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Ekhaya: Human displacement and the yearning for familial homecoming. From Throne (Cathedra) to Home (*Oikos*) in a grassroots ecclesiology of place and space: *Fides Quaerens Domum et Locum* [Faith Seeking Home and Space]

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The classical definition of theology is 'faith-seeking understanding' (*fides quaerens intellectum*). The focus is on the understanding/interpretation of the object of Christian faith: God. There is another root for the quest for understanding, namely the praxis situation of faith. People live in particular historical contexts that have their own distinctive problems and possibilities; thus, the focus on place and space in a theology of home. A praxis approach is to learn life and the gospel from below, thus the emphasis on a grassroots ecclesiology that is structured like an *oikos*, a familial dwelling place. This understanding of the dynamics of the fellowship of believers as *oikodomein* is captured by the Zulu notion for the yearning for home (home sickness): Ekhaya. It is argued that Ekhaya thinking is an alternative route for an operative ecclesiology that caters for the need of marginalised, oppressed, displaced and homeless people. Practical theology is thus described as fides *quaerens domum et locum* [faith-seeking home and place], namely to inhabit. An Ekhaya approach to practical theological ecclesiology is about critical reflection through the eyes of those who are weak and who don't count for much by the standards of successful people and institutions.

Introduction[1]

The metaphysics of everyday life in existential thinking refers to the fact that life is exposed to an experience of displacement (*Unheimlichkeit*). Daily life for many poor people and migrants all over the globe is not automatically homely – the total existential strangeness of beings:

> In this unhomely, unfamiliar moment, the mood of anxiety opens up the first questioning movement of philosophy – particularly that big question, which forms the climax of Heidegger's lecture: 'Why are there beings at all, and why not rather nothing?' (Bakewell 2016:73)

The experience of displacement creates an awareness of not being at home in this world (*Unheimlichkeit*, *Un-zuhause*, Heidegger 1963:188–189)[2] Thus, the emphasis on space as an ontological structure of life and the articulation of an existential sense of belongingness (*Gehörigkeit*) (Heidegger 1963:110–111). Being is embedded in space and place and oscillates within a dynamic bipolarity of distance (*Ent-fernung*) and nearness (*Näherung*) (Heidegger 1963:104–105).

With the raise and upcoming of existentialism in the middle of the twentieth century, exponents of existential philosophy made us aware of nothingness and disgust (*nausea*) (Jean-Paul Sartre 1943, 1968). Nausea is an indication of the fact that human beings are exposed to the threat of displacement: life as a place and space of distress, absurdity and despair (Camus 1942; 1965), anxiety (Martin Heidegger 1963) and unfamiliar exploitation – I don't belong here. Due to the contribution of Søren Aabye Kierkegaard[3] (1967) on the interplay between faith and doubt, it became crystal clear, especially during World War II, that the concept of dread plays a decisive

1. I hereby want to honour the contribution of Yolanda Dreyer to practical theological thinking in South Africa. At the beginning of her career, it was difficult to find 'space' and 'home' as a woman within a male-dominated environment, especially in the academic field of Practical Theology. With my emphasis on home and space, especially on the notion of *Ekhaya*, I want to say: thanks for your graceful and familial way in which you made home for many women in practical theological research.

2. '*Das In-sein kommt in den existentialen "Modus" des Un-zuhause. Nichts anderes meint die Rede von der Unheimlichkeit*' (Heidegger 1963:189).

3. Much of his philosophical work deals with the issues of how one lives as a 'single individual', giving priority to concrete human reality over abstract thinking and highlighting the importance of personal choice and commitment. Within the quest for authenticity in Christian spirituality, he deals with the art of Christian love. He was extremely critical of the practice of Christianity as a state religion, primarily that of the Church of Denmark. His psychological work explored the emotions and feelings of individuals when faced with life choices.

role in the quality of daily living and the human quest for meaning; that is, the human quest for a sense of belongingness.

Existential dread stems from an unarticulated disposition, determined by the despondency of non-hope (*apelpizō*): the existential resignation before the threat of nothingness. The antipode of hope is therefore not merely despair, but hopelessness as the disposition of indifferentism, sloth and hopelessness (Bollnow 1955:110). The French philosopher Gabriel Marcel called this desperate situation of dread without a meaningful sense of belongingness and future anticipation, unhope (*inespoir*). The latter is linked to the eventual threat of destructive resignation: *désespoir* (Marcel 1935:106).

In many desperate situations, *désespoir* is an indication of existential displacement; not being at home in life. Displacement is an indication of the fact that human orientation in daily happenstances of life is about the need for a familiar space wherein one is exposed to an intimate environment of rootedness and connectedness. This need for space and place, a sense of belongingness and the quest for home is expressed within different African spiritualities.

It was the former president of Zambia, Kenneth Kaunda, who wrote a book in the 1960s: entitled *A Humanist in Africa.* He advocated for a humanist approach to life (*Christian humanism*) because of the communal spirit within different African spiritualities. For Africa, the aesthetic rhythm of life, the singing and dancing was more fundamental than the awareness of evil forces that determine the value of human relationships. Hence, the following challenging remark by Kenneth Kaunda: 'Let the West have its Technology and Asia its Mysticism! Africa's gift to world culture must be in the realm of Human Relationships' (Kaunda 1967[2]:22).

The spirit of *Ubuntu* – that profound African sense that we are human only through the humanity of other human beings – is not a parochial phenomenon, but has added globally to our common search for a better world (Mandela 2005:82); to improve the world is intrinsically an aesthetic endeavour, not merely a moral issue.

In an African approach to anthropology, *Ubuntu*-thinking and the notion of *homo aestheticus* [the human being as the enjoyer of life] are more fundamental than the aggressive approach of *homo faber* (the human being as the maker of things). What is envisaged in an African spirituality is harmony (the beautification of life) within interpersonal relationships: *Umuntu ungumuntu ngabantu/motho ke motho ka batho* – approximately translated as: [A person is a person through other people] (Mtetwa 1996:24).

Displacement and the disruption of a sense of belongingness, existential dread and unhope (*inespoir*) have become features of many citizens living in the so-called 'global village' of the twenty-first century. The refugee crisis together with a global paranoia and stirred by terrorist attacks all over the globe is fuelling a habitual crisis of fear (Shuster 2016) and xenophobia (prejudice and fear of the stranger). It also stirs the question regarding the sincerity of a *habitus* of care, a sense of familiar belongingness and hospitable inclusiveness within the parameters of a democratic, civil society; the church as *oikos* [dwelling, home, habitation] (Trenchard 2003:112).

At stake is the challenging question: How should the church respond to the displacement of people in contemporary civil society? What are the implications for a kind of grassroots ecclesiology that is focused on the stranger, the outcast, the marginalised, the homeless, the suffering migrant, even on the so-called perpetrator? Within a practical theological approach, what is meant by a practical theology of home? Instead of the traditional description of theology as faith-seeking understanding, how could the notions of place and space be accommodated in an ecclesiology of household and dwelling place? Thus, the option of *fides quaerens domum, et locum*: faith-seeking home and place and the focus on the category of displacement. The focus concurs with the remark of Emmanuel Lartey on a hermeneutics of contextual analysis[4] (2006:42): 'Subjugated and marginalized peoples are increasingly being recognized as sources of authentic and crucial knowledge.'

The predicament of displacement: Turmoil and paranoia in the global village

The refugee dilemma and migrant crisis have become a global, civil and political nightmare because of violent behaviour related to attacks coming from groups associated with the Syrian crisis and migrant dilemma.

Migration is about being uprooted without a sense of belongingness and the option of going 'back home'. More than 600 000 people have entered Europe so far in 2015, sometimes 10 000 a day. Many governments were totally unprepared when Syrians began emerging from the Aegean Sea ending in the deaths of thousands of desperate and helpless refugees. Migration has become a 'transnational revolution' beyond the traditional and national categories of *Heimat* and *Fremde* (Polak 2014:3).

Behzad Yaghmaian, a professor of political economy at Ramapo College of New Jersey, who wrote *Embracing the Infidel: Stories of Muslim Migrants on the Journey West* (in Vick 2015:31), remarks as follows: 'Because of globalisation, you have awareness of life elsewhere in the world. That's crucial now. So you move' (The dynamics of mobility: moving to a better world – pursuit of happiness, cult of prosperity and wealth).

4. Information from magazines and daily papers are often declined as not scientific enough for research. However, information and data from, for example, *Time* or *Der Spiegel* are not used to 'proof' a point, but as fresh information on happenstances all over the globe (like news reports) to create a sensitivity and flavour for what's going on even before critical reflection has taken place. It helps to create a critical sensitivity for the happenstances of life and for an alert approach in critical, contextual analyses. This is specifically the case with the current migrant and refugee crisis.

Due to processes of globalisation, all human beings, irrespective of whether one is living in Paris, New York or Cape Town, are involved in a kind of global paranoia: citizens in national states fear the incoming refugees and migrants and respond with resistance and prejudice. On the other hand, a collective guilt is developing: but they are human beings and we should treat them with dignity and care! What is a proper response within the paradox of fear and outreach?

The dilemma is that citizens of the global village start to live in a kind of catch 22 situation, namely between resistance (anxiety and hate) and outreach, acceptance (mercy and trust). The dilemma is: the challenge of tolerance and accommodation within an atmosphere of suspicion and resistance. Eventually it boils over into the fear of the other (*xenophobia*). 'Right-wing parties that promote nativism and xenophobia were already on the rise in France Greece and other E.U. nations well before the latest surge of migrants' (Vick 2015:32).

An article by Walt (2015:8), refers to the gruesome events of January the 7th in Paris. As a kind of revenge on a cartoon of the leader of the Islamic state of Iraq and Greater Syria, the attackers killed 12 people, among them three of France's best-known cartoonists, the paper's top editor and two police officers. It is argued that the massacre was an act foretold. For months, French officers have expressed concerns that the country was becoming increasingly vulnerable to terrorist attack. Walt (2015) pointed out:

> Some young French Muslims, disillusioned by the economic hardship and what they see as a French population increasingly hostile to outsiders, have looked abroad for direction and meaning, to the jihadist groups fighting Syria and Iraq. (p. 9)

The immediate impact of the assault is that countries are tightening their borders and security. The global network of fear is causing a global crisis of security and the safeguarding of territory. 'After the worst bloodshed in France since the end of World War 11, European neighbours including Britain, Belgium, Switzerland, Germany and Italy, imposed border controls' (Faulconbridge & Young 2015:1). New York, Los Angeles, Boston and other cities in the United States bolstered security and enforced beefed-up police presence. New police marshalled about 200 officers and dozens of vehicles at Times Square.

According to Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan, 'We are confronted with collective terrorism activity around the world as terrorism does not recognise any religion, any race, any nation or any country' (Reuters 2015:11). This is the reason why Obama is convinced that the terrible attacks and the killing of innocent people based on a twisted ideology is an attack not on France, not just on Turkey, but it is an attack on the civilised world (Reuters 2015:11); it is a global threat on the meaning and significance of our being human.

Most migrants to Europe are from a Muslim background. Muslims are treated with suspicion so that the crisis is fed by security concerns. 'Right-wing parties that promote nativism and xenophobia were already on the rise in France Greece and other E.U. nations well before the latest surge of migrants' (Vick 2015:32). Political parties are even taking advantage of local fear for the stranger (xenophobia). Referring to Mohammed Javad Zarif, the Iranian Foreign Minister, Klein (2015:24) is pointing out that the major problem in the Middle East is a rogue strain of Islam, invented by Saudi Arabia's Wahhabis, that has given rise to radical Islamic movements like ISIS, al-Qaeda, the Taliban and Hizballah.

The other, the stranger, the sojourning migrant, has become a threat to local, native people. Xenophobia, the fear for the other as stranger, and the prejudice that the other is a threatening intruder, has become a major problem within civil society. The refugee crisis is about blunt fear and prejudice. It is about the fear for 'overforeignisation' (*Überfremdung*): the fear that home will become unrecognisable, because of foreign thinking and believing, strange languages and strange behaviour (Kunzig 2016:100).

In daily life, there is another fear: the fear power abuse and domestic violence. This fear is expressed in many variants of feminist theology and women's reaction towards patriarchalism. Patriarchalism refers to the ideology that males are supreme powerful beings and should therefore be the head of everything (Driver 1996:43–65). Notions such as 'male supremacy', 'male chauvinism' and the cultural archetype of the 'super-macho' refer to the dominant positions of males in society. Super-macho, violent body contact sports such as wrestling, football, rugby and boxing enforced this rigid macho image, because in the eyes of viewers the crowds will respond to a player coming back onto the field after an injury: 'What a man!' (Goldberg 1976:112–113).

In a patriarchal society, dominated by male supremacy, women are often victims of domestic violence. Their place and space is 'home', but home as a domestic space wherein a woman should be subjected to male dominance and an inferior position – the existential threat of displacement.

Women voices in the gender discourse: The quest for wholeness

Feminist theology and the quest for hope is in essence a heuristic endeavour. It expresses a deep yearning for wholeness and a sense of humanness and belonging beyond categories of inequality and gender-based oppression. It is inter alia about the deconstruction of fixed and stigmatised, discriminating categories; it criticises the power relations among people (Bons-Storm 1996:25). Therefore, feminist theology as a whole, and feminist pastoral theology within it, oscillates between the two poles of critique and reconstruction (Moore 2002:12–13). In the book *Feminist Theology*, edited by Susan Frank Parsons, Rosemary Ruether (2002:3) reiterates the basic assumption that feminism is a critical stance that challenges the patriarchal gender paradigm that associates males with human characteristics defined as superior and dominant (rational power) and females with those defined as inferior and auxiliary (intuition, passivity).

In fact, the gender discourse is in search for categories that define place and space not in terms of patriarchal structures, but in terms of nurturing, intimacy and caring wisdom. Gail Ramshaw (1995:21) emphasises two tasks in addressing the displacement of women in a world and ecclesiology determined by males: the task of degendering the word *God*. 'We need to whitewash murals that depict God as a male creature' (Ramshaw 1995:21). The second task is unhumanising the connotations of the term *God*. 'Language, such as "God the Friend," is helpful as a partial corrective to other inadequate categories such as "God the Judge"' (Ramshaw 1995:21). Besides the notion 'God as Creator', another option surfaces, namely *God as Sophia* (Ramshaw 1995:44).

Women should be encouraged to resist any form of oppression (Japinga 1999:33). In order to do so, the depiction of God as a kind, elderly man who may resemble a beloved grandfather, should be replaced. With reference to comforting images in the Bible, it is therefore not foreign to Christian language to talk in feminine categories about God (Japinga 1999:65–66).

'Rather than reifying "feminist/feminism" as white supremacist definition by theorizing it in terms of the Western sex/gender systems, feminists must question and redefine the meanings of these terms' (Schüssler Fiorenza 1998:38). In her call of wisdom-*sophia*, Schüssler Fiorenza (1998:24) takes context and experience as points of departure for liberating praxis and for defining a more inclusive view of all humanity. This quest for wholeness should therefore take seriously the following criteria to help researchers and activists to ascertain whether and how much a given social group is oppressed: exploitation; marginalisation; powerlessness; cultural imperialism, systemic violence; silencing, vilification and trivialisation (Schüssler Fiorenza 1998:29–31).

Healing implies more than empathy and emotional categories to articulate a sensitive attitude of sensitivity. Healing is not merely about communication and counselling skill; healing implies spaces and places wherein human beings can reclaim their sense of identity and meaning. Healing in wisdom counselling also needs to probe into the appropriateness of systems of meaning and the *idea*-matic realm of paradigms:

> Feminism is far more than a movement to achieve equal rights, individual freedom, and economic and social equity for middle-class White women. Instead, a feminist perspective demands a critical analysis of structures and ideologies that rank people as inferior or superior class, color, age, physical ability, and so forth. Feminism strives to eradicate sexism and related exploitative classificatory systems and to allow those silenced to join in the cultural activity of defining reality. (Miller-McLemore 1998:79)

For the eradication of sexism, a sense of homecoming and belongingness beyond traditional categories of femininities and masculinities, a theology and ecclesiology of home is most needed. Home not as a domestic space, but as a public space of freedom wherein social categories do not defined womanhood, but spiritual categories.

In an ecclesiology of home, the challenge is to define people not in terms social prejudice (xenophobia) but in terms of dignity, justice and equality. The paradigmatic challenge is the following: to shift from the throne-images (*cathedra*) of patriarchal-based hierarchies of male power, to familial-images of qualitative being-with and equivalent acceptance; places and spaces wherein displaced people find safe havens of refugee; from xenophobia to *xenodochia*. Thus, the challenge to explore in *fides quaerens domum et locum* the practical and theological option of church as *oikos* – a place to dwell as a family and not to be exploited by oppressive power categories. The term *oikia* does not refer to a ruling house, but simply to a family (Michel 1967:132). The verb *oikeō* refers to the quality of a spiritual place for dwelling. 'This "dwelling" is more than ecstatic rapture or impulsion by a superior power' (Michel 1967:135); it is about cruciform love in the mode of service.

Ekhaya: The quest for home and familial space for togetherness within social fragmentation and schismatic divisions

Ekhaya[5] is about the creation of a friendly neighbourhood wherein all people will experience a safe place and space of homecoming. It is a Zulu concept that means: at home; a kind of homesickness and the longing to be part of a place called home. According to the director Koleka Putuma, the play *Ekhaya* communicates an understanding to children what a home is about. It wants to bring about an experience of what it means to be exposed to a safe space that communicates empathy, sharing and a sense of belongingness (Malan 2016:6) (See Figure 1).

Ekhaya as familial homecoming is embedded in cultural structures that communicate a safe space and friendly environment. It has to do with values, education and language because it touches the very fibre, our being human.

Source: Magnettheatre, 2017, *Ekhaya*, viewed 06 Oct. 2017, from http://magnettheatre.co.za/productions/ekhaya/

FIGURE 1: The play *Ekhaya* delves into children's understanding of being 'at home'.

5.*Ekhaya* is a brand new production for under-10s created by The Magnet Early Years Theatre Company and is an expression of the relationship of children towards home. It delves into their understanding of being ''at home', in various contexts, and explores their associated feelings using age appropriate language, song, and clear imagery. Online: http://magnettheatre.co.za/productions/ekhaya/ Accessed 06/10/2016.

Mamphela Ramphele (2012:38) remarks as follows: 'Affirmation of children's home culture builds self-confidence because it establishes children's equality alongside those from other cultures.' She is referring to the fact that the neglect and undermining of African languages unfortunately exacerbates the pain of humiliation that African people suffered over the decades of racist oppression (Ramphele 2012:38).

Familial homecoming within the South African context of cultural diversity implies both cultural affirmation and intercultural exchange and enrichment.

The current discourse in many practical theological circles and societies is how to address the quest for an intercultural approach in theory formation and to create ecclesial spaces for mutual exchange of positive life values that can enhance experiences of human dignity. This is the reason why the Society for Intercultural Pastoral Care published in 2015 for its 20th anniversary a book with the title *Intercultural and Interreligious Pastoral Caregiving* (Federschmidt & Louw 2015). We are in need for an ecclesiology that can not only move beyond denominational limitations into a practical theology that can accommodate cultural diversity but also provide spiritual categories that can help to establish centrifugal energy for creating a sense of mutual belongingness despite cultural differences.

The pastoral theologian Emmanuel Lartey wrote a book with the title *Pastoral Theology in an Intercultural World* (2006). His endeavour was to understand pastoral theology as the attempt to explore the rationale, nature and ethos of care, as practised by and through communities of faith (Lartey 2006:3). According to his basic argument, theory formation should reckon with the reality of cultural diversity:

> Crossing boundaries and helping others do so has been the main activity of much of my professional life and ministry. Over the years I have gained the conceptual framework and the philosophical apparatus to understand cultural and systemic differences. (p. 8)

Thus, the argument that one has to realise that we move from a multicultural to an intercultural community, from a static description of the existence of many to a dynamic recognition of interaction, mutual influence and interconnectedness (Lartey 2006, front cover page).

The plea to deal with cultural diversity within the global networking challenges disciplinary thinking in an academic environment. We need new paradigms in theory formation for practical theology. How does one conceptualise an ecclesiology that attends to human fragmentation, displacement and schismatic prejudice (xenophobia)?

Conceptualisation cannot take place without the rational factor. Paradigmatic frameworks and models are cognitive:

> Since models are mental models of reality, we appropriately speak of models as 'cognitive'. The use of the term cognitive here does not suggest, however, that models are rational in the sense of necessarily logical. (McGaughey 1998:18)

In critical reflection and theory formation, a kind of mental consciousness and critical reasoning play a fundamental role. As McGaughey (1998:157) aptly pointed out: 'Empiricism or objective actual reality is not to be *contrasted* with feeling and intuition but *complemented* by critical understanding'. See Figure 2.

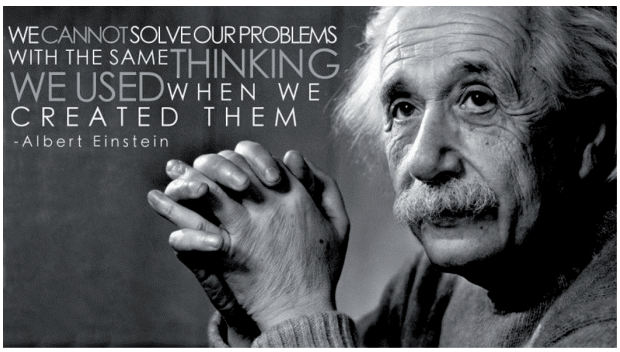
In his book on *Reconstructing Practical Theology*, Reader (2008:1) warns against the danger of 'zombie categories' (Ulrich Beck), that is, the continued employment of concepts that no longer do justice to the world we experience, and yet, which are difficult to abandon because of tradition and because they are not yet totally redundant. Zombie categories are therefore described as the 'living dead', the tried and familiar frameworks of interpretation that have served us well for many years and continue to haunt our thoughts and analyses, even though they are embedded in a world that is passing away before our eyes.

To my mind, the challenge is to move beyond clerical categories embedded in *cathedra* thinking (the pulpit as throne for supreme beings) to home categories determined by *iokos* thinking and the dynamics of a familial household: the spiritual networking and service attitude captured by an ecclesiology of *oikodomein*. *Oikodomein* is about creating spaces and place to dwell, to live and to inhabit.

But space and place imply more than merely geometrical space and geographic place. Space and place refer to a philosophy of belongingness and a spirituality of habitus: to make room for the other.

Space as dwelling place and hospitable environment: Systemic thinking and the quest for home

Already in the 1980's Ed Farley challenges practical theology to move beyond clerical paradigms and to focus on the existential challenge to attend to habitus as the dynamics of positioning in space and place. In the volume *Practical Theology* (1983:27), Farley (1983) argued that *theologia practica*



Source: Landy, P., 2016, It Leads to An Ignorant and Apathetic Citizenry, viewed n.d., from http://through-the-otherside.blogspot.co.za/2016_09_01_archive.html

FIGURE 2: Albert Einstein.

is simply the *habitus* viewed as to its end (from the spiritual perspective of the ultimate):

> Practice meant that aspect of *habitus*, or wisdom, in which the divine object sets requirements of obedience and life. Both reside in the single existential *habitus* called theology. Theory/practice is based here on what could be called a phenomenology of theology as *habitus*. (p. 27)

And habitus in a systems approach, means that position within the relational dynamics of networking is more fundamental than personhood in theory formation for anthropology. Habitus is a relational and qualitative term indicating a mode of being.

Position can be rendered more fundamental in anthropology than merely psychological categories such as personhood, personality and individual characteristics/traits. All these play a role in the process of meaning giving. However, fundamental is the question how one positions oneself within the many ambiguities, discrepancies and paradoxes in life. Position is about meaningful orientation within space and place.

An ontology of being is concerned about the quality of space (*Räumlichkeit*); space as an ontological structure of life and the articulation of an existential sense of belongingness (*Gehörigkeit*) (Heidegger 1963:110–111). Being is embedded in space and place and oscillates within a dynamic bipolarity of distance (*Ent-fernung*) and nearness (*Näherung*) (Heidegger 1963:104–105).

A surprising fact is that the Greeks had already discovered the importance of space and place for our being human. The ancient Greek term *chora* means space or place.[6] Bollnow (2011:28) refers to Aristotle who examined in detail the problem of space as linked to place (*topos*) and time (*chronos*). What is important for our reflection on the connection between space and meaning is the fact that the value of space depends on position (Bollnow 2011:29). Both place (*topos*) and space (*chora*) are interrelated. The Aristotelian concept of space therefore indicates place (*topos*), location and position. Everything in space has its natural place. Stemming from the verb *choreo*, space as an existential category means primarily to give room, more generally, to give way, to shrink back, and particular to vessels: to hold something, to have room to receive something (Bollnow 2011:30).

Space is indeed a many-layered concept. Due to the fact that I want to connect a systems understanding of the value and meaning of our being human to space as a category of position, orientation and the soulfulness of life, I will thus concentrate on space as a dwelling place in our spiritual search and quest for meaning; 'space then as an existential category, that is "experienced space"' (Bollnow 2011:216). Space in the true sense is what Bollnow (2011:43) pointed out: only needed by the human person.

In an existential orientation, it is important that space should refer to the *intimacy of dwelling*. As a human being, we dwell in this world. Dwelling then refers to a form of 'trusting-understanding bond' (Bollnow 2011:261). 'Everywhere it is a question of designating a particular intimacy of the relationship, with which something mental or intellectual is to some extent merged into something spatial' (Bollnow 2011:263).

Human spatiality as a mode of dwelling in this world presupposes *human embodiment*. The only way in which a human soul can dwell is via and through the human body. One thus occupies space and has space. As Merleau-Ponty pointed out: the human being is admitted to the spatial world through my body; 'the world is given to me *à travers mon corps*, in a sense right through my body, which itself is something spatially extended and whose various sense organs are already separated from each other by spatial distances' (Merleau-Ponty in Bollnow 2011:269). Incarnation is therefore to be at home in one's body within the dwelling space of trusting relationships.

Space as a resort for dwelling, and a starting point for wandering, a place to rest as well as a region to be transcended, presupposes a free space, a kind of 'home' – exposure to comfort and compassion. This is the reason why hope as a mode of trusting should be connected to space. Hope then as new state of being (the bright side of trust and affirmation) within the shadow side and cold atmospheric quadrant of homelessness and loneliness/isolation. In space, we should be protected. Bachelard (in Bollnow 2011:281) says: 'Space, vast space, is the friend of being'.

In this regard, space should closely be linked to mood and atmosphere (Bollnow 2011):

> What is repeatedly important here is reciprocity. Space has its particular mood, both as an interior space and as a landscape. It can be cheerful, light, gloomy, sober, festive, and this character of mood then transfers itself to the person staying in it. In particular, it is atmospheric conditions that have a cheering, bright, oppressive, etc., effect on man. (p. 217)

Choreo is a verbal derivative of *choros* or *chora*, indicating an open space[7] or land. As an intransitive, it means, 'to give room'. In an extended and metaphorical sense, it can refer to the intellectual and spiritual capacity of being able 'to understand'. In this sense, space functions as a container of meaning. Used in this way, *chora* becomes an indication of how humans fill space with values, perceptions and associations in order to create a dynamic relational environment and systemic network of interaction where language, symbol and metaphor shape the meaning and discourses of our life.

According to the Platonic understanding, *chora* is a nourishing and maternal receptacle and is related to *topos*, a particular, definable place of human encounter. *Topos* can also be linked to what one might call 'a theology of omnipresence which

6.For this interpretation, see the discussion of Økland (2004:154) on the meaning of *chōra* and the current debate in French philosophy, for example, Derrida.

7.The French philosopher, Derrida, describes space as a *hermeneutic dynamics of interacting discourses* (see Økland 2004:154).

goes hand in hand with the sublimation of cultic observance' (Haacker 1978:461).

When applied to the discourse on healing in pastoral care, *chora* shifts the debate from performance and production to care and nurturing in order to support, surround, protect, incubate and to give birth to life. The feminine and mothering dimension strengthens the notion of the fostering of life: *chora* is the condition for the genesis of things and being.[8]

One of the main factors that determine space is *power*. Many life problems are not so much an issue of personality and personality traits or personal characteristics, but reactions and human responses to the power play going on within the systemic space and networking of relationships. Power relationships play a paramount role in the formation of human identity. Hence, the importance of the following remark by Castells (2004):

> I propose, as a hypothesis, that, in general terms, who constructs collective identity, and for what, largely determines the symbolic content of this identity, and its meaning for those identifying with it or placing themselves outside it. … The social construction of identity always takes place in a context marked by power relationships … (p. 7)

Castells argues that identity cannot be assessed and understood without identifying the different forms and roles contributing to the power play within the dynamics of social relationships. This is indeed true when one considers the impact of information technology and the media on space and place (see Castells 2004:181).

In his book, *Simulacra and Simulation*, Baudrillard (1994:3) refers to the space of simulation: 'To simulate is to feign to have what one doesn't have.' According to Baudrillard, simulation corresponds to a short-circuit of reality and to its duplication through signs. In this regard, the cinema projects a space of 'hyper-reality', the cinematographic (or televised) 'hyper-real'.

In a pastoral sense, space determines the *quality of place*, and therefore of our experience of meaning and dignity. In order to be healed, we need to change the space so that we can live in a very specific place. We can do this even if that place is a hospital, a frail-care unit, or a family home. With reference to a qualitative understanding of space and the fact that caregiving represents a space of hospitality, one can argue that the civil society and citizens in local communities should create such a space of inclusivity in order to support people who are to be healed and to help them discover meaning in their *topos* (where they are located, for example the isolated room of a frail care unit).

8.*Chōra*, then, is the space in which place is made possible, the chasm for the passage of spaceless Forms into a spatialised reality, a dimensionless tunnel opening itself to spatialisation, obliterating itself to make others possible and actual. It is the space that engenders without possessing, that nurtures without requirements of its own, that receives without giving and that gives without receiving, a space that evades all characterisations including the disconcerting logic of identity, of hierarchy, of being, the regulation of order. It is no wonder that *chōra* resembles the characteristics of the Greeks, and all those who follow them, have long attributed to femininity, or rather, have expelled from their own masculine self-representations and accounts of being and knowing (and have thus de facto attributed to the feminine)' (Grosz 1995:116).

By way of summarising the importance of space for the understanding of the healing of life, the following bipolar dynamics and constituents of space may be identified:

- Perceptions and the interplay with contextual and local life experiences.
- Different modes of being and the social and cultural structures of life.
- The interplay between time and human vulnerability (the frailty of life).
- Corporeality (presence as embodied space) and sexuality (the principle of erotic desire/libido).
- Ensoulment (significance) and processes of transcending (spirituality).
- Shape and form (physical-mathematical, topological properties) and relativity (space is relative to the objects within it) (Grosz 1995:97).
- The interplay between space as atmosphere and place as location, territory, possession, occupation and belongingness (cf. different actions such as penetration, colonisation and domination).
- Subjectivity (unique identity) and processes of networking (interrelatedness).
- Spaces within the settings of civil society should be created not according to political agendas fuelled by power and control, but by spirituality. The spirituality of space is about meaningful places where people, irrespective of cultural, racial, gender, philosophical and religious differences, can develop a sense of home, thus the emphasis on the notion of hospitality as exemplification and exhibition of *xenophilia* as replacement for xenophobia.

It is argued by Lartey (2006:40) that pastoral theology is a reflection on the caring activity of God and human communities. How does one link care with the predicament of displacement?

The challenging question in a practical theology of home is: What are the theological indicators for an ecclesiology of familial dwelling? Is there a very specific God image that can be linked to a theology of home so that displaced people can find a safe refugee space for becoming whole (the fellowship of believers as *xenodochia*).

Oikos in *fides quaerens domum et locum:* An ecclesial space for familial wholeness and spiritual nurturing

How to worship God in a cathedral[9] was a higher priority than how to portray and exhibit God in the public space of the market place. The offices were often framed in the pomp and glory of royalties. Cathedrals were built like palaces, not as homes for displaced people (Figure 3).

Cathedral theology is interested in categories that uphold 'eternal truths', systematise the content of the Christian faith,

9.Cathedral is derived from *cathedra* = bishop's throne (Gombrich 2006:141). The great cathedrals built for worship were literally places for the bishops' 'throne' in order to govern and exercise clerical power.

Source: Photo taken by D.J. Louw

FIGURE 3: The Berlin Dom (Cathedral, *cathedra* = throne) designed to copy and to surpass the design of the St Peters Church in Rome.

and define the essence of ministerial engagement in terms of ecclesial matters such as offices and denominational issues. In these circles the classical definition of theology is 'faith seeking understanding' (*fides quaerens intellectum*). 'Theology grows out of this dynamism of Christian faith that incites reflection. There is another root for theology as well: the situation of faith (Migliore 2004:4), inquiry, and pursuit of the truth not yet possessed, or only partially possessed' (Migliore 2004:3). In *fides quaerens intellectum* the focus is on the object of Christian faith: God.

There is another root for the quest for understanding, namely the situation of faith (Migliore 2004:4).[10] 'People live in particular historical contexts that have their own distinctive problems and possibilities, thus the focus on place and space in theology. On the agenda of theology is praxis:[11]'"Praxis" is a technical term designating a way to knowledge that binds together action, suffering, and reflection' (Migliore 2004:17).

A praxis approach is to learn life and the gospel from below (Bonhoeffer in Migliore 2004:18). It is about critical reflection through the eyes of those who are weak and who don't count for much by the standards of successful people and institutions. The shift is from an Enlightenment approach with the emphasis on rational analyses to a grassroots approach with the emphasis being on analyses and contextual interpretation – the incomparable experience of solidarity with the afflicted (Bonhoeffer in Migliore 2004:19). It is about a theology and ecclesiology that accompanies those who cry 'out of depths' (Ps 130:1) and that finds its centre in the message of Christ crucified and the church being there where they are: the church as home for the homeless.

10.'Pastoral theology, then, operates around and studies the central themes of *faith-inspired care* and *care-inspired faith*' (Lartey 2006:28).

11.'Praxis' is not simply a faddish expression for 'practice'. Bevans helpfully explains that praxis is 'reflected-upon action and action-upon reflection – both rolled into one' (Bevans in Lartey 2006:24). According to Lartey (2006:25), theory provides rationale and method for practice. Practice shapes, informs and offers critical tools for theory.

Four issues are at stake in a praxis approach: the dynamics of life; the cultivation of an ethos and habitus of cruciform love, the contextually of place, the quality of humane spaces and the structuring of familial dwelling places. Two descriptions of practical theology come into play: practical theology as faith-seeking lifestyles (*fides quaerens vivendi*) and faith-seeking place and space (*fides quaerens domum et locum*). I will focus on the latter in a practical theology of home.

With a grassroots approach to ecclesiology is meant a model of being church wherein the interaction between believers is focused on mutual support (*koinonia*); service and outreach to all people in the community irrespective of culture, race or descent (*diakonia*); compassionate caregiving (*paraklesis*); hospitable presence for vulnerable people and strangers (*charitas*); celebration of grace (*leitourgia*); and cruciform love (*eucharistia*). All these functions are focused on making people whole by means of a sacrificial ethos of love and reconciliatory actions of peace-making. A Grassroots ecclesiology is a people-focused community of faith and a community-focused group of people who want to edify, empower and enhance justice and human dignity (see Figure 4).

In a grassroots approach, thinking from the bottom up, from the basic functions and mode of being church (the gospel from below), the following ecclesial functions of *koinonia*, *diakonia*, *paraklesis*, *charitas*, *leitourgia* and *eucharistia* could be identified as expressions of a familial dwelling place, *oikos*,[12] that is, the church as home and place, demonstrating the Christian principle of compassion.

Compassion displayed an active and historical presence with and for Israel, serving in the formation of a holy fellowship of people who would be mindful of the covenant and reverently honour his name and faithful promises:

> As the signifier of a divine quality which can apply also to human relationships, the root *rḥm* has much in common with the noun *ḥesed*, which denotes the fundamental orientation of God towards his people that grounds his compassion action. As 'loving-kindness' which is 'active, social and enduring', *ḥesed* is Israel's assurance of God's unfailing benevolence. (Davies 2001:243)

The *passio dei* in its connection to the praxis of God defines 'practice' in pastoral theology to compassion (*rḥm* in close connection to the root *ḥnn*, which means to be gracious). Together with *oiktirmos* and *praxis*, the *passio dei* expresses the being quality of God as connected to human vulnerability and suffering (H.-H. Esser 1978:598). The verb *splanchnizomai* is used to make the unbounded mercy of God visible by means of the unqualified praxis of hospitality and *diakonia*.

With church as home is meant that faith is not merely about understanding and dogmatic confessions: *fides quaerens intellectum*. The church is space and place where people meet

12.See Trenchard 2003:112–113 and the connection to *oikodomein*.

Source: Photos taken by D.J. Louw

FIGURE 4: Lutheran Church Emeshiye, Tanzania. (a) Not kitsch (cathedral) but beacon of hope and familial dwelling place (Ekhaya). The wooden structure is more or less a household and place of refuge, safe haven for people in the very poor and remote community of Massai people. I visited this community with the inauguration of a water tank. (b) The whole village gathered with singing and dancing. A kind of outdoor worship around the water tank to celebrate a God who provided water by means of a system of gutters that catch water and deposit it into the tank. In this very dry area, the turn of the tap was like Moses hitting the rock and the water poured down.

to become whole and to be exposed to *xenophilia* rather than to xenophobia. Thus, the formulation: *fides quaerens domum et locum* (faith-seeking spaces, places for homecoming and compassionate being-with). *Domus* as a divine dwelling place (household) and hospitable presence to display the *ḥesed* and *rḥm* of God – merciful faithfulness and compassion. Within the broader context, the Latin *domus* is also connected to body; body as a kind of *hospitium* (Michel 1967:132) and dwelling place.

A place and space for being at home is best captured by the practical theological Pauline principle of *oikodomein* = the spiritual task of the community, namely the mutual building up, edification of the body and household of Christ on the basis of neighbourly love, compassionate caregiving and diakonic service. *Oikeō* means to dwell, to live and to inhabit (Trenchard 2003:111). Within an ecclesiology of household, the dwelling is determined by the indwelling presence of the Spirit of God in human beings. *Pneuma Theou oikei ēn 'umîn* (I Cor 3;16; Rom 8:9–11) refers to the fact that the indwelling presence of the Spirit of God in human beings was one of 'the permanent catechetical and didactic elements in Paul's theology' (Michel 1967:135).

Oikodomein is of Messianic significance; it is connected to the Parousia of Christ and the notion of eschatological thinking:

> The fut. *oikodomēsō* in Mk. 14:58 and Mt. 16:18 certainly point to an act of eschatological power, perhaps also denotes a spiritual element which may be found equally well in the *parousia* and the Easter event, and possibly has its own particular part in the widespread primitive Christian image of the heavenly building. (Michel 1967:139)

Oikodomein is a term for the process of the growth and development of the community bases on both incarnational terminology (the sacrificial work of Christ) and inhabitational terminology (the pneumatic indwelling of the Spirit of God in the lives of his people). The term describes the pastoral relation of the individual to the other; the mutual interrelationship of the individual members; the spiritual and charismatic character of the process of growth, which aims at fullness and perfection (wholeness) and is not to be limited to morality or wrongly construed in sentimental or emotional terms. The term is about a theological comprehension so that the Christian contributes to the building and upbuilding because this is ultimately the true work of God in Christ (Michel 1967:141). *Oikodomē* then is in essence an 'ecclesial' term and refers to the spiritual furtherance both of the community and also of the individual by Christ. 'The term reflects the manifoldness of the primitive Christian understanding of the church. A spiritual, theological and cultic or congregational element is concealed in it' (Michel 1967:141); it is understood by Paul christocentrically, filled with *agapē* and pneumatologically exalted to be a critical element in the possession of the Spirit and charisma (fruit of the Spirit). Within an ecclesial context, believers function as stewards (*oikonomos*). *Oikonomos* and *doulos* are actually interchangeable (Lk 12:42, 43, 45f.) so that one becomes a steward from among the slaves who is over the whole household (*therapeia*). A steward operates as a guardian to support and educate and administer the whole inheritance of the gospel to the benefit and advantage of the other.

The concept of *oikos* refers to a structure of the Christian community (Michel 1967:119). 'The term *oikia* does not refer

to a ruling house, but simply to a family' (Michel 1967:132). Christians are members of the household, the *familia Dei* (Hb 3:1–6; Gl 6:10 – household of faith). As a 'House of God', the *oikos* functions as a dwelling place and space wherein human relations are structured as a kind of unique family. The structure is qualified by wisdom, thus the role of the Torah to give direction to the household. Feminine terminology is used in order to contrast Lady Folly with Lady Wisdom (Prv 9:1–14) and to establish a household on the basis of covenantal thinking, namely that the *ḥesed* of God, God's faithfulness and mercy will determine the dynamics of human relationships. The household is an earthly sanctuary that functions as a *oikos pneumatikos* (I Pt 2:5).

Oikos within the concept of *oikoumenē* (the ecumenical realm) is fairly common in the New Testament (Mt 24:14). Whole in the whole world/earth denotes a spiritual quality; the whole of the cosmos is under the eschatological rule of the gospel of peace and freedom, the earth is becoming a dwelling-place for god's kingdom. It denotes a liturgical realm and not a political realm. 'It is certainly not to be linked here with political imperial style. The reference is simply to the glad message which is for all nations and the whole earth' (Michel 1967:158). According to Michel (1967:159), there is within the New Testament no disputing of the political *oikoumenē* understanding of the Roman empire, not even in revelation. It is totally different than in the Hellenistic context of Alexander the Great. The *oecumene* is geographical and later becomes cultural and political. The ideally Hellenic is as such the cosmopolitan, which represents true humanity; it embraces the whole world and differentiates the Hellenic ideal for the barbarian, uncivilised world. The Hellenic *oikoumenē* became fused with the political and legal structure of the Roman Empire; an imperialistic enterprise that is totally foreign to the steward and *doulos* principle in the household of God. *Domum* is a place of sacrificial service, not a place for exploitative dominium.

Household in the New Testament is not about an individualistic piety within a psychological paradigm of personhood in which the 'pure soul' of the individual becomes God's house, but a community which is called to operate like a sanctuary and temple of God; it is a community based on the principle of Christology: Christ as the cornerstone (Eph 2:19–22; I Pt 2:4). In a theology and ecclesiology of home, faith seeks a dwelling place (*domum et locum*) to exhibit the fruit of the Spirit. In this sense the believer inhabits and displays spiritual goods due to the fact that the Holy Spirit dwells in human beings so that even the human body becomes a building or dwelling place (II Cor 5:2).

Conclusion

Ekhaya expresses the quest for a familial place for playful dwelling; a kind of safe haven and place of refuge (*xenodochia*). In ecclesiological terminology, *Ekhaya* is about familial caring and compassionate household.

Instead of the traditional understanding of theology as *fides quaerens intellectum*, a paradigm switch is proposed, namely for rational categories to being and living categories. *Domus* refers to a living place determined by familial relationships of intimacy and hospitality. *Fides quaerens domum et locum* is about an inhabitational theology of dwelling-in and dwelling-with. It is about a faith-seeking place for hospitable homecoming; a place where people can become whole due to the *ḥesed* and *rḥm* of God. In eschatological terminology, *domus* represents a home as qualified by God, enfleshed in the *passio Dei* – the ethos sacrificial of compassionate being-with.

A grassroots church is an 'operative church'. Within theology, it puts a question mark behind a hierarchical ecclesiology, denominational demarcations and a selective morality, thus, the focus on an operative ecclesiology[13] (Yves Congar in Bergson 2015). Within an ecclesiology of home, the basic structures of *koinonia*, *diakonia*, *paraklesis*, *charitas*, *leitourgia eucharistia* are unified and interconnected by a comprehensive spiritual and pneumatological structure of the church as a dynamic networking of *oikodomein*: the mutual caregiving and compassion wherein the other is not a stranger but an inmate, not a displaced sojourner, but home mate.

A basic foundation for a practical theology of home is the enfleshment of Christ (incarnational dimension): 'And the Word (Christ) became flesh (human, incarnate) and tabernacle (fixed his tent of flesh, lived awhile) among us' (Jh 1:14; Amplified Bible). Christology is in fact: God creating a household for humans to dwell by means of the events of incarnation and sacrificial death: divine dwelling on earth. However, divine intervention implies more: God inhabiting the habitus and embodiment of human beings – pneumatology of divine penetration; the exhibition of divine traits in the habitus of human beings (fruit, charisma of the Spirit). A practical theology of home refers not merely to the fellowship of believers as an intimate space of togetherness and belongingness but also transforms the human body as a dwelling place of the Spirit of God: inhabitational dimension. 'Do you not know that your body is the temple (the very sanctuary) of the Holy Spirit Who lives within you. Whom you have received (as a gift) from God?' (I Cor 6:19; Amplified Bible).

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13. With operative ecclesiology is meant performative actions – actions that represent God's compassion within concrete contexts. It reflects on ecclesial matters not merely from the viewpoint of denominational traditions and dogmatic confessions, but within communal life systems. Ecclesiology may be studied inductively and can thus draw support from various other disciplines, such as political science, history and sociology (see Bergson 2015).

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