to do

☺ Have the group seated in a half-circle or horseshoe format. Hand out a sheet of paper (or copies of the Lifeline [3]exercise sheet) and a pencil to each person. Give the following instructions:

🕭 *I want you to take a look at your life. Each of us has had good and positive things or events happen in our lives. But we have also had bad or negative things happened in our lives. I want you to think about those events or things that happened in your life - things you have lived through. Can you remember those things? You are going to draw a 'graph' or 'picture' of your life: make a cross (x) for every event you can think of: make the cross above the line for positive events and below the line for negative ones.* (Demonstrate on the flip chart how they should indicate the events – give an example like showing your own birth, your first day a t school, your first boyfriend, and a bad accident).

🕭 *Once you have made all the crosses you want to make, I want you to connect the crosses with each other, so that you can see your lifeline.* (Demonstrate on the flip chart how they should connect the crosses.) *Do you see that your life has had ups and downs?*

⇨ **If you want the participants to work through pain**, give them these instructions:

🕭 *I want you to close your eyes. Go to your lowest point. Think about that event – what happened? Who were there? When did it happen? How did you feel? Sadness? Anger? Frightened? Frustration? Loneliness? Can you feel that feeling again?*

☺ Allow some time for them to think about and re-live that event, then continue:

🕭 *Now I want you to come back to where you are today – you are here and no longer at that lowest point in your life. You are not feeling that same feeling any longer. I want you to think about and go to the highest point on your graph. What happened then? Can you remember clearly what took place? Who were there? What do you feel? Happiness? Joy? Enthusiasm? Love? Can you experience that feeling again? When you are ready, you may open your eyes'*

☺ Reflect on what the participants experienced and how they felt 'going back to re-live painful experiences'. What did they learn from the exercise?

⇨ **If you only want to focus on the future**, talk about where they come from and what they project for themselves in the future. Ask them to draw in their future as they see it – they then mark crosses on the life line for events that they are looking forward to (i.e. getting married, getting out of school, etc.)

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[3] Based on exercise encountered when working with Mary-Lynn Crosson (MW) at the Ontario Crippled Children's Centre, Ottawa, Canada, during 1989-1982.

MY LIFE LINE

34
Relationship Wheel

Purpose of the exercise	To help individuals to come to terms with the different roles or relationships in their lives.
What do you need	A sheet of paper and a pencil for each participant.
How long does it take	About 20-30 minutes.

What to do

☺ Have the group seated in a half-circle or horseshoe format. Hand out the sheets of paper and the pencils. Give the following instructions:

🎤 *Think about all the areas in your life like family, work and the community. You do different things that are connected to each of those areas. We usually talk about our different 'roles'. Get a clear picture in your head of yourself in each of these roles. Now draw a nice big circle on your paper.'* (Demonstrate it on the flip chart).

🎤 *Draw one 'spoke' – like that of a bicycle wheel - for each role you have thought of.* (Once again, demonstrate how they should do it). *Now take you time and think once more about each of these roles. If you have to 'evaluate' yourself in each of these roles, where would you place yourself on the 'spoke'? Make as cross on the spoke at the place where you think you are: close to the inside(means that you don't do so good in this role; or further along means that you're doing okay; or on the outside - meaning you are doing very well.* (Demonstrate as you go along).

🎤 *Now take a look at the crosses you have made. Take you pencil and connect them to each other – how does your 'wheel' look? Will you be able to ride on a bicycle with wheels like this? How will it feel?*

☺ Discuss what it means if we focus too much on one thing/relationship and too little on another. Ask: *'What can we do to change it?'*
NOTE: Do this exercise to indicate the 'important people in your life' and how you see your relationship with them, e.g. father, husband, friend, child, boss.

Wife role / Churchgoer role / Mother role / Friend role / Teacher role
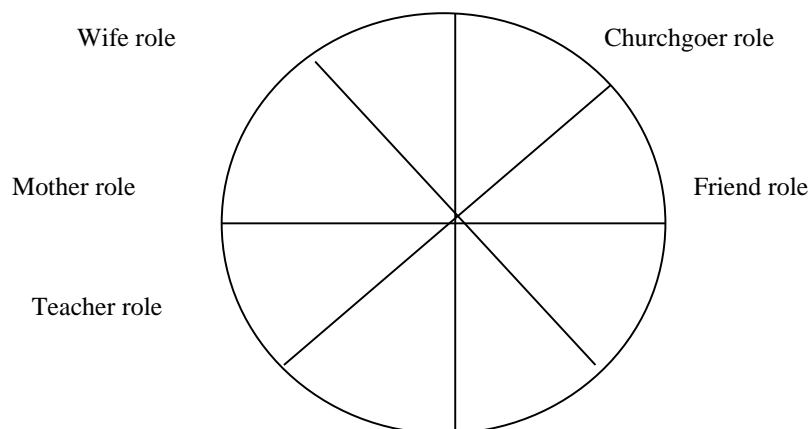
35
Blessing Ceremony

Purpose of the exercise	To let people experience grace through a blessing. Also to encourage people and family members to focus on each other in a positive, supportive way.
What do you need	The 'Blessing'-exercise sheet, candles, matches, small paper squares to keep candles from dripping, flip chart.
How long does it take	About 10- 20 minutes.
What to do	Prepare a suitable scripture from the Bible.

☺ Have the group seated in a half-circle or horseshoe format. Ask the group what they think the meaning of the word 'blessing' is. Ask them why they think people are blessed. Then share with them what the literature says about 'blessing':

Blessing

The blessing is a vehicle for restoring a sense of identity, meaning, love and acceptance. To bless someone is a biblical concept, with its origins in the covenant God made with Abraham (that He will send the Saviour) and which was passed on through the generations to the birth of Christ.

Most people – young and old - yearn for the acceptance, intimacy and affection they have somehow missed out on in their families. Bringing back the family blessing goes a long way in helping people of all ages and cultural backgrounds in their healing process.

Although in the biblical times blessing usually comprised of the laying on of hands and a kiss on the forehead, there are many ways to bless others. It could be anything from a candle lighting ceremony, sharing a special meal, kissing, hugging, reading or praying scriptures or asking God to provide a special future for each child. A blessing could also take on a more 'secular' form, such as having rituals for birthdays (e.g. a 'You're Special Today'-dinner plate set for the birthday person), sharing special memories, creating word pictures or reading a story or message that was written especially for the person who is to be blessed. *In essence the blessing is the 'getting close' to another person in such a manner that he/she is fully aware of unconditional love and acceptance.*

☺ Now do this ceremony as one way to bless someone. Hand each participant a candle and paper square. Ask them to think about someone close to them, which they would like to be blessed. Read the scripture and give the instructions:

🗩 *Please stand up and close your eyes and 'see' the person you want to bless. What is it you would like to say to this person? It may be something about your feelings for this person or something, which you think is special about this person that you would like to share with him/her. Or it may have something to do with the future of this person. When you are ready, light your candle for this person and - quietly, in your head – say the words to the persons: give him/her the blessing.*

☺ Give the participants a few minutes and then ask them to blow out their candles when ready. When sitting again, ask them: *Is it the first time you have lightened a candle for someone? What did you feel/experience when you did it? How did it make you feel to say a blessing over the person?*

36
Touch Dance

Purpose of the exercise	To help people to get to know each other in a fun way and to 'break the ice' at the beginning of a workshop or training session*. Also to improve interaction, communication (non-verbal), to built relationships and trust. **
What do you need	Tape recorder/CD player, suitable music – see note regarding when to use what type on music below.
How long does it take	About 10 minutes, for partners to 'interview' each other, then (depending on the size of the group) at least 20-30 minutes for partners to introduce one another to the group.
What to do	*If used with 'new' group the dancing should be 'lighter' fun and faster, e.g. African drum music. ** When used to built relationships and trust, it should be used only after the group members know each other a little and the dancing /music should be slower, gentler, e.g. Enya, DNA strings.

☺ For this exercise to be successful there must be enough room/space for everybody to participate and move around freely without bumping into one another. It could also be done outside, but the group should be able to hear the music. Have the group standing in a circle, apart from each other – spacing themselves so that they can move freely.

☺ Give the following instructions:

🎤 *Music and rhythm is part of being human – from the beginning of our lives we feel our own and our mother's rhythm: the heart beat, the breathing. Some times if we rush through live, we loose touch with this basic 'rhythm of life' and we need to 'get in touch with life's rhythm' to centre ourselves. We can do this through free movement and dancing. There is no 'right or wrong' in this dancing – the only requirements are that you move with the rhythm, that you do not talk and that you do not touch each other – each person moves in their own space. I will guide you through the dance.*

☺ Start playing the music and ask the participants to first feel rhythm through their feet. Then ask them to start moving with the rhythm from side to side and slowly forwards – first slowly and then more freely as the music leads them, but not touching each other and no talking.

☺ Then, as they move around freer, ask them to start reaching out to one another – by gently touching only the hand of someone as they move past them – keep the touch as light as a feather. If it is a 'fun dance' – you may ask them to take hands, from a circle and move inwards and backwards again, 'stamping' the rhythm. If it is the 'relationship /trust dance' – keep the touching gently, only in passing and without any talking- and only towards the end ask them to move into a circle and very gently move inwards, raise their hands gently touching one another's hands, and move outwards – do this once or twice to end the 'touch dance'. Reflect on their feelings during the whole process.

37
Circle of Influence

Purpose of the exercise   To make people aware of their inter-relatedness with others.

What do you need   Flip chart.

How long does it take   About 5-10 minutes

What to do

☺ Have the group seated in a half-circle or horseshoe format. Talk about who is responsible for what we think, feel and do. It actually starts with oneself: ME. Draw ME in the middle of the flip chart, with a circle around. Discuss one's responsibility towards oneself.

🗣 *Now ask the group: 'Who are very close to you – those you have the most frequent contact with?' Draw another circle and write down what they say (usually they talk about their families). Talk about how we influence those closest to us – and how they influence us.*

☺ Then move a little further away – look at neighbourhoods, places of work – draw yet another circle. Discuss how we can reach out to people in our neighbourhood.

☺ Finally get to the community – talk about all the different institutions, groups, actions in the community that have an influence on ME – and which could in its turn be influenced by me.

SCHOOL/COLLEAGUES

ME

FAMILY

NEIGHBOURHOOD/FRIENDS

COMMUNITY (SCHOOLS, CHURCHES, ETC)

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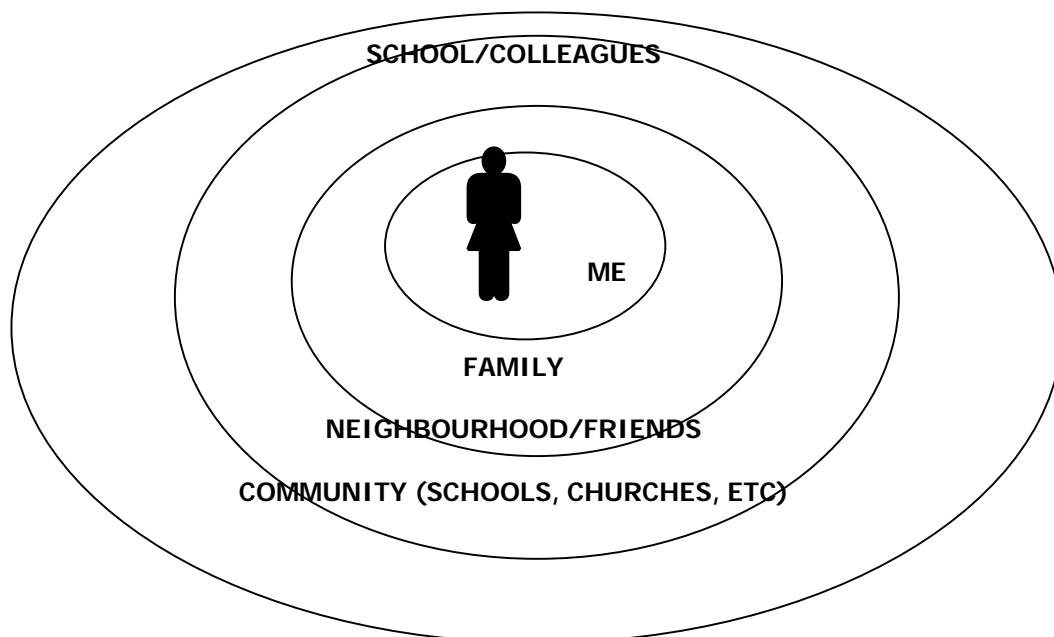
38
Relaxation

Purpose of the exercise	To make people aware of the importance of and encourage daily relaxation. To teach them some easy relaxation exercises.
What do you need	The 'Total relaxation' –exercise sheet, flip chart.
How long does it take	About 10- 25 minutes (If only demonstrating the exercises, do each exercise only 2 times – but when doing it to really relax, do more repetitions).

What to do

☺ Have the group seated in a half-circle or horseshoe format. Ask them to define 'stress' - write it on the flip chart. Talk about 'good' stress and 'bad' stress and the importance of dealing with stress. One way to with stress is to relax for 10-15 minutes every day. List the group's ideas on how to relax.

☺ Now guide the group to do the following relaxation exercises:

❖ **Head Rolls** – relaxes neck and back muscles and relieves tension.

✊ *Stand up with your feet slightly apart for good balance or sit up straight, with your knees bend 90 degrees. Relax your shoulders.*

✊ *Lower you head until you chin rests on your chest.*

✊ *Breathe in deeply – hold it – and breathe out slowly. Breathe in deeply – hold it – and breathe out slowly. Breathe in - hold - breathe out.*

✊ *Breathe in deeply once more – roll your head (still 'hanging' down) first to the left and then, slowly, to the right – keep your mouth open and slowly release your breath while rolling your head.*

✊ *Bring your head back to the middle and slowly lift it up, while breathing in again.*

✊ *Now let your head hang down once more and roll it to the left - start to breathe out and roll it to the right and back to the middle - while breathing out all the time.* (*Repeat this exercise 6 times.*)

❖ **Shoulder Circles** – relaxes neck- and shoulder-muscles.

✊ *Stand up with your feet apart for good balance or sit up straight, with your knees bend 90 degrees and let your shoulders relax. Keep your back straight, tuck in your bellybutton and let your arms hang down relaxed next to your sides.*

✊ *Breathe in deeply – hold it – and breathe our slowly. Breathe in deeply – hold it – and breathe our slowly. Breathe in – hold – breathe out.*

✊ *Breathe in deeply once more. Pull up your shoulders up to your ears – keep it there for two counts.*

✊ *Pull your shoulders back as far as you can while exhaling slowly.*

✊ *Pull your shoulder blades together – keep it there for two counts while you're still exhaling. Now release our muscles and relax.*
(Repeat this exercise 8-12 times.)

❖ Now do the **Total Body Relaxation**

TOTAL BODY RELAXATION

Find a time and a quiet place where you can sit and not be disturbed. Sit comfortable with your feet next to each other on the floor and your knees bend. Let your hands rest on your lap, with your thumbs touching. Now follow these instructions:

STEPS TO REALXATION

- ♣ *Close your eyes and think about something, which you find peaceful, something that you really like – such as water, a tree or clouds floating through the air.*

- ♣ *Breathe in deeply – count 'one'. Slowly breathe out – count 'two'. Breathe in deeply – hold it for one count – breathe out slowly. And in – hold - and out.*

- ♣ *Begin at your feet - pull all the muscles together as tight as possible. Breathe in deeply – hold it – breathe out and relax all the muscles in your feet.*

- ♣ *Now concentrate on your legs – pull all the muscles in your legs really tight, as tight as possible. Breathe in deeply – hold it – breathe out slowly and relax the muscles in your legs. Feel how your legs are getting heavy.*

- ♣ *Become aware of your hands and arms. Make your hands into tight fists and pull all the muscles in your arms as tight as you can. Breathe in deeply – hold it for one count - slowly breathe out and relax your arms and hands. Feel how your arms are getting heavier and heavier, while lying loosely in your lap.*

- ♣ *Focus on your tummy. Feel how your muscles in you stomach area pull into a tight knot. Breathe in deeply – hold it – and slowly relax all the muscles in your tummy while you breathe out. Relax your tummy.*

- ♣ *Breathe in deeply and pull up your shoulders so that it touches your ears. Keep it there for one count – breathe out and slowly let your shoulders relax.*

- ♣ *Breathe in deeply and pull all the muscles in your face as tight as possible – frown and close your eyes and lips as tight as possible. Keep your muscles tight and hold your breath for one count. Relax and breathe out slowly.*

- ♣ *You are breathing deeply and peacefully and your body is floating away. You are where you feel at peace and relaxed. Stay there as long as you want to, breathing deeply in and out all the time.*

- ♣ *When you feel ready, start to move your toes - just a little. Stretch your legs and then your arms. Lift up your head slowly and open your eyes. Feel the new energy surging through you!*

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39
## Meditation: Reflective Circle

Purpose of the exercise	To help individuals determine whether they are 'ready for action' as community facilitators/practitioners. Also to help individuals to evaluate their feelings and experiences after exposure to community situations, traumas and events.
What do you need	A flip chart. Paper and pens for every participant.
How long does it take	About 20 minutes: 5 minutes for individual completion of the 'here and now wheel' and 15 minutes for feedback.

What to do

☺ Ask the group to do this exercise as individuals. Hand out paper and pencils.

🎤 Give them the following instructions:

🎤 *Draw in you Journal or on a sheet of paper a 'here and now wheel'[4] –draw a circle and divide it into 4 quarters as shown. Then write a word to describe how you are feeling now, at this moment, in each of the 4 spaces. Now write a sentence for each of the words to expand on why you are feeling this way - in other words give a reason or motivate why you are feeling like this.*
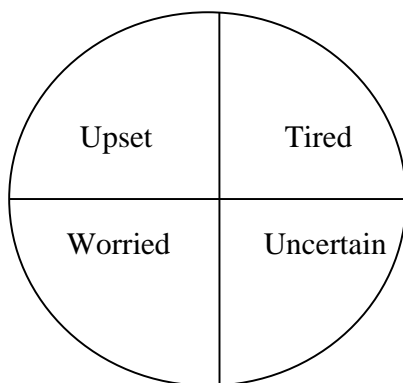
For example: 'I feel <u>tired</u> since I went to bed after twelve last night. I'm <u>upset</u> because we talked about HIV/AIDS and my friend has just found that he is HIV positive. I am <u>uncertain</u> about my status and that <u>worries</u> me.'

☺ Once everybody has completed their wheel, ask feedback from the group. Discuss the different feelings and how we need to be aware of the fact that we are influenced by what we experience in the community. Discuss the fact that we need to 'take stock' of our feelings if we want to work with others.

Note: This exercise can be done at any time to help students to reflect on their actions and different situations.

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[4]Cranfield J. & Wells H. C.1976. 100 Ways to Enhance Self-concept in the Classroom, 22, London: Prentice Hall.

40
Project Map

|	
Purpose of the exercise	To focus people on what they really want to do in terms of a business project. To help them to do a basic assessment before they start a business project. To enable them to work through the process of starting and running a business project. It helps (in a group situation) to get everyone to contribute, share ideas, focus on the same goal and to know what they have to do in order to reach their goal. It can be used as a basic planning tool.
What do you need	Flip chart pages (2 pages taped together to form a big 'page' for each group), magazines, scissors, glue, pens.
How long does it take	About 30-60 minutes.

What to do

☺ Have the group seated in a half-circle or horseshoe format. Divide the group into smaller groups of 5-6 people according to the projects represented (or communities they come from).

☺ Ask the groups if they already have an idea of what they want to do – i.e. what kind of business project do they want to run. Then ask them:

🕊 *Have you done a proper assessment before deciding what you want to do? This exercise can help you with your assessment and will also give you a good indication of where and how to start your business project. If you have already started, you will learn more about your project by making a 'project map.'*

☺ Give the following instructions:

🕊 *'You are now going to 'map' your project. We will hand out magazines, glue, scissors, coloured pens and a big sheet of paper to each group. Page through the magazines and cut out anything, which will help you to make a 'map' or 'picture' of your project.*

🕊 *Think about the people (who are involved), the needs of the community where your project is, the place (where is the group/project located), the actions (what are they doing), the problems and issues, the resources (available to the group) and the product(s) you want to make or are making.*

🕊 *Once the 'Project Maps' are completed, you will take the rest of the group on a 'tour' of your project'.*

☺ Allow at least 20 minutes for making the 'Business Project Map'. Then ask each group to 'guide' you on a 'tour of their project'. Ask questions with regards to the people, market, product, resources, problems, etc. If at all possible, make notes about each project on the flip chart.

🕊 Then focus on what they have gained by making the maps and ask: *Did you discover who your real market is? What are the needs of the community? Which product can you make to fulfil the needs? Who can support/link with you?*

☺ Finally focus them on the 'project path' by visualising the 'route' forward:

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👤 *Remind them that:*

⇨ *We need to know what we want and where we want to go - what our dream is...*

⇨ *We need to know where we are, what we have and what we are already doing - what our reality is and what our resources are...*

⇨ *We need to identify the problems or obstacles blocking our way forward...*

⇨ *We need look at ways of dealing with the problems - find strategies to overcome the obstacles.*
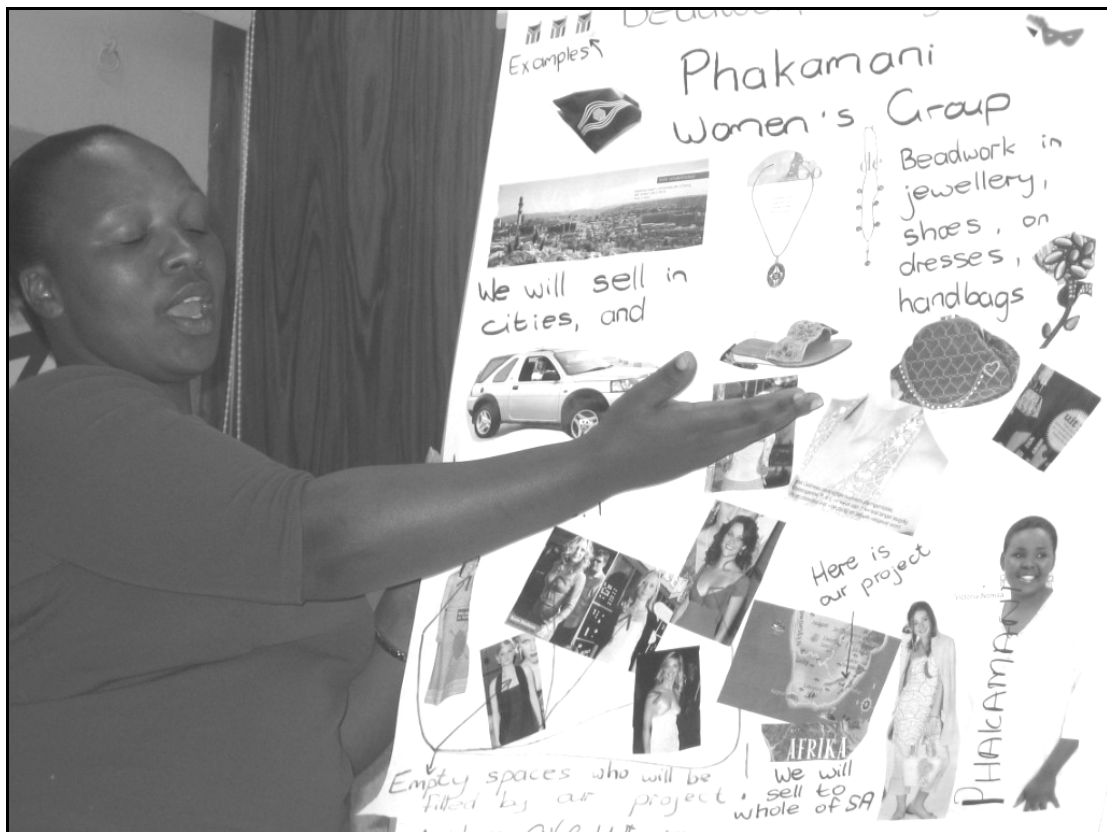
Visualise and operationalise our project by making Business Project Maps.

41
A Day/year in the Life of...

Purpose of the exercise   To make the participants aware of what is happening in their community. By using a type of reflective meditation, they are able to 'see' their community more clearly and come up with interesting information which can be used in the assessment of the community needs, resources, issues, etc.

What do you need   Flip chart, matrix*, sheet and example of matrix.

How long does it take   About 20 minutes.

What to do   *Make sure you understand the use of the matrix.

☺ Have the group seated in a half-circle or horseshoe format. Ask the participants to close their eyes and think about their community. 'Talk' them through a day in their community:

🕮 It is very early in the morning…what do you hear? What do you smell? What is happening in the community at 6 o' clock in the morning? What does it feel like to be awake in (name the community…) early in the morning?

🕮 Keep your eyes closed and think of 10 o' clock in the morning. What do you hear now? Who is doing what? Can you see the people of your community going about their daily tasks? What is it they are doing? Where are the children, mothers and the men? What do you smell now? And which sounds do you hear?

🕮 It is after lunch now. Does anything change? Do you hear something different now? What do you see – what are the people doing? Where are they? Which sounds do you hear? How are the people feeling?

🕮 Now it is dark, night. Is there a difference if it is only 7 o' clock and late at night? Which differences are there in what you hear, do, smell and see? What is the feeling you have?

☺ While the participants are sharing what they heard, smelled and saw, write everything on a matrix*. (*A Matrix is a chart which you use to give different types of information, like the time of day and the activities taking place at that time. It helps you to identify the different 'components' making up a community and to prioritise the issues/needs.

☺ Discuss the information on the matrix. Talk about other days or special events in the community, like Sunday, holidays, etc and add the information. Then ask: *What do we learn about the people, their strengths, their aspirations and their needs? What do we learn about the infrastructure of the community? What is happening in this community? Where should we start if we want to make a difference or to start a project?*

MATRIX OF COMMUNITY LIFE: 'A DAY IN S... COMMUNITY'					
TIME	**SOUNDS**	**SMELLS**	**FEELINGS**	**PLACES**	**PEOPLE & THEIR ACTIONS**
VERY EARLY	Wheel barrows Cars & busses Birds Hens & ducks quaking	Fumes Fresh air Dust Breakfast – eggs frying & coffee Smoke (wood fire)	♥ OK	Work-places far away Factories nearby have been closed	People are going to fetch water Women making breakfast Getting ready for work & school
7:30	Radio playing Sweeping the yard	More fumes from busses, taxi's		Day-care & Nursery schools	Children leaving for school Parents going of to their jobs Sundays: People going to church and Sunday-school
AFTER-NOON	Community radio: local developments, jobs, advertising, meetings Taxi's dropping off people Lots of noise & shouting	Fumes Supper Dust		Meetings at the community hall Churches	Wednesday & Thursdays: Women are going to church & church groups Youths (school drop outs) are washing the taxi's to earn money Schoolchildren are selling vegetables at the taxi rank & the 'station' (the station is closed – there is no longer any trains running) Mothers & teenagers are cooking supper Some fetch water Fighting in families Men are still in the shebeen Most children do not do homework, because their parents are not there/ don't know that they should help them or cannot help them Youths & men playing soccer, netball, cricket in the community Choral group

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					practices at the community hall
EARLY EVE-NING	𝄡 Fathers back from work, shouting at the family 𝄡 Men /women arguing about the money 𝄡 Domestic violence 𝄡 Neighbours praying and singing 𝄡 Children screaming		♥ Scared to go out ♥ No commitment to each other, the community	🏛 Community hall 🏚 Some dark streets with no street lights	🧍 Children/ youths are stealing the electrical & water cables 🧍 Families eating supper - others do not have food 🧍 Lights are burning in some of the houses – others do not have electricity 🧍 Dancing 🧍 Children & women are afraid to walk outside – robbing, raping 🧍 Wednesdays 6-8: Meetings (political) in the community hall **WEEKENDS:** 🧍 Stokvel – jiving, drinking, smoking dagga & 'oorgooi' – illegal activities 🧍 Some stokvel's are legal – they don't sell alcohol 🧍 Traditional dancing 🧍 Crime taking place
LATE AT NIGHT	𝄡 Gun shots 𝄡 TV		♥ Afraid ♥ Worry about money ♥ Disappointed		🧍 Watching TV 🧍 Making babies 🧍 Reading 🧍 Cannot sleep - Worry!!!
The overall feeling of the community is one of hopelessness, poverty, lack of motivation					

☺ The group discussed the different problems in the community and agreed that the biggest problem is that people in the community are disempowered (because they do not have jobs, hope and money).

42
Mapping

Purpose of the exercise	To help people to take a different look at their community. To 'open up' the community for the facilitator or community developer, by asking the community members to provide the information. An excellent way of doing a community assessment. It can also be used to portray a project.
What do you need	Flip chart paper (4 sheets stuck together with masking tape to form a big sheet for every group), magazines, scissors, glue, pens (optional: sand clay, sticks), black garbage bag to get rid of the waste paper.
How long does it take	About 1½ - 2 hours.

What to do

☺ Have the group seated in a half-circle or horseshoe format. Divide them according to villages / community (or projects). Hand each group the paper for their map, scissors, glue and magazines.

Give the following instructions: (If you use 'A Day in the Life of…' go to instruction 2)

🎤 *Close your eyes. Imagine you are back in you village / community (at your project). What do you see? Who do you hear? What are the people doing? What happened yesterday or last week? What is going to happen next week? Do you have a good view of your whole village / community (project)? Please open your eyes.*

🎤 *Now you are going to make a community map – use pictures, drawings or words (and even grass, stones, sand or any rubbish you can find) to portray your village / community (or project). Afterwards you are going to take us on a 'village tour' through your village/community (project). When making the map, focus on the people, the places, the resources, the problems and issues in your community /village (project).*

☺ Allow 45-60 minutes for making the maps. Get everybody back into the larger group and ask each group to take you on a 'Village tour'. Ask questions about the problems, the needs, the people and especially the resources/assets.

🎤 *Ask the participants:*
  ⇨ *What have you learned from doing the exercise?*
  ⇨ *Did you see something new?*
  ⇨ *What strengths do you see in your community / village (project)?*
  ⇨ *Are there things which can be used that you have not thought of before?*

☺ Once the group has given feedback (took you on the 'tour'), ask them to go back into their small groups and do the 'prioritising'-exercise. (See 'Circles of Priority' exercise 27.)

43
Circles of Priority

Purpose of the exercise	To help the participants to identify and prioritize the problems, issues and needs specific to their village, community or project. To help them to decide on which problem, need or issue they should focus on first. Also excellent for getting people to be open for discussion, to learn to listen to each other and to work together in focussing on one issue – and working toward reaching a specific goal.
What do you need	Completed 'community or village (or project) maps', A4-sheet of paper for each group, about 30 round circles in various sizes (from small too large), coloured pens, flip chart, Prestic.
How long does it take	About 30-45 minutes.

What to do

☺ Have the group seated in their 'community' /'village' or project groups, with their 'map' in front of them (on the floor). Give each group a sheet of paper and pens. Give them the following instructions:

🎤 *I want you to now focus on the issues, needs or problems in your community /village/project. Give each person in the group the opportunity to list at least one concern/ issue/need or problem. Write it down .Now add any other problems, issues, needs or concerns you can think of – write them down.*

☺ Allow at least 15 minutes for this discussion. Hand each group a number of big, medium and small circles and some Prestic (to stick circles onto the map) and continue with the instructions:

🎤 *Discuss which problems/concern/needs you view as BIG problems/needs or concerns – write it (one problem per circle) on the BIG circles. Now talk about which ones you feel are medium- write it down (one problem per circle). Then write the small problems/needs/concerns and write them down on the small circles, one problem per circle. Make sure that everybody agrees with the decisions about the big, medium and small problems.*

🎤 *Place the circles on the map where you think they fit best or where you think the problem area is. Look at your map – it is now covered with concerns, needs and problems. Talk to each other and see if you can link any of the problems, needs or concerns together – see if they are not one and the same thing. If they are, stick them next to each other or onto each other.*

🎤 *Finally take a good look at your map – decide where and with what you want to start. Which problem /need/concern should you tackle first?*

☺ Get feedback from the group about how it felt when everything was covered with 'problems'. Does it feel better now that they have agreed to start with one specific issue/problem/ concern?

44
Giving an "A"

Purpose of the exercise	To help people to believe in themselves: that they can achieve what they want to achieve and that they are 'worth it'. It also helps people to start out with a positive outlook. An excellent exercise to use in a student/school or any training setting where people are suppose to work for definite outcomes or grades.
What do you need	Each participant will use their own paper – or if they don't have, provide them with one A4-foliosheet each
How long does it take	15 minutes to explain the idea. The rest (writing the actual letter) is done in their own time – see below.
What to do	This exercise works better if participants can complete it in their own time away from the 'training' or group setting. If it has to be done in the group setting, allow at least 45-60 minutes (give them 'quiet time' – let them write while you are playing soft music in the background and allow NO TALKING). *NB if people cannot write, they have to ask someone they trust to write the letter for them.*

NOTE: The facilitator should read this in preparation for the exercise to understand the idea of giving an A.

Giving an "A" is to see and acknowledge the possibilities 'locked up' in yourself and other people. Looking at and approaching yourself and others this way promises to transform you as well as them. It is a shift in attitude that makes it possible for you to be all you can be and to support others to be all they dream of being. It transforms your relationships from the world of measurement/comparison into the universe of possibility.

An "A" can be given to anyone in any walk of life – to a waitress, to your employer, to your teacher, to your friends, to your brother, to a traffic cop. It helps you to look at the person inside – to respect their possibilities. It opens your (and their) mind to the countless opportunities and possibilities open to them.

☺ Have the group seated in a half-circle or horseshoe format.

🎤 Ask: *'How did you know if you had done something well in school?'* The answer is likely to be that they knew they had done well when they got good grades.

🎤 *Talk about 'grading':*

⇨ *Throughout out lives we are socialized into thinking of 'success' as 'good grades' and failure as 'low or bad grades'. And since grading becomes so important, we start to think 'we are our grades'. Yet it does not really tell us much about ourselves. It does not indicate how hard we have worked or how much time we have spent, etc. In reality it often makes us feel unsuccessful, like under-achievers and like failures.*

⇨ *Would it not be wonderful if we could 'see' the way Michelangelo saw: 'Inside every block of stone or marble dwells a beautiful statue – one needs only to remove the excess material to reveal the work of art within.'*

⇨ *Would it not have been much more empowering if – rather that using grades to measure us - more energy was focussed on getting rid of whatever it is that stands in the way of 'getting there' of developing skills and mastery and self-expression?*

⇨ *That* would mean that we would be practicing giving people an "A" – see note.

☺ Then give the following 'instructions'[5]:

🕪 *Because I truly respect you as people and am interested in helping you to open up possibilities, all of you will get an "A" at the completion of these classes/workshop/lab sessions. However, there is one requirement that you must fulfil to earn this A:*

⇨ *By tomorrow [if it is a two day workshop]; the end of the week [if it is a 5-day workshop]; or within the next two weeks [students doing lab sessions].*

  you must write me a letter dated a year from now, beginning the words:

'Dear …. (name of the lecturer/facilitator, i.e. Thembi), I got my "A" because…'

⇨ **In this letter you are to tell, in as much detail as you can, the story of what will have happened to you by next January that gave you this "A".**

⇨ **You are to place yourself in the future, looking back, and to report on all the insights you have required and the milestones you have attained during the year as if these accomplishments were already in the past.**

⇨ **Everything must be written in past tense. Phrases such as 'I hope', 'I intend' or 'I will' must not appear.**

⇨ **You may mention specific goals reached, but what I really want you to focus on is the person you will have become by next year.**

⇨ **I am interested in the attitude, feelings, and perceptions of that person who will have done all she/he wished to do or who will have become everything he/she wanted to be.**

EXAMPLES OF A 'GIVING AN "A"-LETTER'

Dear Thembi,
I deserve an "A"-candidate because I have the potential and abilities to reach my goals. I believe that each and every individual is unique and I have a vision for life. I am [the] kind of a person who likes to socialise with people and helping people, listening to other people's needs.
Zandile.[6]

Dear Teacher Mr Zander,
I received my grade "a" because I worked hard and thought hard about myself taking our class, and the result was absolutely tremendous. I became a new person. I used to be a negative person for almost everything even before trying. Now I find myself a happier person than before. I couldn't accept my mistakes about a year ago, and after every mistake I blamed myself, but now, I enjoy making mistakes and I really learn from these mistakes…Also I found out my real value. I found myself a special person, because I found out that if I believe myself I can do everything…
Esther Lee.[7]

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[5] Developed from and based on Zander S. R. & Zander B. 2000. *The Art of Possibility*, 25-29, New York: Penguin.

[6] A letter written by a participant of a workshop for community facilitators, Pretoria.

[7] A letter written by a young Korean flute player at the Boston Conservatory for Music, published in Zander S. R. and Zander B. 2000. *The Art of Possibility,* 29, New York: Penguin.

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45
Being a Contribution

Purpose of the exercise	To help people break free from limiting rules and help them realise that there is a different/positive way of looking at life, making positive use of opportunities we have each day.
What do you need	Small paper squares. A flip chart. A large sheet of paper (stick two newsprint sheets together for the 'karos'). Divide two more newsprint sheets into equal sized squares - one for each participant. Paint & brushes or colouring pencils.
How long does it take	About 15 minutes. Next session: 40 minutes for the 'karos'.
What to do	Begin this exercise during one session/week and complete the 'Contribution Karos' during the next/week.

☺ Have the group stand in a circle. Ask them to turn to the person on their right, look the person in the eyes and give a big smile. What does it feel like to 'receive' a smile out of the blue? Then ask them to turn to the person on their left – they have to take that person's hand and give it a friendly squeeze. Again ask them how it feels to receive an unexpected 'wishing-you-well'-squeeze? List the reaction on the flip chart. Ask them to be seated again.

☺ Now they have to write down – on the small piece of paper - anything they have contributed over the past week. It can be anything, from helping an old lady across the street, to calling home, handing in work on time or standing in for a friend.

☺ Then explain to them the 'rules' of the 'Contribution Game'[1]:

  ⇨ *Firstly you have to declare yourself a contribution;*

  ⇨ *Secondly, throw yourself into life as someone who makes a difference, accepting that you may not always understand how or why.*

☺ Remind them that: *Naming oneself and others as a contribution produces a shift away from self-concern and engages us in a relationship with others that is an arena for making a difference (Ben Zander, 2000:30).* If they are willing to play this game, there will be no time to talk about what they did *not* do, how badly they have done in their tests, or how unkind or irresponsible they have been. They are only to concentrate and to share by describing themselves in terms of *contribution.*

📣 Give them the assignment: *For the next week you have to throw yourselves in life as a contribution – like casting a pebble in a pond, imaging that everything you do sends ripples out beyond the horizon. Before class next week, I want you to write (or draw/paint) all the stories of you being a contribution in different colours on your small square- one side only.*

☺ At the next session, each person is to paste their piece on the "CONTRIBUTION KAROS" – thus allowing them to read each others' stories. It will even be more meaningful if they share their 'contribution-stories' in the group while making the karos, and reflect on how it made a difference in their lives.

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[1] Zander S. R. & Zander B. 2000. *The Art of Possibility*, 30-32, New York: Penguin.

46
IALAC

Purpose of the exercise	To help people become aware of the ways in which we 'mistreat' one another without even thinking about it. Excellent exercise to talk about parenting skills or even in boss-worker relationships.
What do you need	An 'IALAC'-poster[1] (A4 sheet with IALAC written on it in large letters and fastened with rope around the co-facilitators neck.
How long does it take	About 10- 20 minutes.

What to do

☺ Have the group seated in a half-circle or horseshoe format. The co-facilitator comes forward with the IALAC –poster around her neck. Explain what the IALAC stands for: **I** = I   **A** = am   **L** = loveable   **A**=and   **C** = capable. Do the following role-play:

🔊 *The co-facilitator is the child, over sleeping. The facilitator is the mother who wakes the child up – not very kindly. When the child protests, the mother gets even more irritated and says: Get out of bed – you're always late! (the child tears a piece off her poster). Now the mother calls, angrily: 'Come and have your breakfast – you cannot go to school without it. And why didn't you make your sandwich?" (The child tears off a piece from her poster). Mother is running to the car, scolding: 'Now see what you have done! It is not only you who are late; you've made me late as well. You're so selfish!' (The child tears a piece off her sticker).*

🔊 *As they arrive at school, the facilitator takes on the teachers' role. She says strictly: 'Margery, your socks are hanging over you're shoes – fix it immediately and don't be such a slob'. (The child tears a piece off the sticker). The teacher then pushes the child towards her desk, saying, 'You're such a lazy child! No wonder you're mother gets angry at you…' (the child tears a piece off her sticker).*

☺ Ask the group what happened. Look at the whole IALAC poster torn to pieces spread out all over the place. Ask them: *Can you fix this poster /this relationship? How should you do it? Where do we find that this is happening to us? How can we prevent 'tearing up' people? How should the mother have handled the situation?*

NOTE: It is NB De-role the co-facilitator – ask the group how the mother and child can 'make up' – give the co-facilitator (child) at least one good hug.

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[1] Based on an idea from Cranfield J. & Wells. 1976. *100 Ways to Enhance Self-concept in the Classroom*. London: Prentice Hall.

47
Bang!

Purpose of the exercise	To look at trauma as something most people experience at one or other time in their life. Help them to deal with their reaction and the impact of trauma. Raise awareness of being sensitive to other people's trauma – also in the community.
What do you need	'Trauma'-poster/worksheet. Flip chart.
How long does it take	About 20 minutes.

What to do

☺ Have the group seated in a half-circle or horseshoe format. Talk about the fact that most of us have had 'bad' or 'scary' or real painful things happen to us at one or other time in our lives. Ask the group to give examples of what they see as 'traumatic experiences'. List their examples.

☺ Talk about how it makes them feel if they look at it or watch TV-accounts of traumatic incidents. List the feelings they come up with.

☺ Now divide the group in small groups of two's (by counting 1, 2, 1, 2 and then turning to face each other). Show them the 'Trauma'-poster. Ask them to take 5 minutes to share a traumatic event in their lives with each other. Talk about

    ⇨ where it happened,

    ⇨ when it happen,

    ⇨ who was involve,

    ⇨ how did it make them feel,

    ⇨ what did they do immediately after the event,

    ⇨ who helped them,

    ⇨ how long did it take them 'to get over it'?

☺ Get feed back and point out that all people do not experience and 'live through' traumatic events in the same way. We need to know how trauma influences a person, so that we are better able to help them to heal again.

Remember

• Trauma affects us on different levels:

    ⇨ Physical injury – like stab wounds, broken bones, injuries due to molestation

    ⇨ Emotional injury or pain – confusion, pain, denial, hysteria, withdrawal

    ⇨ Social 'injury' – social injustice, group conflict, prejudices, isolation, rejection

    ⇨ Spiritual 'injury' – rejection of God, hopelessness

• Trauma rarely affects only the victim – but affects the whole family and community. It may cause break down in relationships, revenge, apathy, recklessness, disempowerment, desperation, anarchy, alienation.

• Trauma care involves immediate physical and emotional follow up us, as well as offering help in the form of support, involvement and counselling.

TRAUMA

WHAT HAS HAPPENED IN YOUR LIFE THAT MATCHES THESE EVENTS?

☹ ....
☹ ....
☹ ....
☹ ....

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48
Trauma Cycle

Purpose of the exercise   To make people aware of the cycle of emotions and experiences they may go through after a traumatic event. To help them identify with this 'cycle' and to enable them to be sensitive to how others may be living through the 'trauma cycle'. To help them realise that it is necessary to deal with these feelings in order to live a full life and to reach out to others.

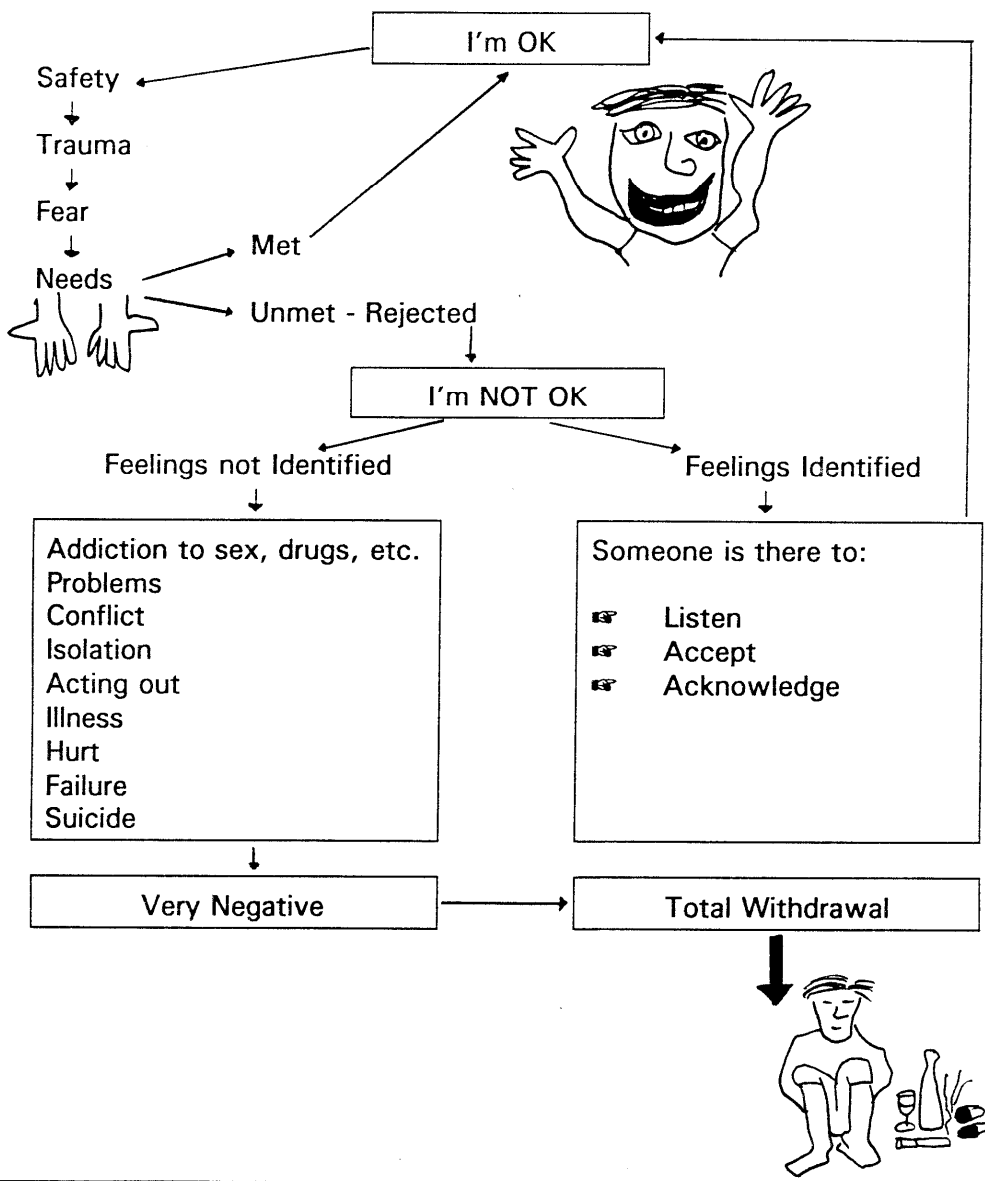**What do you need**   'Trauma Cycle'-poster, flip chart.

How long does it take   About 30 minutes.

What to do

☺ Have the group seated in a half-circle or horseshoe format and share the following 'story' with them:

🗣 *In my mother's womb I felt completely safe and content. To leave that safety made me feel scared – I experienced trauma. My empty stomach and wet nappy frightened me. I needed someone (like a mother) to look after me. Only when this person took care of me, did I feel okay.*

🗣 *When I was older I felt safe at places where there were people like teachers and good friends around me. Most of the time I felt safe at school, but one day I was left alone at school long after everybody went home. There was nobody to take care of me, to talk to. I felt forgotten, alone, unwanted that nobody cared and maybe nobody liked me. After what felt like hours my granny came to fetch me and said that she was sorry she was so late - she had transport problems. She listen to how I felt and hugged me. I felt safe and okay again.*

🗣 *When I lost a loved one I was shocked. I could not believe what had happened. I needed people to understand my doubts and fears. I needed friends to be there for me. Instead they criticised me for being different and sad and gave me advice: you have to get over it and get on with your life; time will heal…. I argued with them and decided I must have done something wrong to deserve this, or that something was really wrong inside me. I felt unwanted, unimportant, that nobody cared and maybe nobody liked of me. Six months later I felt depressed and helpless. I was hooked on drink and pills; I had no friends, no money. My work suffered. I was a failure; I felt my life had no meaning.*

☺ Talk about how we all have similar experiences – we may not end up exactly the same, but we feel pretty hopeless and useless. Now share the 'Trauma Cycle'. Ask them: *Look at the different 'phases' and try to identify where you are at the moment. Do you feel Okay? Or do you feel that you have some of these 'unidentified' feelings? Maybe you feel total withdrawal?*

☺ Talk about what we can do to deal with these feelings – i.e. identify where we are, acknowledge what we are feeling and doing, sharing it with the right person or even go for counselling.

MY TRAUMA CYCLE

☞ *Circle the place where you are at this moment in the cycle.*

I'm OK

Safety
↓
Trauma
↓
Fear
↓
Needs → Met
     → Unmet - Rejected
↓
I'm NOT OK

Feelings not Identified   Feelings Identified

Addiction to sex, drugs, etc.	Someone is there to:
Problems	
Conflict	☞ Listen
Isolation	☞ Accept
Acting out	☞ Acknowledge
Illness	
Hurt	
Failure	
Suicide	

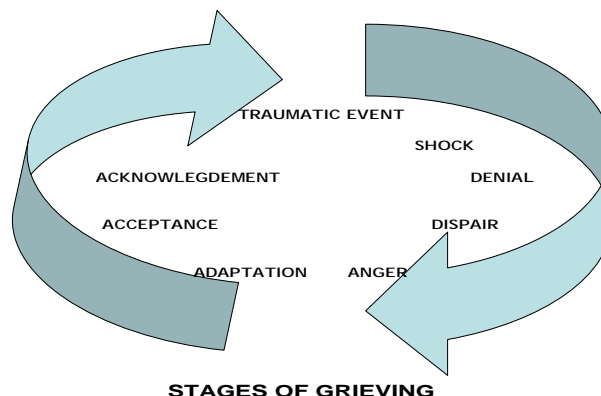Very Negative → Total Withdrawal

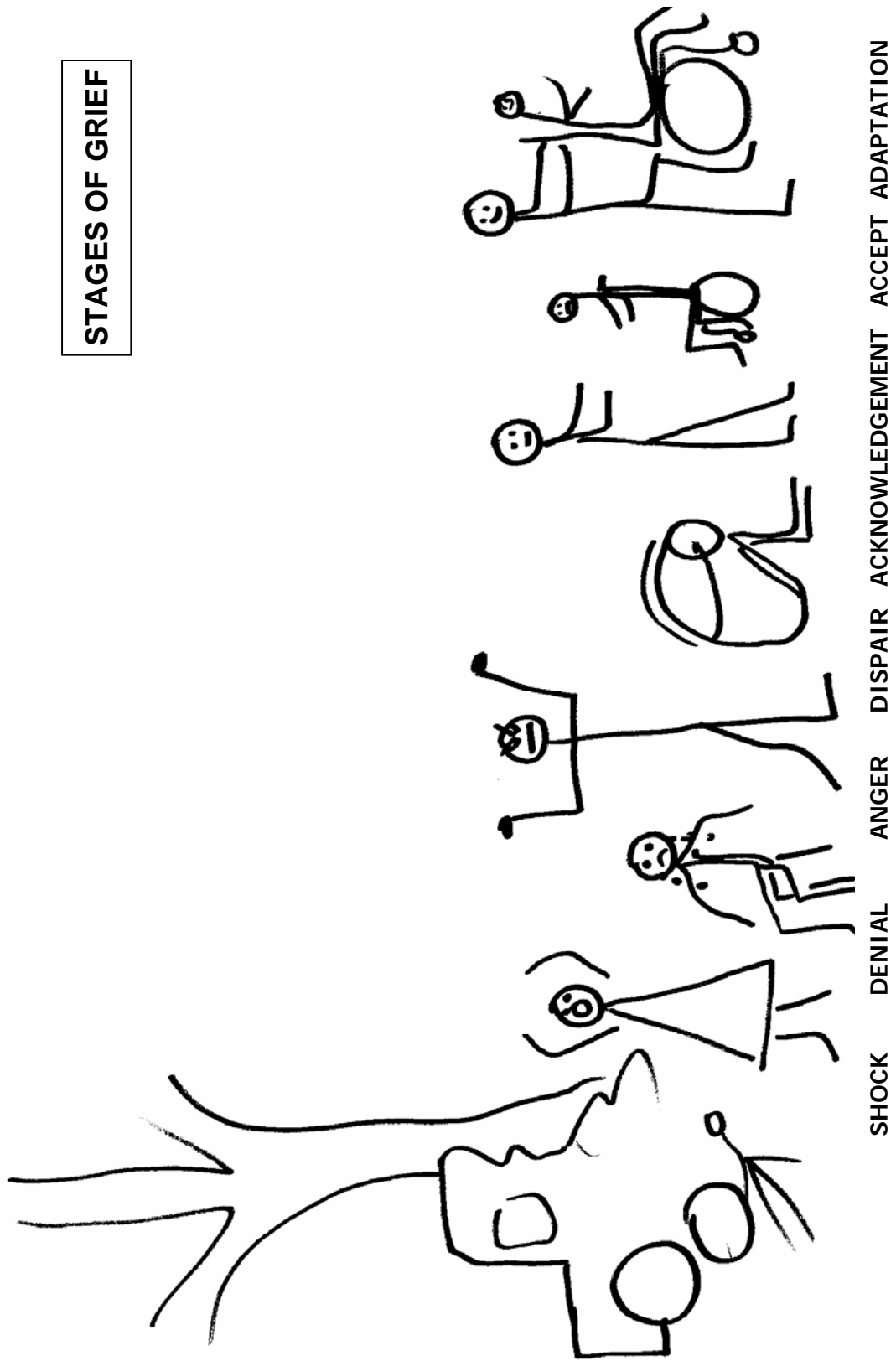IPSO©2008

49
Grieving

Purpose of the exercise	To help people realise that it is natural to go through different stages of grief. To make them aware of these stages and of the fact that one should not get stuck in one of these stages. To help them understand how to help others through the stages.
What do you need	'Stages of Grief'- poster, flip chart.
How long does it take	About 20 minutes.

What to do

☺ Have the group seated in a half-circle or horseshoe format. Ask the group to give examples of grief that they have experienced. Ask: *How did if feel? What did they go through? Does it include one or more feelings? How long does it take to grief?*

☺ Now talk about the different stages of grief** and discuss how a person could move from one stage to the other or get stuck in any of these stages. Ask them if they have examples of people moving through these stages or getting stuck in it.

☺ Talk about the role of the 'helper' or volunteer: What does he/she have to do? List some of the things the group mention, but also focus on the following:

   ⇨ Having knowledge and understanding of the stages of grief.

   ⇨ Understanding what the other person is going through.

   ⇨ Allowing the person to feel their pain.

   ⇨ Being alert for 'danger signs' – when does a person get stuck in a phase?

☺ Ask the group to give an example of someone they know who are going through the grief process and use it to do a role play: the group member is the 'helper' and has to reach out to the grieving person (played by another group member). Help them to identify in which stage of grief the person is and how to deal with it. (NB See the exercises on 'DEALING WITH TREAUMA' for guidelines on how to deal with a grieving person.

STAGES OF GRIEVING

STAGES OF GRIEF

SHOCK   DENIAL   ANGER   DISPAIR   ACKNOWLEDGEMENT   ACCEPT   ADAPTATION

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50
Candid Camera & Hands On

Purpose of the exercise	To help people with communication by concentrating on looking, listening, paying attention and reflecting on their observations.
What do you need	A flip chart.
How long does it take	About 20-30 minutes.
What to do	Based on work by Virginia Satir.[1]

☺ Have the group seated in a half-circle or horseshoe format. Ask them to number one, two, one, two – until each person is either number one or number two. Now ask them to move their chairs so that each 'number 1' sits directly in front a 'number 2', close enough to touch. Give the following instructions:

CANDID CAMERA

🎤 *Imagine each of you has a camera and you are photographing one another. Sit back comfortably in your chair and just look 'through the lens' at the person in front of you. Without talking, look at the moveable parts of the face: notice what the eyes, the eyelids, the eyebrows, the mouth, the nostrils, the facial and neck muscles are doing, and how the skin is colouring. Look at the body, its size, form, the clothing. After a minute, close your eyes - 'see' the 'photo' you have taken.*

🎤 *Reflect on how this is what we do all the time: we 'see' and then interpret, e.g. we may see grey hair and think of your grandmother, or a white skin and think of 'apartheid'. We don't do it intentionally, yet we all have this 'internal dialogue'.*

🎤 *Now take another look through the lens: does you partner remind you of anyone? Close your eyes and search through your mind to find the connection. Maybe it is a former friend, a teacher, a TV personality. Open your eyes and share with your partner what you have learned from your internal dialogue. Give the partner time to respond. Reflect on how this could effect your communication with one another.*

HANDS ON

🎤 *Stay in the same position on your chairs - facing one another. Look at your partner and ask permission to take his/her hands. Then take both hands in yours and close your eyes. Slowly explore the hands of your partner – notice the form, texture. Experience the attitudes you have while exploring these hands - how if feels to touch them and to be touched by them. Open your eyes and let yourself experience what happens. Is there a difference? Now let go of your partners hands – in a friendly manner – and sit back, closing your eyes. Reflect on what you have learned. Then open your eyes again and share something of what your experience with your partner.*

☺ *Back in the group: reflect on how looking and touching others influence us and how – if we work in the community, we have to be constantly aware of our internal dialogue and of the different meanings things have for people, i.e. touching.*

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[1] Satir V. 1972. *People Making*, 34-42, California: Science and Behaviour Books.

51
Different but the Same

Purpose of the exercise	To guide people through the opening phases of the workshop situation – getting to know each other and 'getting in touch'. Also to get people to focus on what they want/need ('dream identification').
What do you need	1 Balloon, a piece string and coloured permanent marker per person.
How long does it take	About 20 minutes.

What to do

☺ The whole group is to sit around in a circle. Each person is handed a piece of string, a coloured permanent marker and a balloon, which they should blow up and tie to their wrist.

☺ Give the following instructions:

🎤 *Each person should take a good look at each other, trying to find the person who you think is the most different from you – age, sex, place where they come from, looks, etc. Go over and sit next to that person. Make sure you take your balloon with you! You have five minutes to get to know this person who is 'the most different from you'. You should do this by:*

⇨ *Telling each other why your think they are different from you.*

⇨ *Then try to find something you have in common with each other.*

🎤 *Did you identify the differences and found some similarities? Who want to share it with the group?*

☺ Share and view similarities and differences. Ask them how they feel now that they have discovered they are not so different from one another.

☺ Then give the following instructions:

🎤 *Now that you know each other a little better, I would like you to take five-minute to share your dream – for yourself, your family or your community – with each other. Before you start talking, I would like you to close your eyes. Think about that dream of yours – what is it you really want…what does it look like…who does it involve. Can you see the picture of your dream? You may open your eyes and share this dream, this picture with your partner. Talk about it and make sure that the other person has a clear picture of your dream. Then go ahead and write your partner's name and dream on their balloon.*

☺ Ask each person to introduce his/her partner and their dream. Tie all the balloons into one/two big bundles in order to use the dreams later during the session.
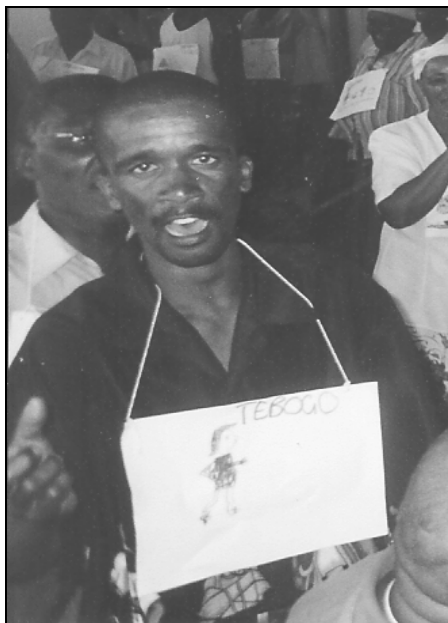
☺ Highlight differences and similarities in the dreams.

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52
Name Tags

Purpose of the exercise   To help people with introducing themselves to one another and to focus on the fact that each person is special and has something to share.

What do you need   1 A4 sheet, piece of string (or tape) and coloured pens per person.

How long does it take   About 20 minutes.

What to do

☺ With the group seated in a half-circle, the facilitator gives the following instructions:

🗣 *Sit in a relaxed position, with your feet in front of you on the floor and your back well back against the chair. Close your eyes, breath deeply and thing about yourself. What is it about yourself that makes you special? How do your parents, or friends, or siblings describe you? If you have to describe yourself to someone who does not know you, which word or picture would you use? Now write that word or draw that picture on the piece of paper.*

☺ Allow 5 minutes for this, and then instruct them to tie the 'nametag' around their neck (or to stick it to their chests). Each individual then gets the opportunity to come to the front and introduce him-/her to the group – sharing why he/she used the specific word or picture to describe him-/her.

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53
One True Thing

Purpose of the exercise	To help people to get to know each other better in a fun way and to 'break the ice' at the beginning of a workshop or training session. Don't use this if the group is totally unfamiliar with one another - they have to have some knowledge and a degree trust for this exercise to be effective.
What do you need	A Flip chart – if you want to write their statements.
How long does it take	About 15 minutes: if it is a large group ask group to do this 2-2 (allow 5 minutes) and share only the 'truth' in the large group (allow 10 minutes). If the group is small, ask every participant to share all 3 statements with the whole group.

What to do

☺ Have the group seated in a half-circle or horseshoe format. *If it is a large group*, ask them to number one, two, one, two – until each person is either number one or number two. Now ask them to turn to each other, so that a number one is facing a number two. If it is a small group (8) ask them to do this as they are sitting – with each participant sharing with the whole group.

☺ Give the following instructions:

🎙 *Take a minute to close your eyes and think about yourself. If you were told that you have to 'sum up your life' in three truthful statements or 'truths' about yourself, what would those be?*

🎙 *Now try and 'disguise' the truth about yourself, by changing two of the statements into 'false statements' or untruths, leaving you with only one true statement about yourself. For example, my 3 original true statements may be: (1) I am 21, (2) I love to sing and (3) I am good at sewing. I will 'disguise' the truth about myself by telling the group: (1) I turned 19 recently, (2) I hate singing and (3) I am good at sewing.*

☺ Now each participant is to share the three statements with the group (the two 'untruths' and the one truth). The group has to guess which statement is 'the one true thing' about each other.

☺ Reflect on how we often 'hide' behind untruths and also how we think we know or trust someone but we don't really know the truth about them.

☺ Talk about how this could influence relationships, team and group work.

54
Wind in the Willows

Purpose of the exercise	To help team building, trust, interaction. Also to create an awareness of how a group/project/team can be influenced by things/events powers from the outside.
What do you need	A flip chart.
How long does it take	About 15 minutes.

What to do

☺ Have the group standing in a close circle and give the following instructions:

🎤 *We are going to work together as a team, by standing in the circle and holding hands. We need three volunteers: one to stand inside the circle and two to be outside the circle. The person inside the circle is 'one of us' – our newest 'recruit' to our team; and those outside are representing a gale force wind ('outside forces'). The person inside will have to rely totally on the team members to keep her/him from falling over, whilst the 'strong wind' is trying to blow her an the rest of the team over and to pieces. Are you ready? Wind, start blowing!*

☺ Allow some time for the 'wind' to blow, and the person in the middle to experience what it feels like to be 'blown in the wind'. You may want to change the person in the middle to give someone else the experience.

☺ After a couple of minutes, ask the 'wind' to stop blowing and ask for feedback: firstly for the person inside: *What did it feel like to be blown? Was easy to trust your team mates?*

☺ And to the team: *How did it feel to have to protect your team member? What did the 'strong wind' do? What meaning does it have?*

☺ Ask the 'wind' what it feels like to be the 'outsider force' and to see the destruction it brings.

☺ Relate the exercise to team work and how each team have to struggle on a daily basis. With outside forces. Ask them, to identify the specific team's 'strong wind(s)'.

55
Blind folded

Purpose of the exercise	To demonstrate how we lead – often without really informing those we lead of what the goals and plans are. To demonstrate what the 'blindfolded' community has to go through. To get participants to outline 'good leadership practices'.
What do you need	A blindfold (3-cornered piece of cloth), flip chart, objects to build the obstacle course (chairs, bags, etc), rope.
How long does it take	About 30 minutes.

What to do

☺ Have the group seated in a half-circle or horseshoe format. Ask for two volunteers and take them outside. While they are outside build an 'obstacle course' with the help of the group. Use anything in the room – chairs, bags, tables – and use the rope to create an obstacle for the unsuspected 'follower' to climb through. As the group to go back to their seats and keep quiet while the 'leader' guides the 'follower' through the obstacle course - they should be 'quiet observers'.

☺ In the meantime, ask the two participants which of them wants to be the leader. The other person (the 'follower' or the 'community') is blindfolded. Take the 'leader' out of earshot (where the 'follower' cannot hear) and tell him/her: *'You have to take your blindfolded 'follower' through the obstacle course'.*

☺ The 'leader' and 'follower' are then asked to enter the room and do as instructed. Allow the process to continue without any prompting from the facilitator – until the 'leader' decides he/she has taken the 'follower' through the whole obstacle course.

☺ **Ask the 'follower'**: *How did it feel to be led like this? Did you know what was expected from you? Was it easy to do the task? Is there anything the 'leader' could have done differently?*

☺ **Then ask the 'leader'**: *How did it feel to lead a 'blind follower'? Was it easy to get him/her through the course?*

☺ **Finally ask the group**: *What happened here? Did the 'leader' do a good job? What could the 'leader' have done differently? Is this what is happening in practice – in our groups and community?*

☺ If the 'leader' did not give verbal instructions while leading the 'follower', ask him/her to do the course again, this time giving clear verbal instructions. After completion, discuss the difference it has made – first asking the 'follower' if it was any easier this time round.

☺ Compile a list of tips for leadership on the flip chart - see example:

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Tips for Leadership'

☞   Communicate with those you are leading (give information).

☞   Rather walk next to the ones you are leading than 'in front'.

☞   Listen to those you are leading.

☞   Start slowly and be patient.

☞   Be humble and willing to do things.

☞   Guide those you are leading and have physical contact with them.

56
Village Walk

Purpose of the exercise	To get to know the community you are working in. To built trust and to get first hand information about the community from the community (by going there).
What do you need	Contact persons within the community to show you around. Notebook and pen. Transport to the community. A translator. A camera. Map/directions on how to get to the community.
How long does it take	This could take up to 1 or 2 days, depending on the surroundings and size of the village/community.

What to do

☺ Preparation

The 'Village Walk' requires pre-planning – with the representatives from the community you need to plan the date, time and duration of your visit. You also need to make sure that you will be introduced to the leaders in the community. Lastly, you need to take care that you are aware of the 'culture' of the community: how to dress, how to greet people, who to greet, and what language you will be best able to communicate in. Be careful not to raise false hopes and expectations: make it very clear that the purpose is to get to know and learn from the community (and not to bring them money, resources).

☺ Village Walk

⇨ Enter the village/community with the representative(s) and let them guide you to where you should go first – and tell you whom you should greet first.

⇨ Once there, you have to try and speak to as many people from different areas as possible. Also visit as many possible of the places that are identified as local 'problem areas'.

⇨ Also visit the resources and places of activity, i.e. shebeens, places where people work, crèches, churches, the clinic.

⇨ Ask about the issues, people, skills, customs and happenings within the community.

⇨ If time allows, ask villagers to tell you stories about the local customs, important events, past occurrences.

⇨ If possible, take photographs for future reference and also to have something to give back to the villagers/community.

☺ Special focus areas

If any special focus area has been identified (or if you are representing a specific agency or project) make sure you visit that place/area. Get as much possible information on the issue/place. Try to get representatives of the group/community involved, to draw up a matrix – showing where, when and how the problem/issues occur. (For example, if the special area of interest is 'families without income' ask to see these families; draw a matrix where you indicate – from the information given by

them – exactly how many people are in each family, where do they live, if there are any specific special circumstances you should be aware of, etc. If the people cannot write, draw the houses in the dust, get stones to represent the number of people and ask the community if the correct number of 'people' (stones) are placed at every house. You could even get each household to pose for a picture – thus giving you the correct number of people, and also something (a token of good will) that you can bring back to the family.)

Franschhoek community: Children leaving school

Backyard business   *Boys creating their own toys*

'Hokke' and waving children – asking for food   *Squatters drinking & smoking*

'Street Shop'   *Street vendors selling their brooms*

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57
ISD Model

Purpose of the exercise	To give people/organisations (especially professionals in the developmental field) a basic framework for assessment, planning and co-ordinating of services and/or intervention/input in the community. (Do with exercises 58 and 59.)
What do you need	'ISD-model' information sheet and 'Windows', flip chart.
How long does it take	About 60-75 minutes (with the case study included).
What to do	Read the background, case study and application.

Share and discuss this information with the participants in order for them to get a clear picture of how to approach social development.

MODEL FOR INTEGRATED SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT (ISD-MODEL)

- The ISD-model helps us to look at our communities from a holistic, inclusive perspective.
- Focus on:
  - The total community and its resources.
  - People and their environment.
  - The strengths and competencies which can be put to work towards the benefit of the community as a whole.
  - Inclusiveness - get everyone to work together for the good of the community.
  - Full participation of all parties ('givers' and 'receivers') involved.
- Screen the community for:
  - Needs.
  - Obvious lacks.
  - Existing or potential problem areas.
  - Existing and under-developed resources, i.e. human skills, potentials, strengths, competencies, coping strategies.
- Promote the experience of 'ownership' amongst all involved.

PRINCIPLES FOR AN INTEGRATED APPROACH

- Focussing on the community as a whole.
- Adapting a multi-organisational and multidisciplinary approach.
- Rooting each action or project in sound business principles.
- Acknowledging existing problems and unfulfilled needs.
- Turning to the community for participation and help with regards to finding solutions, solving their problems and meeting their needs.
- Identifying potential problem solutions.

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- Re-thinking and updating social and community work strategies and skills.
- Promoting co-operation.
- Making inputs on different levels (therapeutic, rehabilitation, preventative, enrichment).
- Performing a total participative community assessment and prioritising of needs, problems and target groups and areas.
- Empowering the community as a whole (building social, economical, environmental capacity).
- Practising inclusive (participative) decision making and transparency.
- Releasing people's capacities and potential.
- Increasing responsiveness of social and physical environments.

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58
4 Windows

Purpose of the exercise	To give people/organisations (especially professionals in the developmental field) a basic framework for assessment, planning and co-ordinating of services and/or intervention/input in the community. (Do with exercise 57 and 59.)
What do you need	'ISD-model' information sheet and 'Windows', flip chart.
How long does it take	About 60-75 minutes (with the case study included).
What to do	Read the background, case study and application.

☺ Have the group seated in a half-circle or horseshoe format. Ask them what they think are the most important aspects of determining what to do and how to decide which services to deliver in a community. List those things on the flip chart.

☺ Give the group the *definition of COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT: it is the planned gathering of information in a community with a view to draw conclusions and start planning actions and initiatives.* Community assessment should lay the foundation for structuring, planning, decision-making, mobilisation, implementation and evaluation of actions within a community. Assessment in the community should always include human problems/needs (emotional, spiritual, physical and mental); the relationship and interactions between man and environment; as well as structural needs (i.e. schools buildings, roads, etc) (Lombard 1993:1-3).

☺ Explain how assessment should take place: Community assessment should ideally take place by means of semi-structured interviews, speaking tot key informants, community mapping, village walks, listening to stories, doing participative timelines and determining where and with what to start (prioritising) with community.

☺ Explain that one cannot focus on only one situation or aspect when beginning to 'move into' a community: one has to see the whole picture. One should look at and assess the needs, resources, abilities, competencies, coping strategies, problems, issues and concerns that form a pattern in the community. One way to do this is to use the Model for Integrated Social Development (ISD-model.)

☺ Draw the 4 windows on the flip chart. Explain and discuss the focus and the principles of the ISD model. (Refer to the exercise sheets.) Use the 4-Windows exercise sheet to explain the different focus areas and the strategies.

☺ Now divide the group into smaller groups of 5-6 people – if they are from different agencies, according to agency or organisation. Give them the Franschhoek-case study (exercise 98) and ask them to do an assessment of the Franschhoek community, using the '4-windows' model. Discuss and give feedback in the larger group to ensure that everyone understands the model.

☺ Once they have completed this, they can also do and assessment of one of the communities in which their agency or organisation is working – using the '4-windows' –model.

ISD-MODEL (A)

MODEL FOR INTEGRATED SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

(Adapted from Lewis & Lewis, 1990 **Isabel Kirsten** *©IPSO 1994)*

DIRECT CLIENT SERVICES	DIRECT COMMUNITY SERVICES

Focus on:
■ Identified clients/client groups in the community towards which the organisation has the responsibility of providing direct services in order
    ➢ to enable them to function on a acceptable level
    ➢ to prevent potential problems
    ➢ to prevent factors influencing their normal developmental processes and thus their physical and mental health and functioning
 	
Main strategies:
 	
☞ Reaching out
☞ Counselling & therapy
☞ Early identification
☞ Working with groups
☞ Prevention
	Focus on:
	■ The community as a whole in order to identify gaps in their education and equipment for healthy social functioning.
	
	Main strategies:
	
	☞ Discussion groups
	☞ Educational groups
	☞ Adult education
	☞ Talks and lectures
	☞ Life-skills education
	☞ Training opportunities
	☞ Retraining opportunities

INDIRECT CLIENT SERVICES	INDIRECT COMMUNITY SERVICES
Focus on: ■ Community groups with specific needs or problems. **Main strategies:** ☞ Consultation ☞ Advocacy (cause) ☞ Co-ordination ☞ Linking ☞ Empowering ☞ Influencing public opinions	**Focus on:** ■ Social, economic and political policies which have a suppressive influence on the functioning of specific groups within the community. ■ Public policies necessary to improve the responsivity of the community towards the community needs. **Main strategies:** ☞ Policy management ☞ Lobbying ☞ Public speaking ☞ Office holding ☞ Organising of community forums

59
Case Study (ISD Model)

Purpose of the exercise	The case study is done as part of the 4-Windows exercise to give participants a real life, practical example of how to apply the '4 windows'. It equips them for community needs assessment and planning an action/intervention strategy.
What do you need	Flip chart, Franschhoek case study sheets, 'Community Assessment'-sheets and the 'Identifying Development Possibilities for a Community'-sheets for each small group.
How long does it take	About 60-90 minutes.
What to do	(Do with exercises 57 and 58).

☺ Have the group seated in a half-circle or horseshoe format. Divide the group into smaller groups of 5-6 and give each group (1) the Franschhoek Community case study– sheets with the background information on the community; the (2) 'Community Assessment-sheet and the (3) Identifying Development Possibilities for a Community-sheet. Give them the following instructions:

📢 *The Franschhoek Community Forum* or FCF is a network organisation with the vision to bring positive change to the community; community development practitioners are employed to oversee this process. You are now the members of FCF* who has to do an assessment and come up with a plan for the Franschhoek community. Use the* case study and '<u>Community Assessment-sheet</u>' *to do the assessment.*

📢 *Look at and read through the case study, focussing the key aspects:*

   ⇨ *the human needs (emotional, spiritual, physical and mental needs)*

   ⇨ *the community's abilities, competencies, coping strategies*

   ⇨ *the relationship and interactions between man and environment*

   ⇨ *the available resources (e.g. other agencies, services, community initiatives)*

   ⇨ *the problems, issues and concerns*

   ⇨ *structural needs (i.e. schools, buildings, roads, electricity, water, etc.).*

☺ Allow the small groups about 20-30 minutes to do their assessments. Get everyone back to the larger group for feedback. Draw '4 windows' on the flip chart and list their information. Paying special attention to the identification of strengths, competencies and resources. Compare the information generated by the different groups.

☺ Ask the participants to go back into the smaller groups. Give the following instructions:

📢 *Use your '<u>Identifying Development Possibilities-sheet</u>' and list the services and actions you think should be implemented in the area. Remember you are community development practitioners employed by FCF and you have to focus on what FCF should do; who they should serve and how. Think creative and ask: 'What can be done that has not been done before? How can different organisations and stakeholders co-operate to provide services?*

☺ Allow about 20 minutes and ask for feedback. Focus on the different inputs expected from welfare organisations (social workers) and community development practitioners, but also at how these groups can work together in order to provide a more co-ordinated service. Discuss how one can apply this method to assess one's own involvement in a specific community.

ISD MODEL (B): FRANSCHHOEK COMMUNITY CASE STUDY-SHEET

This community is divided into different sub-communities – in the centre there is the town with small businesses and busy tourist industry (with numerous hotels and restaurants catering for the mainly overseas visitors).There are many wine farms in the surrounding area – of which most belong to non-South Africans. In the outlying areas there are smaller 'settlements', like the older Groendal, the newer area with wooden/log houses (or 'hokke'), La Motte Forestry and Wemmershoek Saw Mills. Different population groups are living in this area: whites, coloured people and Xhosa-speaking people coming from the Eastern Cape. People mostly work on farms in the smaller factories and in the tourist industry.

There are a number of primary health care clinics and a day hospital will open in August in the Simondium area. Various churches serve the area and a number of welfare organisations and CBO's deliver services to children, the aged, people with disabilities and families. The problem of TIK and teenage pregnancy is prevalent in the area. HIV+AIDS are also affecting the area and many children are left orphaned. Many initiatives such as clubs, sport events etc have been started to focus on the youth, but they don't seem to last long since rivalry and mistrust amongst different groups in the community seems to be rampant.

Different facilities for children – crèches, primary and secondary schools – can be seen, yet many children are going hungry, because their parents are unemployed or abuse alcohol. Parents often do not help children with their homework and in the afternoons and on weekends there is little recreation for the children. They go to 'corner stores' or play sports, but then drink afterwards... Children often only have themselves and their imaginative 'toys' and games to keep them busy.

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Children from as young as 9,10 are abusing drugs (TIK) and many girls from the age of 12-14 get pregnant on purpose and many drop out of school at this age.

Young boys looking for cigarettes (and maybe TIK) – there are many TIK houses in the various communities selling alcohol and TIK to the under aged.

Unemployed people – living in shacks, abusing substances, feeling hopelessness.

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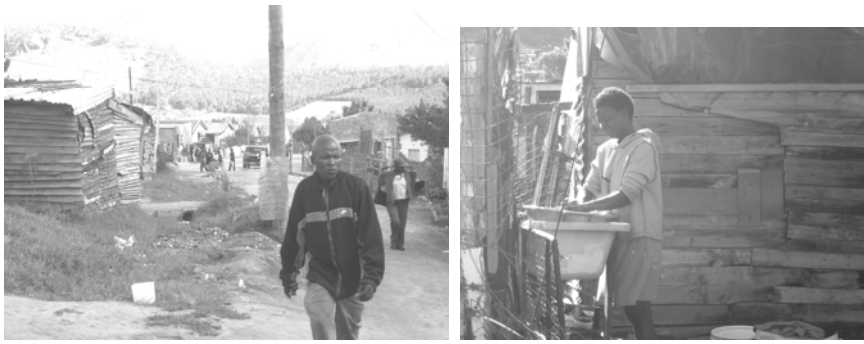
People in the 'hokke' area struggling to wash clothes without running water.

Littering is evident everywhere - little care is given to the environment and conservation. Stray animals in poor condition are seen wandering the streets, looking for food.

Unemployment is rive, but a few people try to make a living from their skills and crafts – a hairdresser, street vendors and selling grass brooms and tools.

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Care for the disabled is given by volunteers. The aged gather regularly with the help of a community based organisation to share soup, sandwiches and activities.

HIV/AIDs is a huge problem – people are lining up at the AIDS Help Desk and new graves are dug every day. The staff members of one of the primary health clinics are here waiting to serve those who come for help.

Some children are well cared for -this pre-school child was taught not to litter by his teacher; others are playing on the jumping castle under supervision of volunteers (CBO) and others are attending a well equipped preschool where trained staff members provide stimulation and care. Yet many single mothers cannot afford these services.

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ISD MODEL (C): APPLYING THE ISD-MODEL

COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

DIRECT CLIENT SERVICES	**DIRECT COMMUNITY SERVICES**
▪ Identified clients/client groups: ▪ Potential clients at risk: ▪ Strengths, abilities, competencies & resources:	▪ Identified gaps in the community's equipment for healthy social functioning: ▪ Strengths, abilities, competencies & resources:
INDIRECT CLIENT SERVICES	**INDIRECT COMMUNITY SERVICES**
▪ Identified community groups with specific needs or problems: ▪ Strengths, abilities, competencies & resources:	▪ Identified social, economic and political policies & factors which have a suppressive influence on the functioning the community: ▪ Strengths, abilities, competencies & resources:

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ISD MODEL (D): APPLYING THE ISD-MODEL

IDENTIFYING DEVELOPMENT POSSIBILITIES FOR A COMMUNITY

DIRECT CLIENT SERVICES	**DIRECT COMMUNITY SERVICES**
Provide the following direct services: Remember the main strategies: ☞ Reaching out ☞ Counselling/Therapy ☞ Early identification ☞ Working with groups ☞ Prevention	Provide the following educational or training services: Remember the main strategies: ☞ Discussion groups ☞ Educational groups ☞ Adult education ☞ Talks and lectures ☞ Life-skills education ☞ Training opportunities ☞ Retraining opportunities
INDIRECT CLIENT SERVICES	**INDIRECT COMMUNITY SERVICES**
Provide the following services for community groups: Remember the main strategies: ☞ Consultation ☞ Advocacy (cause) ☞ Co-ordination ☞ Linking ☞ Empowering ☞ Influencing public opinions	Provide the indirect services focussed on policy and infra-structure: Remember the main strategies: ☞ Policy management ☞ Lobbying ☞ Public speaking ☞ Office holding ☞ Organising of community forums

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60
Bean Bombs

Purpose of the exercise	An exciting game to help people to interact with each other, to 'break the ice', for team building, to create an atmosphere of 'learning is fun'. Also to encourage people to think for themselves, to participate and speak up. To assess knowledge and cover the theory of a specific topic in a fun way (e.g. teamwork/leadership)
What do you need	Self-sealing plastic bags, each filled with about ½ a cup of dried beans; 'messages' – see the lists of 'cards' designed to cover different topics; a white 'flag' (any piece of white material or handkerchief).
How long does it take	About 30-40 minutes (a bigger group will take longer with the feedback from the message cards).
What to do	**Prepare the 'message cards' before your session – focus on the specific area which you want to cover, e.g. work skills, care-giving, business skills, leadership, community development – see examples.**

☺ Have the group stand in a large circle and divide the group into two 'teams' by numbering 'one', 'two', 'one', 'two'. Give the following instructions:

🎤 *You are two gangs and you are going to have a 'street fight'. Get a name for your gang – you then have about 2 minutes to plan their strategy. You have deadly weapons –'bean bombs' – to fight with. You are not allowed to hit each other with the 'bean bombs' – you may use it in any other way. The team who has the most 'bean bombs' in the end, wins. You may only start the1 fight once the facilitator tells you to. The fight stops when the facilitator waves the white "flag".*

☺ Hand each group the same number of 'bean bombs' and allow them about two minutes to plan their strategy. Go outside or move all the furniture and bags out of the way. Position the 'gangs' on the opposite ends of the room and tell them to start fighting. Allow a couple of minutes for the 'fight' to progress.

☺ Then wave the white 'flag' to stop the fight. Count the 'bean bombs' to see which 'gang' is the winner. Ask the participants: *What did you think of this "fight"? Did your team have a strategy? What can we learn from this "fight"/exercise?* List 'lessons' o flip chart.

☺ Ask the 'gangs' to open their bean bombs and to take the 'message cards' out. They should make sure that everyone has at least one card. Then ask them to form one large circle. Every participant now gets the opportunity to read his/her 'message card'. The person should say whether he/she agrees or disagrees with the statement and motivate their answer (why does he/she disagree or agree?). Ask the group to feel free to say if they do not agree with what the others say – stimulate conversation about the statements. When everyone has had a turn, ask the group what they have learned from the exercise. If at all possible write some of the most important points down (i.e. aspects of leadership; points to remember about business, etc.).

1. BEAN BOMB MESSAGE CARDS for Money Generation

I must find a job	I need money to start a money making project	The people who have money studied after school	When I start a money making project, I should use some-one else's idea
I will know that I have improved my situation when I feel better	A product is only something like food that I sell	The 'market' means: ♦ A place where we sell food ♦ The people that buy my product	My client is the person who: ♦ I help ♦ Who pays me for my product or service
The most important thing when starting a business is to; ♦ do it one step at a time ♦ to plan	If I want to start a business, I have to be careful not to make mistakes	In business the most important thing is: ♦ Hard work ♦ The person who buys the product ♦ money	If I am afraid to start a business, I should: ♦ Not talk about it ♦ Do nothing ♦ Talk about it and start
If I don't have the right skills, I cannot make money	It is best to do business on my own	The thing I sell can be a product or a service	My family must be part of my business
Everyone can be an entrepreneur	I should help other people by sharing the money I make in my business	The government is responsible to help me earn more money	To do business I need: ♦ Money ♦ A product or service ♦ A client

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2. BEAN BOMB MESSAGE CARDS for Community projects

Community development must come from the outside	**If you want to become involved in community development, you have to do a course**
People in the community are mostly helpless	**True leaders are willing to listen to others**
Outsiders cannot help the community	**A leader is a person who is able to take all the decisions**
Each community must solve their own problems	**If we join hands, we will be able to do more**
In many communities there are lots of problems which will never be solved	**Women are able to make a big difference in their community**
I, as an individual, will not be able to solve the community's problems	**We need to start with small projects**
Every person in the community has a role to play in development	**I need to do something about myself before I can help others**
There is a set 'recipe' for successful community development	**All development starts with one small step**
You need a lot of money/funding to start a development project	**People in the community grow by sharing**
It is up to each individual to look after his/her own interests	**Each community has only one true leader**
Leaders have to be educated	**I don't know enough to take the lead**

Enjoying a lively 'Bean Bomb War' & reading the statements.

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