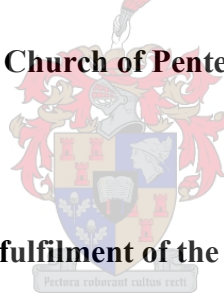**University of Stellenbosch**

Faculty of Theology

Department of Practical Theology and Missiology

Masters in Practical Theology

"Sustainable Pastoral Practices within the Continuous Reality of the COVID-19 Pandemic within the Church of Pentecost, in South Africa"

A Thesis submitted in Partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of

Masters in Theology

By

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March 2023

Supervisor / Promoter: Prof. Christo Thesnaar

DECLARATION

UNIVERSITY OF STELLENBOSCH

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

ABSTRACT

This research study investigated how the adverse impact of the COVID-19 pandemic exposed the shortcomings of the traditional ways of pastoral care and counselling practices within the Church of Pentecost (COP) in South Africa. The study utilized some aspects of the Dialogical Intergenerational Pastoral Process (DIPP) approach as a theoretical framework to explore sustainable pastoral practices within the continuous reality of the COVID-19 pandemic. Aspects of the DIPP approach as a branch of Pastoral Care and Counselling allow one to better understand the complexity of relational ethics as well as the interrelatedness of people living across generations (past, present and future). An aspect of the DIPP espouses on how pastoral caregivers should learn to do what Boszormenyi-Nagy & Krasner (1986:421) calls self-delineation and self-validation. These are the first and second phases of the dialogic process in dialogue. The tendency in putting more stress on oneself and becomes emotionally drained and exhausted. This kind of over-giving due to difficulty to set boundaries leads to burnout. One becomes spiritually affected and intoxicated and eventually compassion fatigue sets in (Van Doorn, 2020:157).

The limitations in the conventional way of pastoral practice within local congregations of the COP in South Africa have been laid bare by the COVID-19 pandemic. Amongst such practices are physical visitation to members before attending church, laying on of hands, baptism by immersion and christening of babies. The problem this research seeks to address is how to develop sustainable pastoral practices in the COP in responding to the emotional, mental, socio-economic and spiritual needs of those suffering as a result of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, including the pastoral caregiver.

The research methodology that informed this study was Richard Osmer's four tasks of practical theology; namely descriptive-empirical task, interpretive task, normative task and pragmatic task.

The finding of this study was that pastoral caregivers need to be responsible and accountable in their pastoral care and counselling. Pastors must be matured enough to know if they fall within the high risk age bracket, making them more susceptible to the virus infection. This will require the pastor referring suffering congregants to other colleagues, or skilled professionals or to continue with the caring and counselling process via the digital platforms.

Secondly, it was found out that pastoral caregivers suffered double injury during the height of the pandemic and the emotional, financial and psychological stress on them brought conflict and tensions on their network of relationships. This calls for Multi-Directed Partiality (MDP) between the pastoral caregiver, his suffering congregants and his family to dialogue in order to understand and be informed about the effects of such problems on the children involved from both parties so as to assist the future generation from not falling into future relational challenges (destructive entitlement).

In order to fulfil their calling, pastors must take risk to experiment and find creative ways to do pastoral counselling via internet, social media, cellphones and other digital platforms. That is why an aspect of the DIPP advocates that being present and occupy the space with suffering congregants is not only through physical presence.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the past, present and future generations of my family and the body of Christ within the fraternity of the Church of Pentecost, worldwide, especially, South Africa. And all pastoral caregivers who succumbed to the COVID-19 virus in line of your pastoral call, this thesis is dedicated to you. You fought the good fight of faith!

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CHAPTER 1

SETTING THE STAGE

1.0 Introduction

The impact of the COVID-19 virus and its traumatic devastation did affect not only the healthcare systems and economic conditions of the world but also the religious life of people and their relationships. The religious and relational aspects became more evident during the lockdown period when churches were forced to lock their doors for the first time in many decades. According to Mbaya (2021:208) the World Council of Churches (WCC) described the pandemic as follows:

> "The COVID-19 pandemic has taken so many lives and disrupted the lives of many more. The effects are not only felt in health and healthcare, but also in the capacity of families and communities to survive and thrive amidst mounting economic uncertainty. [It has] created new grounds for stigma. This complicates efforts to restore health and human dignity, especially for those being discriminated against (Ecumenical Global Health COVID-19 Response Framework)"

Thesnaar (2021:98) stated that the pandemic has exposed the theologies and the functioning of pastoral care and ministry, as this has impacted the existence, functioning and future of pastoral caregivers. Pastoral caregivers, individuals, families, communities, businesses and the church suddenly found themselves in uncharted territory (Stokes 2020:1). This situation meant many people became vulnerable and needed economic and psychosocial support. The church became a critical caregiving institution. Yet, the church's role, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, is less understood, especially in pastoral counselling and caregiving. Against this background, and as a pastor, some experiences are worth sharing.

1.1 Motivation

The impact of the COVID-19 crisis has been deeply felt by families and communities, particularly in terms of the loss of loved ones. After more than two years of lockdown, many are now battling with how to settle in after the easing of the lockdown regulations (Ecumenical Global Health COVID-19 Response Framework).

As a clergy who oversees a number of congregations in the Johannesburg and Soweto churches under the auspices of The Church of Pentecost in South Africa, the impact of the pandemic on congregants, their families and the clergy as pastoral caregivers has been daunting and exhausting. My personal witness to the sufferings of my congregants and my experience of COVID-19 infection after being in contact with affected congregants in the course of duty; for example, to bury the dead, pray for some of them, mobilising resources to support those who were unable to feed their families and many other duties. This has brought to light the complexities that pastoral caregivers face while caring for those in need of pastoral care; and at the same time taking responsibility for the consequences of their actions on their relationship with themselves and those they are existentially connected to. Thesnaar (2021:101) affirms that the COVID-19 virus crisis has paved the way for pastoral care and ministry to redefine the conventional methods of pastoral care in the midst of the continuous reality of COVID-19.

In this study, the researcher aims to redefine the practices in the pastoral ministry of the [1]Church of Pentecost (COP) from three different perspectives within the continuous reality of the COVID-19 pandemic and the challenges associated with it.

The Dialogical Intergenerational Pastoral Process (DIPP) is a pastoral care framework that is utilized as a lens of this thesis. Roberths (2020:23) explains that the DIPP as a pastoral care

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[1] The Church of Pentecost (COP) is a Pentecostal denomination headquartered in Ghana and operates currently in 135 nations worldwide, as at December 2021. See, the 17th Session of the Extra-Ordinary Council Meetings in May 2022.

framework contributes to the pastoral process in understanding ministry and practice. It allows pastoral caregivers to utilize the interpretation of scriptures, and addresses relationships. The DIPP also makes use of mutual trust between people and promotes dialogue to enable care to bring healing. With this insight, the pastoral caregiver ensures that in his/her pastoral work, he/she takes into consideration, his/her relational networks. The DIPP focuses on filial relations and another relational networks. It also places emphasis on relational ethics.

Against the backdrop of what have been explained, the effects of the pandemic have been felt beyond the medical conditions. Relational issues, economic threats due to loss of loved ones some of who were bread winners and spiritual issues which affected some congregants' faith in God have all been adversely affected (Evil in the context of a loving God – Theodicy). The Dialogical Intergenerational Pastoral Process (DIPP) approach seeks to address affected congregant families in bringing healing to severed relationships.

Secondly, the impact of COVID-19 on pastoral caregivers as individuals is explored, particularly in terms of their network of relationships and the high risk of COVID-19 virus infections in their pastoral duty to be there for the congregants. The DIPP approach reminds caregivers to take responsibility for the consequences of their actions for them as individuals and their network of relationships. The DIPP approach therefore holds caregivers accountable for their choices.

The third aspect of the impact of the COVID-19 in relation to the DIPP approach is dealing with future generations of the continuous reality of COVID-19. The full impact of the COVID-19 reality is not yet fully known and can only be comprehensively assessed after a few years. It is therefore important to actively deal with the challenges by redefining sustainable pastoral practices now in order to pass on a good legacy for future generations.

The researcher believes that a more holistic and sustainable pastoral approach to deal with both congregants, the pastoral caregivers and the future generations within the continuous reality of the COVID-19 pandemic could be the DIPP approach. According to Thesnaar in Kusa (2018), the new paradigm this approach brings in pastoral caregiving is the fact that the person with whom you are engaging is not separated from his or her network or context. These voices from the network of these relationships participate in the engagement with one another and within families. The resulting rewards or consequences will be felt for the next and even unborn generations.

1.2 Problem Statement

The conventional or traditional way of pastoral practice within the local congregations of the COP has been greatly exposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Amongst such practices are physical visitation to members before they come to church, laying on of hands, administering of the Holy Communion, just to mention a few. These liturgical practices were specifically challenged during the early stages of the crisis when the government of South Africa brought the country under lockdown level 5 and 4, banning churches from meeting physically. The notion of congregants being fully dependent on the pastor as pastoral caregivers doing everything for them in certain situations exposed some of the weaknesses in the pastoral ministry. The traumatic impact on those affected by the virus is relayed over to the pastoral caregivers who attempted to occupy the space to care for the victims of the pandemic. Thesnaar (2021:102) indicates that pastoral caregivers, "... are often tempted to lessen the impact of the suffering by, for example, exceeding the boundaries of their involvement in the provision of sympathetic care and attempting to devise simplistic solutions". It emphasises the importance for the pastoral caregivers to set boundaries in order to be responsible for their own wellbeing and the wellbeing of their families and related members in their pastoral ministry.

Boszormenyi-Nagy & Krasner (1986:421) describe this task as self-delineation and self-validation[2].

Based on the above, the problem this research wants to address is how to develop sustainable pastoral practices, such as finding alternative ways of creatively using digital platforms in the COP in responding to the emotional, mental, socio-economic and spiritual needs of those (including the pastoral caregiver) suffering from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. A key element of this approach is the ethical relational focus. This focus calls for Multi-directed partiality[3] on the part of the pastoral caregiver, which entails both accountability and responsibility. Within the context of responsibility and accountability, loyalty and loyalty conflict[4] play a role between the pastoral caregiver and his or her family, on the one hand, and the suffering congregants, on the other hand, who call to service and duty. The conflict also manifests when the pastoral caregiver is expected to be responsible and accountable to the caregiver's family members, who also suffer from the virus and its implications. According to Boszormenyi-Nagy & Krasner (1986:75), the process of self-delineation is a task of an inescapable ethical mandate where "somewhere between birth and death people have to come to terms with the delineation of a unique self that is set apart from the world and from others". Based on this, pastoral caregivers must, therefore, know when to stand back and allow others who are equally skilled and gifted to carry some of the burden and take some of the responsibility in these uncertain periods of the pandemic. Thesnaar (2021:116) argues that although pastoral caregivers are called by God to minister healing in the Church and in the broader community, they are not the sole bearers of this responsibility and that learning to delineate themselves means being accountable and responsible in dealing with their own

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[2] See, Key concepts below.

[3] See, Boszormenyi-Nagy & Krasner (1986:416). Between Give and Take.
[4] See, Hargrave & Pfitzer, (2003:79): The New Contextual Therapy. Guiding the power of Give and Take

proneness and being sincere about their realities during the COVID-19 crisis. Roberths (2020:23) further argues that the DIPP approach makes use of mutual trust between people and the promotion of authentic engagement or dialogue in order to enhance care and make healing possible. With this assertion, within the DIPP, the [5]pastor often approaches 'the other' in a contextual way. This implies that he or she takes his or her relational network into consideration. Ducommun-Nagy (2016:6) explains that when family members do not want to sound selfish where a high moral and religious value of the husband's (wife's) ministry is at stake, the family members find it difficult to express their needs, and this can bring tension between moral ethics and relational ethics. The pastor at most times overlook the negative consequences of this giving on the family. The DIPP approach and its emphasis on relational ethics, multi directed partiality, trust, loyalty, dialogue, responsibility and accountability, and justice in relationships can assist the redefinition of the pastoral practices within the COP.

Based on the above discussion the problem this research wants to address is to find sustainable pastoral practices within the continuous reality of the COVID-19 pandemic within the COP, in South Africa.

1.3 Research question

- How can the [6]Dialogical Intergenerational Pastoral Process (DIPP) approach assist the Church of Pentecost (COP) in finding sustainable pastoral practices within the continuous reality of COVID-19?

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[5] The terms pastoral caregiver, clergy, minister and pastor are used interchangeably in this study
[6] The DIPP approach is explained in detail in chapter 3 of this study.

1.4 Aims and objectives

- To explore the impact of COVID-19 on the Church of Pentecost congregants and pastoral caregivers;

- To reflect on the conventional pastoral care strategies;

- To engage with the terms of relational ethics, multi directed partiality, trust, loyalty, dialogue, responsibility and accountability, and justice in relationships within the DIPP approach in order to find pastoral ways of dealing with the continuous reality of COVID-19 pandemic; and

- To recommend sustainable pastoral practices within the continuous reality of COVID-19 pandemic.

1.5 Research methodology: Osmer's Interpretation of Practical Theology

Practical Theology, as a sub-discipline of the broader field of Theology, seeks to bring theology to people in such a way as to provide service and to interpret their needs. Roots in Roberths (2020:4) posits that practical theology is often reflected as a theology which leaves behind theory and practically moves, serves, and formulates theological knowledge in the field of ministry, communities, or broader society. In other words, practical ministerial knowledge and everyday life experiences are used in a meaningful way to address issues in a theological way.

Browning (1985:20) asserts that in order for practical theology to be truly practical, it should have a description of the problem, apply critical theory to the ideal situation and, most importantly, be aware of processes as well as spiritual and technological forces required to make the ideal situation possible. This assertion, in Manuel's (2021:7) view, lays the foundation, that for a situation to be responded to in a practical manner, it requires an investigation that necessitates looking at mitigating factors that have an impact and

understanding the context, practical theological concepts as well as pastoral hermeneutics in developing a response.

Figure 1: Richard Osmer's four tasks of Practical Theological Interpretation
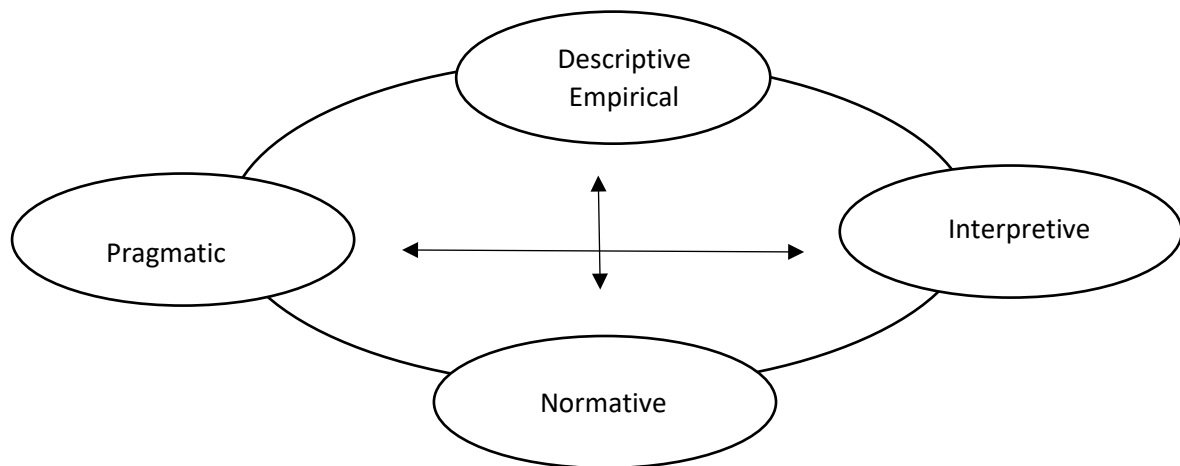
With this background, the researcher utilised Richard Osmer's four core tasks of practical theological interpretation in offering clarity on what practical theologians can do and how to go about doing practical theology, both in academia and in ministry (Osmer, 2008:18-19). I used this hermeneutical and practical theological framework to guide and hold together the structure of this study, which is rooted in the discipline of practical theology, with specific reference to the sub-discipline of pastoral care. The interrelationships of the four core areas of Osmer's tasks, as shown in figure 1 above, are the descriptive-empirical, the interpretive, the normative and the pragmatic.

The descriptive-empirical or the priestly listening poses the question, 'what is going on?' The aim was to gather information, which enabled the researcher to better understand certain episodes, situations, or contexts (Osmer, 2008:10). In this study, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on congregants, pastoral ministry, and pastoral caregivers is explored in chapter two. In this study, the descriptive literature review was used as the main research methodology.

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The interpretive task poses the question, 'why is this going on?' In this case, literature was consulted in the research study from theories of the arts and sciences from most scholars and works in the field (Osmer, 2011). This task, also called sagely wisdom, was used as a map to guide the researcher to reflect on the information gathered (Osmer, 2008:61). Chapter 3 therefore reflects on an interdisciplinary focus, which will look at the work of Martin Buber, Emmanuel Levinas and Ivan Boszormenyi-Nagy, to gain an understanding of relational ethics and the relational resources, with specific emphasis on relational ethics, multi directed partiality, trust, loyalty, dialogue, responsibility and accountability, and justice in relationships, which is the main focus of the DIPP approach, which will be applied in this study.

The normative task, as explained by Osmer, looks at the question, 'what ought to be going on?' This looks at ethical norms which guide our responses and the ability to be guided by good practice (Osmer, 2011:2). The normative task looks at questions addressing the tension between the worldly wisdom of the arts and sciences and the wisdom of God from the Biblical texts. How do we bring together what is happening currently with what ought to be happening, with the help of pastoral counselling, social values and ministry? The study therefore looks at how the DIPP as a pastoral care focus within this study serves as a theological guide.

The pragmatic task according to Osmer addresses the question, 'how must we respond?' This section looks at what we must do to move us from the current situation by devising an action plan to change the status quo (Osmer, 2011:2). This task, in a nutshell, looks at the result of the compilation of all that is done from the study. Chapter 5 addresses the main research question by integrating the DIPP as sustainable pastoral caregiving practices and new insights gained in order to suggest practical contributions and recommendations.

Relevant literature was reviewed in order to engage with observations and events related to the way and manner the COVID-19 pandemic impacted congregants, the pastoral ministry, and the

pastoral caregiver. Last but not least, it is worth mentioning that the researcher draws also from his experience as a pastoral caregiver within the context of the Church of Pentecost who was affected by COVID-19 virus himself in the line of duty as a pastoral caregiver, which placed him in a better position to suggest sustainable pastoral practices within the continuous reality of COVID-19. As indicated earlier, the researcher followed the descriptive literature review as the main research methodology in this study.

1.6 Chapter outline

Chapter 1 – This chapter looks at the Introduction and the overall summary of the research study. It sets out the parameters of the study to enable the readers to familiarise themselves with the rest of the chapters.

Chapter 2: The Impact of COVID-19 pandemic on The Church of Pentecost ministry, congregants and the pastoral caregiver, using the descriptive-empirical task of Osmer.

Chapter 3: An interdisciplinary focus on relational ethics with emphasis on the terms of trust, fairness and loyalty: by drawing on theories of the arts and sciences from significant scholars and works in the field of relational ethics, with particular emphasis on trust, fairness and loyalty. The main three scholars to be discussed are Boszormenyi-Nagy, Martin Buber, and Emmanuel Levinas. (Interpretive task of Osmer)

Chapter 4: The Dialogical Intergenerational Pastoral Process as pastoral framework. This chapter focuses on the theological reflections of this study as it is noted in the field of Practical Theology. In other words, Biblical texts will be used to argue how the terms of trust, fairness, and loyalty as central to the DIPP can be used to give direction, using the normative factor of Osmer.

Chapter 5: Focuses on a Pragmatic discussion, looking at the overall impact of the pandemic and the lessons learned. How the main research question will be addressed by integrating the DIPP as theoretical framework, pastoral caregiving practices and new insights gained in order to suggest practical recommendations and contributions.

Chapter 6 – Conclusion: This chapter will review and reflect on the research objectives

1.7 Key concepts

1.7.1 Relational Ethics

In close relationships, fairness is measured in terms of reciprocity on the balance of giving and receiving from each other. In other words, relational ethics deal with the balance of what people give in relationships, as opposed to what they merit or are entitled to get from others (Hargrave & Pfitzer, 2003). This is the dimension that the work of Boszormenyi-Nagy contributed in family therapy. Boszormenyi-Nagy & Krasner (1986:420) explain that people use each other and are used by one another in relationships but the trustworthiness of the relationship is dependent on each other's multilateral and equitable giving and receiving. In human beings, relational ethics require people to assume responsibility for consequences.

1.7.2 Multi-directed partiality

Joyce & Krasner (1995:220) explain multi-directed partiality as: "A therapeutic attitude, stance, and method. Multi-Directed Partiality (MDP) presumes merit in each relating partner and merit earned through contributions given and received between them despite injuries and engagements. Siding with each person's real and perceived suffering and against each partner's unmitigated tendencies to blame, therapists use MDP to acknowledge pain, elicit trust, identify resources, help people assess personal accountability, and establish new balances of burdens and benefits between and among them."

1.7.3 Pastoral caregiving

Pastoral caregiving is an inclusive term which traditionally refers to the broad activities of a pastor in his or her relationships with his clients (Stuck, 1983). According to Louw (2015:29), caregiving is an inclusive concept embracing "religious content, actions of communication and verbalizing, events of human encounter, conversational interaction (talk-therapy), structured procedures of intervention and professional help (counselling), the fostering of possible change and healing (therapy), and actions of service/outreach in communities irrespective of belief systems (diakonia)".

1.7.4 Loyalty and loyalty conflict

Loyalty is a preferential attachment to relational members who are entitled to a priority of 'bonding'. It is based on our indebtedness to the people who have offered us their commitment and it manifested itself in our willingness to place their interest before the interest of others (Boszormenyi-Nagy & Krasner, 1986:418; Docummun-Nagy, 2016:4).

Loyalty conflict evolves when co-existence with the other is never about only one other person but always simultaneously about many others, contends Van Doorn (2020:112). For example, the dilemma of a couple to satisfy both parents during Christmas holidays, without offending the other spouse's family, can be loyalty conflict.

Boszormenyi-Nagy & Spark (1984:103) explains Loyalty conflict as "intrinsic in any family life where all individual assertiveness is a challenge to the shared family loyalty.

1.7.5 Self-delineation

This is the ability for a person to define his/her individual autonomous self. This is a process that happens over a period of time during a person's developmental stages which includes boundary formation between the self and the not-self with which it enters into relationship (Boszormenyi-Nagy & Krasner, 1986). Van Doorn (2020:156) explains self-delineation as how

one attends to oneself and sets the necessary boundaries for anyone in order to prevent oneself from over-giving in a relationship.

1.7.6 Self-validation

According to Boszormenyi-Nagy & Krasner (1986:421) self-validation "has to do with a person's capacity to earn credit for relational integrity rather than simply defend power, prestige or self-esteem. This is phase two of the dialogic process which establishes and enhances the self's ethical worth." In addition, "self-validation is a step in the process of earning entitlement. It results, then, in the kind of freedom produced by earned entitlement."

1.7.7 Justice

Boszormenyi-Nagy & Krasner (1986:417) explain this concept as a dynamic foundation of continuing close relationships. Periodically it is concerned with a concern to monitor the fairness of relationships in order to keep it trustworthy. In addition, this is the ongoing challenge to the balance of fairness.

1.8 Conclusion

This thesis attempts to propose sustainable pastoral practices within the continuous reality of the COVID-19 pandemic, with particular reference to the COP, using some aspects of the DIPP approach. Chapter 1 sets out the parameters and structure and outline of the study.

Chapter 2 will now use Osmer's Descriptive-empirical task of Priestly Listening in responding to find out what is going on in the current context as far as the impact of COVID-19 on congregants and pastoral caregivers within the Church of Pentecost, in South Africa. as the Covid-19 pandemic has laid bare the weaknesses in some of the conventional practices. The concept of DIPP will be used to assist in developing sustainable pastoral care practices within the continuous reality of COVID-19 pandemic.

CHAPTER 2

THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON CHURCHES

2.1 Introduction

In chapter two, the researcher will draw from lived experiences in addressing the crisis of the pandemic. The structure of this chapter will utilize Osmer's descriptive-empirical task by asking, 'what is going on?' In this chapter, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on congregants, pastoral caregivers and pastoral ministry of the church is explored.

Since the COVID-19 virus was declared a global pandemic by the World Health Organisation (WHO) on 11 March 2020, a number of literature have been written on this topic. The researcher will use sources from articles written by scholars from Stellenbosch University and other sources of interest. A brief history of world pandemics will be explored before zooming into the current, continuous Covid-19 pandemic and how it has exposed the inadequacy of the conventional way of doing pastoral ministry and the lessons gained from the devastating impact of this crisis. The COVID-19 pandemic is a continuous reality because the likelihood that it would be with us for the foreseeable future is high as it is not certain when it will be completely eradicated. The impact of the pandemic is not only in the lockdown period but its psychological, emotional and spiritual impact after the lockdown needs much to be desired.

The COP as a classical Pentecostal church like other churches has been greatly impacted by the COVID-19 virus pandemic both as congregants and pastoral caregivers. This chapter will therefore attempt to indicate the impact on the clergy and congregants.

2.2 The Church of Pentecost

Historical Background

The Church of Pentecost has its roots in the indigenous ministry of Apostle Peter Newman Anim (1890–1984), who later requested missionary support from the Apostolic Church headquartered in Bradford, England, to help develop the church. The response to this request included sponsoring Pastor James Mckeown to the then Gold Coast, now Ghana, in 1937. Due to doctrinal differences the group split in 1939 into the Christ Apostolic Church and the Apostolic Church, Gold Coast. The latter grew rapidly under Pastor James Mckeown. A Constitutional crisis in the Church led to the founding of the Gold Coast Apostolic Church in 1953, with Pastor James Mckeown as leader. On the Gold Coast's attainment of independence in 1957 and its adoption of the name Ghana, the Gold Coast Apostolic Church was renamed the Ghana Apostolic Church. The Church later adopted the name "The Church of Pentecost" on August 1, 1962[7]. Through foreign missionary work and establishing relationships with other Pentecostal churches, the Church of Pentecost currently operates in 135 Nations, as at December 2021. These churches are headed by Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists and Senior Pastors throughout the world.[8]

In South Africa, there are 68 local congregations nationwide, which are located in eight of the country's nine provinces. The researcher joined the church in South Africa in December 1994 and has held various leadership positions since 1998 until he was called into the full-time ministry of the church in 2011. The total membership of the Church of Pentecost, South Africa (COPSA) currently stands at 5,043 comprising 3112 Ghanaians, 1595 Nationals or Indigenes, and 336 other Nationals, as at 31 December 2021 (State of the Church 2021).

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[7] See, Onyinah (2017:12). Pentecostal Transformation in Africa. The rise and growth of the COP.
[8] See, The 17th Session of the Extra-Ordinary Council Meetings Report.

The membership composition is shown in Figure 1: in the Pie Chart below:
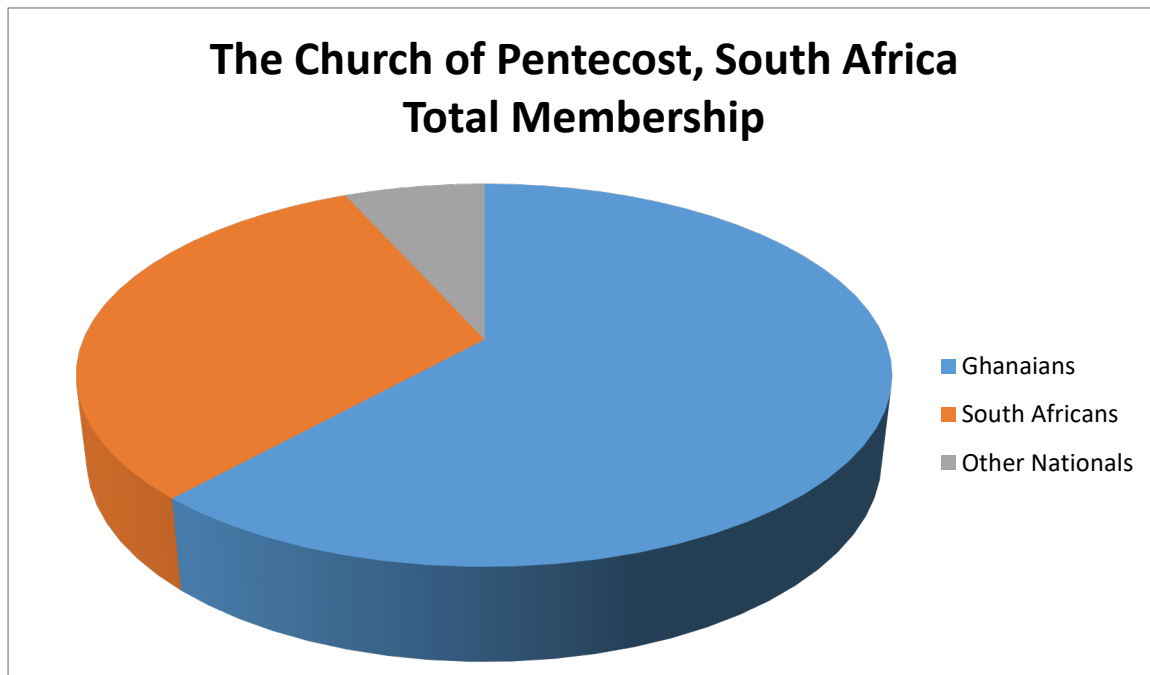
The role religious leaders play in the lives of their congregants is significant in the area of their spiritual, physical, and mental health to support many African people. The 84% of the South African population believed to belong to the Christian faith shows how significant role religious leaders provide in terms of emotional, psychological and spiritual support for the population (Cilliers & Wepener, 2021:30).[9]

2.3 The Crisis of Pandemics in World History

Kelly (2011) defines a pandemic as "an epidemic occurring worldwide, or over a very wide area, crossing international boundaries and usually affecting a large number of people".

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[9] Recent 2019 Statistics South Africa. See official Guide to South Africa 2018/19.

World history recounts numerous pandemics that have happened in the past. The coronavirus pandemic is not the first to strike the human race; there have been more severe pandemics than what the world is experiencing now. Ever since humans learned to live in groups, with clusters of different people coming close to each other a number of diseases spread.[10] The problem has been further exacerbated by migration and globalization, whereby people travel across the seas, air, and lands, and a number of diseases spread in an unprecedented manner[11]. Nine pandemics that have plagued humans in the past before the Covid-19 virus pandemic are discussed below:

1. Antonine Plague (165 AD-180 AD)

Also known as the Plague of Galen, it was an ancient pandemic that broke out across the Roman Empire, through Asia, all Roman cities in Italy, and Greece. Eventually, it reached Spain, Egypt, and North Africa among other areas. At the height of the pandemic, it killed 2,000 people per day. Many believe that it was caused by smallpox and measles.

2. The Black Death (1347-1352)

The Black Death was a deadly pandemic that swept through Europe and Asia, among other continents, and killed an estimated 25 million people in Europe. Aside from having fever and chills, those afflicted also had blood and pus seeping out of swellings all over the body.

3. Small Pox Pandemic (1870-1874)

Edward Jenner made important contributions in the development of the smallpox vaccine that helped save millions of lives.

Before the world completely rid itself of this horrendous disease, it swept through various continents, killing three out of ten victims. Those who survived were left with deep scars, which

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[10] Assessed from www.worldatlas.com/article
[11] Assessed from www.worldatlas.com/article

were even found in 3000-year-old mummies, showing that it ravaged ancient civilizations for thousands of years. However, it was in 1870 during the Franco-Prussian war that smallpox spread throughout the world. From Europe, it reached Asia and America, causing 500,000 deaths worldwide.

4. Cholera (1817-1824)

The first of seven cholera pandemics emerged in India in 1817. According to the World Health Organization, cholera is an acute diarrheal infection caused by the ingestion of food or water contaminated with the bacterium Vibrio cholerae. Three years after it spread throughout India it reached different countries in Asia. In 1821 it was brought by British troops traveling from India even to countries outside Asia.

5. Russian Flu of 1889 (1889-1890)

Called the first-ever modern flu pandemic, the Russian flu, which started in St. Petersburg, spread throughout Europe infecting even prominent world leaders. After a few months, it reached virtually every part of the planet. An estimated 1 million people died of the Russian flu.

6. Spanish Flu (1918-1919)

The Spanish Flu of 1918 is considered the deadliest in history, infecting 1/3 of the world's population and killing 20 to 50 million people worldwide. It came in three waves. The first wave was almost like the flu and hit in the spring of 1918. The second wave that appeared in the fall of the same year was deadlier. It killed people within hours or a few days after the onset of symptoms. The third wave that came the following year was just as deadly and added to the death toll.

7. H3N2 Pandemic (1968)

The influenza viruses caused the Hong Kong flu (magnified approximately 100,000 times). The 1968 flu pandemic was caused by the influenza H3N2 virus. Although it was not as deadly as the others discussed above, the virus was highly contagious and it spread throughout Southeast Asia within two weeks after it first emerged in Hong Kong in July 1968. By December of the same year, the virus had reached the United States, United Kingdom, and other countries in Europe. It killed an estimated one million people.

8. HIV/AIDS (1981)

The first case of acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) was reported in 1981. Since then, HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) has spread globally, infecting more than 65 million people, according to the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention. There is still no known cure for this sexually transmitted disease, but there are already treatments that keep the virus under control, allowing people to live longer.

9. SARS (2002-2004)

Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) was first reported in Guangdong, China in February 2003 although experts believe it started as early as November 2002. After a few months, it spread throughout countries in North America, South America, Europe, and Asia. It infected 8,098 people worldwide and killed 774 people. The disease caused high fever, body aches, and dry cough which then led to pneumonia in some cases.[12]

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[12] 10 Pandemics throughout history – World Atlas

2.4 The Crisis of COVID-19 Pandemic

When the COVID-19 virus started, videos emerged showing all kinds of mice and reptiles being eaten by the Chinese, which was interpreted as abusing nature. Little did we know that this was soon to become a global menace, asserted Asamoah-Gyadu[13].

The World Health Organization (WHO) announced officially on March 11, 2020 COVID-19 virus a pandemic after surging through over 114 countries in three months and infecting over 118,000 people. COVID-19 is caused by SARS-Cov-2, a novel coronavirus strain that had not been previously found in humans. Symptoms of the disease manifested in respiratory problems, fever, cough, which would lead to pneumonia and eventually death. It is spread through droplets in the air when an infected person sneezes or coughs. The first case was reported in China on November 17, 2019, in the Hubei Province, but was unrecognized until eight more cases appeared in December with researchers suspecting an unknown virus. Dr Li Wenliang defied government orders by releasing safety information to other doctors, only to be announced the following day that Dr Li was charged with a crime to WHO, and died about a month later. The virus spread beyond China boarders to almost every country in the world and by December 2020, over 1.6 million deaths had been recorded and over 75 million people had been infected.[14]

The crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic affected everyone in our society, leading to the loss of many loved ones, deepening the suffering of the poor and widening the inequality problem in South Africa. Weber (2021:76) affirms that the COVID-19 pandemic has had an impact on people around the globe politically, economically, socially, and spiritually through its varying

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[13] Presentation by Prof. K. Asamoah-Gyadu during the colloquium held at Stellenbosch   University Theology Department on 10 June 2022.
[14] https://www.history.com/topics/middle-ages/pandemics-timeline

forms of loss (death, illness, employment, community, education and other issues). The restrictions imposed by the government during the hard lockdown resulted in loss of income, isolation, overcrowding and high levels of stress and anxiety. On 27 March 2020, the National State of Disaster was declared in South Africa, which resulted in many spheres of society being placed under lockdown. During that period, a number of areas became poverty stricken, as access to basic needs like food, housing, proper sanitation and education was practically impossible when people were restricted from going out to earn income to survive.

This crisis also presented a pastoral problem, which forced churches to resort to religious interventions. This had a ripple effect on congregations in many churches. The Church, as the ecclesia (people of God), was also affected by the impact suffered by many families, organizations, and relationships. Stokes (2020:1) asserts that "COVID-19 is pushing us all in ways we've never been pushed and making us do things we've never done. It is also stressing us in very peculiar ways. And perhaps one of the most tiring things is the all-encompassing lack of certainty." The crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic, according to Mbaya (2021:202) in his article on COVID-19 and the mission of God, raises issues like the problem of the co-existence of evil and God, commonly known as theodicy, human suffering and the sovereignty of God within the mission of God, which probably is one of the greatest challenges faced by Christianity and Christians.

The COVID-19 pandemic will continue to be a reality into the future generations and the way it is handled now will determine how posterity will judge the current generation. Stokes (2020:1) further raises a significant point when he states that it is not how much COVID-19 has changed but how much it has exposed. Indeed, the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed weaknesses in our traditional ways of pastoral care ministry. The DIPP approach seeks to address the interrelatedness of our humanness in that all people, not only caregivers, are

affected in one way or another by the trauma of the COVID-19 pandemic in the past, present and future generations.

The researcher will now review literature of some articles written by Theological Scholars on the COVID-19 virus, which will build on articles written by scholars such as Asamoah-Gyadu, Christo Thesnaar, Henry Mbaya, Peter White, and Ian Nell and others, and relate it to the COP context. The Church of Pentecost falls within the Classical Pentecostal Movements as opposed to the Neo-Pentecostal Movement. This chapter will identify the risks and effects of the pandemic and the resultant challenging pastoral risks in performing customs and rituals in the line of duty, which resulted in risks and adverse effects on pastoral caregivers and the pastoral ministry of the church.

2.4.1 Understanding the impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on churches

The effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on churches across the world cannot be under-estimated. The COVID-19 pandemic is still a continuous reality in our contemporary times and as such, very little research has been conducted and not many articles have been written about it. Reviewing the article by Cilliers & Wepener (2021:30-44)[15], on lockdown liturgy in a network culture: A liturgical exploration of embodiment and place, the authors focussed on the church's liturgical practices during the hard lockdown, when no gatherings were allowed in public places, including churches, in South Africa. They explored four areas through the lenses of place and embodiment in the context of the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC). When the COVID-19 restrictions were implemented by the Government of South Africa in terms of the Disaster Management Act[16], gatherings were banned during levels 4 and 5 of the national lockdown, between 27 March and 31 May 2020. Churches could not meet to worship.

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[15] Article focuses on Lockdown levels 4 and 5 liturgies during the hard lockdown in South Africa.
[16] https://openbylaws.org.za/za/act/gn/2020/318/eng/defn-term-gathering

According to Cilliers & Wepener (2021:30) "84% of the South African population belongs to the Christian faith, in recent 2019 statistics. This comprises about 43 423 717 South Africans belonging to the Christian religion". With 84% of the population belonging to the Christian faith, the lockdown meant that the 'Ubuntu' culture of the African people was disturbed by this ban. This communality was shattered by the COVID-19 pandemic, especially during the Easter celebration, which marks a very important occasion on the Christian calendar. The place and space where members gather to worship plays an important role in the lives of congregants and this worship is part of worship in a network of culture for the people, assert Barnard, Cilliers & Wepener, (2014). This shattered communality affected people psychologically, emotionally, socially and spiritually, especially for those who could not have access to technology as an alternative means of meeting. The authors also sought to develop a practical theoretical framework by using four probes in celebrating liturgies when members were restricted by social distancing during the hard lockdown. In presenting a descriptive exploration regarding space and embodiment in lockdown liturgies, the following functions were looked at briefly, using Gerard Lukken's insights regarding his dimensions of rituals: mediating the past, condensation channelling, therapeutics, exorcism, ethics and social interaction (Lukken, 1999:58-70).

In his article on Pentecostal Spirituality in the context of COVID-19, White (2021:2) argues that African spirituality increased in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic partly because of the belief that certain types of ill health, evil, and misfortune are usually explained in the African context as negative supernatural forces. Based on this belief, many Pentecostal preachers and believers responded to the pandemic in the following ways: call for prayer, deliverance, and healing of nations; preaching messages of faith, and inspiring hope in their congregations. Most members of the Christian religion became shaken because of anxiety, uncertainty and the economic hardships members suffered and are still suffering from.

The lockdown further affected congregants who were in private employment and self-employment, namely those in the Small Business Enterprises, who could not go to work. This adverse economic impact on congregants in turn affected the cash flow of churches, and resulted in the shut-down of certain Neo-Pentecostal churches managed by independent overseers and clergy. Classical Pentecostal Churches, according to White (2021:2) are the traditional mainline "Pentecostal Churches that follow ethos, dogmas, and praxis of the proponents of the Azuza Street revival, the majority of which have well-structured administration and hierarchical leadership with a well-written polity and constitutions which govern the institution. The Neo-Pentecostal churches on the other hand, came into existence in the late 1960s and early 1970s". The Church of Pentecost and the Christ Apostolic Church are currently the two Classical Pentecostal Churches as Migrant Pentecostal churches from Ghana that have been operating in South Africa since early 1990 and 2000 respectively. The pastoral problem posed by the pandemic required interventions from pastoral perspectives and one of the scriptures that come to mind is 2 Chronicles 7:14:

> "If my people who are called by my name shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."

In his assertion, White (2021:3) explained the Pentecostal's spiritual interpretations of the above scripture as the sinfulness of humanity which had reached its limit, thus leading to the evil pandemic. This perceived causal effect of the pandemic resulted in the call by religious organisations and governments for nationwide prayers for repentance, through fasting for God's divine intervention in countries like Ghana, South Africa, Kenya and Nigeria. The President of South Africa, Cyril Ramaphosa made a call for a day of prayer on COVID-19 virus on March, 26 2020. In the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, various views were expressed as to whether the pandemic was an attack from the devil's camp, the wrath of God

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due to sin, or an action of God to bring humanity to repentance. Some Pentecostal preachers made references to biblical texts such as Exodus 7:12 and Genesis 6-8 to buttress their claims. Emphasis of Pentecostal spirituality in the context of COVID-19 has strengthened many Christians' spirituality in their engagement and encounter with God for divine protection, healing, and provision. In addition, most Pentecostal preachers' sermons centred on faith, hope and inspiring messages as a result of the devastating and psychological effect of the pandemic on members. White used the faith and hope gospel to argue that even though biblical texts help to address the spiritual, emotional, social, and material needs of people, this should, however, be approached in the context of the sovereignty of God. This means that preachers will do their part to inspire and ignite hope and faith in people, but it is in the sovereign will of God to establish His divine purpose in the life of humanity.

Using scriptural texts for faith declaration, White (2021:4) cited Prov. 18:21, Mark 11:23, Exodus 12:13, Isaiah 53:5, 1 Peter 2:24 and Psalms 91:1- 6 as some of the key texts many Pentecostal preachers encouraged their church members to declare as a form of prayer for divine protection against the COVID-19 virus. He also used the Holy Communion as an important sacrament used by members as a pastoral intervention for healing and protection and as an important component of the doctrine of the church. Though unusual for Pentecostal believers to demystify and democratize the concept of the breaking of bread as many believe it is only administered by ordained ministers and church elders, the lockdown situation enabled members to observe it at the family level. This act gave members of the congregations the opportunity to practice their faith and assisted them to address their psycho-spiritual needs resulting from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown experiences. The article also noted the response of most Pentecostal churches switching from on-site worship to online worship. This approach, however, led to some members shifting their membership to other

churches. The article concluded with an appeal for balanced theology amongst Pentecostal churches when dealing with healing and miracles.

In Ian Nell's article on COVID-19 Spirituality (2021:10), he stresses the Psalmist's longing desire for God in his desperate situation, from Psalms 42:1, 2 'As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God' (NIV).

The purpose of his article was to investigate the possible impact the coronavirus pandemic had on selected groups of church leaders' desire and search for God with regards to their spirituality. He explained spirituality as "everything pertaining to life; therefore, one could describe spirituality as a sign that faith is an answer to the double commandment of love, where love is the indication of a relationship that changes one and that gives one a renewed look at reality". In a nutshell, he explains that spirituality is a way of sorting out for God by experiencing him through one's body, soul and spirit while doing God's work in the world. He emphasised the deep desire in everyone's heart for something deeper in life and this longing is met when one pursues it through spirituality. The empirical research was conducted on Reformed Church leaders. In his analysis, some of the encounters involved concepts such as silence, deepening of spirituality, time of discomfort, vulnerability, prayer and the reading of scripture, and God images, during the lockdown period.

In summary, it came to light that during the lockdown period, ministers' spirituality was intensified in relation to their God images during a time of discomfort, where they could not have access to suffering members to offer pastoral care, and they had to spend more time in personal devotion and their own vulnerability of the double trauma they suffered from.

Members of the Church of Pentecost, in South Africa, also experienced similar challenges during the first, second and third waves of the pandemic, which resulted in many still recovering from the impact. During the initial stages of the lockdown, the National Executive

Committee of the COP in South Africa convened a meeting amongst the pastorate in the nation to strategize and chart a way forward to interact effectively with congregants, after the Chairman's circular letter and the International Missions Director's (IMD) letter.[17]. Days of fasting and prayers for the ministers and wives as well as the entire membership in the nation were embarked on as it is a characteristic of classical Pentecostal Churches (Ministerial Handbook, 2014:27-29). Other forms of prayer services were mobilized on social media platforms for e-services as well as praying for those who were affected by the virus and hospitalised. The Holy Communion was observed online with congregants. Congregants who were not literate and unfamiliar with technology were unfortunately unable to participate in the fellowship of e-services. Apart from that, this intentional effort to follow up on our church members helped in tracking those who were in need of assistance. The church supported those who could not go to work as a result of the lockdown measures. Members who had stable income were encouraged to support other less fortunate members by using the early church example to motivate the congregants to practice same. Key scriptures used to buttress our assertion were: Act 4 and Acts 2. All these practices are enshrined in the COP Ministerial Handbook which was revised in 2018.

2.4.2 The impact on ritual performance

In the African context, calamities and evil are usually associated with factors such as broken moral code or disharmony within a community of people which might have led to the situation. White (2021) argues that in the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, African Christian communities expressed their own views regarding the cause of the pandemic. Some perceived it as an attack from the devil or punishment from God due to sin and disobedience for which there was the need for repentance. This could be substantiated by the fact that most of the

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[17] See, Circular letter ref: COP/CO/VOL.38/0113/20, dated 13 March 2020 and COP/IMO/009/20, dated 16 March 2020.

churches, especially Pentecostal preachers, referred to biblical experiences from texts such as the Noah's flood in Genesis 6 to 8 and the plagues in Exodus 7 to 12. This spiritual perception of the cause of the pandemic called for the churches to seek for spiritual interventions and other ritual performances to alleviate the suffering and pain caused by the COVID-19 virus on members of congregations and many other people. Some of the interventions resorted to during the early stages of the pandemic were: call for prayers, deliverance, healing of the nations, administering the Holy Communion and other religious practices.

The Pentecostal and other Protestant communities welcomed the call made by the SA President, Cyril Ramaphosa and the Ghanaian president, Nana Akuffo-Addo, for a day of prayer as they believed that through prayers and intercession, there would be divine healing.

White contended that the preaching of the gospel of faith and hope, which he termed 'prosperity theology', to establish that the gospel of Jesus Christ is the 'Good News' which stirs faith in the heart of people and brings hope and inspires people to put their confidence and trust in God. His contention was that exercising faith and hope in the midst of challenges should, however, be approached in the context of the sovereignty of God. With the preaching of faith and hope in the sovereignty of God, those who lost their jobs were strengthened to continue in their faith with the hope of seeing the light at the end of the tunnel. Using relevant biblical texts like Psalm 91:1-6, 1 Peter 2:24, Isaiah 53:5 as common anchor texts in most Pentecostal churches, congregants were encouraged to keep declaring them for divine protection, healing and comfort against the onslaught of the COVID-19 virus.

The Holy Communion, as an important sacramental ritual in many Christian traditions, was also used as a pastoral intervention during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Eucharist forms part of the liturgical rituals and administering and participating in it is an important component of the doctrine of the church. White (2021:4) argues that in many churches, only ordained

ministers or clergy and Elders are allowed to administer the Holy Communion. In most of the Classical Pentecostal churches, spiritual preparation towards the Communion service involves prayer and fasting; reading and meditations are observed prior to the Sunday of the service and congregants are encouraged to follow such directives in order to benefit fully from its observance. During the early stages of the lockdown when churches could not meet, many Pentecostals resorted to the observance and use of family communion in their homes. This is what [18]Asamoah-Gyadu terms 'demystifying and democratization of the Holy Communion'. In his assertion on this concept of demystifying and democratizing the holy communion, White points out that 'though it is unusual for Pentecostal believers to demystify and democratize the concept of breaking of bread, as many believe that the communion can only be administered by ordained Ministers and church elders, the shift took place when there was no opportunity for on-site congregational meetings and church services due to lockdown regulation.' This act of demystifying and democratizing the communion was intended to secure God's divine protection, healing and deliverance during the pandemic. This served as a therapeutic remedy for healing and deliverance from the 'evil virus' as some Pentecostal ministers classified it. In his presentation on 10 June 2022, Professor Asamoah-Gyadu stated that he would classify the coronavirus as an 'extra-ordinary evil' in that it's mode of transmission and the rate at which people were dying was unprecedented. If the virus was 'extra-ordinary evil', then many Pentecostals believed that it would take supernatural interventions to eradicate it, whilst observing the necessary protocols to curb its rapid spread. The notion of restricting the administering of the Eucharist to only ministers and Elders of congregations was indeed democratized to bring a deeper understanding that we all stand before the face of God, standing hand in hand with others before God (Meulink-Korf & Rhijn, 2016).

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[18] Online Presentation by Prof. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu held on 10 June 2022 at Stellenbosch University colloquium by the Theology Department

During the early part of the pandemic the COP as an institution reiterated the following core values and practices as pastoral interventions: call to prayer and fasting by Ministers and their wives every Friday and monthly prayer and fasting by all congregants. The Holy Communion was administered online and those who could not access online or e-services were asked to collect it at church where some church Elders prayed over them. The pastors also visited some sick people to their homes to administer the Holy Communion to the sick, whilst observing all COVID-19 precautionary measures. The traditional pastoral practices were still observed even though we knew our lives were at risk. Initially, it seemed as if one could exercise faith in attending to the sick without being affected. Thesnaar (2021:101) argues that pastoral caregivers are so accustomed to answering the call to minister to those who are suffering by being physically present to respond to the divine call of 'hinneni' (here I am Lord)[19]. The practicality of being together cannot be compared with virtual meetings; and this resonates with the subjectivity of inter-subjectivity of our humanness. Thesnaar further explains that this experience of being there for the suffering members was demonstrated during the devastating Spanish Flu, which lasted for three years, where many church leaders as well as those who volunteered to help the sick, lost their lives in the line of duty. It is therefore not a new thing for pastoral caregivers during times of crisis and suffering of humanity to see it as their divine call to respond by occupying the space to comfort, pray for the needy, share the sacrament and physically risking their lives as front-line workers. I personally disagree with the general assertion that church pastoral ministers are not frontline workers like health professionals and are therefore not allowed to assist suffering people during the hard lockdown period.

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[19] See Meulink-Korf and Van Rhijn (2016:120). In Biblical Hebrew 'hinneni' means: "Here I am" (Gen 22), 'Yes!'.

2.5 Impact of COVID-19 on the Pastoral Ministry

The effect of the Covid-19 pandemic on the pastoral ministry poses concerns ranging from how the pastoral ministry of the Church will attend to responsibilities such as visiting the sick, burying the dead and consoling those who mourn their loved ones during lockdown. How does the pastoral ministry of the church respond practically to the physical, economic, psychological, emotional and spiritual needs of those affected by the pandemic?

2.5.1 How does the pastoral ministry of the church attend to the issues of visitations to the sick, and burials during Covid-19 lockdown?

The pastoral ministry, as indicated earlier, was challenged during the lockdown period when members of congregations were afflicted by the Corona virus. As African Classical Pentecostals in the diaspora, most of our congregants have not been well-prepared to understand the theology of the Sovereignty of God in every situation. Piper (2020) posits that the sovereignty of God over the coronavirus means that He can do and undo the eradication of the pandemic if He wills. This assertion is similar to the one made by the Apostle Paul in Ephesians 1:11,"In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, (NKJV)". As a result of this lack of application of theology, most congregants became disloyal to the mother churches during the lockdown period, when most members joined other denominations on e-services.

Members' access to other social media platforms like the Facebook and You-tube media exposed vulnerable members to false teachings and doctrinal interpretations. Most families were unable to grieve their loved ones who lost their lives through the COVID-19 virus because of the lockdown restrictions. The extent of the traumatic impact has still not been ascertained yet. The church's response to those affected by the loss of their loved ones and its subsequent

adverse economic impact leaves much to be desired. There was the need to mobilize our leaders in the various congregations to assign members to check on them on a regular basis in order to assess their challenges readily in order to intervene. Small groupings on WhatsApp and other social platforms were embarked on for COP members to pray and share fellowship with one another. The chairman of the COP worldwide, Apostle Eric Nyamekye, in a circular sent out to the churches worldwide in March 2020 stated, "As you may be aware, the World Health Organization (WHO) has declared the coronavirus a pandemic; that is, it has become a global challenge. But we believe that in times like this we need not live in fear and panic or spread anxiety." Christians were encouraged to draw strength from Psalm 91:5, 6, 'You will not fear the terror by night or the arrow that flies by day, the plague that stalks in darkness, or the pestilence that ravages at noon".

The Chairman of COP again reiterated the government's precautionary measures put in place to combat the spread of the disease. Denteh (2020) recalls the quotation of the Chairman from Ephesians 5:15, "Be very careful, then, how you live – not as unwise but as wise" (ESV). Vigilance and attitudinal adjustments such as avoiding physical contact to curb the spread of the virus and keeping proper hygiene and sanitation were encouraged in order to flatten the curve. The pastoral ministry had a responsibility to create awareness among members of their congregations to observe all protocols put in place by the government and health officials to curb the spread of the virus.

The DIPP approach to pastoral care and counselling acknowledges that as humans we have a responsibility towards one another. Thesnaar (2021:110) affirms this by stating that it is in relation to others that the pastoral caregiver realises and becomes conscious of the ethical requirement of responsibility toward the other. The pandemic, however, has brought people much closer than ever, especially during 2020. All nations became united to fight the common enemy and finding a vaccine to bring about population immunity against the corona virus. The

DIPP approach to pastoral care and counselling echoes the 'Ubuntu' philosophy that 'I am who I am because of the other person' as the African theologian and scholar, Mbiti, asserts. My humanity is not found within myself, but rather within the humanity of others with whom I have relationship (Thesnaar, 2021:110). [20]Archbishop Desmond Tutu of blessed memory quoted, "Africans believe in something which is difficult to render in English. We call it 'ubuntu, botho'. It means the essence of being human. You know when it is there and when it is absent. It speaks about humanness, gentleness and hospitality, putting yourself on behalf of others, and being vulnerable. It embraces compassion and toughness. It recognises that my humanity is bound up in yours, for we can only be humans together."

The DIPP approach resonates well with the African communality of interrelatedness.

2.5.2 The impact of the COVID-19 vaccine and divergent views on congregants from Neo-Pentecostal and Classical Pentecostal churches

One notable school of thought was the opposition to the administration of the Covid-19 vaccines. White (2022:6) notes that the tension between certain Pentecostal fraternities became evident and there are video and voice messages from certain popular Neo-Pentecostal preachers like Bishop David Oyedepo of the Living Faith International (Winners Chapel), who reportedly said he would not take the vaccine because "he wouldn't want to be a guinea pig." Other ministers like Johnson Suleman (Omega Fire Ministries International), Chris Oyakhilome (Christ Embassy) and Chris Okotie of Shepherd of the Household of God Church International Ministries, among others, subscribed to the notion that the vaccines were 'anti-Christ' products. The influence these preachers have and that they exert on their congregations had a great impact on these members. As a result, such utterances, based on the pastors' personal convictions and

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[20] N Tutu, *The words of Desmond Tutu*. (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1989), 69.

faith influenced their members' response to the virus. These public pronouncements brought two divergent views in most of the Pentecostal churches. Not only did such utterances cause tension and anxiety amongst church members, but also among close families. Some members of the Christendom whose faith become shaken deepened their quest for meaning.

The Church of Pentecost and The Christ Apostolic Church International issued a communiqué to all its members after careful consultations with their members who were medical practitioners, that the church was not opposed to the administration of the vaccine as recommended by the WHO. Most of the members were still sceptical because of the various conspiracies around the vaccine and decided to abstain from taking the vaccine. A Pastoral Letter was issued by the Chairman of the COP worldwide to address such issues and declared a week of fasting and prayers from Monday 10 to Sunday 16 August 2020 by all Ministers and wives worldwide (Pastoral Circular Letter, 2020)[21]. Some ministers had their own convictions and decided not to take the vaccine and unfortunately when some contracted the COVID-19 virus, they succumbed and lost their lives. There is still on-going tension between some church members and their families where opposing parties are waiting to hear about the medium-term and long-term results on those who have been vaccinated in order to prove a point. These uncertainties and conspiracies are disturbing and bring other relational issues. The aspects of relational sentiments around the vaccine will be discussed in more detail at a later stage. Trust and trustworthiness is fundamental in every aspect of human relations and whenever this fundamental need between two or more people is shaken, things go terribly wrong.

2.5.3 The impact on congregants and the church's response as a social intervention

There are many ways that the COVID-19 pandemic affected congregants of churches including the COP members. Their socio-economic lives were seriously affected as most of the small

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[21] See, Pastoral Letter on 28 July 2020: COP/CO/VOL.39/0499/20.

business enterprise workers could not go to work. The ban caused restrictions on their vocations which affected their financial lives (Osei-Tutu, 2021). This is particularly true with those self-employed congregants whose sales and businesses were not patronised by customers for fear of uncertainty.

Secondly, the restrictions also affected their family lives as many tensions evolved as a result of the ban during the lockdown. Ruffing et al. (2020:3) identified that issues related to conflicts in relationships coupled with limited resources in crisis could trigger stress levels among people. This brought conflicts within certain families because for the first time, parents and children of households were locked up behind their homes.

The third impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on congregants were fear of infection from the COVID-19 virus. People having been living in fear of being infected by the virus whilst others lived in denial that the virus did not exist. Some members had misconception and stigmatization of the virus that it is a death warrant once you are infected due to its rapid spread from person to person. The fear of being infected and the stigmatizations psychologically affected people who had slight headaches for fear of going to die.

The Covid-19 pandemic brought churches in the spotlight as Faith Based Organisations (FBO) are regarded, globally and especially in South Africa, as a resource for social relief interventions during crises of this nature. In their article on FBOs as key role players in the response to the Covid-19 pandemic, Bowers Du Toit & Hancox (2021:167-169) argue that FBOs have not always risen to the task of bringing relief to the poor during crises although they are recognised as actors in the developmental sectors in our societies. However, from an ecclesiological perspective, they have not been recognised as such in terms of the influence they exert in order to bring relief. With more than 84% of the South African population

classified as Christians[22], it behoves on the church to meet the needs of the masses during lockdown periods. The question most of these congregants were asking was, "where is the church now"? The church as the Body of Christ mobilised themselves to meet most of the needs of their members in the informal sector and small scale businesses by assisting them with their daily living.

The authors addressed the challenge of a highly unequal South Africa in terms of poverty amongst the marginalised communities in rural areas and informal settlements. Although the State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2019 report showed a higher food availability average in South Africa compared to the world average, about a third of the country's population (29.9%) experienced severe levels of food insecurity. The pragmatic efforts made by these FBOs have gone a long way to bring relief to households where hitherto there would have been no source of hope. The government identified these FBOs as important role players in addressing hunger during the lockdown period. These FBOs were focusing on care, community development and advocacy at grass-root level, for communities needing assistance in their deepest needs. Some of the FBOs became frontline workers in most impoverished communities. The COVID-19 pandemic thus brought FBOs and their congregations closer together during the period when socio-economic distress made the marginalised more vulnerable. A model is emerging of how the church should reach out in its missionary mandate of meeting the needs of the most vulnerable in our unequal societies, and finding more creative ways of thinking about Church in a COVID-19 and Post COVID-19 pandemic world. The relationship between FBOs and congregations should include an intentional effort to reach out to the communities in meaningful ways, and participating more fully in God's liberating and

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[22] See, Official Guide to South Africa 2018/2019.

holistic mission. This would include exploring transformation of the negative effects on socio-economic conditions.

Crisis brings about creative and innovative thinking and this is true of the COVID-19 crisis, which somehow has brought other organizations and congregations closer together as they joined forces and became frontline workers in the most impoverished communities in suburbs like Alexander, Soweto, Tembisa in the Gauteng Province and Khayelitsha in the Western Cape, province.

2.6 Impact of COVID-19 on Pastoral Caregivers

The adverse effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on pastoral caregivers, as they endeavoured to meet the need of suffering congregants and the other suffering people, have been daunting. Pastoral caregivers understand their calling as a call from God and are prepared to meet this call when people are in need. In his article, Thesnaar (2021:102) posits that clergy are the last resort for people who are desperate to find a way out of their predicaments. The temptation of the clergy to be there in person to try and lessen their pain can be overwhelming. Most of them experienced what Louw (2008:136) calls 'compassion fatigue' during the pandemic because they had to deal with the trauma of congregants, people outside their congregations and their families as well. According to Thesnaar (2021:103) the impact of the pandemic on pastoral caregivers, was like a double injury to them as a result of not being physically present in their efforts to care for and counsel affected families. In this way, they feel affirmed, appreciated and thanked by those sufferers or victims and their network of relations. The conviction that one is in the call of duty and that if God will protect him / her was the primary motivation and driving force behind many clergies in caring for affected families. On the other hand, sick people who could not be visited physically would also make caregivers feel guilty for not being there for them. This in itself becomes very traumatic for caregivers. Billings, Bloomfield &

Greene (2020) affirm Thesnaar's assertion of the satisfaction of religious leaders' when they are physically present for their members. They use the term moral injury in the failure of pastoral caregivers being there for their congregants in their time of need due to the ban and lockdown. In Thessnar's view, measures to curb the virus, such as social distancing, mask wearing, inability to visit health institutions, the prisons and orphanages also affected the coping capacities of pastoral caregivers during the lockdown period. According to Ganzevoort (2008:20) trauma is "the psychological wound resulting from the confrontation with a serious event that shatters a person's integrity and induces powerlessness and estrangement. Contrary to common parlance, trauma is not the event as such, but the impact of the event on the person." This applies to the COVID-19 virus, because it is not just the sickness that one suffers from, but psychological trauma as well.

This assertion resonates with my personal experience of contracting COVID-19 virus, which affected my family as well. It was the scariest and most difficult moment in my entire life. As a caregiver in the period where some members were losing their loved ones and church leaders were sick with the COVID-19 virus and other diseases, we observed all the necessary protocols of social distancing, washing our hands and sanitizing but somehow, I was infected with the virus. My breathing got affected and was rushed to the casualty ward on 12 July 2021 for monitoring and treatment. This confirms Ganzevoort (2009:187) view that when people are suffering from trauma, they are challenged with the three notions of God as Omnipotent, God as good and the world as a good place. These notions come into sharp focus during traumatic periods, where people may choose to deny one of the three in order to make sense of what they are going through. This is what sometimes causes people to question their faith in God and reconstruct their theology afresh. It is therefore incumbent on pastoral caregivers to help congregants to be firmly rooted in the conviction that God is Sovereign and in His Sovereignty, He may choose to do whatever he pleases.

Another challenge that has confronted pastoral caregivers has been the economic impact of dwindling church finances, especially in the Neo-Pentecostal Churches led by independent ministers. Some churches reduced the salaries of their ministers as a way of supporting other church members who were in informal employment as well as those pastoral caregivers who are in self-supportive pastoral practices (Thesnaar, 2021:104). All these became very stressful on pastoral caregivers. As Mambrol (2017:3) asserts, the delayed effects of traumatic events like this pandemic could be very disturbing; this suggests that caregivers may experience the trauma well after the crisis has subsided. The impact of the virus challenges the very essence of the lives of pastoral caregivers, their families, and congregations as they were disorganized at many levels. Thesnaar (2021:106) stresses the fact that pastoral caregivers should not underestimate the impact of the stress brought on them by the Covid-19 pandemic because it affects the brain and the body. It can also increase the heart rate, which may culminate in high blood pressure, and can change one's eating habits and sleep patterns. Chronic and prolonged fatigue and stress may lead to anxiety, depression, and other disorders. In order to gain more insight into the impact of COVID-19 on pastoral caregivers, the researcher would like to discuss briefly about trauma and its effects on a person.

2.6.1 Trauma

Trauma refers to the immediate impact of injuries and experiences which are totally unexpected, unforeseen and related to one or other unfortunate event, accident, or sudden external cause which overwhelms the coping strategies to such an extent that the person feels like a victim without knowing what the alternative can be (Louw 2016:129). Trauma is accompanied by feelings of extreme loss, fear, and desperation. Louw (2016:129) indicate that trauma is an "emotional shock and a state of extreme confusion and numbness. On a rational level, it indicates a state of dissociation. The cognitive faculties have been by-passed. The brain

experiences a rational short-circuit. On a spiritual level, the belief system starts with a spiritual strike. The spiritual disruption and disturbance occur due to the fact that the reality of the situation cannot be linked to the existing understanding of the spiritual sources and God-images." This assertion is buttressed by Sandberg (2017:77) by describing trauma as a seismic event that shakes one's belief in a just world, robbing us of a sense that life is controllable, predictable, and meaningful. The continuous reality of the COVID-19 pandemic has challenged many Christians' belief in the efficacy of the reality of God which has challenged people's theology and cause them to start finding meaning. Trauma can overwhelm an individual's ability to cope, causes feelings of helplessness and diminishes their sense of self and their ability to feel the full range of emotions and experiences. The COVID-19 pandemic has affected the coping abilities of people. Gobodo-Madikizela & Van der Merwe, 2007:10) categorizes trauma into historical trauma, which is a single huge disaster, which can be personal like rape or communal like flood, and structural trauma, which is a pattern of continual and continuing traumas. The COVID-19 pandemic may be categorized into the structural trauma because of its continuous reality over a period of time. The uncertainty associated with it makes it stressful but with the vaccine emergence, there is hope that the situation will get better in the foreseeable future as people develop population immunity in cubing the rapid spread of the virus. At the same time all COVID-19 protocols as laid down by the government are followed.

Delaplain (1997:96) asserts that the "belief in the God of the Jewish people provides certainty of His ever-faithful dependability because of His covenant with them. This covenant does not negate tragedy, injustice, and suffering from humanity and their difficulties but rather, His faithful promises are capable of bringing deliverance during difficult times". According to Abbott (2020), God does not abandon or desert His people, so there is hope in God's unending presence. The Christian hope lies in a Saviour who, far from erasing suffering and injustice from the lives of his followers, enters into the suffering and injustice of the world with an

incarnational promise of redemption. Christ suffers and dies with his followers, sharing through his presence an immanent experience of the divine in the midst of brokenness. It is only through the finished work of Jesus Christ that the broken pieces in our lives can be mended through appropriation of that victory by faith in Him (Ison, 2020). According to Hog and Wenger (2005), ministry is a high-risk occupation. Not only do the clergy struggle with the effects of high ministry demands, they also face a situation of unexpressed sentiments that has long-term physical and mental health implications. Louw (2008:32) states that for the healing of attitude and position, the wounded person has to be affirmed through disengagement and embracement by the pastoral caregiver. Disengagement is when the caregiver creates space for critical self-reflection where the traumatised person goes through meditation on what has happened before they can move forward. In embracement, the caregiver allows space for creating an atmosphere of intimacy where unconditional love and regard is shown and affirmation is expressed. Gobodo-Madikizela & Van der Merwe (2007:11) note that the reality of the destructive power of trauma can be balanced by the reality of human resilience, which can triumph over adversity, and create meaning in the void. This means that when trauma strikes, the search for meaning gradually emerges from the pain through translating it into the structure of a narrative that brings order and coherence into the chaotic experience. The trauma experienced during this COVID-19 virus can both be measured through the economic and social impact as well as the psychological, emotional, spiritual and other subjective impacts which have long-term impact on both pastoral caregivers and health care personnel.

2.6.2 Effects of trauma

According to Jones (2009:53) in the first few days and weeks after a horrifying episode, some victims usually experience feelings of fear, sadness, guilt, and anger. This feeling begins to go down after some time as they begin to make sense of what has happened to them. Most people recover quickly especially, when family and friends give support to the victims. For some

people, the terrifying ordeal they go through can lead to mental or psychological issues such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Some fall into depression, anxiety, alcohol and drug use, which in turn, impact negatively on their relationships with family, friends and colleagues. PTSD is a set of reactions that can occur after someone has been through a disturbing experience. Streets (2014), posits that people who suffer from PTSD know how draining it can be. A person who has had a traumatic episode can develop some signs of PTSD (Jones, 2009:54). Sometimes they show signs of loneliness, anger, a profound sense of inadequacy, unsafe and loss of hope, even some of the other features normally associated with the symptoms which may suggest a diagnosis of PTSD. There are people who seem to be functioning and fulfilling the activities of daily living but whose traumatic episodes have left them feeling depressed, angry, and with a chronic sense of vulnerability and lack of hope about life. Sometimes they also express hopelessness. These feelings or emotions affect their long-term health and place stress on their relationships with their families and others. The negative impact of trauma can become multi-generational when not identified and dealt with early (Streets, 2014). Persons who experience complex trauma may also experience withdrawal symptoms or social isolation. Scalise (2014:30) defines "dissociation as an emotional reaction to complex trauma triggers, where a person either intentionally or unintentionally withdraws themselves from other people, social situations, or gatherings that appear to have similar threats to the trauma experienced at another time and place". The person simply isolates from people, preferring to be alone rather than in the company of other people, including family and friends.

With these assertions of how traumatic events affect the victim, Gobodo-Madikizela and Van der Merwe (2007:10), however, focus on the positive aspects in which they use Victor Frankyl's Logotherapy to link trauma as a stimulus to re-imagine one's life story to suggest ways of recreating one's life narrative to incorporate the trauma; to create a story which will, add value to the person's life, after the experience. In my narrative of the ministerial traumatic

experience in Queenstown, I shared my story of enrolling in Stellenbosch University to do pastoral care in trauma as a result of the shock of experiencing such inhumane treatment from two Christian church leaders, which added some value in my life and resulted in a story worth sharing. Trauma can be communicated and shared through language, which also helps the healing process, according to Gobodo-Madikizela et al, (2007:11). Further, they state that trauma often takes away words from its victim, but recovery from such trauma begins with the recovery of lost words and telling of a story about what happened. This echoes Sanberg (2017:78) assertion that the PTSD trauma victims experience can sometimes translate into Post Traumatic Growth or what she terms, 'bouncing forward'. Some use traumatic experiences to better themselves whilst other get destroyed from them.

2.7 The Impact of Covid-19 on the Church of Pentecost

Against the backdrop of the discussions above, the study will review the general impact of the pandemic on the COP in South Africa.

The traumatic effect on the ban and restrictions during lockdown levels 5 and 4 especially, were both positive and negative in various ways.

2.7.1 The Impact on the COP Ministry in general

The positive effects (e-services, which has saved the church exorbitant travelling expenses from travelling from far and near the provinces to Johannesburg for Half-Year, Meetings and End of Year meetings. Many pastoral caregivers and their leaders who, hitherto, would not have any idea about the use of social media and technology to interact, have now learnt the use of these e-services. Secondly, the spirituality of clergy, and other dedicated believers were deepened and also the personal relationship of many believers with the divine were promoted, according to Calhoun & Tedeshi (1999). Even though, it was not a new phenomenon of having e-congregational service, COP, South Africa, embarked on weekly online prayers at the

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inception of the lockdown and has since been an on-going ministers and wives' prayer meeting to date. It has now been made bi-monthly in order that it will lose its significance. Recently, once a month midnight prayer meetings amongst ministers has also commenced[23]. These are some of the creative aspects of deepening our spirituality the COVID-19 pandemic has introduced.

The socio-economic impact on the members directly affected the churches income from tithes and offerings, which is the main source of resourcing the COP, South Africa This problem made most of our churches incur huge rental arrears. It is clearly stated in The Church of Pentecost Minister's Manual as, "We believe that the Bible clearly teaches believers to make or give tithes on their earnings unto the Lord and free-will offerings to the cause of promoting the Kingdom of God. We also believe that God blesses a cheerful giver (Mal. 3:10; 2Cor. 8:7; Heb. 7:1-4; Ac. 20:35)." There is a lot of emphasis to collect offerings and tithes during all church meetings. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the economic life of members has adversely affected the financial flow of the church. This is because some church members cannot afford their contributions to the church as a result of loss of employment, while others withhold their contributions for fear of uncertain future. Coupled with the threats from certain organisations like the "Operation Dudula", and the Home Affairs minister's announcement of scrutinizing permanent resident statuses for foreign nationals, most members of the COP relocated back to Ghana and some proceeded to other European countries for greener pastures. Some members who were supporting the church succumbed to COVID-19 virus and other related sicknesses.

The tenets of the COP and its core values which emphasises the planting of churches, discipleship, and building indigenous self-supporting, self-sustaining and self-governing

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[23] This was agreed in an online meeting on Friday, 21 October 2022 after the Pastors & wives' prayer meetings.

strategy seemed to be shattered during the pandemic. The wheel on which these activities and objectives can be achieved through sound financial base. The economic impact adversely affected every facet of the ministry[24].

On ritual performance, the COP resorted to the use of factory ready-made packed communion set from Durban and distributed to all the churches in the nation. It made it much more hygienic than the traditional way of pouring the grape into communion glasses and the waiver. Members also had the opportunity to improvise by using bread and grape drinks in their homes during the lockdown period. On the naming and dedication of children (christening), parents were asked to carry their children in the arms of the father as the clergy offers pray of blessing on the child. The third ritual performance that was halted until the end of the national state of disaster was baptizing members. The COP doctrinal position on water baptism is by immersion to establish a member as an authentic registered member of the COP. Baptism by immersion is a significant ritual in the COP (Ministerial Handbook, 2014:26; September Circular Letter, 2020).

2.7.2 The Impact of COVID-19 on the COP Clergy

The COVID-19 impact on the clergy of the COP in South Africa amongst others were: the COVID-19 infections leading to illnesses, the financial constraints, psychological trauma suffered by them and are still going through the after effects, financial loss which in turn, affected the schooling of some pastor's children, the guilt feeling associated with not being able to help sick members and others, which may culminate into spiritual, emotional and eventually into anxiety and depression in extreme cases. The impact of the COVID-19 virus that can be measured or objectively observed are the financial constraints on our ministers. Some of who had to sacrifice certain allowances in order to support other members who were

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[24] See The Church of Pentecost Ministerial Handbook (2014)

struggling to afford basic needs. Thesnaar (2021:103) notes that this economic loss and social struggles which ministers do not have control over, can be daunting and traumatic. Most of our ministers as well as other ordained leaders were afflicted with illnesses from the COVID-19 virus[25]. With all the numerous programs and training courses caregivers go through, none of the sessions cover programmes to deal with such crisis. According to Thesnaar (2021:104) caregivers become vulnerable, exposed and are caught in-between the rock and a hard place in a sense. Using my experience of COVID-19 infection together with other ministers in COP, the some of the aftermath of the symptoms that characterised the COVID-19 sickness amongst others, were memory loss and dizziness, of which I can testify of its reality. It took me about six months to recover from slight memory loss, constant fatigue and other weakness and periodic general malaise for some time. I was also unfortunate to fall into the category of the 1 to 3% of those who suffered from conjunctivitis (redness of the eyes)[26], which lasted for two weeks. The health impact of the COVID-19 virus on the clergy was very uncomfortable. Most of us were on sick leave and its ripple effect on the congregation was also stressful, following a circular letter issued by the National Head on August 2021. These objective evidence are the measurable evidence of the impact of COVID-19 sicknesses on the clergy and their families. The financial impact on the clergy as a result of non-payment of allowances became very stressful on them. The indirect burden it places on the children in such situations can be very frustrating and depressing. The helplessness and emotional distress was uncomfortable. The other aspects of the impact which cannot be measured objectively amongst others are: psychological stress for not able to visit sick members physically, their inability to visit members admitted at the hospitals and the burden of not able to explain everything to members as to why God should allow such crisis on humanity. The trauma of congregants and the impact

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[25] This information was made available during the Pastors and wives online prayer meeting on 16 July 2021, by the National Head and requested that we intensified our prayers for the sick.
[26] See www.webmd.com/eye-health/covid-19-and-your-eyes

on themselves have also influenced their theology in many ways (Thesnaar, 2021:103). The fear and anxiety associated with the losses of members and illnesses have had a major impact of pastoral caregivers. Louw (2008:137) alludes that the existential anxiety, fear and uncertainty due to death, and guilt lead to meaninglessness of life. The impact of the loss of loved ones from families and church leaders on collective levels will continue to be with us for some time to come. Thesnaar asserts that pastoral caregivers struggle to be honest about the impact of the virus on their lives. These unexpressed sentiments may have long-term effect on their health as well. It is an undeniable fact that the impact of the pandemic has been unprecedented and daunting for pastoral caregivers and in reality, we will be able to ascertain the effects in the years to come.

These emotional, psychological and spiritual impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic of pastoral caregivers is what Greene et al (2020) call moral injury and psychological trauma. This moral injury is linked to the guilt and guilt feelings associated with the failure of the clergy to be there for sick members when they need them the most. Most of the ministers of COP including myself still have these moral injuries we are dealing with in our own way. The time I was seriously infected with COVID-19 virus together with other church leaders. It was not only gloom for my family but the congregants as well as the entire pastorate.

Milstein (2019) also notes that the role of the pastor in occupying the space and being present for the suffering congregants in their time of need was restricted by the ban which prohibited them from performing their duties.

There are mental health challenges such as high level of stress, burnout and emotional exhaustion or fatigue on the rise for pastoral caregivers especially during the peak of the pandemic and still its aftermath effects is on-going.

Issues of relational conflicts and the care for people in crisis coupled with limited resources could trigger stress levels among pastoral caregivers (Ruffing et al. 2020:6). By the nature of the work, pastoral caregivers or religious leaders are faced with duties which are existential in nature which often require their attention and resources. This has the potential to challenge their mental health and well-being according to Hendron et al. (2021:2). The mental health challenges associated with pastoral caregiver's work are profound because they are less likely enthused than others to seek assistance from mental health professionals and suffer sudden and unexplained breakdown from time to time as Salwen eta al. (2017) allude.[27] This assertion was confirmed by a mental health professional who had a workshop with our women's ministry wing of our church in Johannesburg on 11 June 2022. She emphasized that some religious leaders are being brought to her private practice for mental assessment frequently during this pandemic period than during the pre-COVID-19 era. Currently, no clergy of the COP in South Africa have been diagnosed of any mental health problem but the fact that it is not easily measured is difficult to ascertain unless the individual pastor seeks professional help.

Rowatt (2001) notes that apart from the psychological effects associated with pastoral duties, they also experience tensions in meeting the demands from their family and church activities. This tensions heightened during the COVID-19 pandemic as a result of limited financial resources. Members economic lives became challenged during the early parts of the lockdown which affected pastoral caregivers as well. As I have already indicated above, the pastors of COP, in South Africa sacrificed their transport allowances in order to sustain the church during the hard lockdown periods.

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[27] Dr Annette Antwi-Anyimadu, a psychiatrist, was invited to educate our women on Mental Health issues on Saturday, 11 June 2022.

2.8 Conclusion

Chapter 2 reviewed some literature on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the churches from the perspective of various scholars who have written on the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact, pastoral ministry, congregants of churches and the COP ministry, and, and zoomed into COP specifically the pastoral caregiver, using the descriptive-empirical task of Osmer by asking the question, 'what is going on?'

Chapter 3 pursues this in more detail and delves into the disciplinary perspective of trust, loyalty, fairness, responsibility and accountability. The researcher will explore other disciplines from psychology, philosophy and psychiatry to assist him to better understand the theory on the impact of COVID-19 virus pandemic on the Church of Pentecost congregants as well as the pastoral caregivers. Interdisciplinary focus and thoughts on relational ethics by the thoughts of Ivan Boszormenyi-Nagy, Martin Buber, and Emmanuel Levinas will be explored.

CHAPTER 3

COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND RESTORATION OF TRUST: AN
INTERDISCIPLINARY FOCUS ON RELATIONAL ETHICS

3.1 Introduction and Overview

The previous chapter attempted to answer the question, "what is going on?" posed by the Descriptive-Empirical task of Osmer's practical theology, by focusing on the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on churches with specific focus on the COP, in South Africa, ministry and Pastoral Caregivers. Chapter 3 undertakes the interpretive task or sagely wisdom by answering the question, "why is this going on?"

To answer this question, the researcher will utilize Osmer's practical theological interpretation to understand the ethical implications, circumstances and situations of congregants infected by the COVID-19 virus as well as the pastoral caregivers in order to find appropriate ways to respond to them. To assist to answer the question, 'why is this happening' it is important to explore other disciplines other than theology, on their views on the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on COP members. In a nutshell, the chapter adopts an interdisciplinary focus, which will look at the thoughts of Martin Buber (Philosophy), Emmanuel Levinas (Philosophy) and Ivan Boszormenyi-Nagy (Psychiatry), to gain understanding of relational ethics and other relational resources.

Having ascertained what these disciplines say about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on COP ministry and the pastoral caregivers, the researcher will utilize the theories from these disciplines to assist the reader to interpret the impact of the pandemic in this chapter. In order to achieve that, elements of dialogue, trust, fairness, loyalty and multi-directed partiality and

entitlements as an aspect of the DIPP will be explored to gain more insights to assist the COP ministry.

Pastoral caregivers find themselves in a dilemma of caring for the suffering congregations negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, their families as well as themselves. This effect on their lives can cause, as alluded by Mambrol (2017:3)), a delayed after effect of the trauma of the COVID-19 pandemic which in turn, have a potential ripple effect on their close network of relationships. This has ethical implications of affecting the children consciously or unconsciously in their future relationships which can be destructive or constructive. This chapter attempts to utilise theoretical constructs from the arts and sciences (natural and physical) to explain the trends of the impact of the pandemic on current, and future relational issues.

It is therefore necessary to find other ways of meeting the needs of suffering members through proper dialogue in order not to lose those whose faith is not strong. This is why the DIPP approach can provide an alternative to other pastoral care and counselling approaches in finding sustainable ways of pastoral practices during the COVID-19 crisis. The "conflicting loyalty" between pastoral caregivers and their families leaves much to be desired in these circumstances. The practice of physical calls in caring for the vulnerable and suffering people must be done with a sense of responsibility and accountability.

3.2 Impact of COVID-19 on congregants and pastoral caregivers: Input from the social sciences

3.2.1 Social Sciences Perspective

The Ethics of Responsibility: Using the thoughts of Jonathan Sacks and Emmanuel Levinas

In order to be a good theological scholar it is important to explore the views of other disciplines from the social sciences, philosophy, psychology and the natural sciences (psychiatry) for their thoughts on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic to gain more understanding of its effects on members of COP and the pastoral caregivers and their network of relationships. Utilizing the thoughts of Sacks and Levinas on the ethics of responsibility, how the pastoral caregiver in serving the congregants should be responsible and accountable so as to bring their network of relations into the picture should they fall victim to COVID-19 infection in the line of duty. In Levinas ethics, Burggraeve (1999:29) notes that the field of ethics begins with the appearance of the other person; by calling into question one's spontaneity based on the presence of the other. He further notes that the face of the other is not necessarily the physical face, but rather, the invincible; as the other is an enigma of sorts that cannot be fully comprehended. Burggraeve (1999:31-32) continues that the face of the other involves a certain level of vulnerability.

Van Doorn (2020:45) describes Levinas' identification on Buber's I-Thou space that it seems empty which is filled with silence and void of any awareness. The other is always different and unique and are on unequal balance (this is what Nagy calls polarization), which makes the otherness of the other become the deciding factor that appeals to the 'I' in the mode of command and demand. This becomes an appeal that puts my own being into question, and this question becomes a call. This call, emphasizes the responsibility of the subject. The other is not just a neighbor. The other is foreign, we can also say stranger to me in many ways. The strangeness or otherness is not to be despised but evokes and braces responsibility. In Levinas' ethics, the 'I' is described as infinite responsibility towards the other person, this ethics of responsibility makes an appeal to me, and never to the other in order to be filled with compassion, hospitality, empathy and interplay.

Vosloo (2021)[28] reiterates Levinas' ethics in COVID-19 era as the face mask covers the others face which prevents one to see his or her vulnerable face.

Sacks (2005:4-5) describes his responsibility ethics from the Judaism faith as honoring the image of God in other people, and doing well to turn the world into a place of haven where the divine presence of God will be felt. We are here as sojourners to make a difference in a fractured world, a day at a time, an act at a time, for as long as it will take, to make it a place of justice and compassion to the destitute and lonely, the poor not without assistance; where the cry of the vulnerable is taken notice of and those wronged are heard. Sacks argues that Jewish mystic thought states that, "Someone else's physical needs are my spiritual obligation". This is what Thesnaar (2019:4), echoes when he says, when we are able to see the face of the other it becomes difficult to ignore our discomfort with the impact of the trauma on the other. For Levinas, this is what ethics is about whereby a way is always explored to engage with the other to show hospitality, compassion and be responsible for the other when it within your ability to do so. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is a collective responsibility. Responsibility as Sacks (2005:5) illustrates, is like the people who were taking their roles and responsibilities as fellow humans during the Holocaust: what was common to them as studies have shown, was not religious belief or any specific kind of culture or upbringing. Most of them did what they did even though they risked their lives to save others by simply acting human, doing what human beings are supposed to do for their fellow human beings. This confirms the statement made by Van Doorn (2020) 'that ethics is ontic indeed.' Ethics comes from our humanity and if congregants of churches would endeavor to occupy the spaces of the other in their weakness and vulnerable states, the world would be a better place for all.

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[28] First MTh Clinical & Full-Thesis students contact session lectures held online with Prof. Vosloo in March 2021.

This reminds pastoral caregivers that they are not the only ones to do all that needs to be done in the COVID-19 pandemic as they find it difficult to accept the fact that they cannot be physically present to assist the sick. Louw (2008:135) explains that pastoral caregivers can have the tendency to give themselves fully to the point of having 'compassion fatigue' without maintaining a healthy balance between being responsible and accountable.

3.3 Aspects of Dialogue in the thought of Ivan Boszormenyi-Nagy: input from the natural Science Perspective (Psychiatry)

In pursuant to finding a common ground to understand the dynamics of pastoral caregivers and the suffering congregants in the continuous reality of COVID-19 pandemic, it is important to understand these three aspects of dialogue. Van Doorn (2020:154) asserts that for a pastor to be of help to a client or a congregant in need, it is important to probe into the realm of another human being's pain and grief. On the other hand, it is also important to understand ourselves better in terms of our personal resistance that may hamper the establishment of an authentic dialogue. The challenge of pastoral caregivers being used to be physically present in their pastoral duties to attend to the sick, in crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic on COP congregants require that pastors gain some understanding of these aspects of dialogue.

3.3.1 Polarization and Differentiation

This aspect emphasises the understanding that no two persons are the same because each individual is existentially and inherently different from the other. This existential differences between people is what Boszormenyi-Nagy & Krasner (1986:75) refers to as polarization or differentiation. They continue that in contextual sense, individuation is a relational construct or process. Relationships can be understood if due recognition is given to efforts made by individuals. They state that: "Individual psychology and relationships are integral parts of each

other, so too are the present and the past. If people are participants in their current sets of relationships, they are also links in the chains of trans-generational consequences."

According to Van Doorn (2020:154) this differences between persons provide the resources and raw materials for the enrichment of relationships. This diversity of our differences enrich one another but to use these differences appropriately require mutual trust, respect and understanding each other. Differentiation, Van Doorn (2020:154) continues, requires one's ability to fairly define both the other and oneself; which implies that one should not over-give to the other at the expense of oneself and vice versa. It also means that in relationships it is important to maintain a balance between the partners in a fair way. Boszormenyi-Nagy et al. (1986:75) describes this aspect of genuine dialogue differentiation into two self-correcting resources in relationships as self-delineation and self-worth or self-validation.

- **Self-delineation**

Boszormenyi-Nagy & Krasner (1986:421) describes this as stage one in the dialogic process whereby one sets boundaries between the self and the 'not-self'. They describe it as a resource which requires a personal practice and a sound insight in correcting measures in order to apply a fair boundary within the dynamics of giving and receiving. This is an important aspect in this chapter of the study which tries to create awareness in dealing with the issues of the pandemic so as to protect oneself and their network of relations. It is very critical for pastoral caregivers to master the art of self-delineation in their calling especially during crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic. Boszormenyi-Nagy et al., (1986:75) espouses on self-delineation as a process through which a person's life goes through, to give him or her a unique identity. He explains that life's purpose and meaning are obtained from various sources such as significant relations with people, the chain of transgenerational course in a person's life. A person's background as

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to the family being born into. Is it a loving, caring parents? One's gender, religion, race, and ethnicity sets one apart from all others as a unique individual.

Golf (2001:150) refers to this self-correcting resource as an option whereby the self uses others to define itself in forming boundaries between the self and the other. Van Doorn (2020:157) notes that in, therapy sometimes it becomes difficult to know when and how to be available for people in a fair way. In so doing, sometimes one is influenced by a voice from the past experience that compels one to be more available for the other. This can put more stress on oneself in over-giving. This tendency of over-giving can cause burnout for many which many pastors fall victim to, especially during the pandemic of which some of us fell victim to. The knowledge in this aspect of psychiatry in relational ethics is a good resource to help pastoral caregivers in COP to take precaution in their pastoral care duties. The emotional, psychological and spiritual impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the pastoral caregivers in COP can have a long-term effect if these awareness is not created to make pastors well informed. It should not make one become unnecessarily guilty of not being there to help oneself and his / her network of relations.

In responding to our pastoral caregiving responsibilities, which require us to be there for suffering people, there is also the ethical responsibility of being able to self-validate and self-delineate. In Thesnaar's (2021:115) view, this first phase of the dialogic process, establishes and enhances the self's 'ethical-worth'. This is important because pastoral caregivers, in fulfilling their role as caregivers, may go beyond reasonable boundaries in discharging their duties and thus endanger themselves and their close network of relationships during their engagements with sufferers of the coronavirus. This is because during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the medical risks posed by contaminating and possibility of contracting the virus was not only restricted to the caregivers but their families and loved ones. Thesnaar (2021:114) therefore poses the question: "To whom are they accountable when caregivers are in danger of

harming others, their families and themselves during their pastoral ministry?" To answer this question one needs to understand the responsibility attached to the consequences of one's actions in relation to those they are connected to. Pastoral caregivers must be able to know when to open and close their fences and to who they can allow into their space and at what time. Van Doorn (2021) alludes that if you struggle to delineate, you can be susceptible to be exploited and you may easily go into guilt feeling when you delineate. It is key in caregiving and taking responsibility for oneself.

- **Self-validation**

The discovery of oneself and finding a sense of meaning is seen in our relationships with the other. It is an indication of one's maturity level, according to Van Doorn (2020:158) who believes that the discovery of one's unique identity in establishing sound maturity to know one's unique meaning and self-worth. This is tested and proven regarding the merit of giving and receiving, that is, one's entitlement.

Botha (2014:25) alludes that when one's self-worth has been hurt or wounded, the victim may be reluctant to invest wholeheartedly in future relationship with the fear and uncertainty of maintaining that relationship. This is where the concept and approach seeks to find the hidden jewels and residual trusts which can be utilized in order to restore broken trust once again. When this is viewed from an ethical dimension, with time, trust may be regained by the balance of giving and receiving between two partners deemed to be dependable on each other. Before any dialogue is to be ensued, another aspect in the dialogic phase that needs to be addressed is the issue of asymmetry and symmetry. Van Doorn (2020:160) affirms that self-validation is the other phase of establishing reliable and dialogical relationships. In self-esteem, one discovers freedom in him or herself without fear of losing oneself or becomes alienated from the other. It informs one to listen to the other without giving up one's own position in the

relationship. Self-validation empowers one to know who he or she is and gives that inner confidence and a sense of self-worth and self-esteem. You need to come to terms to accept the fact that you can live a self-fulfilled life when you understand self-worth implies always facing differences and view them as opportunities to grow into maturity and betterment.

3.3.2 Symmetry and Asymmetry

The second aspect of self-correcting in the dialogic phase is symmetry and asymmetry which assists one to gain insight into what appropriate proximity and distance in intersubjective networking is (Van Doorn, 2020:161). Boszormenyi-Nagy (1986:81) notes the symmetrical and asymmetrical deficits and merits in relationships represents an intrinsic based contextual limit to equity between partners.

Boszormenyi-Nagy & Krasner (1986:81) explains this aspect of dialogue as when an individual looks into what can be contributed into a relationship that will impact on the other on an ethical mode of giving and receiving. In an asymmetric relationship's there is no equity in reciprocity especially in intergenerational relationship where the issue of an individual accepting liability for another's expectation is limited by virtue of the position being held in the relationship. This is a relationship which is intrinsically restricted by their reciprocity, where it conspicuously shows within parent-child relationship. Parents cannot expect to receive equal returns from what they have invested into their children. Whenever this order of intergenerational relationship is jeopardised, parentification phenomena can occur which distorts the responsibility of the relationship. This can be very destructive and give rise to deficits in the child which either third parties who have nothing to do with the injustice suffer from or they themselves cause injustices to others. This is destructive entitlement which will be explained in detail later on.

Van Doorn (2020:162) asserts that in asymmetrical relationships, the movement on the balance of giving and receiving on the scale is never exactly in the centre. In asymmetry, we realise that we are never the same but unique in our differences which underlines differentiation. This brings safety and security within each person's space whereby observance of such space is respected to bring freedom. Nagy & Krasner (1986:162) posit that "the tendency to overlook hidden asymmetries in an apparently symmetrical relationship, is often the cause of relational confusion and despair". Nel van Doorn (2020:163) observes that respect for asymmetry contributes to the avoidance of exceeding the boundaries of the other. When there is disregard for this asymmetric relationship, the responsibility of the relationship is negatively affected. The giving of life from parents to children cannot be reciprocated in the same manner. Parents need to take cognisance of the relevance of asymmetry relationship in the interest of the child, according to Van Doorn (2020:162). It is important for the child to be able to count totally of the reliability of a parent in this relationship. However, children are obliged to take appropriate care of their parents as an ethical responsibility but not as a repayment of their indebtedness. Nel van Doorn (2021)[29] explained the risk in asymmetry being the tendency to abuse the child. It is existentially asymmetrical and the child must be able to count on safety in family settings. It gives insights in these aspects of the dialogic phase because inappropriate and appropriate relationships that occurs in families, child molestations and other vices can be identified and addressed.

3.3.3 Multi-directed Partiality

This is the third aspect of self-correcting resource of dialogue as identified by Boszormenyi-Nagy and Krasner (1986:89), which embraces the notion that both deficits and merits or considerations from all parties within the relational network is acknowledged and recognized

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[29] Nel Van Doorn in her explanation during the third block contact session of the 2021 MTh Clinical lecture at Stellenbosch University

in order to bring out hidden jewels. Nel van Doorn (2020:164) asserts that this aspect of dialogue is the main key of the contextually oriented pastor or caregiver. It attempts to consider all parties in the networking involved, both living and dead as well as current and future generations. Its aim is to give confidence so that every vote is guaranteed in the invisible ledger of credits and deficits. Multi-directed partiality is aimed at fairness in the promotion of justice to restore trust with the hope of bringing healing during the dialogic encounters.

Joyce & Krasner (1995:220) define multi-directed partiality as: "A therapeutic attitude, stance, and method, Multi-Directed Partiality (MDP) presumes merit in each relating partner and merit earned through contributions given and received between them despite injuries and engagements. Siding with each person's real and perceived suffering and against each partner's unmitigated tendencies to blame, therapists use MDP to acknowledge pain, elicit trust, identify resources, help people assess personal accountability, and establish new balances of burdens and benefits between and among them." It is contextual therapy's bedrock approach to dialogue where there is inclusivity and fairness by giving everyone into the discussion regardless of their position or status in the relationship. Once people feel valued and recognised it Meulink-Korf & Van Rhijn (2016:114) everyone feels the sense of being human, respected and belonged in our co-existence as a people. In Manuel's (2021:63) view this inclusive multi-laterality departs from being a mere dialogue to forming the main chief therapeutic intervention of the contextual therapy with an intergenerational focus spreads to include even to the third generation in order to arrive at an appreciable conclusion that will be fair to all parties. The dead in such discussions are exonerated so as to correct negative legacies associated with the previous generations in order to carry on a positive mandate for those unborn. There is always a responsibility on the current generation to either correct negative legacies from our forebears' or carry on the load or weight of good legacies to the next generation and the not-yet generations into the future.

Sacks (2005:25) argues that God gave Abraham a mandate to become a father who will teach a child to question, challenge, confront, dispute. God wanted Abraham to do all these in order that the covenant people will not be people who accept evils and injustices of the world but rather take responsibility to resist such and not to accept it as the will of God. God wants them to hear the cry of the oppressed, the sufferings of the afflicted, and the pains of the lonely. Sacks espouses that God does not want His covenant people to accept the world as is with all its predicaments because it is not the world that ought to be.

What makes Boszormenyi-Nagy's contextual therapy approach unique is this dimension of always being conscious of the unborn generation to be better than what we find ourselves currently. MDP in the passing of legacies will be discussed briefly in chapter 5 of this study.

Van Doorn (2020:234) argues and summarises it this way, that we live between generations, on one side we our loyalty is to the previous generation, and on the other hand our loyalty should be to the next generation as well as the not-yet born generation. At same time we cannot neglect our responsibilities to bestow justice and fairness to the current generation. Van Doorn advocates that our the yet unborn generation still makes an appeal to the current generation of which they hold them accountable in the mode of an ethical imperative, the present from the not-yet, but becoming into the future. Meulink-Korf et al., (2016:39) assert that anytime an individual makes a more constructive contribution to the well-being of those who come after us, and thus, let go of destructive and negative legacies, the quality of life changes for the better at that moment.

Boszormenyi-Nagy et al. (1986:97) note that in these three aspects of the dialogic phases come together, it aids in evoking ethical relational response instead of prescribing a rigid technique. When the caregiver is able to allow each participating partner in the dialogue, as described by Nel van Doorn (2021) dialectic attitude can be adopted. In this attitude, the pastoral caregiver

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plays along the groups like an oscillating pendulum whereby the therapist does not become neutral but journeys along with the parties; the merits from each party should be acknowledged, whereas the bad is not condemned but as connecting questions. In this manner, the heuristic attitude is gained which allows each party to recognize and learn something for themselves. The parties discover solutions for themselves through the multi-directed partiality role played by the pastoral caregiver[30].

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on congregants and pastoral caregivers alike, poses ethical issues in our relationships and as such the aspects of the DIPP approach as an intervention measure to mend broken trusts amongst one another. This section will be considered in the pragmatic chapter of this study.

3.4 Introduction to Contextual Therapy of Ivan Boszormenyi-Nagy

Using the philosophy of Martin Buber (1958) in his articulation of the 'I'-'Thou' concept of relational encounter, Hargrave & Pfitzer (2003:6) explain that a person is a person because of others; and that is how you construct an objective view about yourself, life and the world as a whole. For instance, it would be difficult to know how I look if someone else doesn't give me feedback on whether I look good. This idea about myself cannot be constructed in a vacuum in my head, but it is dependent upon my environment and people around me. In a nutshell, it is my relationship with the environment and with other people that gives me the ability to discover myself and others. Based on his research and experiences with mentally handicapped patients and their families, Ivan Boszormenyi-Nagy understood the 'fibres' that a tissue of interpersonal relationships consists of (Meulink-Korf & Van Rhijn, 2016:7). Using Buber's concept of 'I'-'Thou' in dialogue and Levinas' ethics of responsibility, Nagy distinguishes four major foundations of relational realities upon which every relationship is influenced and built; these

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[30] The third block lecture at Stellenbosch University contact lessons in October 2021.

dimensions include facts, individual psychology, systemic interactions, and relational ethics (Boszormenyi-Nagy & Ulrich, 1981). These four dimensions are intertwined and inseparable. It is in the fourth dimension that hope resides in bringing healing and restoration to severed relationships. This is the realm contextual therapists' aim to help people gain a disposition that will free them in pursuit of multilateral balances and fairness in relationships. The question of fairness between them is a matter of equity, though not necessarily of equality (Boaszomenyi-Nagy & Krasner, 1986:399).

3.3.1 The dimension of facts

This first dimension constitutes the facts about an individual regarding certain objectifiable events in life and relationships, which are true but are not easy to change or reverse. This may include factors such as our genetic makeup, physical health, basic history, and events in our lives or our socio-economic history (Boszormenyi-Nagy & Krasner, 1986). This dimension clearly plays a part in relationships. For example, whenever an autistic or an epileptic child, whose condition affects the parents, siblings and close relations, has an attack, the anxiety, worry, and anticipation of when the next seizure or attack will surface becomes a burden. These uncertainties can cause fear, frustrations, depression, and resentment between spouses when the wife might think that the man is not too concerned and starts to nag, which might bring strain in the relationships. Hargrave and Pfitzer (2003:8) assert that though not all the facts may be evident or discovered, this does not change the reality that the facts can be discovered. For instance, people may not inform others that they have experienced divorce in their families or believe that the divorce affected them. However, the choice the parents made to divorce makes up a part of their factual history which cannot be changed. Consciously or unconsciously these facts in their history affect the way they will interact with others in their future relationships.

Botha (2014:7) also notes that facts will not be adequate to give a pastoral caregiver the complete picture. However, facts remain an important resource for a pastoral caregiver to gain the necessary information and insights. Facts, Botha continues, are part of a person's story and they include past events that have taken place in a person's life. They are incontestable parts of a person's relational reality. However, it is encouraged that with careful understanding and insights, no one should become a victim of the past but look into the future with hope.

The reality of COVID-19 pandemic has become a historical fact of our time and the impact of the pandemic will be seen in the next generation as well as the unborn generations. Some of the consequences have been highlighted in the previous chapter but we need to use the negative aspects of the pandemic to better our lives into the future and to improve our consciousness of the importance of good hygiene and protect ourselves from contracting infectious diseases. The pandemic has heightened our consciousness of being responsible and accountable for our own actions. Unfortunately, with the lifting of the restrictions regarding wearing of masks and social distancing, people have started behaving as if COVID-19 virus never existed. We cannot completely say the pandemic has been eradicated, but the lessons learned should help to improve pastoral interactions and practices.

3.3.2 Individual Psychology

This relates to the dimension where the individual utilizes the information derived from the external environment and the facts. He or she internalizes and transforms the information into relationships concerning beliefs, emotions, experiences, feelings, and motivations. It basically describes the process of developing aspirations and striving for power, love, and pleasure (Boszormenyi-Nagy & Krasner, 1986). Hargrave & Pfitzer (2003:8) state that this dimension is concerned with the activities in which the individual forms an idea about themselves based on their experiences and use them to express themselves in action, which becomes their

personality traits. Unlike the dimension of facts, this dimension of individual psychology is subjective in nature. This means we cannot be certain as to what informs an individual to construct certain ideas, beliefs or aspirations. Two individuals brought up in the same genetic background, environment and upbringing may construct different individual psychologies. This means there is no absolute certainty as to how beliefs, emotions and motivations are developed.

Botha (2014:8) argues that in this second dimension of individual psychology, listening to one's story uncovers how the world of facts has impacted a person and informed his or her cognitive, emotions, and passions and needs. The person's story is the result of the facts of their development, self-image and social adjustments in relating with others. It is in this dimension that we investigate our defence mechanisms, fantasies, opinions and behaviours. Most psychodynamic models are very useful here but for Nagy, psychology was inadequate and thus he enriched it with his understanding of interpersonal reality. "He developed his own dialogue-oriented contribution to the understanding of interpersonal reality" according to (Meulink-Korf et al, 2016:11).

In this dimension, the psychological impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and its devastating effects have shifted some members of congregations and society into a new paradigm in their theology, and has challenged their thinking about the meaning of life and this is likely to be a continuous reality for some time. With this insight on the individual psychology in the second dimension, Meulink-Korf *et al* (2016:11) highlight that Nagy believes that feelings of loyalty and a sense of 'being entitled' are a psychological construct. Those feelings should be differentiated from the relational essence of loyalty and entitlement, which will be dealt with later on, in the fourth dimension of relational ethics. The tension arising from pastoral caregiver's inability to respond to the call of the suffering people during their times of urgent need, cause anxiety and fear without knowing how to cope with the new normal life during the

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lockdown period. This is the reason Thesnaar (2021:106) argues that pastoral caregivers should not underestimate the stress the COVID-19 pandemic has on them because the chronic stress associated with it may lead to anxiety, depression and other self-indulgent disorders. This anxiety may be as a result of the caregiver unable to be there for the sick as restrictions from government. The psychological impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is not easily measured objectively but subjective.

3.3.3 The third dimension: the interactional and the transactional

This is what Nagy calls the systemic approach; it is seen as a way forward by classical systemic therapy and family therapy (Meulink-Korf et al., 2016:13). Hargrave & Pfitzer describe the third dimension of relational reality as systemic interactions, which deal with different communication patterns in relationships. Goldenberg & Goldenberg in Hargrave & Pfitzer (2003:9) put forth the idea that the behavioural interactions of the supra-individual level make a unique entity of their own. For instance, if a family comes for a therapy session and you realize that one parent continually dominates the discussions with the pastoral caregiver, where the parent tries to define the problem and the efforts of the family in finding solutions, we could easily establish that that parent holds most of the power, which creates a structure where he or she is in control of affairs in the family. This produces a belief that perhaps that parent is not used to engaging or listening or that no one in the family has anything important to say. Dysfunctions or negative symptoms may be shaping and maintaining such a system in a family. For example, a depressed father's attitude over his distressed marriage may affect his son or daughter consciously or unconsciously and this may show in the child's poor performance at school, which will have to be looked into (Hargrave & Anderson, 1992).

This third dimension is objective in that we can articulate the interactional dynamics within relational networks of an entity. The important key in this dimension of interactional

transactions is that it becomes evident and predictable for members in relationships, which can lead to actions and beliefs around control in entities. It therefore affords the opportunity to make timely interventions.

Meulink-Korf & Van Rhijn (2016:12) contend that the dynamics in this third dimension have their own rules and regulations that guide the behaviour of the people involved. In other words, it is not really the players that rule but the game that rules. This can be done according to the power structure in the system described above: for example, in the coalition, boundaries set, strategy, control, top-down and bottom-up etc. In this type of system, maintaining the balance of the family rules may have negative or adverse effect on the relationship. When rules become rigid, with time, when the inevitable change sets in, when children are growing up and adults are ageing, rules may result in dysfunction and pathology.

3.3.4 Relational ethics from Contextual Therapy (Care and responsibility)

Nagy was inspired by Buber's philosophy of 'I' and 'Thou' dialogue (1922) and to develop his contextual therapy approach of relational ethics. According to Meulink-Korf & Rhijn (2016:8) for Buber relational existence is not a mere character trait of humanity but an encounter or authentic engagement with the 'other'. As with Buber, Nagy's aim is that people who for some reason or another, are 'objects' to others, 'It' instead of ''You', start to encounter and be encountered. There is wonder and awe which begins something new altogether. In this encounter with the other, it becomes possible to let go of the prejudices and images we project on others. This, in turn, provides space for surprise and wonder and meeting 'face to face' becomes possible. During such meetings with the other, there is healing and freedom which bring psychological relief. In the process, giving and receiving are considered dialectically: there is receiving by giving, and giving by receiving (Boszormenyi-Nagy, 1986:44). The fourth dimension encompasses and supersedes the previous ones. In this fourth dimension, ethics of

due consideration or relational ethics, you become fundamentally conscious of the other. Botha (2014:10) notes that if anything is to go wrong between people in their network of relationships, it is in this dimension. This is where constructs and concepts such as trustworthiness, rights, and merits, fairness, and justice, loyalties and responsibility come into play. The second and third dimensions enable us to understand people but it is in the fourth dimension that real meeting between the 'I' and 'You' occurs to bring healing, change or transformation. Hargrave & Pfitzer (2003:10) echo the view that it is this fourth dimension that sets the contextual family therapy approach apart and offers new understanding to the field of therapy. In this realm of relational encounters, the balance of what people give in relationships, as opposed to what is received from others, is what determines the deficits/entitlements and merits that one owes or deserves. The welfare and interest of every relational member is taken into consideration by each participating party in order that there will be fairness in what each member is obligated to give and is entitled to receive. Hargarve & Pfitzer (2003:10) espouse that patterns and balances in this dimension of due consideration of each relational member, however, do not impact the relational members only in the present time. The patterns and balances and the trustworthiness are passed from one generation to the next and serve as pointers to understanding individual and family functioning.

Botha (2014:10) iterates that in the relational ethics dimension people have a responsibility towards each other and within this perspective, traces of relational deficits and merits are detected and how these could possibly be restored, especially when relations become severed and trust is broken.

Roberths (2020:69) illustrates the four dimensions of Nagy's relational approach as a funnel through which a fluid is poured and trickles down to the constricted end in a slow-moving process. The process is not forced and the movement from one stage to the other is not rigid,

but flexible, which allows all four dimensions to be integrated. In this scenario, the fourth dimension, or the ethics of due consideration, envelops all the other three as it is shown below:

Figure 3.1: Illustration of the 4 Dimensions of Contextual Therapy

Relational Ethic/ Ethic of due consideration
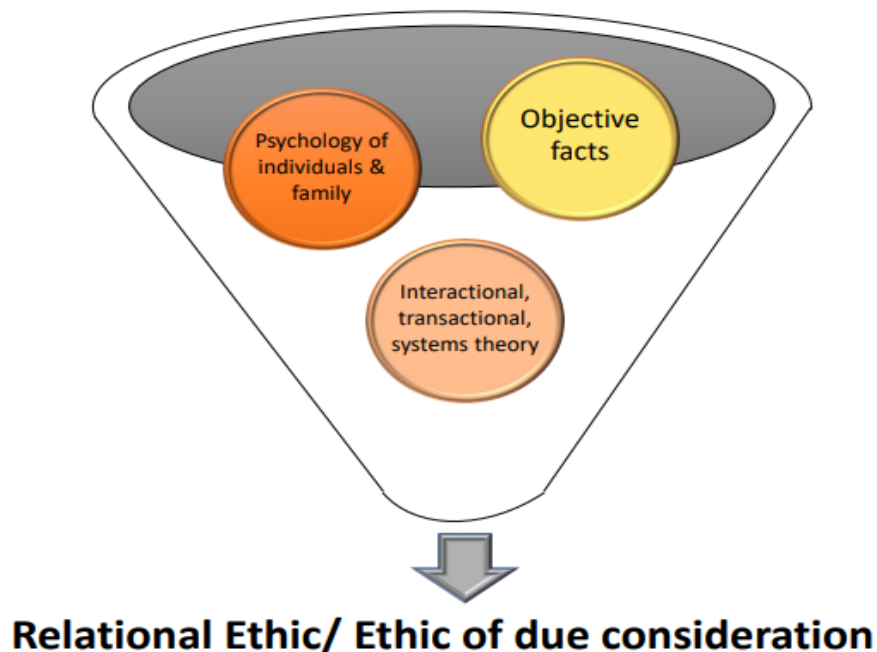
The diagram above illustrates the interactions of the various relational dimensions.

Although relational ethics are considered the most important foundation of contextual therapy, all the other dimensions are equally important. The four dimensions are mutually dependent on each other and it thus becomes a challenge to articulate one dimension as being more important than others (Hargarve & Pfitzer, 2003:11). "In sum, the four dimensions of the relational context indicate that contextual therapy integrates rather than opposes the spectrum of valid therapeutic approaches and methods. Though its guiding consideration relies on Dimension four – the Ethic of Due Consideration: Merited Trust – it accommodates considerations and methods based on the other three dimensions" (Boszormenyi-Nagy & Krasner, 1986:47).
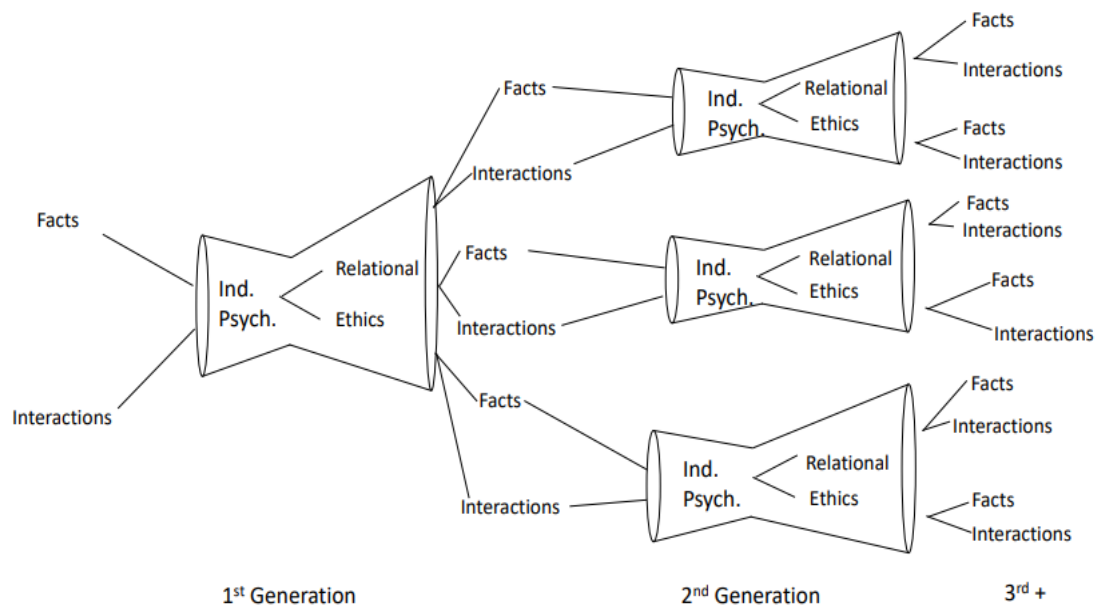
Figure 3.2. The Interactions of the Contextual Therapy Dimensions

As shown in the diagram above, the facts and the systemic interactions are the means through which information is taken in by an individual, from the 1st generation to the 3rd generation. For example, a child born into an average middle-class family, without any health defects can be described as experiencing the objective dimension of facts. The love that is showered on the child puts pressure on the child to behave like an adult because of high expectations placed by the parents on this child (Hargrave & Pfitzer, 2003:11). When such a child grows up, the parents' continual dependence on the child for emotional support to stay with them and make them also feel loved and accepted makes the child attempt to meet the parents' wish. Most of the time, children fail to meet such high expectations from parents in giving them the emotional support they might need. Certain remarks and comments made towards such children make them feel condemned. Such constructions about their self-image from the objective facts and the transactions and interactions shape their individual psychology, which will manifest in their future relationships. In other words, the formation of the individual psychology and relational

ethics in the subjective frame will now be expressed through the factual and systemic interactive dimensions of the objective frame. This kind of information moves from one generation to the next by spreading out to multiple relationships.

The dimension of relational ethics in the thinking of Nagy is so powerful because of this passing on from one generation to the next. Every generation comes with other additional relationships. When the relationships are healthy, responsible and constructive, it will definitely reproduce more relationships which will reflect the values from the previous generation. However, if the ethics received are destructive, each person who receives the unhealthy constructions of negative ethics will feel entitled to get the deficit that person did not get from the past from the future generation. This is another form of parentification which will be discussed later in this chapter.

The dimension of relational ethics therefore, is not an umbrella over interactions with the other three dimensions but rather, this dimension's influence is seen in the way it magnifies what happens in the other dimensions which is then passed on to future relationships and generations (Hargrave & Pfitzer, 2003;12).

Flowing from the four dimensions of contextual therapy, there are key concepts which form the broader approach of this Contextual Approach. There are several concepts embedded in the dimension of relational ethics which include trustworthiness, justice, fairness, entitlement, responsibility, accountability, dialogue, guilt and guilt feeling, legacy, revolving slate, multi-laterality, multi-directed partiality, exoneration, loyalty, and parentification. Some of these concepts which relate to the focus of this chapter which is concerned with the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the COP ministry and the role of pastoral caregiver, will be discussed in more detail in the paragraphs below.

3.4 The Relational Perspectives of Trust, Fairness, and Loyalty

This section of the study focuses on the concepts of trust, fairness and loyalty, in order to gain a deeper insight and understanding of their meanings and their relevance to this research study. Other related concepts which form part of the constructs of trust, fairness and loyalty will also be discussed as they relate to relational ethics. This section will help to determine how these concepts relate to the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on relationships and how it can pass on to future generations in their relationships due to destructive entitlements. There is also the need to explore trust and loyalty in the family of the clergy and the congregations. The ethical interactions between these groups ensure that the actions pastoral caregivers take in line of duty to serve victims of the COVID-19 pandemic should be responsible because the consequences have the tendency to affect their network of relationship as well as others they interact with. In discussing trust, fairness and loyalty, the aspect of dialogue is key in finding sustainable pastoral care practices during the COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath.

3.4.1 Trust and trustworthiness in Ethics of Due Consideration

Botha (2014:10) contends that in relationships people receive their value and self-worth in accordance with the fairness on the balance of giving and receiving within the relationship. Boszormenyi-Nagy & Krasner (1986:422) argue that "Trustworthiness accrues on the side of the reliable, responsible, duly considerate partner in a relationship which is characteristic of a realistic, deserved trust. From an ethical perspective, trustworthiness is always earned over the long-term by balancing the consequences of give and take between two relatively reliable partners".

Hargrave et al (2003:32) explains that trust is important and it is essential in the formation of the individual self-concept, but that is not the whole narrative. Trust is necessary for healthy development and sound relationships. It is the fundamental relational resource from where we

learn how to interact with others. For Nagy, understanding trustworthiness as an important relational resource is perhaps the most essential characteristic of contextual family therapy. In contextual family therapy, trustworthiness is predicated on the premise that humans have an innate sense of justice that demands that we endeavor to balance what we are entitled to receive from a relationship and what we are obligated to give in order to maintain homeostasis in the relationship (Hargrave, 2003:32). In simple terms, in every relationship, we are entitled to take something for ourselves and are obligated to give something back to the other person. This makes each person feel that there is fairness.

One key trust resource is dialogue. Such dialogue is not just engaging with the other person and is not necessarily verbal; it can sometimes be non-verbal dialogue which has to do with fairness in what is credited and debited between the two persons (Botha, 2014:11).

In their book, '*Truth, trust and relationships'* Krasner and Joyce[31] explore the means of bringing healing in severed family relationships. They also use Buber's theory on relational ethics in injured relationships by 'directly addressing' issues between families in authentic dialogue. In other words, they emphasize 'direct address' as the cornerstone that assists in catalyzing ethical imagination to initiate dialogue. In furthering the evolution of contextual therapy, Krasner and Joyce's insights use Martin Buber's philosophy of the word (speech with meaning), and the contributions of Ivan Boszormenyi-Nagy regarding concepts of fairness and justice in relationships. They also use Nagy's intergenerational concept in dealing with issues from the past, and how it relates to a person's current situation and how, if not addressed, such issues could spill over to the future and unborn generations. Trust and trustworthiness are formed out of mutual commitment from both parties, beyond their psychological and emotional sentiments. It also includes fairness on the balance of giving and receiving in the family

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[31] See Barbara R. Krasner & Austin J. Joyce (1995): Truth, Trust and relationships.

relationships. Interwoven throughout the book is an abundance of real-life cases that serve as a resource in bringing to light the complex but fascinating concepts of Krasner and Joyce's contextual therapy. The authors again see the summation of an invisible ledger sheet that records the merits and deficits among people, termed 'residual trust', as the keystone of the dialogic process, and the chief resource of human relationships from Nagy's concept of giving and receiving, with specific reference to the elemental triad of mother, father and child, as central to their version of contextual therapy. They differentiate between resentment, unforgiveness and guilt feelings on a psychological level and the fairness, owed and deserved, at the level of merited trust.

In her thesis on 'Exploring trust and loyalty within grandparent-headed families on the Cape Flats and the impact of the church, as social support', Roberths (2020:71-72) argues that the concept of trust was constantly reflected upon because trust within the family is imperative for the balance of relations between family members but also a relational construct which can easily be disturbed when there is hurt, injury and imbalance. She states that trust cannot be ignored in relationships as it is a resource that determines the state of relationships in a household or family structure. The church is also considered as a family of people who, though they come from different backgrounds, have common family values in Christ.

Having explained this aspect of trust, the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on church congregants and the pastoral caregivers have inherent trust related aspects. This is because the pastor and church leaders who are to occupy the space and place of the suffering members are unable to reach out to them physically. Some members still doubted the COVID-19 pandemic as a myth and a fallacy as the researcher described in chapter two of this study concerning the divergent views of the COVID-19 virus pandemic between the Classical Pentecostals and Neo-Pentecostal denominations. The issue of trust also evolved when the economic well-being of certain congregants was a challenge. Some churches which could not support their vulnerable

members lost most of these members from fellowship because of lack of trust. Looking at the unique challenges of poverty, unemployment and other social ills in the South African context, grants from the COP Headquarters in Ghana remitted some funds to support the churches in South Africa. In this way, members were supported during the lockdown period until the economic pressure eased. This is one of the reasons why the COP in South Africa did not lose many of our members. Some Neo-Pentecostal churches shut down after the easing of the lockdown due to lack of trust from congregants who became vulnerable during the hard-lockdown period of the pandemic[32].

3.4.2 Loyalty: The fiber of relational ethics

In Meulink-Korf & Rhijn's (2019:88) view, our being humane and bound in the network of interrelatedness within close relationships, loyalty articulates the basic fundamental, irrevocable and non-refutable connections between people. Loyalty creates a meaningful space for humans to have a sense of belongingness.

Loyalty is a powerful relational fabric which manifests itself when an attachment in a relationship is preferred over another relationship (Boszormenyi-Nagy & Spark, 1984). The appropriateness of this ethical entanglement is that it helps one to understand how to set priority and allegiance. In other words, it makes us understand our indebtedness and obligations. For example, a person will feel more loyal to the obligations and indebtedness to close nuclear family members than friends.

Family loyalty and trust are key areas that can cause unresolved relational issues between parents and children, which can become detrimental to the child in their future relationships and their attitude towards the 'Other/other'. Nagy views the significance of loyalty as a

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[32] This information was contained in a circular sent by the International Missions Director in September 2020 calling all nations worldwide to submit all Utilities and rental arrears to the Head-office for support.

relational ethical power that is intangible (Van Doorn, 2020:104). Nagy distinguishes between two forms of loyalty embedded in our human interconnectedness: the horizontal loyalty which refers to the social and generational dimension and the vertical loyalty, which refers to the intergenerational dimension. In vertical loyalty, the interconnections between humans are not with one's will or choice. One does not choose one's parents or grandparents the same way that a parent does not choose a child or a grandchild. These kinds of relationships are irrevocable and existential; they cannot be given up even if there is misunderstanding or rivalry within families. One can negate their parents or child but cannot delete them from one's DNA (Van Doorn, 2020:9). This vertical loyalty is existential in nature and our loyalty is prioritized towards them before others, all things being equal. Boszormenyi Nagy & Krasner (1986) argue that families are, most of the time, the first relationships we experience and have the first-hand chance to program our constructs concerning our being, values, morals and actions, which shape us into who we are. This makes us indebted to them before others. This makes the link with our biological family ties very strong in relationships.

Horizontal loyalty, for example loyalty to partners, friends and business associates, resides with the choices one can make (Van Doorn, 2020:109). One can abandon these relationships if one wants to. She argues that horizontal loyalty enables one to have the opportunity to allow all these connections and engagements to fall off when there is the need. The relationships between siblings are a complex aspect of loyalty, which has both vertical and horizontal dimensions. There are many times that loyalty becomes a problem in relationships, when there are destructive actions that take place in a child's upbringing.

3.4.3 Loyalty Conflict and split loyalty

There is also an aspect of 'loyalty conflict' which in Nagy's view can be exclusive. This creates a negative impact in a family, which can lead to an aftermath of destructive entitlement which will be discussed later. For example, in the family of the clergy, there is tension in the

movement of giving and receiving between the clergy and his family. This is what Nagy calls 'conflicting loyalty' where the clergy has an absolute loyalty focused on God. In the view of Meulink-Korf & Rhijn (2019:91-92) this loyalty is maintained at the expense of intimate familial ties (the children and the spouse). This becomes a type of religious exploitation on the family. The loyalty to God is abused and introduced as an excuse for neglect of familial responsibilities. The children and the spouse then test the clergy's comparative loyalties as a husband and father. In this case, value ethics is placed above relational ethics of the family. This form of "loyalty conflicts" can cause some pastors' kids to develop negative attitudes towards the religious profession and if it is not repaired, can cause destructive entitlement, which could affect the next generations. This assertion is shared in the context of the COP ministry in South Africa, which has not grown and well-resourced like in Ghana, La Cote d'voire, Benin, Canada, U.K, USA, and other well established nations.

Another loyalty conflict is what Nagy calls 'split loyalty', which occurs between parents during divorce. Hargrave et al (2003:80) notes that for instance, a divorcing husband and wife may hate each other but their selfish desires can prevent them from seeing the consequences of their action on their children. Each spouse may blame the other for not meeting their needs and attempt to win the children to their side by saying something negative about the other parent. The children caught between these two divorcing parents are biologically connected to both parents and the demand and psychological torture they may go through cannot be underrated. Boszormenyi-Nagy & Krasner's (1986) definition of split loyalty "is when an individual is required to show loyalty to one deserving relationship at the cost of betraying or being disloyal to another deserving relationship." The consequences on the child are sometimes devastating, because from the early stage of a child's development, they develop a deep concern for the well-being of their parents (Van Doorn, 2020:113). She argues that from a clinical point of view, when such children survive in this dilemma of loyalty, their confusion and frustration

may lead to pathological problems of delusion in their adult life. This person may blame him/herself that he/she was not good enough and failed to meet the expectations of the parents. Such delusion can lead to guilt feelings that can impede further development into maturity (Boszormenyi-Nagy & Krasner, 1986:194). This is one of the most destructive forms of entitlement. Adults who put a child in such situation are demanding that the child give an inappropriate obligation, which can lead to parentification. Such children may also be affected academically. Furthermore, the child can be deprived from engaging in future relationships, thereby cheating the child from what he or she deserves because of lack of trust (Amato & Booth, 1997).

Another common form of split loyalty is when parents interfere in the marriages of their children by intruding and causing problems for the couple. Amato & Booth (1997) contends that many times the family of origin will expect the loyalty of an adult son or daughter at the expense of that son or daughter's loyalty to a spouse. There are times when spouses do not give their loyalty to their partners because they prefer to give their loyalty to the family of origin. This type of demand for loyalty from the family of origin disturbs and violates the trust in the intergenerational pattern because the marriage will be problematic and the children may carry that hurt and pain into their future and the next generation.

Roberths (2019:24) explained in her thesis, "exploring the trust and loyalty within grandparent-headed families in the Cape Flats, and the impact of the church as social support" that the reference to the balance of give-and-take does not necessarily refer to giving of tangible objects but dimensions of relationships such as trust, loyalty, fairness, justice, responsibility, compassion, dialogue and other relational resources.

3.4.4 Invisible loyalty

Loyalty as an ontic fabric of our being in the world we live is in essence, "invisible". This flipside of loyalty, which is a feature of our human dynamics, usually operates at a subtle level within groups and intersubjective communication (Meulink-Korf and Van Rhijn, 2019:89).

Boszormenyi-Nagy & Spark (1984) coined the term 'invisible' loyalty to explain the unreasonable behaviour of some individual. Many times, individuals may come from backgrounds with numerous injustices, which make it difficult to discover one's clear self-identity. Boszormenyi-Nagy and Spark define it as "indirect action by a victim of destructive entitlement to fulfill unjust obligations in an effort to gain love and regard from family of origin". Boszormenyi-Nagy, Eerembeemt & Heusden (1987:22-23) explains that when a person is not open about his or her loyalty to their family of origin, the loyalties become concealed or invisible. These invisible loyalties influence the horizontal loyalty patterns, which are optional chosen relationships. Such invisible loyalty may hinder the opportunity for mutual relational harmony. It manifests in destructive tendencies towards innocent and third parties, which may be unnoticed by the perpetrator of such negative behaviors. For example, a man might refuse to have children with his spouse because he was physically abused by his parents who made remarks like they would have been better off without children. This man might later admit that his fear was that if he had children he would make his parents offended because there would be more children brought into the family; he would thus nurse the same resentment towards his children that his parents had for him (Hargrave & Pfitzer, 2003:82). Invisible loyalty can be very destructive. In the case of the COVID-19 pandemic and the relationships between the pastoral caregiver, his family and the congregants, the children's invisible loyalty to their parents can be destructive because they may think their liberty is being deprived.

3.5 Fairness and the balance of give and receive in the movement of reciprocity

Van Doorn (2020:119) argues that relational ethics operates like a pendulum which oscillates on the balance of how just/fair or unjust/unfair giving and receiving occur within relationships. In this kind of relationship, one must be ready and willing to contribute to the relationship with the other. It is not that you give but what you give, in that, it does not mean when someone give you a shirt on your birthday you should also give the person a shirt on his birthday. Van Doorn (2020:119) notes that the "dynamic movement between giving and receiving does not develop in terms of a straight line, but rather in terms of a zizag that oscillates between the different bipolarities". Giving and receiving is in the fourth dimension of Nagy's lens of relational reality in the ethical complexity of multi-directed partiality. What is at stake in such dynamics is the desire for fairness in interactions with one another and the establishment of relational justice.

Ducommun-Nagy (2016) posits that fairness, justice and trust in our relationships also compel us to expect redress when someone has treated us unfairly, which is part of relational ethics. When the offender fails to acknowledge or repair the damage caused to the victim in a relationship especially in an asymmetric.

In this study, this discussion of giving and receiving in our network of relationships is relevant in the endeavor to find alternative means of offering sustainable pastoral care and counselling in the midst of the continuous reality of COVID-19 pandemic. When the pastoral caregiver does not acknowledge the giving from the side of the child and he / she grows up without being acknowledged and appreciated, some end up with low- self-esteem and image thinking that nothing good will come out from them.

3.5.1 Parentification

In Ducommum-Nagy's (2021) presentation during an online conference held at Stellenbosch University, she explained parentification as the act of a parent leaning on the child and he/she becomes like a parent to the parent and sometimes the siblings. In this case, the relationship between a parent and a child is reversed. In psychology, the inappropriate act of a child taking the role of a parent by taking care of the parent as a result of factors such as addiction or external pressure is called parentification (Van Doorn, 2020:140). This is what leads certain people into teenage pregnancies in order to compensate for the love and affection they missed from their parents. For some, these children are born to be parentified and it continues in a revolving slate if it is not redressed. Someone needs to stop this trans-generational continuity or what Nagy terms a revolving slate. The norm is that parents should give to their children and children should be able to receive from their parents.

Other forms of parentification that depict the exchange of giving and receiving within a family set up (parents and children) manifest in the two ways of active and passive forms of helping and caring. It is not always easy to recognize them, but they are real (Van Doorn, 2020:142). For example, in a situation when there is tension and argument between parents and where two of the children may witness, one may start crying to draw attention from the parents' arguments to himself, whereas the other may leave quietly into the curtains so as not to bother the parents. In this scenario, both children took responsibility for the parents' relationship: one by choosing the active route to be angry, whereas the other took the passive route by making himself invisible. In both ways according to Van Doorn (2020:143), both children are mildly contributing giving. The down side of this form of giving is that it can impede children from developing into maturity, which can obscure their ability to assess what is fair and what is not fair. It affects them in their later lives in taking up their own responsibilities, especially for children who give in a passive way. According to Nagy, the passive form of parentification

demands constant availability of parental control and guidance. Passive givers mostly have a sense of guilt and they blame themselves for causing tensions in their parents' relationships and in an effort to compensate for that, they become victims of parental control and are unlikely to make much progress in their future life.

Van Doorn (2020:143) argues that the results of parentification can arise throughout a person's life, whenever there is tension in relationships. It is feasible that different forms of ethical complexities and manifestations of disruptions are repeated in partner relationships. This is what Nagy termed, 'revolving slate' where patterns of behaviour are repeated from one generation to the next.

Figure 3.3 Shows Fair Relational Ledger Between a Parent and a Child

Parental Merit or Take from the Child (What the Parent is Entitled To)	Parental Obligations or Give to the Child (What the Parent is Obligated to Give)
Nothing	1. Love 2. Care 3. Nurture 4. Security 5. Protection 6. Discipline

Figure 3.4: Unfair Relational Ledger Between a Parent and a Child

Parental Expectation from the Child (What the Parent feels Entitled to Get)	Parental Give to the Child (What the Parent feels obligated to Give)
1. Love	1. Food

2. Care	2. Clothing
3. Nurture	

The diagram above shows the ideal asymmetry relationship between parent-child and the reversal of such relationship in figure 3.4 (unfair relational ledger between a parent and a child.

3.5.2 Multi-directed Partiality

In Joyce & Krasner's (1995:220) glossary multi-directed partiality is defined as: "A therapeutic attitude, stance, and method, Multi-Directed Partiality (MDP) presumes merit in each relating partner and merit earned through contributions given and received between them despite injuries and engagements. Siding with each person's real and perceived suffering and against each partner's unmitigated tendencies to blame, therapists use MDP to acknowledge pain, elicit trust, identify resources, help people assess personal accountability, and establish new balances of burdens and benefits between and among them."

In Meulink-Korf and van Rhijn's (2016:111) view, the term Multi-directed partiality describes both a methodology and an attitude of the caregiver in becoming partial to an interlocutor or parishioner and those they are connected to in a relationship, which is their context. That basic context comprises the client's multi-generational family, which includes even the dead.

Krasner & Boszormenyi-Nagy (1986:139) explain MDP as the scientific method for drawing out a dialogue within a family, which is relevant in collecting information about relationships. It is the systematic steps followed to help invoke members to get information about the family's balances of their unconscious ledger of fairness and unfairness. Questions of that nature usually lie closer to the heart of people's relational needs. Van Doorn (2020:175) describes this third aspect of dialogue, which Ivan Boszormenyi-Nagy (Nagy) describes as the methodology and attitude that a pastoral caregiver or therapist adopts in authentic dialogue which is based on

reciprocity in a relationship. At stake in such dialoguing is ethics, which is the attempt to build trust and maintain justice. This networking, Van Doorn (2020:175) continues, revolves around the balancing of the dynamics of fairness and trustworthiness. During caregiving, the focus of healing and the well-being of the other cannot be narrowed to selfish needs. It always focuses on the interests and contributions of all others.

3.6. Overview of the chapter

In concluding this chapter, having considered the various aspects of relational ethics from psychiatry, psychology and philosophy within the COP context, the caregiver's context and the congregants, by looking at the thoughts and contributions of Martin Buber, Emmanuel Levinas and Boszormenyi-Nagy. How the insights gained from these scholars could contribute to the focus of this chapter which is utilizing the relational resource of dialogue and multi-directed partiality to gain insight from the sciences and psychology and philosophy disciplines to give us better understanding on how the impact of COVID-19 pandemic has been on pastoral caregivers.t. This trust can be restored through dialogue between the pastoral caregiver, his / her relational networks, the sick member(s) and their relational networks as well as the congregation as a whole utilizing the DIPP approach as a pastoral care and counselling framework.

 Boszormenyi-Nagy & Krasner in Thesnaar (2021:108) explain the two convictions the contextual therapy approach as a pastoral care intervention, are based on. The first being the consequences of the decisions made by the pastoral caregiver during crisis and its effects on his or her network of relationship and the second conviction is the guilt imposed on a person whose decisions may be viewed as not being considerate of his relational networks and end up to affect his relationships and significant others.

Dialogue is explained by Thesnaar (2021:113) as the ability to stand in the middle as a caregiver, in order to facilitate smooth negotiation by relating to all parties involved in the dynamic giving and receiving in a relationship. In this case, the pastoral caregiver stands behind the perpetrator and the victim, and those absent in turn, to allow each voice to be heard. Thesnaar continues that the pastoral caregiver should start with the most vulnerable first in this exercise of multi-laterality.

Using my experience of contracting COVID-19 virus in July 2021, the effect was that all my children got infected in turn as well as my wife. No one was allowed to come close because we were quarantined but during the critical moment some members risked and visited in order to assist my wife to take me to the casualty Ward at Life Hospital in Bedforview, Johannesburg. This shows a typical scenario of the consequences of the decision pastoral caregivers pose on their relational networks. The need for dialogue between all significant others within the interplay of these relational dynamics is an aspect of the relevance of DIPP. Botha (2014:24) summarizes dialogue in multi-partiality as an attitude of impartiality and the ability to create space in which all parties and potential partners render something into the relationship to feel free and safe to contribute their quota. The purpose is to obtain as much information as possible from all participating partners in order that a clear picture will be portrayed to establish trust. During such interactions, what have been invested in the relationship and what have been taken out inappropriately would come to be known. This enables whatever have been hidden to unearth into the narrative. It is important to treat everyone as a subject and to be given the chance to express themselves freely (Botha, 2014:24). The language used in this exercise is extremely important as most of the questions asked should be connecting to bring out answers. Botha explains such connecting questions as those which do not demean or break down or reject participants but rather, allows the courage and boldness to touch sensitive and painful areas. The contextual pastoral caregiver with the skill in multi-directed partiality should be able

to articulate and evoke hidden invisible gaps of loyalties, deficits and merits in the invisible ledger, to affirm, acknowledge and recognize credits. The use of dialectic attitude on the balance of give and take would be helpful in this approach.

The researcher is of the view that the aftermath effect of the COVID-19 impact on families has the propensity to trigger destructive entitlements tendencies if it is not well managed. The losses suffered by many families and the pains of children involved in these families should be of concern.

3.7 Conclusion

Chapter 3 discussed the task of developing response to the question "why this is going on?" To answer the question, theoretical interpretation of interdisciplinary scholarly works and literary contributions pertaining to relational ethics, trust, fairness and loyalty was embarked upon.

Having discussed the theoretical interpretation of literature within chapter 3, the next chapter will focus on the DIPP as a pastoral framework for this study, with emphasis on the theological reflections of the study.

CHAPTER 4

THE DIALOGICAL INTERGENERATIONAL PASTORAL PROCESS, (DIPP), AS PASTORAL FRAMEWORK: THEOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS

4.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, the Descriptive-Empirical task of Osmer was looked at by answering the question, 'why is this going on'? Insights from other disciplines in Philosophy, Psychology and Psychiatry were gained to address the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Church of Pentecost ministry and the Clergy. Chapter 4 undertakes to address Osmer's (2008:93) normative question: 'what ought to be happening' by addressing the tension between the worldly wisdom of the arts and sciences and the wisdom of God from Biblical texts. In this case, how do we bring together what is happening currently with what ought to be happening by using aspects of the DIPP approach as Pastoral Framework to serve as a theological guide.

The DIPP as pastoral care approach looks at the individual pastoral caregivers not as an isolated entity but inter-relationally connected to others from the past, present and the future. It attempts to understand a person within his / her network of relationship (Thesnaar, 2021:107). The impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the congregants and pastoral caregivers as an on-going reality, the traumatic effects suffered by ministers of COP and its ripple effect on their network of relationships. This chapter will start by reflecting on the unique role of pastoral care within the African context as the DIPP approach resonates well with the cultures. It will also look at how the aspects of the DIPP will be able to interpret the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the COP congregants and the issue of trust which brings the concern for rediscovering meaning and purpose. The insights of Pastoral theologians, Van Doorn, Meulink-Korf, Van Rhijn, Thesnaar and Botha, using the DIPP approach, will be used to interpret situations, contexts and Biblical Scripture texts.

4.2 Pastoral Care as Practical Theology within the African Context: Essential Aspect of the Impact of COVID-19 Virus Pandemic.

Pastoral Care as a discipline within Practical Theology, and the DIPP as a theory will be utilized to espouse the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on members affected by the virus including the pastoral caregiver. In their endeavour to enrich practical theology in pastoral ministry in caring for the other, Van Rhijn and Meulink-Korf (2019:10) embarked on a research project which focused on three critical areas in pastoral caregiving. These areas were:

The relational framework of humane encounters, the impact of space as an inherent fabric of existential networking and the compassionate caring, and the ministerial responsibility towards the suffering and vulnerable people. In pastoral caregiving the understanding of these three dimensional aspects in Van Rhijn, et al's, view, firstly, is predicated on the fact that humans are interrelated with one another and the suffering and pain of one person has the tendency to affect those in their network of relationships. This calls for responsibility towards one another in our relational engagements or encounters. This is what Van Doorn (2020:34) describes as a calling away from becoming self-centred into an open space of the other, whereby there is an acknowledgement and responsible co-humanity. In this encounter or calling and summoning of engagements, there is a paradigm shift from exclusivity into inclusivity. This is a critical element in the establishment of a genuine dialogue. From the explanation, Van Doorn's (2020:34) view on pastoral care in the COP context during the COVID-19 pandemic, can be described as when the minister places him/herself in times of suffering and trauma of congregants; the minister occupies the space in an endeavour to lessen their pain or stress in providing sympathetic care. Thesnaar (2021:102) notes that during the COVID-19 virus pandemic, pastoral caregivers thrive on the affirmation from suffering members and congregants by being physically present to care for their sufferers. Some struggle of not being physically present during the hard lockdown. The unexpressed trauma and guilt suffered by the

caregiver in such situations put mental stress which has the tendency to manifest in certain impulsive behaviour of a person if it is not effectively managed. This is where the aspect of the DIPP addresses the accountability of the consequences of the actions of the pastoral caregiver comes into play. In this case, the negative effects on pastoral caregiver's relations and it future effects to the future generation should be addressed now. Upon this premise the focus of the DIPP approach can help to provide sustainable ways of being there for the other in a responsible way.

Pastoral care as defined by Magezi (2020:1) is a type of spiritual encounter whereby a pastoral caregiver offers assistance to an individual who needs healing or care by giving a good and quality care through relational encounter. In so doing, there is hope and healing which results from such encounter in response to the relational interactions. In reference to Louw's (2013:3) description, pastoral care is linked to issues around human rights and human dignity which includes a healthy and effective relationship between the caregiver and the individual being cared for. This ensures effective networking and relationships so that the care given is meaningful. The psychological, social, economic, and spiritual impacts during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic became daunting for many pastoral caregivers. As I have explained earlier on by taking responsibility in caring for the suffering people, what ought to be happening as the main focus of this chapter seeks to address, is to occupy the space for your neighbour who is vulnerable. However, the other side of the coin also needs to be looked at to bring a balance on the dynamics of giving and receiving in relational ethics as the core concept of the contextual pastoral care or DIPP.

Manuel (2021:72) describes the concept of Pastoral Care using the acronym of the three R's namely, Relationship, Respect and Responsibility. Firstly, it is a recognisable fact that fundamental need in any person called human is the desire to feel belonged and this belongingness is the connection between two humans where there is openness and honest

sharing and acceptance of each other in the relationship. Trust is built in such encounters where each participating party in the relationship freely expresses their honest opinions without fearing of being judged, which leads to the second phase of R (Respect). In communicating, fostering and nurturing of care, respect as a virtue in relationships where all participating parties receive the reciprocal due worth and value for their contributions in the group, community or any relationships; in this case, the unique talents, abilities and giftedness of each individuality comes to the fore for the benefit of the partners engaged in the network.

The next and final R (responsibility) which places a demand on every individual to be there for the other in genuine and authentic encounter is where problems and conflicts evolve in the failure of an individual to do. Manuel (2020:72) notes that the human relationship without responsibility towards the other results in injustice to human dignity, which does not guarantee the survival of humanity as species. Vosloo (2021) notes Levinas 'ethics of responsibility and the face of the other' when he describes the infinite responsibility towards the other person. This responsibility makes an appeal to me where the 'I' see the vulnerable face of the other, which calls me into humanity. Thesnaar (2019:5) also alludes that responsibility means that we always see the other as a human being where the face of the other person speaks to you without realizing it. The voiceless face of the other person speaks to you. This responsibility is what Thesnaar (2019:5) calls, 'Divine Discomfort' because Thesnaar (2019) sees it as the image of God in humans. This God-kind of attribute is what motivated Christ to place Himself in divine discomfort by availing Himself to be emptied for our cause as fallen human race (Philippians 2:7).

The DIPP in addition, entails the restoration of the person back to the 'Shalom' space. This is conceptualized by Van Rhijn & Meulink-Korf (2019:11) as seeking spiritual wholeness which is an inherent yearning for the quest for human identity, human dignity, and human rights. Exploring the holistic approach to discover the meaning of life should empower human beings

to discover goals that will add to the quality of life. In the African context, the issue of evil is interpreted from a broader perspective to gain a better insight and understanding. The researcher will now look at how the DIPP approach resonates with the African relational milieu.

4.2.1 The DIPP in Parallel with the African Relational Milieu

Against the backdrop of the discussions on pastoral care as a framework to guide the DIPP approach, Gathogo (2013:276) notes the communality that exists amongst Africans which is philosophised as 'Ubuntu'. This aspect of African way of life resonates the DIPP concept in addressing the current continuous reality of the COVID-19 virus menace. Mbiti in Gathago (2013:276) emphasises the philosophy of the African way of life: "I am, because we are; and since were, therefore, I am". This quote of Mbiti's summary of the African's worldview is what in my view, helped Africans to deal with the COVID-19 virus pandemic effectively than other Western worlds before the discovery of the vaccines. The interdependence of the African way of life parallels the DIPP approach of pastoral care. The Ubuntu ideology and philosophy believes more in co-operation and networking in a communal fashion. For example, for the typical African before pre-scientific and pre-colonial era, anything that brought about disharmony amongst the nuclear family, clans, and the community were considered in a more or less collective manner. In that sense, every party within the relational network of the community or family deems it a moral duty to be responsible towards one another. Mbaya (2021) notes the theological aspect of recognition and humanness that connects Ubuntu to African Cosmology and Anthropology. He referred to the thesis of Michael Nel on the 'Concept of Homeostasis in the Zulu family'. There is the need for family harmony and interrelationship which abhors anything that will create discomfort and disunity in the family. Conflicts and misunderstandings are quickly dealt with before it leads to any serious problems or tensions. This promotes and sustains the continuity of life. When family feuds are settled

and as a symbolic gesture of reconciliation, there is a feast to allow all the parties to share meals together. This strengthens the bond of unity amongst family members. The analogy of this fellowship is what is practiced by the Christian religion of sharing the Holy Communion on regular basis to symbolize the fellowship or 'Koinonia' amongst congregants of churches. This signifies the bond of love and unity, that the symbols of the bread and drink signifies as the body and blood of Jesus which have brought people of different backgrounds, together to share a common identity in Christ.

Gathago (2013:275) references Archbishop Desmond Tutu of blessed memory, that the African exhibits something within their relationships which is difficult to render in English: he calls it 'ubuntu batho', it is inherent in the being of a person because the humanity of one person is bound up in the other person's being; an individual becomes whole and recognized because of the existence of others; and that as human beings we are a delicate network of relationships; when this fundamental reality is missing amongst us, disharmony, anarchy and all kinds of things go terribly wrong. This assertion is observed when a Zulu or Xhosa tribe in South Africa greets another person. For in instance, the greetings from a Zulu, 'Sawubona,' does not just mean, 'Hello' or 'I greet you'. Literally, it means, 'I see you' or until you see me, I actually do not exist'. When you therefore, see me, you bring me into existence. I see the love in your face and your soul and you mean everything to me. This means, in you we see ourselves. It informs human existence and defines human identity (Mbaya, 2021). In the same way, when the Xhosa male greets you by the shaking of hands, you can feel that warmth and the affection which is shown in the way the person squeezes your palm with firmness. This kind of interrelatedness and reciprocity in Ubuntu, though, it is human centered, it also transcends to the spiritual dimensions of including the ancestors, in the African context. This is a display of inter-subjectivity: seeing the other as other and vice versa. The harmonious way of humanizing as humans.

Roberths (2020:97) espouses the African's believe that an individual finds meaning and a sense of identity and true significance within the community of other humans. In other words, the identity and the person or an individual is not isolated. The way of communal living of the African tradition defines the individual in terms of his or her network of relationships which depicts that we are part of the web of reciprocal relations. This is contrary to the philosophy of Descartes "Cogito ergo sum" or "I think therefore I am". This implies that the African relational interactions embrace multi-laterality and inclusivity on the balance of giving and receiving as contextual concept advocates.

Gathago (2013:276) explains three domains in which the African expresses their interdependence and hospitality, through economic, social and spiritual lives. These dimensions are as well expressed through their proverbial languages. Economically, Africans from ancient times have subscribed to the communal willingness to support one another in farming, fishing, trading and so on. In a typical African economic hospitality and interdependence and in supporting one another, contributing money amongst friends, families or colleagues in order to support members in that network of relations with substantial amount of capital to start a business or something. This kind of contributions will rotate in turns. In the Ghanaian context, small scale farming is done in such a way that groups may come together to support one person to clear the land and rotate to another person in turn until the balance of give and take is fairly distributed amongst the parties. As a young child who used to visit my grandmother in the village, I witnessed this kind of support from groups in communal farming.

On the social front of African hospitality, interdependence and communality, Gathago (2013:276) observes that songs forms part of the rich heritage of the African. They express their sentiments in their songs and music: in their joys, sorrows, their hopes, fears, anxieties are expressed through their songs. When songs are accompanied by dancing it does not only entertain but also express the feelings of the individual or group which portray their aspirations

and expectations. Songs in the African traditional milieu expresses the general mood and meaning in a given time and not just displaying lyrics and melody to excite a person. In the context of hymns and songs of the African, a message is communicated. There is an aspect of social interactions of the African way of life which is community drama. Gathago's view on this aspect of hospitality is how to communicate values of good and acceptable deeds amongst groups and families which directly influences community behaviors. Drama is portrayed by actors through poetry, myths, legends for teaching moral and social lessons. Drama is performed to eschew evil and unacceptable behaviors in the community. These are various means through which the African lives. This is part of the Ubuntu concept of the African.

Africans are classified as very spiritual in religious things as Mbiti asserts "the African is notoriously religious". This aspect of the African believe relates to the dead called the ancestors (Gathago, 2013:275). Louw (2008:169-1170) asserts that for the African good health imply that there is correct relationship with one's environment including both the living and the dead network of relationships. It also means the societal order, equilibrium and harmony are destabilized. It is also seen as a spiritual disturbance which might have altered the spiritual chain within the community. Louw notes that in an African traditional context, sickness is both individual and spiritual which is closely linked to behavior, which has damaged spiritual powers within the community. The COVID-19 pandemic is still being interpreted from the perspective of the African dimension as being spiritual and hence, punishment from God.

In doing pastoral care in an effective manner in the African context especially within South Africa, all these aspects need to be looked at in order to give a broader objective argument to assist in an authentic dialogue with the client.

This communal outlook of life is further developed by Magezi (2007:664) who notes that it is imperative to maintain healthy relationships from past, present and future starting from the

nuclear family, extended family, and kinship ties, without forgetting the God-factor in the context of the African. With this assertion, it stands to reason that any individual's discomfort within the network of such family, and community relations will have reverberating effect across the whole network of community which the individual is connected to. This is what informs the African Ubuntu concept to resolve and restore harmony within family members when feuds emerge.

With this understanding, the fight against the COVID-19 virus pandemic, which in the religious view of the African, was considered an 'evil virus' as asserted by Kwame Gyeke[33]. Any misfortune that afflicts the African is interpreted in a manner that has religious connotations. As Jesus outlined in the Lord's Prayer in Mathew 6:13b, "...but deliver us from the evil one" (NIV). This indeed informs the African that any misfortune is from the evil one hence, the Coronavirus tagged as the 'evil virus'. The members of the congregations and pastoral caregivers rallied around each other in an effort to support the sick, the bereaved and those who were negatively impacted economically by the virus. Despite the inconvenience in compliance with the COVID-19 protocols such as social distancing, wearing of masks, and sanitizing to curb the transmission of the virus from person to person, majority of the people obliged. This helped to fight the pandemic effectively especially during the national state of disaster. The African interdependence and hospitality as a way of life was greatly shattered during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic when churches doors were closed and people could not visit their loved ones during the hard lockdown.

Pastoral care in the context of South Africa is also unique as the situational dynamics of the nation is very complicated. As a nation with different diverse cultures, which had been governed over centuries along racial lines and discriminations amongst people, pastoral

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[33] This assertion was quoted by Professor Asamoah-Gyadu on his presentation on 10 June 2021 at the colloquium at Stellenbosch University Theology Department

caregiving requires understanding, sensitivity and patience in dealing with an indigenous South African. It is upon this premise that the DIPP as a pastoral care approach is relevant to connect with the diverse contexts especially by the migrant churches in South Africa like the COP. The role of the church as a pastoral intervention in the continuous crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic should be an on-going exploration to find a sustainable practice that will stand the test of time.

4.2.2 Dialogical Intergenerational Pastoral Process (DIPP)

The DIPP is a broader field of practical theology and a sub-discipline of pastoral care termed in Europe as Contextual Pastoral Care. Context in this case is not to be understood as merely situational but the focus is to understand a person within the network of relationship they are in especially between different generations. The family, as the basic unit of society, is always connected to one another, which is termed, the significant 'other'. Every person has a father and mother whether they took care of them or not. There is this interconnectedness between children, parents, grandparents, cousins and significant others, which have movements between these relationships in a mutually dynamic giving and receiving ways. The way in which these balances are trustworthy influences the manner in which a person can give to others in a more or less constructive or destructive way in their future relationships.

The DIPP is not only of interest to the family pastoral care but also to the individuals as well as the communities. It is of great importance in resolving conflicts and facilitating greater understanding between people and cultures in general[34].

The aim of the DIPP approach is to endeavor to restore mutual trust after a relationship is severed by hurt leading to separation and conflict with the hope of bringing healing and restoration. It does not, however, tries to fix relations between family members but strives to achieve greater balance in these relationships (Boszormenyi-Nagi & Krasner, 1986).

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[34] See the course outline for 2021 Stellenbosch University MTh Clinical & Full-Thesis Students

The DIPP approach of pastoral care resonates well within the South African context post-apartheid era, where the country is still struggling to bring reconciliation and healing after 1994. Roberths (2020:93) noted the contributions of the following theologians in developing this all-important and emerging concept in South Africa: Van Rhijn, Henneke Meulink-Korf (2016), Nel Van Doorn (2007; 2020) Christo Thesnaar (2019) and Botha (2014). She stresses the fact that pastoral care emphasis on dialogue after traumatic experiences, bringing justice in human severed relations, fostering reconciliation by addressing issues of guilt and guilt feelings between victims and perpetrators. The DIPP also values the dialogical encounters between humans and the existential loyalties and trustworthiness issues that occur within families and individuals. The DIPP in effect, appeals to the reciprocal responsibility towards one another in relationships.

4.3 Relational ethics from Contextual Therapy in give and receive

Nagy used Buber's philosophy of 'I' and 'Thou' and 'I' and 'It' in a dialogue to develop his contextual therapy approach of relational ethics. According to Meulink-Korf & Rhijn (2016:8) in their book, *The Unexpected Third,* posit that, "for Buber, relational existence is not a mere character trait of humanity but an encounter or authentic engagement with the 'other'. As with Buber, Nagy's aim is that people whom for some reason or other are 'objects' to others, 'It' instead of 'You', start to encounter and be encountered. In this encounter with the other, the prejudices and images we attach to others can be let off from our minds, and this provides space for surprise, wonder and meeting 'face to face' becomes possible. During such meetings with the other, there is healing. In the process, giving and receiving are considered dialogically or there is reciprocity in subjectivity: there is receiving by giving, and giving by receiving. Boszormenyi-Nagy (1986:44) uses relational realities, which include four fundamental dimensions: objectifiable facts, individual psychology, systems of transactional patterns and

the ethics of due consideration or merited trust. The fourth dimension encompasses and supersedes the previous ones.

Van Doorn (2020:120-121) in her book, *Encouraging encounters*, explains that ethics is rooted in the being and is therefore an ontic issue. She further explains that for Nagy, "ethics is therefore not focused on ideas regarding good and evil as based upon principles established by institutions from the past. It is not to be derived from fixed regulations. The most basic concept to describe the focus of ethics is 'justice in relationships' and its endeavor to promote the perspective of fair relationships". The goal of relational ethics therefore, is an endeavor to contribute fairness to the well-being of humans. It influences the quality of being which has the potential rippling effects on the well-being of future generations.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on pastoral caregivers poses ethical issues in terms of their relational network. The clergy family scenario depicts the "conflicting loyalties" that the clergy person children and spouse experience and the interplay between these dimensions within his/her family, the congregation and the suffering congregants, raises moral and ethical issues. Most at times, in my view, giving is reversed in this scenario from the spouse and kids towards the clergy, in that they tend to sacrifice their relational encounters with the minister in favour of the congregants. Ducommun-Nagy (2016:6) explains that family members do not want to sound selfish when the moral and religious values of the clergy's ministry are at stake. In such instances, the family members find it difficult to express their needs, which can bring tension between moral ethics and relational ethics. The negative consequences of this giving from the family to satisfy the clergy are often overlooked by the clergy. To redress this and bring a balance between all affected parties, the caregiver places him/herself in a multi-directed partiality where all stakeholders have an authentic encounter to express their needs, especially, the children. This might even include parents of the clergy and spouse, who may also feel neglected because of the profession their children have committed themselves to.

Meulink-Korf & van Rhijn (2019:127) assert that "the whole of human encounters and interrelationships constitutes a web of reciprocal relationships that are directed by the interplay between loyalty and disloyalty, fairness and injustices, responsibility and ignorance, trust and distrust". The aspects of relating with one another in authentic dialogical engagements and living in a mutually symbiotic association and space where the needs of each other are met in a responsible way to bring harmony is what relational ethics seeks to address.

Fairness, justice and trust in our relationships also compel us to expect redress when someone has treated us unfairly, which is part of relational ethics. The problem arises when the offender fails to acknowledge or repair the damage caused, which may lead to 'destructive entitlement' in our future relationships. In the Covid-19 pandemic, the interactions between the pastoral caregiver, his/her family and the suffering members are all relational in context and as such, fairness, justice, trust, responsibility, accountability and dialogue are crucial in the dynamic dealings with all parties involved.

4.3.1 Brief insight into understanding Trust and Trustworthiness in relational ethics

Martin Buber's philosophy of how human beings view one other is set on the word pair: I/Thou and I/it. For Buber, trust and trustworthiness is the basic fundamental need in the life of humans. What Buber seeks to explain is that, to the human being, the world is twofold, in accordance with his twofold viewpoint. This attitude is with twofold nature of the primary words he speaks and these primary words are not mutually exclusive but combined words. The first primary word is the combination 'I-Thou' and the other primary word is the combination 'I-It', where, without a change in the primary word, one of the words He or She can replace 'It'. Therefore, the 'I' of man is also twofold. For the 'I' of the primary word I-Thou is a different 'I' from that of the primary word 'I-It'.

Primary words do not signify things, but they intimate relations. Primary words do not describe something that might exist independently of them, but being spoken they bring about existence.

Primary words are spoken from the being. If 'Thou' is said, the 'I' of the combination 'I-Thou' is said along with it. If 'It' is said, the 'I' of the combination 'I-It' is said along with it.

The primary word 'I-Thou' can only be spoken with the whole being. The primary word 'I-It' can never be spoken with the whole being. For example, in a meeting, 'I' meet the 'Other'. In a real meeting, according to Van Doorn (2020:42), the becoming of I (the developmental and growing person) is inherently joined with the Thou – whether you like it or not. As soon as the other is addressed by me as Thou or you, a relationship is initiated. The person addressed becomes a Thou or you for me. And this declaration is what Buber calls an 'encounter'. In his later works, he calls this engagement in relationships a genuine dialogue (the authentication of subjectivity). The latter can only be performed wholeheartedly – with the whole of your very being. In this way, he/she institutes the existence of the other and vice versa. In other words, encounter is about attesting and validating, approving and acknowledging, and in this event of confirmation, healing comes to pass, and trust is established. During such encounter, the dialogue between I and Thou becomes present tense, where it is 'now', which is surrounded by silence; no interruptions, but only the two persons will be in exchange of the in-between moment. In such moments, "the event takes place without specific mindfulness, because, when the 'I' starts to observe, when the 'I' becomes aware of things and starts to signify things, the encounter already belongs to the past and becomes part of history, sinking back into the completion of time" (Van Doorn, 2020:41).

When the encounter becomes an experience or becomes history, the Thou changes to I-It, and is objectified. In this case, there will be no real meeting and trust cannot be established to bring healing.

In their book, '*Truth, trust and relationships'* Krasner and Joyce (1995) explore means of bringing healing in severed relationships in families. They also use Buber's theory on relational ethics in injured relationships by 'directly addressing' issues between families in authentic dialogue. In other words, they emphasize 'direct addresses as the cornerstone that assists in catalyzing ethical imagination to initiate dialogue. In furthering the evolution of contextual therapy, Krasner and Joyce's (1995:203) insights use Martin Buber's philosophy of the word (speech with meaning), and the contributions of Ivan Boszormenyi-Nagy regarding concepts of fairness and justice in relationships. They also use Nagy's intergenerational concept in dealing with issues from the past, and how it relates to a person's current situation and how, if not addressed, it could spill over to the future and unborn generations. Trust and trustworthiness are formed out of mutual commitment from both parties beyond their psychological and emotional sentiments but also fairness on the balance of giving and receiving in the family relationships. Interwoven throughout the book is a rich abundance of real life cases that serve as a resource in bringing to light the complex but fascinating concepts of Krasner and Joyce's contextual therapy. The authors again see the summation of an invisible ledger sheet that records the merit and deficits among people termed 'residual trust' as the keystone of the dialogic process, and the chief resource of human relationships from Nagy's concept of giving and receiving, with specific reference to the elemental triad of mother, father and child, as central to their version of contextual therapy. They differentiate between resentment, unforgiveness and guilt feelings on a psychological level and the fairness, owed and deserved, at the level of merited trust.

The reason the researcher finds it relevant in this study is because of the complexities of the pastoral caregiver's role in the line of duty during the continuous reality of the COVID-19 crisis and at the same time being responsible towards his / her family and the resultant conflict

of loyalties dynamics. When the pastoral caregiver needs to stop and when to do what are all ethical issues worth considering in this study.

4.3.2 Restoring trust

Using the COVID-19 pandemic as a scenario to explain this, it would be noted that the unexpected lockdown in March 2020 sent a shock wave globally including South Africa. This made members who have unbalanced theology begin to question the so-called miracle faith preachers. In Asamoah-Gyadu's reflection on Ghanaian Pentecostalism, miracle and coronavirus, he contends that the theology of contemporary Pentecostal or charismatic churches has an interventionist orientation because they take the theology of evil very seriously and try to give explanation to every evil in the society (Asamoah-Gyadu, 2020:127). This posture of some preachers projecting themselves as the storehouse of miracles made some church members question the efficacy and the authenticity of their supposed power. This kind of theology shook many members' faith and trust in certain churches and preachers. In COP for instance, some church members whose curiosity to understand what is happening needed explanation as to why God would allow such a thing to happen to humanity, especially those believed to be staunch Christians who died and the suffering of many who have been serving God? Such sentiments obviously give an impression of how people's psycho-spiritual state is and needed pastoral caregivers to be there to explain scriptures well to congregants.

Trust can be broken or shaken under certain circumstances. Using the concept of Nagy's ethics to explain the credits and deficits that accrue during relational interactions, some 'migrant churches' that do not have proper administrative structures and transparent financial policies were not able to survive during the lockdown period. Vulnerable members, whose hopes were in these churches to support them in their vulnerable state, lost hope in them because they felt it was not worthwhile to give their resources to such churches. In the COP for example, all the pastors were asked to sacrifice their transport allowances and other benefits to support members

who could not afford the basic necessities of life, like food. The churches' coffers were emptied to support members of our congregations. The Church's Headquarters in Ghana sent money to pay all rental arrears during the lockdown. The unique situation in South Africa, where majority of the masses live in poverty and unemployed that 76% of South Africans may be considered vulnerable to extreme poverty as against the global economic effect (Valodia & Francis, 2020). This giving from the part of the church to members was in reciprocity on the balance of give and take. In a sense, Pentecostal churches depend basically on tithes and offerings from members to sustain the church and in crisis of this nature when members' economic livelihood was affected, the church had to step in to support them. Botha (2014::11) contends that it not a question of 'I give you so that you will give me' as much as: 'I give because it has to be given to me…'. This type of giving was in the form of care for congregants in serious need at the peak of the lockdown. Members were being spiritually taught and prayed for and they in turn gave their resources in cash and kind by supporting the running of the church. In their time of incapacity to generate income to sustain their families, the church resorted to its coffers to meet the needs of their members. Within the dynamic of the giving and receiving in relationships, situations arise where one party believes the other party has accumulated more resources at their expense which will result in a considerably wide deficit on the balance of give and take. Van Doorn (1996:13) argues that for Nagy, ethics is not something that has been introduced from an external source but rather, it is inherent within our being. It is ontic; and therefore it is fundamentally present within our humanity. Nagy regards ethics as an existential, universal human endeavor, which is based on honest division of rights, responsibility and accountability in a dynamic movement between people. This is what distinguishes animals from humans: the knowledge that the 'I' is committed to 'You' and the 'You' is committed to the 'I' (in Buber's 'I-Thou' philosophy). In some of the churches that could not survive during lockdown, members felt a deficit in their giving and lost trust and withdrew their allegiance from those

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churches. Trust and trustworthiness flows between people and does not reside in them or come automatically. It is the direct result of give and take (Boszormenyi-Nagy & Krasner, 1986).

4.3.3 The Problem of Theodicy

In finding sustainable pastoral practices which will help both the pastoral caregiver and his or her relational networks, the issue of trust on the part of congregants who are impacted by the COVID-19 virus and their relations also raises another ethical concern. The traditional way of caring for members by being physically present to lay hands while praying for the sick, performing rituals like christening and dedication of babies, administering of the Holy Communion and baptism by immersion. Thesnaar (2021:103-104) alludes that pastoral caregivers experience extreme pressure during the abnormal times especially during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic, and describes it as their faith "becomes sick of rigid views of moralistic undertones". He further alludes that the fear and anxiety pastoral caregivers experience is as a result of uncertainty of threats associated with the fear of death, loss, guilt feelings and ultimately loss of control and hopelessness. Suffering members on the other hand, would be offended that the clergy who preach in the pulpit to inspire faith and confidence in congregants now is afraid to attend to their sick members. This tension between the caregiver and the sick member gives different God images and theological positions from both the caregiver and the sick member.

In the COP liturgy, christening and dedication of babies are done in church when someone gives birth to a child. The clergy receives the child in his arms, lays his hands and prays for the child. During the COVID-19 pandemic, a communique was given from the church's Head-office to desist from laying hands on children and members to comply with the COVID-19 regulations. This aspect of compliance, made some members take offense as some Neo-Pentecostal churches that are independent did their ritual liturgies without changing the laying

on of hands by the clergy. These kind of discrepancies make members question the authenticity of the ritual differences within churches.

Louw (2008:184) asserts that church rituals and liturgy play important role as a component of bringing healing and growth to the sick, because psychological illnesses are either treated by ritual purifications, and sacrifices in the African context. Once members feel the pastor is not laying hands, it sends mixed messages of being cautious and may be interpreted differently from what the main reasons are. This made some congregants' faith become shaky in the sense that the pastor is afraid to touch them.

Another aspect of trust related challenge that arise in this relational network is the family of the pastoral caregiver. The spouse and children also may feel neglected often because the pastor is always busy with church programs and seem more concerned for the suffering members at the expense of the children and spouse. This is also relational ethics. Ducommum-Nagy (2016:6) argues from the perspective of giving from the children of the pastoral caregiver as not being acknowledged and this can cause destructive entitlement from the affected kids in their future relationships. The parents of the pastoral caregiver too may feel neglected though they feel proud that their children have chosen a high moral profession but may feel not being cared for by their children. In such scenario, the pastor has to put him or herself in an inclusive multi-directed partiality to bring all the affected parties together to dialogue (Docummum-Nagy, 2016:7)

4.3.4 Loyalty fairness and justice, responsibility and accountability in relationships

Loyalty is a preferential attachment to relational members who are entitled to a priority of 'bonding'. It is based on our indebtedness to the people who have offered us their commitment and it manifests itself in our willingness to place their interests before the interests of others (Boszormenyi-Nagy & Krasner, 1986:418; Docummun-Nagy, 2016:4).

Loyalty conflict arises when co-existence with the other is never about only one other person but simultaneously about many others (Van Doorn, 2020:112). For example, the dilemma that a couple might face in trying to satisfy both sets of parents during Christmas holidays, without offending the other spouse's family, can result in loyalty conflict.

In using elements of contextual therapy to explain why some obstacles to solidarity between human beings, Catherine Ducommun-Nagy posits that at a systemic level, the obstacle comes from family and group levels. She argues that in commercial relationships, fairness is measured objectively when one renders his / her service and is paid for the time spent. However, in close relationships justice or fairness is measured in terms of giving back for what one has received or reciprocity. In such cases, reciprocity may take the form of loyalty. She defines loyalty based on our indebtedness to the people who have offered us their commitment, support and love and it is reciprocated by our willingness to place their interests above others'. For example, Catherine Ducommun-Nagy argues that in families, loyalty commences when our parents start taking care of us from infancy and that automatically makes us indebted to them as our filial loyalty. The same applies to other people who support us significantly and this sometimes leads to loyalty conflicts. Her argument is that this kind of loyalty has the tendency to prevent us from showing solidarity to migrants who come to one's country for greener pastures and safety because we feel that we owe our families and country. This could be part of the reason the masses of the unemployed in South Africa are turning their anger on foreign nationals for being the cause of their problems. Ducommun-Nagy (2016:6) gives a picture of the strong influence of loyalty on both on our family and society.

She argues again that our expectation of fairness in relationships will also lead us to expect redress when someone has treated us unfairly, because it is part of relational ethics. Problems may arise when the people who cause the injustice from our vantage point fail to acknowledge or repair it. For example, in pastoral caregiving, the clergy always assumes that their spouses

and children would understand their calling and would not complain, because their complaints may seem selfish. However, the children may be accumulating anger and frustration in them. This unfairness and the gap created may affect their future relationships. This aspect of giving on the part of the clergy family are most at times not acknowledged.

This unfair giving of the pastor's children may have the potential or the propensity to *parentify* a child in future. It is when a child takes up the responsibility of a parent, either because of the parent's sickness or because of substance abuse or addiction. In contextual therapy, the child would not enjoy being a child and so when this person gives birth, the child becomes a victim to compensate for what he or she was deprived off. This cycle continues in the next generation or becomes trans-generational, which is termed a 'revolving slate' in contextual therapy.[35] This phenomenon could be one of the reasons for the alarming teenage pregnancies in South African townships, aside from the child support grant.

Parentification phenomenon in relation to the COP context in pastoral caregiving during COVID-19 pandemic could arise when the clergy falls sick and loses his or her life in the line of duty; the COP instituted funeral plan and pensions schemes for their ministers in 2016 which has not accumulated enough returns to cater for the families of the clergy when they pass on. This situation may jeopardise the lives of children ministers if it happens that an unexpected death occurs through COVID-19 virus or any other sickness. From the vantage point of the children, it may sound as if the church did not treat them fairly and it might cause the children to take up an elderly role at an early age to support their siblings and mother. It is hoped that such will not occur in the near future until these children become independent, otherwise, it would be a big challenge. The unique role of the COP as a classical Pentecostal church means emphasis on tithes and offerings to resource its sustainability meant that member's economic

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[35] Catherine Ducommun-Nagy's online presentation in October 2021 at Stellenbosch University

livelihood affected by the pandemic brings the pastors and their families into serious challenges.

Boszormenyi-Nagy & Spark (1984) in their book Invisible Loyalties state that contextual therapists endeavour to bring out invisible credits in relationships to bear during counselling and therapeutic sessions and helps to free members in families to resolve relational issues. This theory explores individual and family relationship problems. The themes under this topic was discussed earlier on in this study.

4.3.5 Destructive entitlement

Ducommun-Nagy (2016:4-5) asserts that if the injustice committed by a perpetrator is not repaired, two things can happen. The victim or the child might stop caring about others because he/she feels that no one cares about them. The child could turn to people who have nothing to do with the situation, hoping that they will make up for the injustices that they have experienced. Here the explanation would be: 'I don't care if you did not cause the damage but someone needs to repair it'. In this case, the entitlement to compensation has destructive consequences on their relationships, because it compels them to commit injustices themselves. This is what destructive entitlement means (Meulink-Korf & Rhijn, 2019:89-90). The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on pastoral caregivers and the toll on their families can trigger sentiments of destructive tendencies on the children's future relations if care is not taken because of their perception that the clergy puts the interests of the suffering members above their family. Using my experience of contracting the Covid-19 virus in the line of duty, the virus could have cost me my life as a pastoral caregiver and would have put innocent children in a situation where their mother would be struggling to bring them up single-handedly under difficult conditions. It could even cause some of them to terminate their schooling. As I explained earlier, pension policy for ministers of the COP in South Africa started in 2016,

which has not accumulated enough returns to support minister's families when they are no more.

One of the characteristics of destructive entitlement is that it makes us blind to the injustices that we are committing towards either a third party or another victim, because from our vantage point, we are just asking for fairness. If we have experienced serious injustices in our families or in our community - our destructive entitlement - this could prevent us from caring about the needs of vulnerable people (Ducommun-Nagy, 2016:5). We could even go as far as resenting the fact that other people may try to help them. We could indeed perceive this help as a betrayal of our own right to receive compensation for the injustices that we have experienced.

Understanding the pastoral care concepts of the DIPP can indeed assist in finding sustainable pastoral practices in the coronavirus pandemic as it is still on-going. The population immunity derived because of the vaccine has reduced fatalities and hospitalizations as it was before the emergence of the vaccines.

4.3.6 What can be done to address the negative consequences of Destructive Entitlement: Constructive Entitlement?

Ducommum-Nagy (2016:5) explains the fulfilment one enjoys or gains is by giving something to better someone's life (being responsible to the 'other'). Being generous brings us inner benefits like an increased self-worth, an increased self-esteem. This relational ethic dimension of giving and receiving is in the fourth dimension of Nagy's contextual therapy. One way to assist such people is to design situations in which they can experience the benefit of giving such that, they do not demand much of them. Then the reward of their little gesture can motivate them to give a little more at another occasion, and so on. The main point is to design steps that are small enough to not immediately trigger destructive entitlement. Recognition and acknowledgement of the little efforts they make can also give them inner self-fulfillment.

4.4 DIPP Contribution to Biblical Exegesis

Using the DIPP concept in pastoral care and theology, it became known that in order to foster smooth relationship between one another, there is accountability and consequences of the decisions one makes in the relationship. Each participating party in the relationship needs to act responsibly towards one another. Pastoral caregivers subscribing to the DIPP approach should be aware of the next generation in mind and for that reason, act in a manner that would live a lasting and beneficial legacy. Roberths (2020:95) concurs with this assertion when she posits that loyalty is always connected to the consequences of our actions because people's interactions with one another has loyalty as its fabric that holds it together.

How the DIPP as a pastoral practice could be employed as an interpretive and ethical guide within these Biblical texts to gain more insights in relational ethics and how the elements of loyalty, trustworthiness, responsibility and accountability unfolds. Pastoral care undoubtedly acknowledges the authority of Scriptural texts. Van Doorn (2007:1) notes that Biblical texts speaks to situations but the DIPP as a pastoral care concept enlightens the text. Pastoral care and the texts then can duly interact to bring out its true meaning.

4.4.1 Loyalty, and the Mandate of Posterity

The fifth Word in Exodus 20:12 will be explained in the context of passing on of legacy to the next generation. Van Doorn explains the ethical implications of the word 'Honoring' as the relational and ethical quality of giving and receiving within a relationship. The word honouring in Hebrew, as explained by Van Doorn, is "kabod" which is translated in English as "glory", which has its original meaning of "weight" or "heaviness". Honouring your father and mother in the context of Exodus 20:12 is to acknowledge the heaviness or weight placed on the child in the current generation to pass on the mandate of what have been received graciously from the previous generation to the next generation but not necessarily to respect your father and mother (Van Doorn, 2020:217). Passing on a legacy from previous generation to the next can

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be daunting when it is negative in nature like for example, the apartheid legacy in South Africa. The weight placed on descendants from families who inherited the legacy of their forebears have an obligation to pass on a better legacy by doing something to compensate for the ills of the past in order to honor their parents in that regard. The Centenary celebration of Stellenbosch University, the Rector and Vice Chancellor, Prof. Wim de Villiers, speech extract states: "In the context of our country's divided past, he expressed his deep and lasting sorrow about our contribution to the injustices of the past and sincerely apologized to those who were wronged and denied the privileges. Arising from a sense of responsibility toward current and future generations, we committed ourselves unequivocally to the idea of an inclusive, world class university in and for Africa". This statement is conspicuously posted in front of the main library for all to see. Some of the individual bursaries being awarded to most of the black students at the University come from descendants from the perpetrators of apartheid who were privilege to benefits from their forbears' legacies. It is one way of compensating for the ills of the past. Another form of compensation, in my view, is, the bursaries the Dutch Reformed Church offers to post-graduate students outside the Dutch Reformed church of which the researcher is a beneficiary.

Van Doorn (2020:254) explains guilt, which accompanies a legacy due to injustice of which no justice has been done? Does the transfer of such legacy pass on to the next generation to bear the consequence as Exodus 34:4-7 advocates? She notes that Ezekiel 18:2-3, gave an assurance that the sons and daughters will not be accountable to the sins of the fathers and it would be for their own account for their sins. Van Doorn (2020:255) notes that God calls human being into accountability to care for the future unborn generations but each individual and generation will be accountable for the consequences of their own actions. No one will be responsible for someone's misdeeds.

In the Bible, there are a number of scenarios that can be used to illustrate the balance of give and receive and the interplay of loyalties on the balance. In the narrative of 1 Samuel 20:1-42, the account of David and Jonathan's covenant to be loyal to each was consummated. Because of this loyalty between David and Jonathan, after the death of Jonathan, he remembered his covenantal relationship with his late friend and brought Jonathan's son, Mephibosheth from Lodibar to live in Jerusalem and ate the king's table. This loyalty between them made David restore the land of Saul to Mephibosheth. This is a typical illustration between how strong loyalty could be. The lesson is that Jonathan assisted David to be delivered from his father Saul. Jonathan's act of giving to David was a gesture of his faithfulness to his loyalty, which David received to save his life. On the other hand, when Jonathan died, David showed mercy to Mephibosheth in reciprocity of his loyalty to Jonathan. The lesson here as Van Doorn (2020:99) posits is that Mephibosheth grew up in Jerusalem and his young son's name, Mica was mentioned. The mention of the name of Mica, was the end of the mentioning of Mephibosheth in the narrative. This again, resonates the issue of intergenerational connection to Saul as the fourth generation. In the household of Saul, now hosted in the household of David. The familial tie is thus sustained into the next generation as a result of Loyalty between Jonathan and David. Loyalty as a preferential faithfulness, according to Van Doorn (2020:104), can be very difficult and sometimes awkward if not handled with care. David and Mephibosheth's relationship and the unexpected third, Ziba, brought loyalty conflicts between the relationship in 2 Samuel 16.

In the narrative, another lesson worthy to capture here is the loyalty Mephibosheth showed to David in his absence. The act of giving was also seen from Mephibosheth's 'invisible loyalty' even though Ziba's action brought David into 'Divine discomfort' within the triadic dynamic relationship: Ziba-David-Mephibosheth (Doorn, 2020:99).

The lesson of legacy from Saul is worthy of emulation to take responsibility as a second or current generation to correct the evil legacies of the previous generation to pass on better legacy for the future generation to halt the problem of revolving slates. David knew his reign would be passed on to his son Solomon and in my view, he corrected the sins of the fathers (Saul) by virtue of his loyalty to Jonathan, which could have resulted in a revolving slate into the future generations. However, David's (hesed) kindness towards Mephibosheth because of Jonathan, made him to deliberately correct that revenge on Saul.

The rage and anger of Saul towards David because of his favour with God and the people made him plot to kill him with hope of preserving the throne to his son Jonathan. His possession over Jonathan as a son to obey and honour him was not taken because Jonathan wanted justice for David. He was prepared to deprive himself of the throne for the sake of justice (fairness). Some parents can be possessive to the point of preventing their children from building any long-term relationships. They make critical remarks about all of their children's associations. In verse 30 of 1 Samuel 20, Saul hurled insults on Jonathan for allowing David to escape his intention to kill him. Jonathan was in 'loyalty conflict' between his friend and his father. In Exodus 20:5, the command to honour parents does not deprive us to stand for our rights against injustice. Does familial loyalty mean we have to sacrifice our personal aspirations in order to satisfy our parent's expectations? Jonathan's stance to help David into safety is a lesson to be emulated when we are caught in-between 'conflicting or split loyalty'.

Jonathan's loyalty to Saul in my view, is an indirect loyalty to his family because the lineage of Saul would have been wiped out had it not been David's loyalty *(hesed)* to Jonathan, his friend. The giving of Jonathan paid off later on in history and the legacy of Saul was passed on to the next generation through the kindness the king shown to Mephibosheth by King David. On the balance of giving, Jonathan's (*hesed)* faithfulness to David in his vulnerable state when Saul pursued to kill him was reciprocated at a later stage on the balance. Mephibosheth favor

with David and eventually his son, Mica, which connected him inter-generationally to the fourth generation of Saul's lineage.

- **Loyalty and Justice of Rizpah**

Another lesson worth noting is the concept of 'revolving slate', which David as a king of such great influence, endeavored to stop from recurring into the next generation. In 2 Samuel 21:1-4, there was famine in Jerusalem during David's reign. As it was characteristic of David, he inquired of the Lord and the answer he received was a casual effect from previous injustice meted out to the [36]Gibeonites during Saul's reign as king. The link to this act of injustice was the famine, which David was determined to resolve. Van Doorn (2020:101) notes the unavoidable fact of the revolving slate as a compensation for the Gibeonites to find justice from David. In exchange for the restoration of the blessing from God, the Gibeonites requested seven of Saul's male descendants to be killed and hang their bodies in an open place for the birds and wild animals to eat on their carcasses. This was indeed a cruel act to be done to human beings. David agreed to their request but his kindness to Mephibosheth as a result of his covenant to his late father Jonathan, made David spare Mephibosheth's life again. This was done at the expense of the two sons of Rizpah (concubine of Saul) and five sons of Saul's daughter, Merab. All these seven men were put to death during the first days of the harvest.

The loyalty of Rizpah was seen hear when she put on a sackcloth and spread herself out before the rock on which these bodies were hanged. Levinas in Nel van Doorn (2020:103-104) it is affirmed that evil actually resides in the heart of humans. The cruel manner of killing in retaliation of previous injustice and the display of the bodies of the victims depicts the state of the human condition. This woman exhibits true loyalty though it might sound 'foolishness' to some but as Van Doorn posits, it was an expression of 'justice blended with grace of kindness.'

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[36] In Joshua 9, these were the people who deceived Joshua to sign a treaty with them who later became a thorn in their flesh.

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This hybrid of justice and kindness is an expression of pity and compassion in the view of Levinas in Van Doorn. Rizpah kept an eye on the hanged bodies for six months until the rain poured down on the bodies. She prevented the wild animals and birds to feed on the dead bodies. The lesson here is she became a symbol of what true justice is and loyalty to a cause which made King David accord them a dignified burial. Rizpah's action according to Van Doorn, should inspire others to be firm and steadfast in their convictions in the establishment of true justice for the vulnerable in our society.

The COVID-19 pandemic with its daunting challenges should not deter and discourage pastoral caregivers and the advocacy of re-discovering some alternative ways of finding sustainable pastoral practices to assist the sick and those still mourning their dead because of the pandemic. From the scenario described above, it shows loyalty as an intrinsic 'organic fibre' that is existential, irrevocable bond that exists between people. The issue of trustworthiness displayed by Rizpah motivated King David to do the right thing. Van Doorn (2020:101) states that "the whole account of David's loyalty to Jonathan, illustrates how the challenge and decision to install justice and to stay loyal can put one in distressing situation. An oath (*hesed)* can sometimes become devastating, and even deadly." Thesnaar (2019) notes that in order to be responsible for the other, one has to put him or herself in a place of divine discomfort as Christ has to incarnate himself into the space of humanity to redeem mankind unto God.

- **The Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37)**

The story of the Good Samaritan is another remarkable narrative the Bible accounts for in relational ethics. In Luke 10:25-37, Jesus explains the ethical reality between persons and the need to care for the humanity of another. In this way, one becomes responsible to the other and helps to build trust amongst persons. The DIPP approach also advocates for being good to strangers. The profound lessons derived from this passage of scripture is intriguing in the sense

that the expert of the Law attempted to seek Jesus's consent to avoid his ethical responsibility towards his neighbor. In this narrative, Manuel (2021:87) notes that Christ intentionally avoided answering the question posed by the scholar of the Law and rather, gave a deeper sense of understanding regarding the relational aspect of our humanness being bound into one another and to be compassionate towards the other in their vulnerable state. This echoes the ethics of responsibility of Levinas to be there for the other and the vulnerable face of the other, which appeals to me for support and attention (Thesnaar, 2019). In Levinas ethics, asserts Thesnaar (2019), "near to the other in order to be filled with compassion, hospitality, empathy and interplay." Divine discomfort is the responsibility to live in the discomfort of the trauma of the other.

Another lesson Christ revealed in this parable is not to define people by their location or ethnicity before we come into an encounter with them but to be good to strangers and all persons when it is within our power to do so. The Samaritans were seen by the Jews as a mixed culture who they perceived as inferior to them. Van Doorn (2007:3-4) posits that ethics cannot be optional in its consideration but is an inherent and implicit desire that compels the 'I' towards the 'other' in giving and receiving, as it was given to every human being at birth even before we took our first breath.

Morgan (1956:160) notes that the Samaritan, though an alien to the Jew, who had been beaten by robbers, was moved by the ontic compassion of our humanity to do good to him by disregarding the contempt of the Jews towards the Samaritans to respond to his vulnerability. His deep concern towards him moved him beyond his compassion to an act of service by occupying that space and later riding him on his donkey to an inn to be given further care. The lesson the reader can take from this act echoes the assertion of Thesnaar (2021:107) that although pastoral caregivers are called by God to minister healing and care in the church as well as the broader community, they are not the sole bearers of this responsibility. He states

that different people are called to participate in this caring depending on each person's gifts, talents and capabilities. It is important for caregivers to know where their limit ends and refer suffering members to the appropriate health professionals. The Samaritan did just that and ask the Inn keeper to take care of the victim and on his return, he would pay any additional costs incurred.

The story of the Good Samaritan as Manuel (2021:89) describes is that when faced with a situation where an individual or a group of people find themselves in distress and are hurting to a point where neglecting the situation would cause the person or group their lives, you should pause and offer a helping hand. This however, must be done discretely and discerning not to fall into a trap of imposters who disguise themselves as vulnerable people.

- **The Parable of the Fair Father with two Sons (Luke 15:11-31)**

This parable narrated by Jesus gives insight into multi-directed partiality to bring everyone's interest to the fore. According to Van Doorn (2020:179-183) this parable is not about lost property but rather a human being who has been lost. However, at the end of the story, there was celebration on earth here. The intriguing part of this narrative is how Jesus leaves it in an open ended without judging anyone but left it as a food for thought for the reader to derive their own valuable lessons. The lesson here is how the father played an inclusive role to appease both sons.

The narrative also brings insight into loyalty and trust between families and how tensions arise from time to time. The researcher deems it fit to bring this parable in order to answer some of the questions raised in the current study.

There is this father who rejoices and celebrates the return of his lost son after he demanded a share *(ousia)* of the property *(bio)* due to him and his elder brother which the father did. What he asked for was a share of that which rightfully belonged to him. Van Doorn (2020:181)

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espouses it from the original translation in her argument, the fact that the younger son demanded part of the property does not mean there was nothing left for the father. Secondly, she brings another perspective that the father gave both sons the share that is due to them. This is something that the story does not expose clearly about the eldest son's portion he also received which makes the father's action fair and just too both sons. The aspect of the asymmetry relationship between a parent and a child is clearly depicted in this act of the father. This is the normative form of the relationship between parent-child.

Figure 3.3 from the previous chapter: Shows Fair Relational Ledger Between a Parent and a Child

Parental Merit or Take from the Child (What the Parent is Entitled To)	Parental Obligations or Give to the Child (What the Parent is Obligated to Give)
Nothing	Love Care Nurture Security Protection Discipline

In Genesis 48:22 and Deuteronomy 21:17; the birth-right son was entitled to a double portion or twice as much as any other son. The differentiation is, one portion as a son, and the second portion as the new head responsible for the family, which includes the care of the mother and unmarried sisters. With this stipulations, it shows that the youngest son did not demand an

inheritance because an inheritance cannot be claimed whilst the father is still alive, argues Van Doorn (2020:180).

Soon after the younger son had received his share, he distanced himself into a far place in a distant country where he squandered all his wealth in wild living. After he scattered everything, life became very difficult for him to the point of beyond help. The famine in the far away country the prodigal son resided was severe to the point where he had to get a job where he was feeding pigs. He also longed to fill his hunger on the food for the pigs because no one gave him anything.

When he came to his senses, he decided to rise up *(anastasis)*. He said to himself: "I will set out and go to my father". This turn of events shows something motivated him to go back to the father. The hunger could have been the motivating factor. Ludwig Feuerbach cited in Van Doorn (2020:181) states: "A human being exists according to who he/she is and according to what he/she eats".

The son also resolved to confess to his father of his sinfulness and the fact that he does not deserve to be called a son but to consider him as one of his hired men. He then rose up and set off to his father. The father saw him while he was still far away coming. He did not ask any questions but met him with compassion and pity on him. The issue of loyalty and an unconditional love and kindness (*hesed)* from a father towards his son.

The kindness the father shows him did not make him consider the son's request to be considered as one of the hired servants of the father. The father ignores the plea and asked his servants to dress him with fine robe, ring on his finger and sandals for his feet. He instructed for the fat calf to be killed for a feast and celebrate (Luke 15:22-23). In joyous proclamation, he announced the coming back of his lost son who have been found and dead but now alive again. Whilst the joyous celebration was on-going, the unexpected third, the eldest brother comes

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from the field and hears celebration in the house. He took offense and will not go in to be with them.

He voices out his anger and frustration why he would not want to be part of the celebration after he has been informed by one of the servants of his brother's coming back and the father's feast for him. He distances himself from his relationship with his brother by the statement: "this son of yours" distancing himself from the familial link. This is relational ethics by objectifying his brother into "that son of yours". The father's role to quickly embrace the elder son into the familial bond is remarkable and worthy of acknowledgement. The father in a compassionate manner, assured his elder son of his share of the property in the house and that all that he has was for him reminding him of his birth-right as the first son (Gen. 48:22; Deut. 21:17). The father and the two son's narrative was left open by Jesus for the readers to make their own judgements.

In this narrative of Jesus, the main lesson to be derived is that whenever a caregiver is approaching any predicament and relational issues, the approach must be should not be of a judgemental attitude but with a pitiful heart of compassion. In the case study described above, the father's approach is worthy of emulation. Neither the 'guilty son', the eldest brother who objectified his brother or the father who embraced all two sons with a loving and compassionate heart was bad or good

4.4.2 The Multifaceted Dimension of the Parable of the Fair Father

Between the three characters described by Jesus in the parable, the eldest son is the most vulnerable in the story. His statement: that 'son of yours' indicates his vulnerability because he distanced himself from the relationship by refusing to acknowledge him as brother and as a son to the father. Van Doorn (2020:186-187) argues that the words, 'brother' and 'father' were absent. What made him not able to relate to both his father and brother? Put differently, what

did he need in order to acknowledge both his brother and father? In order to keep the familial connections, and belongingness, Van Doorn examines how multi-directed partiality approach assist in answering these questions.

How did the younger brother's departure impact this elder brother? Is it possible he missed his brother and internalized it without talking about it? How was he dealing with his brother's absence? Had he been acknowledged for his loyalty and service to the father while his younger brother was away? One missing link in the narrative is that there was no mention of a mother figure in the parable. Could it be that the mother was dead or there was a divorce? The elder brother's blame of the younger brother had undertone of destructive tendencies with the possible attitude to take revenge. From his vantage point, he should be compensated for the giving he has contributed to the relationship in the brother's absence in order to settle an account. All the sentiment draws to the conclusion of a broken trust on the part of the elder son. The other issue at stake that is worthy of discussion is loyalty. The father's loyalty to both sons irrespective of the situation. The instant and spontaneous joy displayed by the father an attitude of not being less loyal to the elder son? Van Doorn (2020:188) wrestles with how siblings should respond to issues of this nature in families, especially when one seems to be favoured over the other? Van Doorn advocates multi-directed partiality can be of help in offering assistance to the continuous exchanges in family systems as well as to the quality of their intersubjective dynamics. In relating these scenarios to the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on pastoral caregivers, their families and the church congregations, the multi-lateral attitude of the clergy could suffice. The lessons learned from the father's multi-partial attitude in the manner he related in a fair manner towards both sons can be adopted in handling the family, and affected members to maintain the homeostasis within the relational network. In other words, the pastoral caregiver should be able to stand behind all parties within the triadic network (clergy-family-congregants) in such a way that will not trigger destructive tendencies

within the family set-up. The father with two sons played a compassionate role towards the prodigal son on his return. The most vulnerable amongst the three in Van Doorn's view, was the elder son who detached himself from the relationship by his remarks: 'that son of yours'. It implied, he detached from both his brother and father. This scenario echoes the similar situation David (2 Samuel 16:1-4) found himself in when he showed loyalty to his friend Jonathan's son, Mephibosheth, and Ziba schemed to deceive David. Sometimes loyalty comes with a price tag, as in the case of the father with two sons and David's kindness to Mephibosheth and his pledge to Ziba (2 Samuel 16:1). With the dilemma David found himself, he did multi-directed partiality by summoning Mephibosheth and Ziba to divide the fields amongst them (Van Doorn, 2020:100).

The pastoral caregiver must continually acknowledge and appreciate his/her spouse and children little efforts to the ministry in order to gain their support at all times. The vulnerable party in the relational intersubjective dynamics in the clergy-family-congregants is the children within the family network. They need to be acknowledged and affirmed to build their self-worth in order to help in their future relationships.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter discussed and engaged in a deeper theological perspective and how it endeavors to inform a normative objective in this study. The DIPP as a Pastoral Care framework to guide the structure of the study was considered in the African Ubuntu concept and how it played out during the COVID-19 pandemic and how it played out within the congregation and pastoral caregivers within the Church of Pentecost. The application of the DIPP was also considered in Biblical exegesis as an approach to pastoral care. The next chapter will now proceed to undertake the pragmatic task, which is the discussion and recommendation section culminating from chapters 2 to 4.

CHAPTER 5

PRAGMATIC DISCUSSIONS: CAN THE DIPP ASSIST AS AN ALTERNATIVE PASTORAL CAREGIVING METHOD?

5.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, the normative aspect of Osmer's theological task was addressed by asking the question, 'what ought to be happening' in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on the congregants of COP, pastoral caregivers and their relational networks.

The previous chapter also addressed the theological perspective by undertaking on ethical guidance, theological interpretation, and reviewing literature on concepts such as loyalty, trust, dialogue, self-delineation and self-validation, responsibility and fairness in order to structure the normative task of Osmer.

In presenting the final task of the Practical Theological interpretation, the question: 'how must we respond' will be addressed in this chapter. The researcher will use the information gathered from chapters 2 to 4 to address the research question in chapter 1 on how the DIPP approach of pastoral care and counselling can assist the COP in developing sustainable pastoral practices within the continuous reality of the COVID-19 pandemic. The insights gained will be utilized to suggest practical contributions and recommendations.

This chapter proceeds to highlight key elements required from the DIPP approach that can be used in strategies to reassess and refine the conventional pastoral practices exposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. This will be done based on the multi-disciplinary analysis and theological discussion in previous chapters. The researcher proposes practical and sustainable ways in which the traditional methods of caregiving which COVID-19 pandemic has exposed can be critically looked at and refined.

This chapter proposes that pastoral caregivers become responsible and accountable in discharging their duties as caregivers in COVID-19 pandemic continuous reality. This responsibility and accountability is the way they deal with their vulnerability within the COVID-19 crisis. In relation to entitlement, they should self-delineate and self-validate, otherwise they will not be able to acknowledge the holy spaces between themselves and the other within the relationship. The intergenerational aspect of the DIPP approach is the mandate on this current generation to be responsible to pass on a good legacy for the future generation; namely, our children. In the dialogue with our children, they should be given space to express their fears, anxieties, joys and aspirations.

5.2 The Health Risks Posed by the COVID-19 Pandemic on Pastoral Caregivers and their networks (Responsibility and Accountability of Pastoral Caregivers)

It is an undoubted fact that the COVID-19 pandemic poses enormous health risks and challenges despite the divergent views associated with some Neo-Pentecostal and Classical Pentecostal churches as I explained in chapter two of this study. Some influential pastors of independent churches are of the view that the vaccine administration, which is meant to provide population immunity to reduce the rate of infection and hospitalization, is a form of Anti-Christ product (White, 2022:6). The clergy in COP need to act responsibly by taking precautionary measures to protect themselves well against being infected. With more than half of the ministers of COP in South Africa being fifty years old and above, this calls for extra vigilance and caution as they fall within the high-risk age category, making them more vulnerable to the virus. The stress and trauma associated with the COVID-19 pandemic may have long-term effects on the clergy because chronic stress may lead to anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress syndrome, high blood pressure, drug abuse and alcoholism (Thesnaar, 2021).

As it is characteristic of Classical Pentecostal ministers, exercising faith in the face of crisis and suffering sometimes blinds us to the reality of the COVID-19 crisis, which is deadly. Underestimating the stress levels associated with the pandemic would be a mistake on the part of the pastoral caregiver. The psychological impact on their health and families cannot be under-estimated. It is therefore important to refer members to other professionals for assistance, as division of labour does not show incompetence but rather wisdom and servant leadership. One's ability to delegate when necessary is also part of being accountable and responsible.

Sacks (2005:135) echoes God's call to humankind to accept responsibility and to become co-labourers with Him and partners in creation. The Bible story of Adam and Eve was the first refusal to take responsibility when God came to the Garden and found them hiding. Adam shifted the blame to the woman, thus indirectly blaming God; and the woman also shifting blame to the serpent (Gen. 2:16-17). The instinct in denial of responsibility has been there since the beginning of creation. According to Sacks (2005), responsibility is existential and neglecting it causes disruption, confusion, and all manner of uncertainty.

An intriguing dimension of the Noah's flood worth learning from Genesis 6 is that God instructed him to make an ark so that he and his family would be saved while the rest of the human race was destroyed. Sacks (2005:141-142) offers profound insights on responsibility, which most preachers keep silent about. Noah did not take to the responsibility to warn, rebuke and intercede for them prior to the flood. Instead, he busied himself with the building of the ark without taking responsibility to bring the masses into the fold.

With this lesson, it behoves on us as pastoral caregivers to learn from Noah's attitude to be concerned about the plight of the masses in pain and suffering, some of whom find themselves in these predicaments through no fault of their own. Investing in digital platforms and social media is one of the ways in which we can assist the hurting people in our pastoral care.

Dissemination of the health information concerning the dangers and dispelling the myths and stigmatization about the COVID-19 disease through social networks, cell-phones and other digital gadgets by pastoral caregivers would be helpful. The responsibility of the pastoral caregiver can be to mobilize as many church members to engage in the use of media and digital networks will assist in facilitating the sharing of relevant health information needed. The burden in creating awareness to educate members about these is, in my view, our ethical responsibility. Botha (2014) notes ethics is not an external imposition from moral regulations, but the knowledge that we belong and are bound up to one another by an ethical relational thread makes us responsible towards one another. Boszormenyi-Nagy & Krasner (1986) view it as part of an honest division of rights and responsibilities in the dynamic movement between people.

There is evidence that participating in religious activities and exercises has a positive impact on the mental health and well-being of congregants (Cunningham, 2008). The digital platform space will help in creating a virtual space community whenever the need arises. The responsibility of the pastoral caregiver in sharing relevant information about hygiene protocols and clearing the stigma around COVID-19 will help to relieve members from fear and anxiety (Pew Research Centre, 2020).

The researcher's knowledge and understanding of the DIPP concept can be used to create awareness in the COP and other Pentecostal denominations. Sacks (2005:141) asserts that "to be moral is to live with and for others, sharing their responsibility, participating in their suffering, protesting their wrongs, and arguing their cause. On the other hand, Van Doorn[37] notes that in as much as 'I must be responsible for you, I must not be responsible for your responsibility'. There is the need to strike a balance when each party endeavours to do their

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[37] Third block contact session MTh lecture in October 2021 at Stellenbosch University.

part in the relational encounters. Van Doorn (2020:120) asserts that relational ethics does not reside within the general regulations for morality. It is therefore not a prescription from regulations from social institutions such as church, government, culture, or any civil society, but it is anchored and embedded within the being of the human which make it an intrinsic or ontic issue. The researcher will then look at the aspects of the dialogical phases.

5.2.1 Aspects of Dialogue and self-correcting measures

The researcher is of the view that pastoral caregiving should create space where the COP members and ministers engage in dialogue. As Bollnow (2008:216) argues, space is 'closely connected with the emotional and volitional aspect, in fact with the whole psychological condition of mankind'. A person's space or environment determines one's attitude and behaviour. It therefore means that healing may occur as pastoral care seeks to change the space, asserts Louw (2019:255). The effect of the pandemic on members and pastoral caregivers' emotions and mental health as well as their social and economic lives needs patience, conducive spaces and places to relax and share their emotions, frustrations and be genuinely heard. In such encounters, healing may occur and renewed trust and confidence may be built. The pastoral caregivers of COP can effectively utilize digital platforms as spaces to accomplish these aspects of dialogue.

5.2.2 Attitude of self-correcting, self-delineation and self-validation. What is their importance?

In pastoral caregiving the pastor or caregiver occupies the space of the suffering person, staying close to the person with the purpose of becoming a channel of comfort and hop through the Spirit of God. However, the COVID-19 pandemic, with its infectious afflictions causing sickness and death, has become an issue (Thesnaar, 2021:101). The traditional way of attending to the sick and suffering members has become a problem for pastoral caregivers because they have not been able to be physically there for the sick. The economic, social, psychological,

emotional stress and spiritual aspects, as Louw (2008:139) asserts, have made pastoral caregivers faith waver because of rigid moralistic regulations. In addition, there are limited resources in terms of finance, as well as COVID-19 infection, which have negatively impacted pastors and church leaders. The tendency of over-giving can cause burnout, which many pastors fall victim to, and this was especially true during the pandemic. Knowledge on this aspect of psychiatry in relational ethics would be a good resource to help pastoral caregivers in COP to take precaution in their pastoral care duties. The emotional, psychological and spiritual impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the pastor of COP can have a long-term effect if awareness is not created to make pastors well informed. Pastors must not feel unnecessarily guilty for not being there to help their network of congregants or people who have been affected with COVID-19 virus.. I do not want to sound a caution of pessimism here but it is likely that the post-traumatic stress syndrome associated with prolonged stress can suffice if pastoral care is neglected in the name of call to duty. This is one of the major challenges pastoral caregivers continue to battle with.

Self-delineation, as described by Nel van Doorn, is the use of relationship for defining oneself. The uniqueness of every human should enable you to set your own boundaries and create your own space where you can open up and close up at your will. That is not necessarily being self-centred but a self-care attitude to protect one's unique self. If you are not able to delineate, you are likely to be susceptible to be objectified. Boszormenyi-Nagy et al., (1986:75) espouses self-delineation as the time frame between the birth and death of an individual whereby the person learns to discover his or her unique self and identity. This uniqueness is that which sets apart a person from the world and others. In the process of self-discovery, a person's life will develop personal meaning that is specifically his or her own. Boszormenyi-Nagy et al., continues by asserting that a person's background lends itself to meaningful uniqueness and thus, the quality of one's significant relationships is key in making the person who he or she is. Pastoral

caregivers should master this attitude because of their network of relationships. It is the first phase of the dialogic aspect. It is important because it assists the pastoral caregiver to be responsible for him / herself and their network of relationships. Self-validation, however, is the discovery of oneself and finding a sense of meaning in our relationships with the other. It is an indication of one's maturity level. Van Doorn (2020:158) notes that the discovery of one's unique identity shows a sound maturity to know one's unique meaning and self-worth.

Because of our unique differences we should know when to halt, reflect, and have time for ourselves even as we help suffering people. That is not being selfish and should not make you feel guilty. It is important to understand self-delineation and self-validation in order to prevent over-giving in relationships. According to Van Doorn (2020), one runs the risk of robbing the other to respond in a responsible way. This is the risk and threat that causes pastors to experience burnout. The COP has a policy that entitles all pastors to one day of rest each week. This is done so that the minister can rest after the Sunday activities, which are usually a lot more demanding than any other day. The policy of 30-days annual leave for COP pastors should also be enforced to allow them to have proper rest for their bodies and souls.

Boszormenyi-Nagy & Krasner (1986:421) defines self-validation to the individual's capacity to earn credit for relational integrity of simply defending power or self-esteem. They approach self-validation as the process of extending care to one's partner, one does not only satisfy an existing psychic need of the other but evokes one's own self-worth and merit. Self-validation affects the balance of relational claims and indebtedness as well. This in the second phase of the dialogic process. This phase makes one understands one's unique identity in order to establish a sound maturity. Our sense of meaning and self-worth becomes visible in relationships. In a reliable relationship one learns to define his or her unique self (Van Doorn, 2020:158).

5.2.3 Multi-Directed Partiality

In creating space for effective dialogue, the MDP is the core strategy of the DIPP as a professional disposition that is based on reciprocity in relationships. The aim of this method is to detect reliable resources of merits and credits to enhance the movement of giving and receiving visible to all, according to Nagy & Krasner cited in Van Doorn (2020:175).

This dialogue can be initiated by instituting a committee to discuss the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on pastoral caregivers' families, especially their children. From chapter 3, it was established that the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the pastoral caregivers was in three dimensional phases: on themselves, on their family (children and spouses), and on their congregations. Viewed from the DIPP perspective, this three dimensional impact affected each individual's network of relationships. Members of the congregation who are affected by the socio-economic impact of the virus require support from the church or the mobilization of resources, pioneered by the pastoral caregiver, to support those in need. The sick also need the pastor's support and comfort, which is another burden. The demands of the families of the pastoral caregivers on the pastor and their economic hardships also pose an additional challenge. According to Hendron, Irving & Taylor (2021:8), this has the potential to challenge the mental health and well-being of the pastoral caregivers. The mental health challenges associated with the pastoral caregiver's work are profound because they are less likely than others to seek assistance from mental health professionals and may suffer sudden and unexplained breakdowns from time to time (Salwen, et al. 2017).

The psychological impact on the pastoral caregiver is something members of the congregation do not understand because of their theology that the pastor is next to God and is capable of solving every problem. Rowatt (2001:5) notes that apart from the psychological effects associated with pastoral duties, pastors also experience tensions in balance the demands of their family and church activities. These tensions heightened during the COVID-19 pandemic as a

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result of limited financial resources. The economic lives of members of the congregation were challenged during the early parts of the lockdown, and this affected pastoral caregivers as well.

The other issue some congregation members struggled with was trust. Pastoral caregivers' compliance with the COVID-19 protocols through social distancing, not laying hands on members while praying for the sick and while performing baptism by immersion. These rituals and liturgies were done without touching and some congregants felt that pastors did not have enough faith. Dialogue is therefore necessary to provide an opportunity to educate and create more awareness and healing.

The immense sacrifices made by pastoral caregivers' children is another important issue that requires careful attention. Their sacrifices towards their parent's ministry is seldom acknowledged. The aim of MDP would be to detect hidden relational resources to be unearthed through the skilful actions of the pastoral caregiver. The trust of the children also needs to be built as they form an integral part of the church and the family (Scheirmacher in Weber, 2021:79). One should build trust with children by taking their concerns and interests seriously and by responding to their needs. The moral values pastors inculcate in their children are worthy of commendation; however, there is serious emotional and psychological pain that COP ministers' children endure on a daily basis which need to be addressed as a matter of urgency. The pastoral caregiver's psychological and emotional concerns include the issues their children encounter, which compounds their stress. The issues faced by the pastoral caregivers' children can be further exacerbated by the impact of psychological stress caused by their parent's work on their future relationships. Boszormenyi-Nagy et al.(1986:78) notes that when a child whose attitude and contributions to his parents' welfare or well-being are acknowledged and recognized helps him or her to earn constructive entitlements and merits. Such a child learns the understands the rewarding features of caring. On the other hand, children whose caring are manipulated and abused suffer from most destructive features of parentification. If their issues

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are not addressed, and their giving on the movement of giving and receiving is not acknowledged (for the sacrifices and contribution to their parents' ministry) they can start behaving in a way that is destructive towards a third party. Ducommum-Nagy (2016:5) explains that destructive entitlement makes one blind to the suffering of others because from one's vantage point, one is asking for fairness. If we did not get this, why should you get it? Secondly, it can make them prevent other people from supporting vulnerable people. That is how serious destructive entitlement can be. In my view, this type of destructive entitlement can be very subtle.

The realisation of fairness creates space for authentic dialoguing. Trust is experienced when there is assurance that the pastor or the facilitator of the MDP does not exclude anyone who needs to be heard (van Doorn, 2020:175). When all parties are recognised, acknowledged and treated fairly in the dialogue, relational ethics become visible.

It is proposed that the MDP will open a conducive space for genuine engagements to bring healing to all parties. With the online services for prayers, counselling, and interactions, distance should not be a hindrance to connect with one another.

5.3 Multi-directed partiality in the passing on of legacies in decision-making: On being partial for the coming generations

Another dimension that needs a critical look is the legacy we inherit from our parents and forebears which we have to, in turn, pass on to the current and the unborn generations. The fifth Word in Exodus 20:12, to honour your father and mother is the load or weight placed on a person to pass on the legacy from one's forebears, or previous generation.

The decisions we take now about the COVID-19 pandemic are not for our benefit alone but for the unborn generations. What biography will we live for the yet-to-come generation to read about us? What kind of world do we envisage for them to live in?

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5.3.1 Intergenerational patterns

In Nagy's thinking, when someone receives a legacy they have the responsibility to weigh to what extent the legacy constructive / beneficial or not. The pastoral caregiver needs to weigh whether the balances and deficits are fair to be lived with or to be passed on to the current and future generation. Meulink-Korf et al., (2016:68) illustrates the passing on of a legacy from a previous generation to a future generation as a roof tile construction where the credit, merit and trust are like the adhesive, binding everything together. Pastoral caregivers need to gain understanding of this trans-generational mandate in order to play the MDP role to bring all affected parties into dialogue.

Positive legacies are a bond between relatives and generations. In African society before pre-colonialism and Christianity, traditions were passed on from generation to generation through storytelling.

5.3.2 Engage in Storytelling as an aspect within the DIPP approach in dialogue

Telling one's life-story is about finding soundness or coherence of words and meaning in life. Gobodo-Madikizela & Van der Merwe (2007:10) contend that "recovery from trauma begins with the finding of words and telling a story about what happened; and thus translating trauma into the structure of a language and a narrative is a way of bringing 'order' and 'coherence' into the chaotic experience." They used Victor Frankyl's 'Logotherapy' to explain this assertion that the loss of words after trauma could be linked theologically to the Biblical account of creation, which describes the chaotic form of the earth before the spoken "Word". In the beginning, the earth was "without form; it was a void", but when God spoke, order was created out of the chaos. Similarly, the void created by the trauma needs words to be transformed into something meaningful. This means that the loss of words initially caused by trauma can be communicated and shared through language, which helps in the healing of the traumatised person. For some people, however, it is important to have wordless time with them

by only being present. During such moments, some go through painful silence on what happened, before they can bounce back, because some people may not be ready for words immediately after trauma strikes (Gobodo-Madikizela & Van der Merwe, 2007).

Layzell (2020:207) asserts that "careful thought needs to be given to pastoral caregivers who provide support and care to traumatised congregations and communities. Carers must have access to therapeutic help for themselves to enable them to process their own reactions to the situation so that they do not spill out inappropriately in their interactions with those they intend to care for." This is where the DIPP approach in self-delineation is relevant.

Streets (2014) asserts that many people who have been traumatized in various ways often feel stigmatized and alienated from others because of their encounters with these tragic events. Some may also feel judged, punished, or abandoned by God. A ministry of presence with those suffering from trauma is a shared grace by which the pastoral caregiver helps to bring hope to those who, because of their traumatic experience, feel further victimized, alone and alienated by the emotional trouble caused by the trauma they experienced (Jones, 2009:56).

Streets (2014) agrees with this argument that feeling loved again and being able to love oneself helps to restore the trauma sufferer's sense of being created in the image of God. This Imago Dei, once sullied or perhaps even destroyed by a traumatic event, can be redeemed in the healing relationship between the victims of trauma and the pastoral caregiver. Healing is found in the quality of the relationship with the pastoral caregiver and how he / she can place him / herself in a MDP to promote dialogue.

A traumatic experience like the COVID-19 pandemic can put victims in a state of anger, disillusionment, low self-esteem and lack of confidence in the existence of God. On the other hand, the religious beliefs and spiritual adjustment of some people who have experienced painful events can be a source of strength and guidance for them through the journey of their

trauma. It is worth exploring with those who are religious and have gone through trauma how their religious beliefs have positively or negatively impacted them as they were dealing with their traumatic experiences (Jones, 2009:48).

Ison (2020) asserts that the clergy can have faith in the Bible to build resilience. However, those who are unable to cope should be given the space to express and break their silence regarding any traumatic experiences which might prevent them from effectively counselling the congregants. Warner (2020:89) asserts that the books of the Old Testament (OT) and New Testament (NT) respond to the traumas experienced by early Israelites and Christians in a wide range of ways to model resilience, both of individuals and communities. One such model is retelling and reframing of stories, which is a recurring feature in the OT.

The difficult question many people ask during tragedies and traumatic events, as Abbort (2020:58) puts it, is "how can the experience of great trauma sit within a strong confession of divine providence? The reality is that the goodness and sovereignty of God sits alongside a confession that God works in the lives of believers to conform them to the likeness of Christ. It is then clear that the foundation of pastoral counselling arises from our understanding and application of the Scripture. It is care for quality of life." Renowned theologian, Daniel Louw (2008:268) explains, "*Cura animarum as cura vitae* is focused on care for life and the enhancement of the quality of life. Its aim is to foster hope and meaning.

5.3.3 Transgenerational solidarity

As long as there are generations, breakages and restorations will come. Transgenerational solidarity is an extension of the family ledger in which the balance of assets and debits are entered (van Doorn, 2020:236). It is a claim to pass on legacies in such a way that fairness and justice are the yardstick to measure its trustworthiness. Nagy believes that the concern for the next generation is incorporated in the MDP attitude.

5.4 Trust and Relational Ethics

The issue of trust and trustworthiness is a relational resource that is fundamental in relational ethics. The COP liturgical activities comprise, amongst others, christening of babies, baptism by immersion, the Holy Communion, prayers and fasting as well as congregational worship. During the COVID-19 lockdown period when churches were not allowed to hold physical services, communiqué was issued by the COP headquarters prohibiting ministers from baptizing, laying hands and other rituals that would involve close contact between the minister and the congregation. This communiqué was in compliance with the government pronouncement to adhere to COVID-19 protocols.

Whilst the COP adhered to these regulations to curb the spread of the virus, other independent churches did not comply and some members got confused as a result of the differences between opinions of churches and the application of faith, theology and civil compliance. These differences between churches' positions and the numerous doctrinal interpretations on social media platforms during the lockdown affected the faith of some members of our congregations. The COP pastors and church leaders strengthened their follow-up strategies to win back some of them who had joined other churches after the lockdown. Van Doorn (2020:234) argues and summarises that we live between generations; on one side, our loyalty is to the previous generation, and on the other side our loyalty should be to the next generation as well as the not-yet born generations. At same time we cannot neglect our responsibilities to bestow justice and fairness to the current generation. Meulink-Korf et al., (2016:39) assert that anytime an individual makes a constructive contribution to the well-being of those who come after us, and thus, let go of destructive and negative legacies, the quality of life changes for the better at that moment.

Thesnaar (2021:109) affirms that trust is a key resource in dialogue and an encounter between people. The pastoral caregiver benefits when these two elements of trust and dialogue are

engaged and they enable him / her to look at the relational network of the client from a contextual perspective. Trust, he continues, is always a risk because the response from the 'other' is not guaranteed. However, trust is fundamental in all ethical relationships, which makes it the essence of relational ethics. Meulink-Korf & Van Rhijn (2016:14) reiterates that relational ethics is about fairness within existential relationships whose focus is on the balance between give and receive.

During such an encounter, the dialogue between I and Thou becomes present tense, where it is 'now', which is surrounded by silence; no interruptions, but only the two persons will be in exchange of the in-between moment. In such moments, "the event takes place without specific mindfulness, because, when the 'I' starts to observe, when the 'I' becomes aware of things and starts to signify things, the encounter already belongs to the past and becomes part of history, sinking back into the completion of time" (Van Doorn, 2020:41). Thorough healing starts in such dialogical encounters.

5.5 The Dilemma of Loyalty

Boszormenyi-Nagy& Krasner (1986:192) explains that loyalty conflict involves making choices of priorities between a person's family of origin, between his or her friends, or even his or her job. Loyalty is basic in the causes of marital challenges that can show up before marriage and after marriage. As I explained in chapter 3 of this study, loyalty conflict may play a role in the relationships between the pastoral caregiver, his family and the suffering congregants during the COVID-19 pandemic. The way the pastoral caregiver handles these dynamics between the parties involved is crucial in how the children, the pastor's family and the wife's family members are handled appropriately with the attitude of MDP.

Split loyalty, which occurs between parents during divorce. Hargrave et al (2003:80) notes that for instance, a divorcing husband and wife may hate each other but their selfish desires can

prevent them from seeing the consequences of their action on their children. Each spouse may blame the other for not meeting their needs and attempt to win the children to their side by saying something negative about the other parent. The children caught between these two divorcing parents are biologically connected to both parents and the demand and psychological torture they may go through cannot be underrated. Boszormenyi-Nagy & Krasner's (1986:191) definition of split loyalty "is when an individual is required to show loyalty to one deserving relationship at the cost of betraying or being disloyal to another deserving relationship." The consequences on the child are sometimes devastating, because from the early stage of a child's development, they develop a deep concern for the well-being of their parents (Van Doorn, 2020:113). She argues that from a clinical point of view, when such children survive in this dilemma of loyalty, their confusion and frustration may lead to pathological problems of delusion in their adult life. This person may blame him/herself that he/she was not good enough and failed to meet the expectations of the parents. Such delusion can lead to guilt feelings that can impede further development into maturity (Boszormenyi-Nagy & Krasner, 1986:194). This is one of the most destructive forms of entitlement.

In the case of this loyalty conflict between the pastoral caregiver, his family and congregants, Meulink-Korf & Rhijn (2019:91-92) notes that the loyalty of a pastor to his call to God is maintained at the expense of intimate familial ties (the children and the spouse). This becomes a type of religious exploitation on the family. The loyalty to God is abused and introduced as an excuse for neglect of familial responsibilities. The children and the spouse then test the pastor's comparative loyalties as a husband (wife) and father (mother). The destructive consequences that can associate this neglect can be costly if care is not taken to address them using MDP processes to appease all parties.

5.6 Alternative and other creative ways of doing Pastoral Caregiving (E-Services)

Can spaces in the cyber environment also become sacred and facilitate ritual liturgical activities? I believe they can, because COVID-19 has actually taught us significant lessons in this regard. E-church/e-ecclesia/cyber church is not a new adventure in the spreading of Christianity. However, COVID-19 lockdown facilitated it much more than most churches using it to propagate the gospel (White, 2022:5). As Pentecostals, COP is characterised by singing, drumming, shouting and clapping of hands during church services, but COVID-19 lockdown restrictions made it impossible for our services to experience such exuberance as we could not hold our usual church services. The switch to e-services was helpful in addressing the spiritual, emotional and psychological needs of our members during the lockdown period. Virtual services have now become a norm for the COP International Sunday evening services, led by the Chairman of the Church of Pentecost International at 20H00. White (2022:5) argues that "cyberspace has the potential to be both creative and transcendental, where authentic experiences can take place. Therefore, it is possible that spaces within cyberspace can be sacred and facilitate ritual liturgical expressions". Thesnaar (2021) concurs that standing with others before God is not only in physical presence alone. The DIPP focuses on the resources needed to deal with the pandemic and its aftermath in navigating through life again.

Thesnaar (2021:117) argues that pastoral caregivers need to risk charting this new digital path of in our pastoral care duties within the continuous reality of the pandemic. This will require a significant re-orientation and re-conditioning; a shift in paradigm and adjustments from the conventional pastoral practices into the digital platform or both. This adjustment is relevant because change is not pleasant in the beginning, but with the current trend and the reality of the COVID-19 pandemic and what it has exposed, it is worth the adaptation into this "new normal" path in our contemporary journey. Seo (2020:93) asserts that moving into a new and unfamiliar approach may sometimes cause resistance and therefore, may be difficult to navigate

through it smoothly. However, gradual and consistent methods, which do not deviate too much from the core values and practices of the COP norms, will help for it to be fully accepted as time goes on.

Based on what has been said, the researcher proposes that the digital ways of pre-marital counselling sessions, small cell groups and other discipleship classes for newcomers and new convert classes be held online with periodic contact sessions.

Weekly prayer meetings can continue as usual, but online links should be created for those who are not able to attend.

Pastoral caregivers can still do counselling virtually when there is a potential health risk to the caregiver.

Religious leaders, in playing their role in spiritual, physical, emotional and mental health support to their congregations, become exhausted, fatigued and depressed and they experience burnout. They also provide emotional, psychological support in various ways to people during times of crisis (Asamoah Gyadu et al., 2014; Benyah, 2020; Osei-Tutu et al., 2019, 2020). It is therefore necessary that pastoral caregivers share some of the responsibilities in order to relieve themselves from over-burden which can cause burnout. As I indicated earlier on, more than half of the COP pastors in South Africa are fifty years plus in age. As Thesnaar (2021:118) reminds pastoral caregivers to be mature enough to acknowledge if they fall within the category of the high-risk age brackets, which makes them more vulnerable to the virus. This will require that a minister in our context of the COP for instance, will need to either refer suffering members to another colleague, or to continue with the care and counselling on a digital platform.

Additionally, colleagues may proactively stand in for those who fall in the vulnerable age brackets to relieve them from being exposed to more risk (Thesnaar, 2021:118).

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5.6.1 Cyber Space for Ritual Performance

Virtual spaces can be used to perform church rituals like the Holy Communion. The administering and participation of the Holy Communion is an important component of the doctrine of the COP and ordained ministers and Elders are the people allowed to officiate it (White, 2022:4). The preparations for Holy Communion involve prayers and fasting, reading and meditation because of its significance and the sacredness attached to it. With the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic and the lockdown restrictions, the cyber services have now afforded members a new shift to allow its democratization and demystifying (White, 2022:4; Asamoah-Gyadu, 2020:127). The lockdown restrictions have allowed for the ritual performance and administration to be done virtually.

During the COVID-19 lockdown period, ordination of three of our ministers into the full Pastorate was done virtually in July 2020. For the COP, when someone is called into the full-time ministry, the first 3 to 5 years is a probationary period and when the minister's work is satisfactory, the minister is then ordained into the pastorate (COP Ministerial Handbook, 2014:34). It is a very significant occasion in the life of the COP. It is then that a certificate of ordination is issued. The first ministers of the COP in South Africa to be ordained virtually were from Polokwane, Bloemfontein and Kempton Park districts. The Online service was streamed from Kempton Park as the headquarters.

With such developments, church liturgies can now be conducted virtually without any problem.

5.6.2 Ministries cyber meetings to be encouraged

The researcher proposes that the smaller group ministries wing of COP should have weekly virtual meetings in areas where congregants travel long distances to get to the church. In this way, members can save on fuel as living conditions have become expensive during this period of the COVID-19 pandemic. The decline in the economic means of members of COP

congregations will directly or indirectly affect the pastoral caregiver and their families as well, because tithes and offerings will drop and the operations of the church will be affected. The family as the basic unit of society suffers when pastoral caregivers are unable to meet the basic needs of their spouses and children and this puts the pastor in a negative light as 1 Timothy 5:8 challenges the Christian leader to take care of their close family members before taking care of God's flock. These tensions in meeting the demands of their family, as Tanham et al. (2020) note, heightened the need for bio-psychosocial, economic and spiritual care for the pastoral caregivers, especially during the peak of the restrictive ban.

Frequent meetings help the pastoral caregiver to find fulfilment in giving him/herself to the 'other' in a beneficial way. Relational ethics is giving oneself to be a beacon of hope to vulnerable people. This again is an ethical responsibility while still being available to your family.

5.7 Unfreeze a safe space for dialogue to initiate healing for affected families

The church as ecclesia is seen as a free and safe space where members of the congregation have the opportunity to interact and find comfort, acceptance and a sense of belonging in times of need. Louw (2010:270) alludes to the fact that individuals who are hurting and in need of assistance tend to feel isolated and lonely but the church should serve as a place and space that is conducive for belongingness where people encounter one another in the spirit of love. This is echoed by Apostle Paul's letter to the Galatians 6:2, 10, "Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ. There, as we have the opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers" (NIV).

To address such issues, especially during the crisis of COVID-19 which have caused many families and church congregants to feel disillusioned and confused, with some still recovering

from their losses and pains, the following can be considered in our liturgical practices as the COP:

- I submit in this section that the creation of a free space for dialogue in initiating healing within the continuous reality of COVID-19 pandemic should start from the liturgical activities in our churches.

- Our congregation must first realize Multi-Directed Partiality (MDP) in our liturgies. In an oral examination at Stellenbosch University in October 2021, one of the questions posed was: 'how will your congregation realize MDP in your liturgy?[38] In answering this question, I cited examples like if a pastor calls out married couples to pray for them and neglects a group like single mothers, widows and divorced people that can send a negative signal of insensitivity to them. MDP in our liturgies must be done with wisdom, tact and sensitivity. It is very crucial that our song ministrations, prayers, and worship should be done in languages and cultures that enable members of our congregations to be free to express themselves without feeling excluded in any way during Sunday services and weekly ministry meetings. Any means that will support this agenda should be explored and pursued, for example, having various cultural groups during our Sunday Bible Study lessons before the sermon, so that just before the sermon, representatives from the various groups will be given a chance to share from the lessons to bring in the inclusive aspect of sharing the topic discussed. In the sermon, as much as possible, the message should be packaged in a way that will cut across all groups to make people go home satisfied, encouraged and comforted. The main therapeutic method of contextual therapy of inclusive MDP can be a resourceful tool. Van Doorn (2020:202) tells a story of a man whose wife had left him a year earlier. He was in a church when the pastor asked all married couples to come up front and

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[38] Mth third contact session oral exams held on 22 October 2021 led by Professor Nel Van Doorn.

appreciated them for their willingness to commit themselves to each other. He prayed and blessed them for a blissful union. This man later told the minister how he felt and the pain he endured during that session; the loneliness, guilt and the desperation to leave the church (Van Doorn, 2020:202). This inclusive MDP or multi-laterality as Boszormenyi-Nagy et al., (1986:74) notes, is of great practical and therapeutic significance to understand that the three aspects of dialogue are not just behaviour patterns. They are the basic attitudes of living in which relationships are formed and sustained.

- The pastoral caregiver or the pastors of the COP should be conscientized and be sensitive to members of the congregation. There are diverse kinds of needs and issues that members of the congregations carry, especially within the diverse context of South Africa, and the impact of COVID-19 and its aftermath and continuous suffering.

- The quarterly open forum discussions where members talk about their aspirations, expectations and needs should be encouraged to allow members to express some of the things they wish to see happening. When a church is transparent and members feel genuinely cared for, they will give freely to support one another and the church's agenda.

- Boszormenyi-Nagy et al., (1986:97) explain that when the three aspects of the dialogic phases (polarization, symmetry and asymmetry, and MDP) come together, they help to evoke ethical relational responses instead of prescribing a rigid technique. When the caregiver is able to allow each participating partner in the dialogue, as described by Nel van Doorn (2021), a dialectic attitude can be adopted. In this attitude, the pastoral caregiver plays along the groups like an oscillating pendulum, where he as the therapist does not become neutral but journeys along with the parties. The merits from each party should be acknowledged and connecting questions should be asked to gain a deeper

understanding of people's views. In this manner, a heuristic attitude is gained, which allows each party to recognize and learn something from the other. The parties discover solutions for themselves through the MDP role played by the pastoral caregiver. This MDP approach by the pastor also evokes healing.

- Quarterly workshops of the church must be encouraged to ventilate issues of concern from members of the various congregations and enable the leadership to address issues on time.

5.8 Intensify teachings on the Word, Prayer fellowship

The COP leadership is called upon to continue in the uncompromised teachings of the ministry of the Word which is theologically systematised to equip the members to be rooted in the word.

Prayer as one of the core values of the church should be continued in all the social media platforms to keep the spiritual fervour in the members.

Regular fellowship, as Hebrews 10:25 encourages, we must not give up coming together in order to nourish the mental, emotional, physical and spiritual aspects of the being.

5.9 Conclusion

In this chapter the concept of the DIPP has been discussed in a pragmatic way. Chapter 5 is the consummation of this study wherein the strategies to address the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on pastoral caregivers and congregants have been developed. Selected themes from the previous chapters from 2 to 4 were engaged to make proposals. This chapter is, in essence, the summary of this thesis as it integrates the previous chapters in an attempt to answer the research question.

In the next chapter, the researcher provides an evaluation, recommendations, limitations, and a general conclusion of the study.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction and Overview

From the previous chapter, the pragmatic task according to Osmer addressed the question, 'how must we respond' to move us from the current situation to better and more sustainable pastoral practices. Chapter 6 is the final chapter, which looks at the researcher's reflections from this study and outcomes. It looks at the review and reflections on the research question and objectives, recommendations to chart a way forward for future research, by considering the limitations in this study and the concluding remarks.

6.2 Review and reflection on the research question and objectives

The main goal of this thesis was to find sustainable pastoral practices within the continuous reality of the COVID-19 pandemic that hit the world as a whole and led to a national lockdown in South Africa on 27 March 2020 until June 2022. It also reflected on how the COP as a denomination, its congregants and its pastors were impacted.

The research question that this thesis addressed is: "How will the Dialogical Intergenerational Pastoral Process (DIPP) assist the Church of Pentecost (COP) within the continuous reality of COVID-19 pandemic?"

The DIPP as the theoretical framework of the thesis is the lens through which pastoral caregivers can engage in MDP in their pastoral care and counselling, irrespective of who they are dealing with. Thesnaar (2021:119) notes that via the prism of the DIPP, pastoral caregivers are called to connect with the other with multi-directed partiality.

6.2.1 Objective 1: The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the COP congregants

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on congregants came in three main parts. The first one was the economic impact on congregants, especially those in the private and self-employed sector. Most of their customers were also affected by the pandemic and hence, their sales went down considerably.

Furthermore, there were many family conflicts and tensions reported during the lockdown. Ruffing et al., (2020) assert that issues related to conflicts in relationships and caring for people in crisis, coupled with financial constraints, could trigger stress among families. With the tensions, uncertainties and other factors, some families struggled with issues of conflict.

Anxiety and panic were experienced amongst church members due to fear of being infected by the COVID-19 virus. The stigma attached to the sickness as a "death sentence" made members of the congregation fear every possible symptom. Hendron et al., (2012) note that issues like this may challenge people's mental health and well-being.

6.2.2 Objective 2: Reflection of the Conventional Pastoral Care Strategies

Since time immemorial, pastoral caregiving has been practiced through physical presence, in occupying the space with the suffering person. The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed some weaknesses in the traditional way of pastoral practices. Thesnaar (2021:119) states that the COVID-19 pandemic has thrust the church's pastoral ministry on an unchartered path, never experienced in our contemporary times. This unchartered path is not only restricted to the pastoral ministry but also to the pastoral caregivers themselves. It calls for the pastoral caregivers and pastoral volunteers to take risks and to experiment with other creative ways to care for the sick and suffering members. This risk-taking calls for pastoral caregivers who are not friendly to social media, internet and the use of other digital platforms to have a paradigm shift. The 21st century is the time of technology, globalization and internet and thus failure to

move with the times will mean you will be lagging behind. These alternative caring options, as Thesnaar (2021:119) alludes, are necessary during these uncertain times of COVID-19 pandemic because pastoral caregivers are inter-generationally connected with their previous, current and future relationships. This calls for a high sense of responsibility and accountability in caring for the suffering. We owe the unborn generation a duty to pass on a good legacy in how we deal with the current COVID-19 pandemic situation.

This responsibility also calls for sharing with other disciplines in academia such as congregational studies, community development, systematic theology, missiology and Biblical studies. The sharing may also be needed inter-denominationally among the Pentecostal, Protestant and other mainline churches These considerations will give meaning, to us as pastoral ministry cannot develop any appreciable ministry without understanding the relationality and the interdependency on each other as a Body of Christ and the essence of our humanity. This is what the DIPP approach can contribute during this COVID-19 pandemic (Thesnaar, 2021:117). Once this collaboration becomes effective, we would be able to influence a considerable number of people who would have hitherto been ignorant and affected by the spread of the virus. Covey (2008) in his book, 'The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People' states that the sixth habit is to synergize. This means that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. If the sum "1+1=3" seems familiar, this is what it is about. Covey tells us that when properly understood, synergy is the highest activity in all life and the beauty in our diversity is for our own benefit. Covey draws a parallel to nature, where synergy is everywhere. If you plant two plants close together, the roots comingle and improve the quality of the soil so that both plants will grow better than if they were separated. This principle is echoed in Deuteronomy 32:30, that "one man will chase a thousand and two put ten thousand to flight".

It is likely that this COVID-19 pandemic will continue to be an issue for a considerable period of time and taking responsibility to collaborate in teamwork will help to deal with its negative impact.

6.2.3 Objective 3: The DIPP as a lens to engage with the terms of relational ethics, trust and loyalty, responsibility and accountability, and multi-directed partiality

Objective 3 highlighted issues such as trust, loyalty, fairness and justice in relationships due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

This section of the study focused on the concepts of trust, fairness and loyalty, in order to gain a deeper insight and understanding of their meanings and their relevance to this research study. Other related concepts which form part of the constructs of trust, fairness and loyalty were also discussed as they relate to relational ethics. This section helped to determine how these concepts related to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on relationships and how it can pass on to future generations in their relationships due to destructive entitlements. There was also the need to explore trust and loyalty in the families of the pastoral caregivers and the congregations. The ethical interactions between these groups ensure that the actions pastoral caregivers take in the line of duty to serve victims of the COVID-19 pandemic should be responsible because the consequences have the tendency to affect their network of relationship as well as others they interact with. In discussing trust, fairness and loyalty, the aspect of dialogue as key in finding sustainable pastoral care practices during the COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath were looked at.

The thoughts of Jonathan Sacks, Martin Buber and Boszormenyi-Nagy and Emmanuel Levinas' assisted in understanding the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic from other discipline. Thus, the normative approach of Osmer spoke to this continuous reality of the COVID-19 pandemic in finding sustainable pastoral practices within the COP.

In chapter 5, through the pragmatic approach, the researcher sought to identify key intervention measures to keep the discussions going in relation to dialogue and creating space conducive for more encounters with pastoral caregivers' vulnerabilities and how they need to be responsible and accountable to their network of relationships as their actions could affect the current and future generations. Furthermore, it was concluded that the DIPP as a pastoral care approach could assist in finding sustainable pastoral practices within the continuous reality of the COVID-19 pandemic within the COP. Some recommendations were proposed to assist in passing on a positive legacy as the unborn generation depends on the current generation and how we handle the COVID-19 pandemic.

Boszormenyi-Nagy et al. (1986:97) explain that when the three aspects of the dialogic phases (polarization, symmetry and asymmetry, and MDP) come together, they help to evoke an ethical relational response instead of prescribing a rigid technique. When the caregiver is able to acknowledge each participating partner in the dialogue, as described by Van Doorn (2021), dialectic attitude can be adopted. In this attitude, the pastoral caregiver plays along the groups like an oscillating pendulum, where the therapist does not become neutral but journeys along with the parties; the merits from each party should be acknowledged and connecting questions should be asked. In this manner, a heuristic attitude is gained, which allows each party to recognize and learn something from the dialogue. The parties discover solutions for themselves through the multi-directed partial role played by the pastoral caregiver. This MDP attitude of the pastor also evokes healing during the process

6.3 Recommendations for the way forward

Chapter 5 addressed the pragmatic discussions of the normative task of Osmer's practical theology. However, this section will be specific on the recommendations made such that it will reflect the DIPP, and the pragmatic task of Osmer.

The COP in South Africa should identify those affected by the COVID-19 pandemic in diverse ways to offer the necessary support to them through dialogue. Intentional education for members and pastoral caregivers who are not accustomed to the use of social media and technology;

- Adherence to the COVID-19 protocols without compromise and keeping to hygienic procedures;

- Pastoral caregivers who fall within the risk age brackets should exercise extra adherence and share responsibilities with other colleagues;

- Pastoral caregivers should be responsible and accountable for their actions and understand that their actions will directly and indirectly affect their network of relationships;

- Create an environment and conducive spaces for authentic dialogue for those who have been impacted by the COVID-19 virus;

- MDP by the pastoral caregiver must be skilfully done to include every relevant partner who matters;

- MDP as a therapeutic methodology must be taught to the clergy of COP to use it in their pastoral care and counselling sessions;

- Taking risk to embark on this new path of experimenting with the development of alternative ecumenical and cultural digital ecclesiologies to care and counsel those in need during the continued reality of the COVID-19 pandemic; this will require a change from the traditional way of doing pastoral counselling to a digital platform;

- Pastoral caregivers to continually remind and create awareness of the continuous reality of the COVID-19 pandemic without getting infected with a new strain of the virus;

- The use of factory-made sacraments for church rituals like the Holy Communion and Baptism by immersion should be done while heeding the necessary precautions;

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- Prayers must be done without laying of hands, unless it is absolutely necessary;

- Develop preaching messages that inspire faith, hope and comfort in the uncertain times members find themselves;

- The pastoral caregiver should identify those struggling with trust issues to dialogue with them using the MDP in order to affirm and acknowledge their merits to restore trust and their relationships with their fellowmen and God.

6.4 Recommendations for further research

Engaging with the thesis and the literature, it is clear that there is the need to further develop this thesis within the continuous reality of the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on pastoral caregivers. In addition, it is noteworthy to mention that the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic has still not been fully ascertained and there is the need to continue with the research process into the foreseeable future.

Secondly, there are those who took the vaccine and others who are sitting on the fence waiting to see the effect of the vaccine. Further research is still needed to understand the full impact of the pandemic on people.

As discussed in the thesis, the similarity of the DIPP approach, which parallels the African communality concept, requires that empirical research be engaged to get factual data and evidence to complement this study.

The researcher intends to develop this work further with the guidance of his mentor (s) to publish this thesis in an accredited theological journal and to have the opportunity to present it at workshops and conferences as the continuous reality of the COVID-19 pandemic is likely to be with us for some time to come.

The researcher again intends to pursue further study in order to explore ways to develop a model which could be useful to both the academia and the COP.

6.5 Limitations & challenges of the thesis

The thesis was written from a literature review of writings on COVID-19 and has not been tested by empirical findings. I would have loved to have interviewed people to ascertain the facts from empirical findings from members of the COP who had been affected by the COVID-19 virus. The only practical example was the researcher's personal lived experience from COVID-19 infection.

Secondly, I would have loved to engage more with the writings from Pentecostal scholars in the South African context; however, the limited materials I engaged with served the purpose for this thesis. The conditions under which I had to write this thesis and engage with literature were very challenging.

6.6 Conclusion

In conclusion, I have argued that the COVID-19 pandemic exposed the conventional pastoral care and counselling practices as inadequate due to how the virus spreads. The growing consensus is that pastoral care is away of life that views the individual as a connected being, first to God, and with other humans.

Pastoral caregivers can be assisted in finding sustainable pastoral practices if they utilize the DIPP approach.

The DIPP approach can assist pastoral caregivers to accept that they are not the only ones to care pastorally for the suffering of others due to the COVID-19 virus (Thesnaar, 2021:119).

The DIPP as a pastoral care and counselling approach emphasizes responsibility and accountability. Pastoral caregiving requires the pastor or caregiver to be present; however, the risk involved in the spreading of COVID-19 virus needs to be taken into account. Pastoral caregivers need to be responsible and accountable in dealing with their own vulnerability about this reality (Thesnaar, 2021:114). This responsibility calls for thinking contextually, as in an ethical entanglement with others, and anything that affects you is not isolated to you as an individual. This responsibility will also call for the creation of awareness to the church members and the general public by virtue of the office the pastoral caregivers hold. The position of influence they occupy gives them the space and platform to conscientize people to observe the restrictive COVID-19 measures and protocols.

The use of digital platforms could be very useful in carrying out pastoral care and counselling duties.

The DIPP approach as a discipline involving Practical Theology speaks to a pastoral care approach that is both theologically sound and relevant and also sensitive to an African context as well as geared towards the quest for relational jewels that can bring broken and severed relationships into some form of a balance.

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