



**African Traditional Bereavement Rituals Amongst Methodist Church  
Members in Mamelodi, Pretoria**

by

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## **DEDICATION**

This thesis is dedicated to my late sister, Mapaseka Mokhutso, whose passing away somehow resuscitated my love for research, especially my interest in the research topic under study. May your soul rest in God's eternal peace, dear sister.

## DECLARATION

I declare that this dissertation, titled “African Bereavement Rituals Amongst Methodist Church Members in Mamelodi, Pretoria”, is my own independent work and that it has not previously or in part been submitted for any qualification at/in another institution.

Full name: .....

Signature: .....

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study examined the significance, understanding, and meaning of African traditional bereavement rituals amongst Methodist Church members, particularly the Methodist Church based in Mamelodi, Pretoria, Gauteng province. This study specifically focuses on the meaning of some of the African bereavement rituals, particularly the dual practice of both the Christian and more African-related (ancestral veneration-related) rituals during bereavement. These factors are explored within the Methodist Church doctrine and theology, as well as African spirituality and philosophy. Qualitative research methodology was used, which included one-on-one and group interviews, as well as observations and case studies.

This study has found that not all Methodist Church members practise African bereavement rituals. However, those who do practise different African bereavement rituals do so due to a number of reasons. Amongst other reasons, some practise these rituals as influenced by their upbringing, while others practise them due to the pressure of family elders and extended family members. Others practise these rituals due to the fact that it is the norm and common practice in their family and community.

**Key words:** African, Traditional, Bereavement, Rituals, Methodist, Mainline, Confirmation, Christianity.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEDICATION .....	i
DECLARATION .....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	iii
ABSTRACT.....	iv

### CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.2 BACKGROUND INFORMATION .....	1
1.3 SCOPE OF THE STUDY.....	5
1.4 PROBLEM STATEMENT.....	6
1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS .....	6
1.6 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES.....	7
1.7 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY .....	7
1.8 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY .....	7
1.9 A GUIDE FOR THE STUDY .....	8
1.10 DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS .....	8
1.11 THESIS OUTLINE .....	10
1.12 CONCLUSION .....	11

### CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION.....	12
2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS .....	12
2.3 ATTACHMENT THEORY .....	14

2.4	DUAL PROCESS MODEL.....	16
2.5	STAGES OF GRIEF OR THE GRIEVING PROCESS.....	18
2.5.1	Reaction.....	18
2.5.2	Disorganisation and reorganisation.....	19
2.5.3	Reorientation and recovery .....	19
2.6	THE IMPACT OF DEATH ACROSS CULTURES.....	19
2.7	DEATH FROM THE CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE .....	20
2.7.1	Theological perspective and burial rites in the Methodist Church of Southern Africa (MCSA).....	21
2.7.2	Death from the Western perspective .....	23
2.7.3	Death from the African perspective .....	23
2.8	A BRIEF DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS OF BEREAVEMENT .....	25
2.9	AFRICAN TRADITIONAL BEREAVEMENT RITUALS .....	26
2.9.1	The impact and meaning of rituals.....	26
2.9.2	Literature review of different rituals of different ethnic groups in South Africa .....	28
2.9.2.1	<i>Batswana people in South Africa.....</i>	28
2.9.2.2	<i>Zulu people in South Africa.....</i>	29
2.9.2.3	<i>Pedi people in South Africa.....</i>	29
2.9.2.4	<i>Venda people in South Africa.....</i>	30
2.9.2.5	<i>Tsonga people in South Africa.....</i>	31
2.9.2.6	<i>Xhosa people in South Africa .....</i>	31
2.9.2.7	<i>Ndebele people in South Africa .....</i>	31
2.9.3	Review of other African ethnic groupings .....	32
2.9.3.1	<i>The Luo people in South Nyanza.....</i>	32
2.9.3.2	<i>The Batsotso people of Kenya .....</i>	34

2.10	SPECIFIC RITUALS TO BE STUDIED.....	35
2.10.1	Death.....	35
2.10.2	Burial.....	35
2.10.3	After the burial.....	36
2.10.4	Mourning clothes.....	36
2.10.5	The end of the mourning period.....	36
2.11	SUMMARY.....	38

**CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

3.1	INTRODUCTION.....	39
3.2	RESEARCH PARADIGM.....	39
3.2.1	The constructivist/interpretivist paradigm.....	40
3.3	RESEARCH METHODS.....	41
3.4	RESEARCH DESIGN.....	42
3.4.1	Case study.....	42
3.5	POPULATION OF THE STUDY.....	44
3.6	SAMPLE AND SAMPLING.....	45
3.7	RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS.....	46
3.8	PROCEDURE OF DATA COLLECTION.....	46
3.8.1	Document analysis.....	46
3.8.2	Interviews.....	47
3.9	PROCEDURE OF DATA ANALYSIS.....	48
3.10	CREDIBILITY AND TRUSTWORTHINESS.....	48
3.11	TRANSFERABILITY.....	50
3.12	DELIMITATIONS AND LIMITATIONS.....	50
3.12.1	Delimitations.....	50



3.12.2	Limitations .....	50
3.13	ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS .....	51
3.14	SUMMARY .....	52

## CHAPTER 4: DATA PRESENTATION

4.1	INTRODUCTION .....	53
4.2	BACKGROUND INFORMATION .....	53
4.2.1	One-on-one interviews: Males and females .....	54
4.3	PROFILES OF PARTICIPANTS .....	55
4.3.1	Participant AA.....	55
4.3.2	Participant BB .....	55
4.3.3	Participant CC .....	56
4.3.4	Participant DD.....	57
4.3.5	Participant EE.....	58
4.3.6	Participant FF .....	58
4.3.7	Participant GG.....	59
4.3.8	Participant HH.....	60
4.3.9	Participant II.....	60
4.3.10	Participant JJ .....	61
4.4	INTERPRETATION OF THE THEMES .....	61
4.4.1	Common themes.....	62
4.4.1.1	<i>Question 01: What does bereavement mean to members of the Methodist Church in Mamelodi, Pretoria? .....</i>	62
4.4.1.2	<i>Question 02: What is the significance of African traditional bereavement rituals? ....</i>	63
4.4.1.3	<i>Question 03: What is the significance of Christian bereavement rituals? .....</i>	64

4.4.1.4	<i>Question 04: Why do members of the Methodist Church prefer to combine these bereavement rituals?</i> .....	64
4.4.1.5	<i>Question 05: Why is the practice of African bereavement rituals kept secret?</i> .....	65
4.5	FOCUS GROUP.....	66
4.5.1	Presentation of themes .....	66
4.5.1.1	<i>Participants' background information</i> .....	66
4.5.2	Presentation of focus group.....	67
4.5.2.1	<i>Sub-question 1: What is the significance of African traditional bereavement rituals?</i> .....	67
4.5.2.2	<i>Sub-question 2: What is the significance of Christian bereavement rituals?</i> .....	68
4.5.2.3	<i>Sub-question 3: Why do members of the Methodist Church prefer to combine these bereavement rituals?</i> .....	68
4.5.2.4	<i>Sub-question 4: Why is the practice of African traditional bereavement rituals kept secret?</i> .....	69
4.6	SUMMARY .....	69

## **CHAPTER 5: DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION**

5.1	INTRODUCTION.....	70
5.2	SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS .....	70
5.2.1	To explore the meaning of bereavement rituals amongst Methodist Church members in Mamelodi .....	71
5.2.2	To establish the significance of African traditional bereavement rituals .....	72
5.2.3	To establish the significance of Christian bereavement rituals .....	73
5.2.4	To examine why members of the Methodist Church combine the African traditional and Christian bereavement rituals.....	74
5.2.5	To find out why African traditional rituals are often kept secret .....	76
5.3	CONCLUSION OF THE STUDY .....	79

5.4	RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY .....	80
5.5	CONCLUDING REMARKS .....	81

<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>82</b>
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**ANNEXURES**

Annexure A: Letter Requesting Permission to Interview .....	91
Annexure B: Ethical Clearance Letter .....	92
Annexure C: Letter Giving Permission to Conduct the Research.....	93
Annexure D: Letter Confirming Therapeutic Support to the Participants .....	94
Annexure E: Interview Guide .....	95
Annexure F: Interview Consent Form .....	96
Annexure G: Maps and Graphs of Mamelodi Township in Pretoria .....	97

# **CHAPTER 1:**

## **INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter foregrounds the thesis by introducing the background, the site, the problem statement, research questions, research objectives, and the purpose and significance of the study.

### **1.2 BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Generally, the mainline mission churches, which include the likes of Presbyterians, Methodists, Dutch Reformed, etc., are known as churches that are not necessarily against practices associated with ancestral relationships, contrary to the association or group of churches called African Independent Churches, which openly and publicly practise all ancestral-related African rituals. The mainline churches do not openly discuss and have not written literature on their stance on ancestral-related practices (Ntombana 2015:104). There is a range of literature, both theoretical and empirical, on the practices of African Independent Churches, but very little on the stance of mainline churches on ancestral-related practices. These include practices related to death, bereavement, and burial, which are some of the contested spaces within the Christian community. Churches differ in their understanding and interpretation of which practices should be accepted and which ones should be rejected. One can conclude that in the Methodist Church of Southern Africa (MCSA) there is generally some kind of dualism in the sense that some practices are conducted by preachers or ministers, while some practices are conducted by family members themselves, without the involvement of the church or church ministers.

Most people in the MCSA are practising believers of the Christian faith. However, when there is bereavement, some of them observe practices that are exclusively meant for the family. Such rituals are practised with an understanding that they are related to family and clan ancestors.

As noted, such rituals are often practised privately; the church is neither invited nor involved in that process. Ntombana (2015:105) notes that “[t]he main problem is not the practice of rituals but the fact that they are practiced away and kept secret from other Church members”. Having performed those rituals, the church’s services and presence are still required in the funeral service

and funeral proceedings until burial. The church is expected and requested to also perform Christian rituals that involve the burial service led by a clergy person or lay people who are trained to conduct such services.

This research therefore examines the significance and the meaning of these private and exclusive family rituals. This is with reference to the fact that in the MCSA a person to be accepted or recognised as a full member of the church must undergo what is called a confirmation class, which is a process that qualifies an individual to be received as a full member of the MCSA through confirmation.

Confirmation is summarised as follows:

“The public reception of new members, also called confirmation, in a solemn service of recognition, commitment, prayer, and blessing, is in accordance with long-established Christian practice. It emphasises the responsibility being accepted by the candidate, the promise of the gift of the Holy Spirit, and the shared life of the Church” (*The Methodist Book of Order* 2014:27).

Among other areas that the members of this class are taught is repentance, accepting Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Saviour, and Creeds, which form the most integral part of worship, faith and belief in the MCSA.

“The Methodist Church throughout the world confesses the Headship of our Lord Jesus Christ, acknowledges the Divine revelation recorded in Holy Scriptures as the supreme rule of faith and practice, rejoices in the inheritance of the Apostolic Faith, and loyally accepts the fundamental principles of the historic Creeds and Protestant Reformation” (*The Methodist Book of Order* 2014:11).

The quotation above embodies what the MCSA believes and preaches. This is what is taught to all people who want to be full members of the church. Lochman (1984:xi) talks about the value of the Creeds in the life of the church: “These Creeds are foundation stones for the theological development of Christendom as a whole. They are ‘classic’, not just historically, but also doctrinally.”

Ashwin-Siejkowski (2010:xxvii) adds the following to this conversation: “The early Christian Creeds came into being as a response to questions asked during the first five centuries. Their statements were the official responses of the Catholic Church to alternative theologies understood to be erroneous.”

All Methodists are taught the Creeds, and they also form part of their worship, especially in the black church. One of the essential Creeds is what is called the Apostle Creed, which is as follows:

I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
Creator of heaven and earth.  
I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord.  
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit  
And born of the Virgin Mary.  
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
Was crucified, died, and was buried.  
He descended to the dead.  
On the third day He rose again.  
He ascended into heaven,  
And is seated on the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.  
I believe in the Holy Spirit  
The Holy Catholic Church,  
The communion of saints,  
The forgiveness of sins,  
The resurrection of the body,  
And life everlasting. Amen (*The Methodist Service Book* 1992:A22-A23).

Having highlighted the above points, this study seeks to understand what the congregation members of the MCSA in Mamelodi understand about the MCSA beliefs and the use of African traditional rituals during bereavement, especially given the summary of the MCSA Statement of Faith, which states that people called Methodists throughout the world “confess the Headship of our Lord Jesus Christ, acknowledge the Divine revelation recorded in the Holy Scriptures as the

supreme rule of faith and practice” (*The Methodist Book of Order* 2014:11). It should also be noted that

“[t]he Creed is a rule of faith; not a ‘Paper Pope.’ It has no magical powers. It is not an automatic guarantee of salvation. Its words are not holy words, but the ‘words of saints’ in the biblical sense, namely, confession of faith that attains their true meaning only in actual confession. As Christians, we are not bound to a literalistic acceptance of the Apostolic Creed; neither are we confronted with the disabling demand to ‘take it or leave it!’ The Apostle Creed is accepted, and can only be accepted, as part of the Gospel. It is good news that we are privileged to share, not something externally imposed on us. It is an invitation, an encouragement to the adventure common to all Christians, namely, to join in this *Credo* and this *Amen*” (Lochman 1984:16).

Therefore, the Apostolic Creed is not in any way a magic pill for those who want to be members of the MCSA. Lochman (1984:15) further states that the Creeds should not be understood as a theory or panorama of the divine mysteries or impartial information, but a witness that can really be understood only as one participates in, shares in, is drawn into, and affected by it. Ashwin-Siejkowski (2010:xxviii) adds to the fact that the Creeds are not magical formulation statements, stating that “Creeds are only signposts towards the divine, not divine themselves”. Lochman (1984:4) further argues that the basic statements of our predecessors in the faith does not mean letting them dictate to us their themes, their positions, or their answers. From the moment the dialogue begins, we are ourselves present with our own themes, positions, and tentative answers, listening attentively but also joining in the discussion. We enquire the views of our predecessors but are not engulfed by them.

However, in the MCSA it is believed that they are among the important Creeds of our faith. It is even more so in the black church where they are sung in worship every Sunday. Without them being sung, some congregations would feel that they had not worshipped at all. This also applies to the Nicene Creed, which is mainly known in the MCSA as *Siyakudumisa* (Xhosa word meaning “We glorify you”). Lochman (1984:4) adds that the Apostle Creed is not in itself the apostolic preaching; it is a doctrinal formulation of the Ancient Church. The Creed has a prominent role in

the worship (and instruction) of most of the Christian churches. The word “creed” in itself means “I believe” (Lochman 1984:4).

Having given an overview of what the MCSA believes and teaches, the researcher notes what Ntombana (2015:104) states: “... black members of mainline Churches are still caught in between two identities; one being the Western package of Christianity and the African ritual practices.” Is this dualism or is there an in-depth meaning behind these bereavement rituals that might enrich the Christian faith? What is it that African Christians find that is so rewarding and comforting that the Christian bereavement rituals are unable to do or offer?

The main purpose of this study is to focus on specific rituals that are performed during the bereavement period up to the burial of a family member among MCSA members in the Mamelodi Circuit. The specific rituals include how death is announced to other family members, the receiving and keeping of the body by the family, the washing of the body, the preparation for burial, and the burial itself. The intention is to understand the role of family in such rituals and whether such rituals are in conflict with their Christian and Methodist faith, as well as to enquire about the secrecy associated with such practices.

### **1.3 SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

The site of this research is Mamelodi, which is a township in the east of Pretoria. The research focused specifically on the congregation members of the Methodist Church who reside in Mamelodi. “Mamelodi is a large, historically black township in Tshwane. It is similar to most townships on the periphery of South African cities planned by the apartheid authorities as temporary or dormitory suburbs for black labour” (Ramafamba & Mears 2012:1564). The researcher explored the phenomenon in question more deeply by interviewing different ethnic groups. The following criteria were followed: 25 people or families who had experienced bereavement were interviewed, the interviewees had to be Methodists, and reside within the vicinity of Mamelodi. Maps of the area are attached in Annexure G.

The researcher attempted to embrace the demographics of South Africa, as well as of Mamelodi. Furthermore, the researcher also sought to embrace the membership of the MCSA in Mamelodi. The researcher followed Denscombe’s (2003:187) advice: “Where possible, avoid basing findings on one interview – look for themes emerging from a number of interviews.” Flick (2002:75)



indicates that conducting an interview “should bring out the specific elements which determine the impact or meaning of an event for the interviewee, in order to prevent the interview from remaining on the level of general statements”.

#### **1.4 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

The research problem of this study emanates from the fact that the members of the MCSA in Mamelodi profess to be Christian believers, but in times of bereavement they incorporate African traditional rituals into their Christian burial rites. These African traditional rituals are often practised privately (away from the church), and the church is not officially invited to, nor made aware of, such practices. The issue, however, is not the actual practice of traditional rituals, but the fact that they are practised away from the church or often kept secret. This makes it difficult for the church to confront this issue, or devise means by which such African traditional practices may be evaluated and considered in light of the principles of the Christian faith.

This is imperative because after the African traditional practices are conducted, the church is often invited and requested to perform the Christian rites of burial, which require the active involvement and services of clergies or laypersons who are trained in the conduct of Christian burial rites. This study therefore intends to explore the origins of this dichotomy (African traditional practices supplementing Christian burial rites, or vice versa), and what these burial practices or rites mean to the members of the MCSA. With specific reference to Mamelodi Methodist Church members, the study therefore intends to explore the possibility of the harmonisation of African traditional bereavement rites with the Methodist Church teachings and funeral rites.

#### **1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The main research question of the study is as follows:

- What do bereavement rituals mean to members of the Methodist Church in Mamelodi?

The sub-research questions of the study are as follows:

- What is the significance of African traditional bereavement rituals?
- What is the significance of Christian bereavement rituals?
- Why do members of the Methodist Church prefer to combine these bereavement rituals?

- Why is the practice of African traditional bereavement rituals kept secret?

## **1.6 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

This research objectives of this study are:

- to explore the meaning of bereavement rituals for the Methodist Church members in Mamelodi;
- to establish the significance of African traditional bereavement rituals;
- to establish the significance of Christian bereavement rituals;
- to examine why the members of the Methodist Church combine African traditional and Christian bereavement rituals; and
- to find out why African traditional rituals are often kept secret.

## **1.7 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of this study is to understand the use of African traditional bereavement rituals by Methodist Church members in Mamelodi, to explore the meaning of these rituals, and why they are used concurrently with the Christian burial rites performed during funeral services in the MCSA.

The study also seeks to understand the secrecy around the practices of these bereavement rituals. The practice is never spoken about openly, and the church is neither involved nor invited when these rituals are performed.

## **1.8 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

It is hoped by the researcher that the findings of this research will assist the MCSA to create policies that will give guidance as to which African traditional bereavement rituals are in breach of our theology and which ones are permissible. Furthermore, this research will add to the discourse that is currently taking place in the MCSA regarding funeral rituals. Kumalo (2018:11), an ordained Methodist minister and a theologian, notes that the MCSA has two challenges. Firstly, the MCSA seems not to have its own legislated liturgical practices and rituals for funerals, and instead uses those of other churches, which is problematic “because they are not customarily

Methodist but are episcopal derivatives mainly from Roman Catholic and the Anglican Church traditions”. Kumalo (2018:11) therefore urges the MCSA to develop its own liturgy and rituals that will embrace the Methodist theology. Kumalo (2018:11) asks:

“Can we develop unique Methodist rituals that are an expression of our theology and not adaptations from other church traditions? In short, is this an indication that our Funeral Liturgy has entered a contested terrain? This must not be seen as a problem but rather an opportunity for reflection and revision of theology of death that will be expressed through a unique African Methodist liturgy.”

Furthermore, this research will assist Christians in the Methodist Church and other Christian traditions to understand the meaning of different rituals that they might be practising so that they are better informed.

## **1.9 A GUIDE FOR THE STUDY**

For the purposes of this research, the researcher has chosen to use two theoretical frameworks relevant to best understanding death and the processes of bereavement. The importance of theoretical frameworks are the following: “The purpose of the theoretical part of a dissertation, doctorate or project – and the purpose of good theory – is precisely to give a sense of order to the empirical section, so that the two parts need to be inextricably linked” (Grix 2004:102). Attachment and dual process theories were found to be relevant for the purpose of this study. A detailed explanation of the two theories is provided in Chapter 2 of this research.

## **1.10 DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS**

**African** – The term in this research refers to black people in South Africa, even though the researcher acknowledges that there are people of Western, Indian, Chinese, etc. origin who were born in Africa and who are therefore Africans. For the benefit of this research, the researcher refers to black people who practise a way of life given to them by their forbearers as Africans.

**Traditional** – This refers to the indigenous African way of life. Awolalu (1976:1) states that “[t]his word means indigenous, that which is aboriginal or foundational handed down from generation to generation, upheld and practiced by Africans today. This is a heritage from the past ...”.

**Bereavement** – This is an emotional state that people go through when they have lost a loved one. Kaneez (2015:1) and Gire (2014:11) define bereavement as referring to the experience that follows the death of a loved one.

**Rituals** – These are symbolic gestures performed by different communities to mark a particular milestone or to restore order. Wolfelt (2005:13) defines rituals as “symbolic activities that help us, together with our families and friends, express our deeper thoughts and feelings about life’s most important events”. Baloyi and Makobe-Rabothata (2013:236) define rituals as a “representation of cultural performances and rites of passage which mark a people’s life experience.

Properly construed, rituals are an expression of people’s thoughts, emotions, social organization and cultural identities”.

**MCSA** – The MCSA is an abbreviation for the Methodist Church of Southern Africa. The Methodist family is quite broad. “Methodist is the name of several denominations that developed from the teachings of John Wesley. About 20 different denominations use Methodist as part of their name” (Lyons & Truesdale 2000:187). South Africa has the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME), Free Methodist Church, the Methodist Church in Africa, Uniting Methodist Church, etc. In the context of this research, the MCSA abbreviation is specific and solely refers to the Methodist Church of Southern Africa.

**Conversion** – This is a point of transition in one’s life from being a non-believer to being born again in professing faith in Jesus Christ. “It is the complete change God makes in people when they become Christians” (Lyons & Truesdale 2000:66).

**Christianity** – This is a faith based on the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. “One central teaching of Christianity is that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. He alone is the Lord and Saviour of the world” (Lyons & Truesdale 2000:57-58).

**Liturgy** – This refers to a format of worship and prayer followed during a particular service or worship. “The Greek word for liturgy means ‘service’. The liturgy includes the words spoken and things done” (Lyons & Truesdale 2000:172).

## **1.11 THESIS OUTLINE**

### **Chapter 1**

In this chapter an outline of the research is provided as follows: introductory parts of the research, which includes background information; the site of the study; statement of the problem; research questions and research objectives; purpose of the study; significance of the study; definition of concepts; thesis outline; and summary.

### **Chapter 2**

This chapter is a review of existing literature and a presentation of theories that were found relevant to this study. The literature considered in this chapter includes various concepts and broadly concentrates on various themes that are related to the subject of death and bereavement within an African context. This chapter begins by examining the theoretical frameworks, stages of grief, the impact of death across culture, Christian perspectives about death, Methodist theology and rites of death, Western perspectives of death, and understanding of death from an African perspective, followed by a broad discussion of the meaning of rituals and how they are practised in different South African cultures and other selected African cultures. The researcher touches broadly on bereavement rituals practised in Africa, and specifically singles out few to be considered by this study.

### **Chapter 3**

This chapter discusses the framework that was applied in this research. The following elements are discussed: research paradigm, research population, procedure of data collection, credibility, transferability, data collection, and ethical considerations. In short, this chapter brings forth what methodology was used for this research, as, according to Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2005:2), “[r]esearch methodology considers and explains the logic behind research methods and techniques”.

### **Chapter 4**

This chapter presents the data that were collected from various participants for the purpose of this study in order to establish the role of African traditional bereavement rituals for Methodist Church members in Mamelodi, Pretoria.

## **Chapter 5**

This chapter presents the conclusions and recommendations of this study. A summary of the findings are presented, as well as the conclusions. Furthermore, recommendations for future research are made, as well as concluding remarks.

### **1.12 CONCLUSION**

This chapter provided an introduction to this research. The following were addressed: introduction and background of the study, the scope of the study, the problem statement, research questions, research objectives, the purpose of the study, the significance of the study, definition of concepts, and the thesis outline. This chapter provided the background information of this research and introduced the research topic and the objectives this study seeks to achieve. The chapter also outlined how the intended outcomes are to be achieved through the thesis outline.

## **CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter is a review of existing literature and a presentation of theories that were found relevant to this study. The literature considered in this chapter includes various concepts and broadly concentrates on various themes that are related to the subject of death and bereavement within an African context. This chapter begins by examining theoretical frameworks, stages of grief, the impact of death across cultures, Christian perspectives of death, Methodist theology and rites of death, Western perspectives of death, and understanding of death from an African perspective, followed by a broad discussion of the meaning of rituals and how they are practised in different South African cultures and other selected African cultures. The researcher touches broadly on bereavement rituals practised in Africa, and specifically singles out a few to be considered by this study.

### **2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS**

Mitchell *et al.* (2003:21) state that “[a] theory may be viewed as a system which orders concepts in a way that produces understanding or insights”. Grix (2004:102) notes that

“[t]he purpose of the theoretical part of a dissertation, doctorate or project – and the purpose of good theory – is precisely to give a sense of order to the empirical section, so that the two parts need to be inextricably linked”.

Furthermore, Grix (2004:103 citing Popper 2000:59) states that “[t]heories are nets cast to catch what we call ‘the world’: to rationalize, to explain and to master it”. Grix (2004:103) further states that “[w]ithout theory, or at least some form of classificatory system, it would be extremely difficult to know which data and facts to collect in the first place”. Duffy, Wong and Moritsugu (2010:34) indicate that

“a theory is a systematic attempt to explain observable or measurable events relating to an issue ... The goal of a theory is to allow researchers to describe, predict, and control for

why and how a variable or variables relate to observable or measurable events pertaining an issue”.

Skidmore (1975:14-15) states that

“[t]here is really no alternative to theorizing. If we did away with it, we would be left with a chaotic mass of data and impression which would only cry out for ordering and interpretation ... [T]heory introduces theoretical order into a situation for the purpose of explaining something, or a range of things, to which the theory is relevant”.

Welman *et al.* (2005:21) further attest to this point by stating that a theory may be viewed as a system that orders concepts in a way that produces understanding of or insight into a particular subject to a researcher. Therefore a theory gives some form of order to a research topic and it also becomes an interpretative tool.

Skidmore (1975:15) further suggests that the importance of theory is to give an explanation of a subject. According to Marshall and Rossman (2011:78), a theory is chosen and used by the researcher

“because of the underlying assumptions, such as how the researcher sees the world and how he sees the research questions fitting in. As the researcher explores the literature, however, he should identify and state those assumptions in a framework of theory”.

Flick (2002:43) states that the importance of using theories in research work is due to the fact that “theories are not (right or wrong) representations of given facts, but versions or perspectives through which the world is seen”.

Skidmore (1975:14-15) indicates that “theory introduces theoretical order into a situation for the purpose of explaining something, or a range of things, to which the theory is relevant”. Therefore, for the purposes of this study, the researcher used two theoretical frameworks that underpin this study, namely the attachment theory and the dual process theory.



## 2.3 ATTACHMENT THEORY

This theory originates from John Bowlby, whose main interest was to investigate cases of depression and mourning among children, as cases that arose from psychiatric and psychoanalytic thinking (Bowlby 1980:216). This theory of Bowlby stems from cognitive psychology and information theory that seeks to demonstrate “the influences on responses of loss of the experiences which a bereaved person has had with attachment figures during the whole course of his life and especially during his infancy, childhood and adolescence” (Bowlby 1980:216). This theory has its roots in psychoanalytic theory, ethology, control system theory, and World War II. It took shape during the time Bowlby was commissioned by the World Health Organization to study the social emotional development of children orphaned during the World War II (Chisholm 1999:96). Bowlby’s theory “was concerned mainly with the making and breaking of attachment ties, probably because his experiences of working as a child psychiatrist exposed him to the negative consequences for emotional development of severe maternal deprivation” (Erdman & Kok-Mun 2010:155).

Erdman and Kok-Mun (2010:3) further state that attachment research theory grew in the 1950s from focusing mainly on infant-caregiver relationships to adult intimate relationships. The initial understanding of this attachment theory was that attachment was developed between an infant and a caregiver within the first nine months of life (Erdman & Kok-Mun 2010:4).

Duck (1992:32), when discussing showing our feelings about other people, states that “[t]hose emotions that cause us to focus on other people are particularly powerful”. Duck (1992:36) agrees that this theory applies not only to children but to adults as well when stating that “adult styles of loving may represent processes similar to those found in attachment formed by infants or children to their parents”. Davidsen-Nielsen and Leick (1991:7-9) emphasise the fact that attachment is not only experienced by children:

“People can be attached to a multiplicity of things: human beings, money, job, prestige, home, land other possessions ... The attachment between people is the most important to understand, as it is usually the loss of someone close to us that triggers off the deepest grief. This theory therefore gives an understanding as to why when people lose loved ones ... it is hard for them to dare to say goodbye to one of their dear ones ... Bowlby and Erikson

give a good and sound explanation of why it is so stressful for us human beings to lose our attachment.”

However, as different researchers use this theory, they have come to learn that

“attachment continues across the life span of humans ... Attachment behaviour refers to any form of behaviour that results in a person achieving or maintaining a desired proximity to an identified individual whom the person sees as better able to cope with the world” (Erdman & Kok-Mun 2010:4).

This attachment comes forth especially when the person needs protection, help, soothing, etc. (Erdman & Kok-Mun 2010:4). “In adults, attachment is reciprocal, which means that two adults involved in the attachment relationship mutually act as attachment figures to each other” (Pantin 1980:38).

Pantin (1980:38) states that

“[a]ttachment behaviour is conceived as any form of behaviour that results in a person attaining or retaining proximity to some other differentiated and preferred individual. So long as the attachment figure remains accessible and responsive ... During the course of healthy development, attachment behaviour leads to the development of affectional bonds or attachments, initially between child and parent and later between adult and adult”.

For the purposes of this research, death influences attachments that people have developed over the years. It is even worse in African communities, as Effah (2009:33) notes that “family is at the core of African society ... It is composed of friends, age mates, and relatives ... [F]amily nurtures the individual and offers the individual a sense of community”. Baloyi (2014:7) adds that “[i]n most African tribes, death is used as an instrument to unite people ... [C]ommunalism plays a pivotal role”. This is the case during death, as well as during the life of the deceased. Community is at the core of African society. Turaki (1999:240) indicates that for African people, “the meaning of life in the community is the measure of purpose of life. It is supreme in all matters of life”.

Duck (1992:36) further expands on this attachment theory by mentioning three kinds of attachments:

- **Secure attachment:** It is based on a sense of confidence and security in intimacy.
- **Anxious/ambivalent attachment:** This is a kind of attachment that is characterised by dependency and lacking appreciation from others.
- **Avoidant attachment:** This attachment is characterised by lack of acceptance by others.

Duck (1992:36 citing Shaver 1992) indicates that these are the kinds of attachment found in adult relationships.

Duck (1992:67) further states that “[w]hen we are asked what matters to us most in life and gives it its fullest purpose, the majority of people give one simple answer: relationships (citing Kinger 1977). Relationships are obvious sources of joy and happiness”. Therefore, when death comes, there is obvious devastation for those who are bereaved.

## 2.4 DUAL PROCESS MODEL

The dual process model is a theory developed by Kohler (1930), who believed that “perceptions and knowing are never simply given to a perceiver by stimuli, but are constructed by the perceiver” (cited by Moskowitz 1999:12). This theory was originally developed to deal with the loss of a partner (Stroebe & Schut 1999:211). Sherman, Gawronski and Trope (2014:3) note that

“[t]he overarching assumption of dual-process theorizing is that the mental processes underlying social phenomena can be divided into two distinct categories depending on whether they operate in an automatic or non-automatic fashion. According to dual process theory, certain types of responses are traceable to what are often called ‘System I’ processes – processes that operate automatically and quickly, with little effort or no effort and no sense of voluntary control”.

The dual process theory is triggered by, among other things, habit. Wood *et al.* (2014:371) detail this link between these theories together with habit and cite James (1890) that

“[d]ue to the frequent repetition of the response, this representation is likely to be highly accessible in the sense of being strong, stable, and distinct. In addition, the frequent

pairings of the context and the response produce a particularly strong associative link between the memory representation of the context cues and that of the response. As a result, whenever an individual perceives the relevant cues, the habit representation is strongly and reliably activated”.

This theory was very helpful to the researcher as it focused this research to properly scrutinise the subject in question. Wood *et al.* (2014:373) note that “[i]n dual-process models, habit performance is mediated by a fast, automatic, unconscious processing system that reflects associations learned through experience”. Wood *et al.* (2014:376) further state that “habits produce a characteristic of responding”. Further behavioural patterns are noted, which are affected by habits such as limited reasoning ability where people rely more on habitual process than reasoning, which is termed “the habitual response learning” (Wood *et al.* 2014:378). Secondly, Wood *et al.* (2014:378) speak about absentmindedness and distraction, which happen when people “are in settings in which they might typically perform a habit. In such settings, they may respond to habit triggers even when intending to engage in another action” (Wood *et al.* 2014:378).

The third word that triggers this habitual response is “stress”. Stress is a trigger due to the fact that “stress limits deliberative capacity [and] is associated with restricted attention, heightened arousal, and corresponding reliance on more routinized behavioral responses” (Wood *et al.* 2014:379).

The fourth habitual response is triggered by lack of willpower. Wood *et al.* (2014:379) state that “[w]hen willpower is low, people may fall back on performing habits, because they have limited ability to inhibit the activated response in mind or decide to engage in an intended action”. What is evident to the researcher is the fact that the dual process model, among other issues, is triggered by habit, more so because “habit performance can be disrupted by experimental manipulations of cues, as well as by naturally occurring changes in life circumstances” (Wood *et al.* 2014:379). Death, in this case, is a good example as it leaves people emotionally drained and often not in their normal state of mind.

Considering the research questions and the objectives of this research, these two theoretical frameworks were helpful guides to finding answers to the research questions. With regard to attachment theory, it was useful for this research because it informed this study with regard to understanding human attachment, the implications of death, the grieving process, and

bereavement. Considering the research topic, this theoretical framework assisted the researcher in critically interpreting how different people understand and respond to death. The same applies to the dual process theory as it seeks to explain human reactions to different circumstances of life. Therefore this theoretical framework assisted the researcher and became a tool to better interpret the participants' reaction and the collected data.

Having highlighted and justified the two theoretical frameworks applied in this research, stages of grief will also be highlighted to further reinforce the relevancy of the two theoretical frameworks in this research. There are many views with regard to the grieving process, but for the purposes of this research, the researcher followed the one discussed in the next section.

## **2.5 STAGES OF GRIEF OR THE GRIEVING PROCESS**

The stages, as presented by Stephenson (1985), are reaction, disorganisation and reorganisation, and reorientation and recovery.

### **2.5.1 Reaction**

This is a phase of shock that takes place at the news of death (Fulton & Metress 1995:351). Three main emotions or reactions are triggered during this time. The first is emotional numbness. The second emotional reaction during this phase is bewilderment; at this stage attempts are made to give meaning to death (Fulton & Metress 1995:351). Emotional wrestling often takes place in attempting to make sense of what had transpired. At some stage crying out to the loved one occurs (Fulton & Metress 1995:351). The third reaction is anger, which is directed at the deceased having left or at God for having permitted their loved one to depart from this earth. Sometimes the anger might be directed at those attempting to console the family or to strengthen them in some way (Fulton & Metress 1995:351). Guilt, being irrational disbelief, yearning, anger, depression, and acceptance are other emotions that occur due to grief. This might be as a result of unkept promises, unfinished business, or perhaps conflict, which might have transpired before the deceased passed on (Fulton & Metress 1995:351).

### **2.5.2 Disorganisation and reorganisation**

This is the second stage of the grieving process whereby the reality of the death or the loss of a loved one sinks in. During this time a number of things take place whereby the bereaved realises that “our loss will not be recovered, deep despair sets in accompanied by varying degrees of sadness, loneliness, and yearning” (Fulton & Metress 1995:351). The bereaved are then faced with challenges such as regaining their sense of purpose without the deceased, and rebuilding their own lives. The challenge during this time of grieving is the load of deep-seated uncertainty. Because “[r]ebuilding is frightening and painful as it springs from a sense of uncertainty and helplessness ... there is often a preoccupation with the deceased, an obsessive review of the past, and a lack of emotional closeness with others” (Fulton & Metress 1995:351).

### **2.5.3 Reorientation and recovery**

This stage is towards the end of the grieving process whereby the bereaved has gone through all the emotional upheavals. This is a stage where, for the bereaved, “it becomes possible to think of the deceased without disabling pain and overwhelming sadness” (Fulton & Metress 1995:352). This is the stage where the memories of the deceased enrich the life of the bereaved, and brings joy rather than sadness. However, that does not mean the bereaved no longer mourn their loved one, but rather “no longer miss our loved one or that the pain of our loss is ever entirely gone ... we learn to cope” (Fulton & Metress 1995:352).

## **2.6 THE IMPACT OF DEATH ACROSS CULTURES**

Makgahlela (2016:1) states that “[d]eath is a universal human experience”. Death is not a religious or cultural occurrence; it is a human occurrence that affects all living creatures, including human beings. Biwul (1978:1) states that “death is a common human phenomenon, acting as ‘the implacable enemy of man’, that is, of all human beings”. Radzilani (2010:1) further states that death is “an expected and irreversible part of life, death is one of the aspects that appear to have a negative impact on the lives of family members and close relatives”. The response to death, however, is different due to different religious and cultural practices. “Burial on the other hand is the act or process of disposing of a corpse. This may vary from culture to culture and from one religious or ideology to the other” (Biwul 1978:1). Stephen (2014:263) also affirms that “[e]very

community in the world responds to death and loss in unique ways. Funeral customs and ceremonies vary across different cultures worldwide”.

The impact, however, is the same, or perhaps even more to human beings due to human intellect compared to the animal kingdom. Hence Biwul (1978:1) indicates how death impacts different racial and ethnic groups across the globe:

“Death comes to its victims without notice when it is time; it gives neither option of choice nor opportunity for negotiation. It is a perfect timekeeper as it neither wastes nor loses time. Death is a close friend and an active participant in every human community, yet no one ever gets used to it. The way in which living humans react to its effects makes death a mystery that defies overfamiliarity. Its effects, most times, can be electrifying as reactions to its occurrence are always irresistible and irreversible, and sometimes emotionally demoralizing, and psychologically and economically incapacitating.”

## **2.7 DEATH FROM THE CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE**

Keating (2002:2) defines death from a theological perspective as “the time that the person’s body is separated from their soul (the immaterial part of humans)”. Keating (2002:5) further states that death from the Christian perspective is not the end of life, but

“death is a transfer from one state of being to another (Heb. 9:27). Every human being will one day be resurrected from the dead and will be judged according to their deeds and their relationship with God through Jesus Christ”.

The theology of death in the Christian perspective is embedded in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This theology is embedded in Scripture passages such as 1 John 3:2: “Beloved, we are God’s children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.” This simply means that those who live their lives in Christ will one day rise again with him. McGrath (2001:404) states that to Christian believers,

“the resurrection of Jesus serves an additional function within Christian theology. It establishes and undergirds the Christian hope. This has both soteriological and

eschatological implications ... At the eschatological level, it gives both foundation and substance to the Christian hope of eternal life”.

### **2.7.1 Theological perspective and burial rites in the Methodist Church of Southern Africa (MCSA)**

Ketshabile (2012:86) posits that the current Methodist burial rites originate from John Wesley’s *Order of the Burial of the Dead* written in 1784. This document has been the mother of all Methodists liturgies across the globe. Ketshabile (2012:88) further states that “theological ideas of John and Charles Wesley were the principal sources for understanding Methodist views on life and death”.

The *Order of the Burial of the Dead* was mainly influenced by the Puritan theology, which was quite popular in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Ketshabile 2012:88). This theology spread what was termed “good death” or “holy dying” (Ketshabile 2012:98). Among other pioneers of this thinking were the likes of Jeremy Taylor (1889:166), who wrote:

“Christian prudence is a great security against the fear of death. For if we be afraid of death, it is but reasonable to use all spiritual arts to take off the apprehension of the evil; but therefore we ought to remove our fear, because fear gives to death wings, and spurs, and darts. Death hastens to a fearful man; if therefore you would make death harmless and slow, to throw off fear is the way to do it; and prayer is the way to do that. If therefore you be afraid of death, consider you will have less need to fear it by how much the less you do for it; and so you direct fear by a reflex act of prudence and consideration.”

For the Puritans who influenced Wesley’s theology, death was some form of a conflict of faith, as well as an opportunity to glorify God. Death was an opportunity to build others’ faith in the Lord (Ketshabile 2012:101). This is reflected in the fact that singing hymns at a funeral was uniquely Methodist (Ketshabile 2012:111). Having given this brief background, it should be noted that Wesley’s *Order of the Burial of the Dead* was used by Methodists throughout the world. There were developments on it, as well as translations into different languages where Methodism existed. This was the case in the MCSA, and the direct translation from the British hymnbook is still used in the MCSA. As Ketshabile (2012:113) attests, “[t]he current burial liturgies used in the MCSA



are therefore part of a long Christian tradition that has influenced many other Methodist traditions for centuries up the present time”.

Having noted this brief history, Ketshabile (2012:113) states some discrepancies in the MCSA: “As a result the denomination does not have a theology of life and death apart from that of John Wesley and subsequent Methodism, and especially as espoused in the historic British Methodism.” Ketshabile (2012:125) notes that

“burial liturgies developed by Methodists in Britain have a disadvantage. The MCSA adopts these liturgies without scrutinizing them for purposes of contextualizing them for the African context ... the MCSA must take cognizance of the absence of the African worldview in their rubrics of their liturgies”.

Kumalo (2018:13) adds to this discourse by stating that a number of foreign liturgies used during different funeral services in the Methodist Church are contradictory and problematic:

“I think it is a demonstration that as a church we have reached a point where we need to reflect deeply on our theologies, especially around the reality of death. Démodé assumptions and theological beliefs have to be revised and developments brought about by contextual dynamics, new beliefs and practices have to be taken into account.”

The liturgies Ketshabile (2012:125) refers to are found in an old *British Methodist Order of Morning Prayer*, which is still widely used in the MCSA, especially in the black section of the church. Light and Rogers (2004:52) indicate that this liturgy “of the ‘Order of Morning Prayer’ authorized [was] for use in the Methodist Church by the British Conference at Newcastle-on-Tyne, July 1936”. This liturgy has, however, over the years been translated into a number of African languages spoken in Southern Africa, such as Swati (spoken mainly in Mpumalanga and Swaziland), Tswana (spoken mainly in the North West province, Free State, and Botswana), Xhosa (dominant in the Eastern and Western Cape), Southern Sotho (dominant in the Eastern Cape and Free State), Zulu (dominant in KwaZulu-Natal), and Northern Sotho (dominant in the Limpopo province).

The views above provide an overview of the burial rites and practices in the MCSA. Furthermore, these views bring forth the struggles within the MCSA with regard to conflicting theologies and

practices during funeral services. Due to the absence of helpful liturgies of funerals in the MCSA, everywhere that Methodism exists, there are different practices of burial rites and bereavement practices. Some go as far as borrowing practices from other Christian traditions.

### **2.7.2 Death from the Western perspective**

Rosenblatt and Nkosi (2007:67-88) discuss a number of perspectives with regard to the Western understanding of bereavement: “For a Euro-American practitioner, there are standard ways of supporting bereaved people that are as much culturally embedded”.

These perspectives are as follows:

1. The first way of dealing with grief is through talking (Rosenblatt & Nkosi 2007:67-88). Westerners talk about the deceased, about their feelings. “Death rituals, including eulogies and ritual lamentations, point to and create the realities that people will discuss when talking about death”.
2. Grieving is an individual activity. Rosenblatt and Nkosi (2007:67-88) state that “[m]any Westerners think of grieving as an individual action, and much of grief therapy is individually focused”. Mourning is individual, not necessarily communal as it would be in the African perspective (Radzilani 2010:3).
3. In the Western culture there is some form of an abrupt transition between grieving and cheerfulness. Mourning is not structured like it would be the case in the African communities, where one may be expected to mourn for a full year, or months, depending on the gender of and relationship with the deceased (Rosenblatt & Nkosi 2007:67-88).

### **2.7.3 Death from the African perspective**

Mkhize *et al.* (2004) define a worldview as a set of basic assumptions that a group of people develop in order to explain reality and their place and purpose in the world. These assumptions provide a frame of reference to address problems in life. In Africa, just like in other parts of the world, there are different ways in which death is understood, as well as responded to.

Owino (2017: 2) states that African people regard death and illness with serious trepidation. Owino (2017:2) further states that

“[h]uman beings were expected to live and enjoy a normal life until death to old age and many African families believed that an early death was not a natural occurrence. Anything that interfered with the natural course of life and brought about illness or premature death was believed to be caused by sorcery or evil spirits”.

Baloyi and Makobe-Rabothata (2013:1) state that the African epistemology views death as a “transition from the visible to the invisible ontology where the spirit, the essence of the person is not destroyed but moves to live in the spirit ancestors’ realm dead”. Therefore, for African people, for that transition to fully take place, rituals are of high importance, and to Africans this is a process that is taken very seriously for that transition to take place.

Hence, Mbiti (1993:185) states that during a time of bereavement, “the living do not want to offend them, either by failure to fulfill any obligations due to them or by acting in a way which is contrary to the pattern of life which had been acceptable to them”, or there will be dire consequences (Baloyi & Makobe-Rabothata 2013:1). Baloyi and Makobe-Rabothata (2013:235 citing King 2013) share that

“[w]hen people die, they transcend to the spirit world to be in the company of the living dead or ancestors. Ancestors protect and provide guidance to those in the material realm and therefore are highly respected, venerated and very important to the community of the living”.

Baloyi and Makobe-Rabothata (2013:235 citing Nobles 2006) further state that during death, “[t]he dead transcends to the state of collective immortality and exists in the company of the spirits”. To African people, death is understood as a time when the soul leaves the body to become a spirit. Mbiti (1991:117) adds that to African mythology, “death came almost by mistake, and that since then it has remained among men. The blame is laid among people themselves, animals and in some cases spirits or monsters”. Mbiti (1991:117) further states that when death takes place, someone is often blamed, or the family involved will always attempt to find out what has caused death to their loved one. Therefore, for African people, as mentioned by Mbiti (1991:118), physical causes of

death are not enough. “People often wish to know both the physical and mystical causes of death; it is not enough further to find out only the physical causes” (Mbiti 1991:118).

Baloyi and Makobe-Rabothata (2013:236 citing Ramose 2002) note that “Africans do not conceive death and life as two separate phases; instead, there is a harmonious and interdependent coexistence between the two life forces”. Furthermore, Baloyi and Makobe-Rabothata (2013:236 citing Mbiti 1990, Ramose 2002 & Bujo 1998) make a clear distinction between the European and African perspectives or understanding of death as follows:

“From the Euro-American perspectives, life is seen to be consisting of discrete stages, starting with conception and ending with death. Death therefore marks the end of life. On dying, the dead person literally ceases to exist. On the contrary, an African worldview understands death as an integrated and continuous developmental life process which is inseparable from the interwoven connections between the visible and invisible ontologies. People do not cease to exist once they are physically dead, instead, they transcend to the spiritual world to live in the community of the living dead.”

Kgatla (2014:81) further states that “death does not result in the annihilation of the individual and his/her identity, but in graduating to another form of life”. Radzilani (2010:45) states that “[f]or the traditional African, death appears to represent a transformation from the ‘flesh’ world to the ancestral spiritual world”.

## **2.8 A BRIEF DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS OF BEREAVEMENT**

Radzilani (2010:53 citing Rando 1993 & Attig 2001) defines bereavement as a “state of having suffered a loss. It involves forceful and unwilling deprivation of someone we love, having something withheld unjustly and injuriously, and a stealing away of something valuable”. During the process of bereavement, Radzilani (2010:53) states that the bereaved individuals suffer and are victimised due to their loss. Furthermore, Radzilani (2010:54) states that

“[t]alking of bereavement as a loss, suffering or victimization suggests furthermore that bereaved people are not normal, but are rather ill and suffering. They have to let go of their attachment to the deceased person and move on with their life so that they can return to ‘normal’ behavior and recover from their depression occasioned by the loss (Neimeyer

2001). This way of talking possibly comes from a community in which people associate bereavement with loss and being robbed of something that leaves one suffering a particular pain”.

Tshoba (2014:21 citing Keene & Reder 2006) defines bereavement as “a state of being denied something of significance and of importance, the passing of a loved one by death”. This feeling can be experienced by an individual, or a group of people, including relatives and a community (Tshoba 2014:21). These emotions are not only related to death, but they can occur due to the loss of a job, physical ability, belongings, etc. (Tshoba 2014:21). Tshoba (2014:13 citing Bhana 2008 & Rosenblatt *et al.* 1976) adds to this discourse by stating that “[b]ereavement represents the experiential state or being in a state of mourning that one endures after realizing a loss”. Bereavement is also perceived as a period during which grief and mourning occur.

## **2.9 AFRICAN TRADITIONAL BEREAVEMENT RITUALS**

### **2.9.1 The impact and meaning of rituals**

Kyalo (2013:34-35) defines rituals in the following manner:

“A ritual is a link established between present moment and original reality. The word ritual refers to symbolic action, which focus[es] a certain kind of power through the use of natural signs and symbols. Rituals range from single gestures such as bowing or shaking hands, to elaborate ceremonial dramas, such as the coronation of the traditional chief, modern chief[,] etc. ... Ritual is symbolic in the most profound sense, for it brings together the mind, the body and the emotions and at the same time, binds us to a community of shared values.”

According to the African worldview, “[d]eath stands between the world of human beings and the world of the spirits, between the visible and the invisible. It is no wonder, therefore, that rituals connected with death are actually elaborate” (Mbiti 1971:26). Kyalo (2013:35) further defines what these rituals mean, or are, in African cosmology in the following manner:

“Rituals are symbolic, routine, and repetitive activities and actions through which we make connections with what we consider to be the most valuable dimension of life. They are

often associated with a significant events or places in our individual and communal lives. Rituals set aside specific times and places and provide us opportunity to ponder their meaning and to connect emotionally.”

Radzilani (2010:66) states that the deceased person is in between the living and the dead, and therefore it is only after the performance of rituals that the dead can join the ancestral world. This then shows how critically important bereavement rituals are to African people. Biwul (1978:3) adds to this discourse by sharing that “Africans bury the dead according to their cultural traditional rituals”. Therefore rituals have huge significance to African people because “[r]itual actions enable us to maintain continuity with significant persons and events from the past. Rituals help us individually and communally to make sense of life’s transition, providing some structure to ease movement from the familiar to the unknown” (Kyalo 2013:35-36). Tshoba (2014:10) also states that rituals are very helpful; she hereby refers specifically to bereavement rituals, and states that “[m]ost cultures have prescribed bereavement and mourning rituals to facilitate adjustment of the bereaved”.

Shiino (1997:213) notes another dimension with regard to bereavement rituals when writing specifically about the Luo people of South Nyanza, stating that they have “a series of rituals and many feasts for the dead because of their strong fear and respect for the dead”. Shiino (1997:227) further states that these bereavement rituals “provide the people with the occasion to express their feelings of pain and deep grief by bitterly crying and singing their own lamentations”. Kyalo (2013:36) defines or views rituals as having a huge impact as “[r]ituals help us individually and communally to make sense of life’s transition, providing some structure to ease movement from the familiar to the unknown ... Religious ritual expresses our deepest understanding of the world”. Kgatla (2014:81), speaking from the Northern Sotho perspective, states that the purpose of bereavement rituals is “varied – they fulfil religious obligations, satisfy emotional needs, strengthen social bonds, demonstrate respect or submission, enable people to obtain social acceptance or approval and cleanse them from contamination”.

Amos (2009:26) states that death is associated with bad things, therefore bereavement rituals are key so that the bereaved can be cleansed from the dark cloud brought about by death, or remove the curse brought about by death. Biwul (1978:1) brings another perspective with regard to the observance of rituals by African society when stating that when death occurs, it “disturbs the

harmony, cohesion, and solidarity in both family and community”; therefore bereavement rituals play a major role in bringing about the necessary harmony to the bereaved, the spirit world, and the entire community. Nwaigbo (2010:236 citing Baloyi 2008) states that rituals are a form of expression that different ethnic and religious groups use to express their faith and beliefs: “Rituals are representation of cultural performances and rites of passage which mark a people’s life experience. Properly construed rituals are an expression of people’s thoughts, emotions, social organizations and cultural identities.”

## **2.9.2 Literature review of different rituals of different ethnic groups in South Africa**

Tshoba (2014:23), writing about bereavement rituals, focuses on the Ndebele people in South Africa, but at the same time provides an overview of other ethnic groups in South Africa. The commonality that Tshoba (2014:23) finds is that all ethnic groups in South Africa “encourage the bereaved to preserve the connection between the deceased and the living”. Furthermore, the ethnic groups differ in their bereavement rituals, but at the same time there are commonalities as well. For the purpose of this research, the researcher in the following section of this research highlights the fact that bereavement rituals are an African phenomenon, hence the focus on different ethnic groups in South Africa, as well as other parts of the continent.

### **2.9.2.1 *Batswana people in South Africa***

According to Tshoba (2014:26), the Batswana is an ethnic group that constitutes the western group of the Sotho people of South Africa and Botswana. About three million Tswana people reside in the North West province of South Africa. Tshoba (2014:26 citing Setiloane & Yawa 2010) states that during bereavement or on the day of bereavement, “traditional Tswana people slaughter an ox named ‘mogoga’ at sunrise. The meat of the ox is consumed without salt. This is to indicate that there is no pleasure in consuming the meat as the family is in mourning”. During the period of mourning, mourners are required to put on a grass necklace and shave their hair. The mourning does not exceed a year, and at the end of this mourning period, the uncle (or *malome* in Setswana) leads a cleansing ceremony (Tshoba 2014:26). The cleansing ritual includes cleansing herbs that are applied to the mourners and the uncle is in charge of this process. This process also includes “giving the mourners new clothing items, food and drink” (Tshoba 2014:26 citing Yawa 2010).

### ***2.9.2.2 Zulu people in South Africa***

According to Tshoba (2014:25), Zulu people are mainly located in the KwaZulu-Natal province in South Africa, although others are found in other provinces of South Africa as well. Tshoba (2014:25 citing Ritcher 2015) states that “the amaZulu tend to focus on the rituals that form part of the burial process in order to deal with the death of a loved one, hence the focus is less on dealing with the emotional aspects”. Tshoba (2014:25 citing Yawa 2010) states that the Zulu people focus on the rituals to avoid being consumed emotionally. The rituals direct their attention elsewhere than on the deep emotions that accompany death, especially that of a loved one. Furthermore, Tshoba (2014:25 citing Yawa 2010) states that among the rituals that the Zulu people observe is that of washing their hands after burial “as to avoid transferring the pollution of death around”. Thereafter a meal will be offered to those community members who have come to support the bereaved family. After the burial it is also expected that the loved ones of the deceased shave their hair, which might be all the hair or a fraction of their hair. Tshoba (2014:25) states that after this hair-shaving ritual, the hair is burned together with the clothing of the deceased. The reason for this is “to purify the mourners from the contamination of death” (Tshoba 2014:25 citing Yawa 2010). During the bereavement process, the widow of the deceased is not permitted to travel outside her home for a certain period of time. The reason for this is so that the widow does not spread the misfortunes associated with death (Tshoba 2014:25 citing Yawa 2010). Towards the end of the mourning period, as specified by the family, another cleansing ritual is conducted “so as to purify the bereaved and the possessions of the deceased. This is also when the widow is given cleansing herbs in order to purify herself” (Tshoba 2014:26 citing Yawa 2010).

### ***2.9.2.3 Pedi people in South Africa***

Kgatla (2014:81) states that the Pedi people are those called the Northern Sotho people. They are mainly found in the Limpopo province in South Africa. Kgatla (2014:83) further states that when death occurs, “[t]he widow or widower is removed from the public into seclusion, as prescribed by the rituals of de-contamination. Death should be contained from spreading to other people, including animals, by secluding the widow or widower ritually” (Kgatla 2014:84). Kgatla (2014:85) adds that “preferably a male animal is slaughtered for the funeral”.



Baloyi and Makobe-Rabothata (2013:236) state that if the deceased was a married man, the widow to the deceased is forbidden from arriving home after sunset, to visit neighbours, or to attend family and community functions. During the period of mourning, the widow wears black clothes that “symbolize the dark cloud [of] death which is associated with loss and pain” (Baloyi & Makobe-Rabothata 2013:236). Baloyi and Makobe-Rabothata (2013:237) further state that if it is the wife who dies, the widower is forbidden from having an intimate affair until a specified period, which is usually six months to one year, depending on the family. The widower is also barred from arriving home late (Baloyi & Makobe-Rabothata 2013:237).

#### ***2.9.2.4 Venda people in South Africa***

Radzilani (2010:68) highlights the fact that wailing as a public acknowledgement of death is done by the Venda community. “When performing the rituals, bereaved people show the public that they are grieving, and they call for this to be acknowledged” (Radzilani 2010:68). Radzilani (2010:72) further states that during the bereavement period, the widow of the deceased is considered to be dirty due to her association with the deceased, therefore a cleansing ritual must be conducted in order to purify her. “The implication is that when the husband dies, the wife becomes dirty. Purification, therefore, allows the survivor to become clean and live a normal life” (Radzilani 2010:72). These rituals are performed by a traditional healer who is normally invited a day after the funeral. Cleansing also includes cleansing the whole yard, which “is done to prevent another death (misfortune) that might be caused by lack of respect for the deceased (Radzilani 2010:73 citing Aborampar 1999). Radzilani (2010:73) highlights the fact that

“[t]he belief that people and their environment are contaminated by death seems to be informed by a religious-cultural heritage that constructs death as something that dirties people, who then need cleansing to return them to the previous state they occupied before the occurrence of death”.

### **2.9.2.5 Tsonga people in South Africa**

Amos (2009:25) states that

“[a]ncestors play an integral part in the lives of the Vatsonga people. This is symbolized by the way their dead are treated and the rituals and rites which go with it. When death occurs, there are a number of rituals and rites which are performed. These rituals are symbolic gestures in the sense that they do not actually represent the actions which are performed but have a hidden significant meaning which is only communicated through performance or action without any form of proper explanation”.

### **2.9.2.6 Xhosa people in South Africa**

Tshoba (2014:24) defines the amaXhosa as part of the Nguni ethnic group, who are mostly located in the Eastern Cape province of South Africa. In the Xhosa culture, the bereaved are expected to undergo some bereavement rituals within the 12 months of mourning. Among the rituals that the deceased must perform, according to Tshoba (2014:24), is to shave off their hair, which symbolises that they are mourning their loved one. Among the rituals that are performed by the Xhosa people is what they call *umkhapho* (“to accompany”), which is a ritual “done in order to escort (*ukukhapha*) the departed to the place of their forefathers” (Tshoba 2014:24 citing Yawa 2010). Tshoba (2014:24 citing Yawa 2010) states that the purpose of the *umkhapho* ritual is to maintain a connection between the departed and the living so that the departed are able to come back later. Tshoba (2014:24) further states that the mourning period of the Xhosa people comes to an end when the ritual called *umbuyiso* is completed. Tshoba (2014:24) defines *umbuyiso* as “returning the spirit of the deceased back home. This process may take place a year after the deceased has passed on”.

### **2.9.2.7 Ndebele people in South Africa**

According to Tshoba (2014:16-17), the Ndebele people belong to Nguni ethnic group in South Africa, which make up two-thirds of South Africa’s black population. The Ndebele people are mainly found in the northern parts of the Mpumalanga province in South Africa (Tshoba 2014:17). In her research, Tshoba (2014:39) was mainly interested in the ritual of hair shaving. The hair-

shaving ritual is practised among the Ndebele people of South Africa, and Tshoba (2014) does not dwell much on the other bereavement rituals of the Ndebele people. The point Tshoba (2014) makes is that the Ndebele people have a number of rituals that they practise during bereavement, of which hair shaving is a commonality.

## **2.9.3 Review of other African ethnic groupings**

### **2.9.3.1 *The Luo people in South Nyanza***

Shiino (1997:213) studied the bereavement rituals of the Luo people, who are a Western Nilotic people. This is an ethnic group found in Kenya. Shiino (1997:213) states that this ethnic group has as many as 14 rituals they perform for the deceased during bereavement. The rituals differ depending on the gender of the deceased. Furthermore, rituals differ due to “fixed ways to reflect how a particular death occurred, the good and bad deeds of the deceased, and the way the deceased and the ancestors performed the same rituals” (Shiino 1997:213). Shiino (1997:214) furthermore states that “Luo people perform a total of about 14 rituals for one deceased. All rituals are performed only when elderly men died, and a certain number of rituals are omitted depending upon age, sex, and marital status of the deceased”. Shiino (1997) mentions the following processes or rituals:

- **Death announcement:** This is a time when women in the community announce death by long, quivering wails, which are followed by the sound of drums. This is normally in the early morning or evening, never during the daytime (Shiino 1997:214).
- **Vigil (*buhdo*):** This is a time when close relatives gather together around the deceased throughout several nights until the funeral. Throughout that time a lamp is lit (Shiino 1997:215).
- **Grave digging (*kunyo*):** It is said that in the Luo community, in the olden days, graves were dug during the day. However, nowadays the grave is dug throughout the night, a night before the burial (Shiino 1997:215).
- **Burial (*iko*):** For adults, a burial normally starts at 2 pm. The father or brother of the deceased leads this ritual. “The program of the ritual includes: speeches about the memories of the deceased by parents, brothers and sisters, children, and friends, etc.” (Shiino 1997:216).

- **Accompanying the spirit of the deceased to the battleground (*tero buru matin*):** This is a ritual that is mainly performed for a man. It can be performed one or two weeks after the burial. This is a time when relatives and neighbours take all their cattle, as well as those of the deceased, to the battleground. When reaching their destination, they kill a cock without a knife, eat it, and return to the home of the deceased in a procession while blowing horns. “The ritual reminds people of the time when forefathers engaged in the inter-clan wars. When one member lost his life in a battle, the forefathers worried that their fighting power might diminish” (Shiino 1997:217).
- **Shaving (*liedo*):** Four days after the burial, people shave their hair using a razor blade. The shaving ritual marks the beginning of the mourning period until the end of the mourning period, whereby those who were shaved, are shaved again. Shiino (1997:218) states that there are three types of shaving: for the spouse(s) of the deceased, for children, and to free the widow of the taboos of mourning.
- **Mourners’ departure to their houses (*kee*):** This is a process where the surviving members leave to return to their respective homes. There is a process, however. Shiino (1997:218) states that “[t]he first-born departs first, followed by the second, then the third, and finally they all depart. This whole process may take place in just one day, a few days, or even one week depending on the number of sons and daughters in the family of the deceased”.
- **Serving a meal to the deceased (*yoodhoot*):** The relatives return to the home of the deceased once more after returning home. “Married women (*wagoguni*) bring food and cook to comfort those who remained ... They think that eating together with the deceased pleases him/her.”
- **Serving a meal to the deceased (*tedo*):** Shiino (1997:219) states that “[t]he *tedo*, which literally means cooking, follows the *yaodhoot*. On the day of the *tedo* the sons and daughters return to their natal home to cook for the dead mother or father ... It is just like a get-together party for the children and their relatives”.
- **Going to the former battleground with the spirit of the deceased (*tero buru maduong*):** This is a ritual conducted for elderly men. It is more like a *buru*, but on a larger scale.
- **Visiting the widow’s natal home (*tero cholla*):** This is a ritual that ends the mourning period. After it is performed, the surviving family members return to their normal life to

the extent that Shiino (1997:219) states that “[w]idows, in particular, must have a man in her mind as her prospective inheritor before the day of the *tero cholla*”.

- **Dividing articles left by the deceased (*keyo nyinyo*):** This is a day where the family members divide the belongings of the deceased among themselves. These includes clothes, furniture, dishes, calabashes, and cooking pots. Land and animals are shared among the sons of the deceased.
- **Remembrance (*rapar*):** This is a time when the relatives gather together in the home of the deceased to remember, comfort, and please the dead person. This goes hand in hand with feasting (Shiino 1997:220).
- **Serving a meal to the family of the deceased by affines (*buhdo*):** This is a ritual that is organised by an affine. The idea is to make sure the surviving relatives are at peace with one another. This ritual lasts the whole night without sleeping (Shiino 1997:221).

### 2.9.3.2 *The Batsotso people of Kenya*

Stephen (2014:266) shares a number of rituals that these community members perform and observe during their bereavement:

- ***Oluveko* (shaving):** The hair is shaved a day or two after a funeral. Stephen *et al.* (1997:266) state that “[i]t is done as an identity for the bereaved members; for warriors it is done to separate the dead and his brevity; to show others that the mourners had a funeral and to separate the dead from the living”.
- **Burial outside the compound:** This is when the deceased, especially people who were divorced or never married, is buried outside the compound, in order to send away the spirit of being unmarried.
- ***Obuko*:** This is a day where married women in the community come together to reflect on the burial, pay debts, and share the property of the deceased.
- ***Lisabo*:** The family members of the deceased come together to slaughter an animal; this is a time where they come together to close the chapter with the deceased.
- ***Shinini*:** This is a group of the relatives of the deceased who gather together three to four days after the funeral. This is done to bring back the spirit of the person who died away from home.

- **Beating the corpse:** This is a ritual where the dead body of a person who committed suicide is beaten in order to drive the spirit of suicide away.
- **Remarrying ceremony:** This is a time when the family comes together, where the widow chooses one of the brothers of the deceased to marry.
- **Speaking to the corpse:** This ritual is performed on a man who dies at an older age but who was never married. During this ritual, he is pierced with a thorn in the back and his manhood. This is said to be done in order to encourage men to marry.
- **Wailing:** People cry out after death has occurred as a way of announcing death and to say goodbye to the dead.
- **Obuloli:** This is a time where the good aspects of the deceased are talked about, or where a tribute is made to the deceased.
- **Burial of banana stem:** This ritual is performed when someone has died and the body cannot be located.

## 2.10 SPECIFIC RITUALS TO BE STUDIED

### 2.10.1 Death

The researcher has observed that death is classified as good and acceptable, or as not acceptable and bad. The death of an old person is good and acceptable, although the family and community go through the normal grief that befalls all families and communities who have lost their loved ones. However, cases such as death due to murder, accidents, an infant's demise, etc. are not understood the same. Death is not the same. This applies to bereavement rituals that are practised. The researcher seeks to understand this perspective.

### 2.10.2 Burial

The researcher has also noted that before a burial there is a particular person in the family who goes to the mortuary to bathe and dress the corpse. Not everyone is allowed to do this. Some families use traditional medicines to bathe and talk to the corpse. During the day of the burial, some families have traditional concoctions that are thrown into the grave before the casket is lowered into the ground. Some also cover the casket with a new blanket that has been bought specifically for the purpose. The blanket is lowered into the grave and buried with the deceased.

These are practices that the researcher seeks to investigate to understand their meaning and significance.

### **2.10.3 After the burial**

After the burial, some families do not participate in the community, including attending church services for a period of ten days. The researcher seeks to understand what happens during that period and what the significance of the ten days is. Some families also appear in the community after the ten-day period with shaved heads. The researcher seeks to understand and study the significance and meaning of these practices.

### **2.10.4 Mourning clothes**

If the deceased in a family was a wife/husband, the surviving spouse must wear a particular mourning garment. During that mourning period and while wearing these mourning garments, certain traditional concoctions are prepared for the surviving spouse to consume. Some rules are also given to the surviving spouse of things that they are forbidden from doing. The researcher aims to learn what these forbidden things are, and why they are not allowed during the mourning period.

### **2.10.5 The end of the mourning period**

Towards the end of the mourning period, which differs for males and females, the surviving spouse gets rid of the mourning garments (*go apolwa* – to be undressed – in Setswana, although the direct translation does not do justice to the exact meaning of this ritual).

This is a time of great celebration for both the mourner and the entire family. Researchers mainly seek to understand the significance and details of this ritual in different ways. Previous research is specific to ethnic groups and examines the rituals of a specific ethnic group or focuses on one specific bereavement ritual (Radzilani 2010; Amos 2009; Makgahlela 2016; Stephen 2014). Radzilani (2010:3) investigated the bereavement rituals but limited the research to the Venda community, and specifically to women by focusing on “the ways in which the religious-cultural discourse informs African Christian and traditional African women’s perceptions of bereavement rituals and the way in which they construct realities after the death of a spouse”, whereas

Makgahlela (2016:7) studied bereavement rituals that focus mainly on the Northern Sotho community, with the research intending “to explore and document bereavement and mourning rituals in a Northern Sotho community and to add a culturally informed dimension to these experiences and practices”.

Stephen (2014:263) investigated bereavement rituals among the Batsotso community in Kenya. The focus of the research was on the therapeutic value of the Batsotso bereavement rituals. Amos (2009:15) also investigated bereavement rituals but with the specific aim of studying their symbolism within the Vatsonga culture. In this study, Amos (2009:15) researched “the symbolic meanings which are displayed in cultural ritual ceremonies and their significance and relevance in our daily lives”. Kyalo (2013:34) researched rituals and rites in general, and attempted to define their significance and meaning in African communities. Baloyi and Makobe-Rabothata (2013:232,236) wrote about rituals with the intention of putting across the African conception of death, and rituals as being part of that conception. In their work, their aim was not to focus on bereavement rituals but rather to provide an overview of what death means to African people, namely “its meaning, significance and accompanying mourning rituals and process” (Baloyi & Makobe-Rabothata 2013:232). Wolfelt (2005:13) also researched funeral rituals but specifically focused on the funeral and why those rituals are helpful. Setsiba (2012:6) also conducted research with regard to bereavement rituals but specifically focused on the rituals practised in South African townships. Among other phenomena that Setsiba (2012:6) studied was a “controversial type of mourning called ‘wie sien ons’ (translated as ‘*who is seeing us*’) which is practiced in the townships throughout South Africa”. Tshoba (2014:VI) conducted research with a specific focus on the psychological significance of shaving hair as a ritual during bereavement among the Ndebele people in Mamelodi, Pretoria. Ketshabile (2012:4) studied Methodist rituals, with a specific focus on the Barolong clan in Mahikeng, North West, South Africa.

Other researchers have also studied the therapeutic benefits of bereavement rituals from a psychological perspective, whereas others have investigated the relationship between bereavement rituals and Christianity. Researchers have also examined the emerging trends of bereavement rituals (Setsiba 2012). This research, however, investigates bereavement rituals practised specifically by African Methodists in Mamelodi. It also focuses on specific African bereavement rituals that are practised.



## **2.11 SUMMARY**

This chapter reviewed existing literature concerning the topic of this study, and in order to capture the essence of what this research seeks to learn, the following were discussed: theoretical frameworks, the impact of death across cultures, the Christian perspective of death, the Methodist theological understanding of death and rites, the Western understanding of death, the African understanding of death, definitions of bereavement, comparison of different ethnic groups in South Africa, and specific rituals studied in this research as well as other parts of the African continent. This chapter also attempted to highlight the significance of this study, and how uniquely different it is from the current body of knowledge.

## **CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter discusses the framework that was applied in this research. The following elements are discussed in this chapter: research paradigm, research population, procedure of data collection, credibility, transferability, data analysis, and ethical considerations. This chapter, in short, discusses the methodology that was used for this research, as, according to Welman *et al.* (2005:2), “[r]esearch methodology considers and explains the logic behind research methods and techniques”.

### **3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM**

Duffy *et al.* (2010:35) define a paradigm as “a smaller framework that guides researchers to conceptualize events in a consistent fashion”. Furthermore, Duffy *et al.* (2010:35) state that the term “paradigm” has two meanings. The first is to describe a set or collection of ideas, values, and theories that are commonly agreed on in a sociological way to guide the direction and conducting of scientific inquiry. The second meaning is as the “concrete puzzle solution to a given problem”. Kawulich and Chilisa (2012:1 citing Patton 2002) state that a paradigm is a way of describing a worldview or understanding that is informed by philosophical assumptions about the nature of reality (ontology – what do we believe about the nature of reality?), ways of knowing (epistemology – how do we know what we know?), and ethics and value systems (axiology – what do we believe is true?). A paradigm thus leads researchers to ask certain questions and use appropriate approaches to systematic inquiry (methodology – how should we study the world?). Guba and Lincoln (1985:105) define a paradigm as a way to “define a basic belief system or worldview that guides the investigator, not only in choices of method but in ontologically and epistemological ways”. Therefore, in this research, the researcher chose to use the constructivist/interpretivist paradigm.

### 3.2.1 The constructivist/interpretivist paradigm

The constructivist paradigm can be traced back to Edmund Husserl's philosophy of phenomenology (the study of human consciousness and self-awareness) and the German philosopher Wilhelm Dilthey's philosophy of hermeneutics (the study of interpretation) (Kawulich & Chilisa 2012:9). Denzin and Lincoln (1994:100) state that this paradigm

“suggests that individual constructions can be elicited and refined only through interaction between and among investigator and respondents. These varying constructions are interpreted using conventional hermeneutical techniques, and are compared and constructed through a dialectical interchange. The final aim is to distill a consensus construction”.

In this paradigm, the researcher's role is as follows: “The inquirer's voice is that of the ‘passionate participant’ ... actively engaged in facilitating the ‘multivoice’ reconstruction of his or her own construction as well as those of all other participants.” Guba and Lincoln (1985:110) focus mainly on realities as constructed by society or individuals. Researchers therefore embark on a journey of interpreting these varying constructions.

This paradigm raises the following areas of inquiry:

- **Ontology:** “Reality is, therefore, mind dependent and a personal or social construct” (Dammak 2018:5). Dammak (2018:5) adds that interpretivists “believe that people are creative and actively construct their social reality. They further note that the social world should be studied in the natural world, through the eyes of the participants”.
- **Epistemology:** “Constructivists believe that knowledge is subjective, because it is socially constructed and mind dependent. Truth lies within the human experience. Statements on what is true or false are, therefore, culture bound, historically and context dependent, although some might be universal” (Kawulich & Chilisa 2012:10).
- **Axiology:** “Constructivists assert that, since reality is mind constructed and mind dependent and knowledge subjective, social inquiry is in turn value-bound and value-laden” (Kawulich & Chilisa 2012:10).
- **Methodology:** “The value of interpretative research is to understand people's experiences. The research takes place in a natural setting where the participants make their living. The

purpose of the study expresses the assumptions of the interpretivist researcher in attempting to understand human experiences” (Kawulich & Chilisa 2012:10). Dammak (2018:6 citing Cohen *et al.* 2003:19) notes that interpretivists believe that the “social world can only be understood from the standpoint of the individuals who are part of the ongoing action being investigated.” This means that participants tell their own story in their own way. A researcher is just a participant who has an interest in that particular story.

### **3.3 RESEARCH METHODS**

In this study, the researcher used qualitative methodology. According to Bazeley (2013:8), “[w]hen you have decided upon your goal, the question becomes: how are you going to get there?” That is where the question of methodology arises. Bazeley (2013:8) defines research methods as “tools employed by a researcher to investigate a problem, to find out what is going on there”.

Qualitative methodology is a methodology that always attempts “to study human action from the perspective of the social actors themselves ... The primary goal of studies using this approach is defined as describing and understanding (*Verstehen*) rather than explaining human behaviour” (Babbie & Mouton 2001:270). Bazeley (2013:4) states that “[r]esearchers engaging in a qualitative study focus on observing, describing, interpreting, and analysing the way that people experience, act on, or think about themselves and the world around them”.

It should be understood that this methodology in itself is a collection of methods and techniques to acquire data.

“Qualitative studies then, will typically use qualitative methods of gaining access to research subjects (e.g. theoretical selection of cases, snowball sampling); qualitative methods of data collection (e.g. participation observation, semi-structured interviewing, the use of personal documents to construct life stories); and qualitative methods of analysis (e.g. grounded theory approach, analytical induction, narrative analysis, discourse analysis)” (Babbie & Mouton 2001:270).

The researcher found this methodology relevant as it seeks to study “attitudes and behaviours best understood within their natural setting, as opposed to somewhat artificial settings of experiments and surveys” (Babbie & Mouton 2001:270). This research approach, according to Babbie and

Mouton (2001:310), has three wings, so to speak, namely ethnographic, case study, and life history. Ethnographic study is an approach that seeks to describe and understand different cultural groups and societies. Secondly, the case study seeks to study a particular unit, which might be a family, or any social group. Thirdly, life history can be categorised into three forms: literature, and predominantly biographical accounts; studies that emphasise personal crises or careers; and psychohistories.

Duffy *et al.* (2010:45) indicate that this methodology gives research participants an opportunity to describe their own experiences using their own language, thoughts, and understanding; not those of a researcher. Literature was also consulted, as well as interacting with different groups that this research sought to study, namely the congregation members of the MCSA in Mamelodi, Pretoria.

### **3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN**

Babbie and Mouton (2001:74) state that a “research design is a plan or blueprint of how you intend conducting the research. Researchers often confuse ‘research design’ and ‘research methodology’, but these are two very different dimensions of research”. Babbie and Mouton (2001:75) further state that the research design focuses on the end product of the research, for example: “What kind of evidence is required to address the research question adequately?” Setsiba (2012:49) simplifies this by stating that it is the procedures researchers use to approach the problem and arrive at answers.

Therefore, for the purpose of this research, the researcher chose the case study as the research design to obtain answers to the research questions.

#### **3.4.1 Case study**

Welman *et al.* (2005:193) indicate that the term “case study” relates to

“the fact that a limited number of units of analysis (often only one) is studied intensively. The units of analysis include individuals, groups, and institutions ... In case studies, on the other hand, we are directed towards understanding the uniqueness and idiosyncrasy of a particular case in all its complexity”.

Babbie and Mouton (2001:281) state that a case study is helpful as it assists the researcher by interacting with the unit of the study in its context. Case studies also assist due to the fact that they take “multiple perspectives into account and attempt to understand the influences of multilevel social systems on subjects’ perspectives and behaviours” (Babbie & Mouton 2001:281). Case studies can be conducted on individuals, units such as families, clinical sessions, a community, or a country (Babbie & Mouton 2001:281).

A case study therefore gives a researcher a variety of options in gathering data: participation, observation, observation notes, questionnaires, and unstructured in-depth interviews (Welman *et al.* 2005:195-199). Denscombe (2003:31) affirms this method as very good due to the fact that

“it allows the researcher to use a variety of sources, a variety of types of data and variety of research methods as part of the investigation. It not only allows this, it actually invites and encourages the researcher to do so”.

The researcher chose this design due to the fact that it allows for interviews, which is in line with what this research seeks to do, which is to investigate the participants’ stories and perspective about life and embraces the methodology chosen for this research. Brinkmann and Kvale (2015:3) affirm that “[t]he qualitative research interview attempts to understand the world from the subjects’ point of view, to unfold the meaning of their experiences, to uncover their lived world prior to scientific explanations”.

According to Denscombe (2003:38), case study research has the following four advantages:

1. A case study is open to multiple methods of research.
2. It encourages data to come from the participants; they tell their story and “there is no pressure on the researcher to impose controls or to change circumstances”.
3. It is focused. It assists the researcher to focus on one specific group, facing a particular challenge, or dealing with one subject.
4. It is a good testing ground for a particular theory.

Flick (2002:114) adds that the case study exposes how opinions are produced, expressed, and exchanged in everyday life. They are a tool for constructing individual opinions constructively.

Zainal (2007:4) adds that it

“can give access to not only the numerical information concerning the strategies used, but also the reasons for strategy use, and how the strategies are used in relation to other strategies. As reading behaviours involve complex cognitive processes, each reading strategy cannot be examined in isolation but rather in relation to other strategies”.

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007:254) state that there are three kinds of case studies, namely exploratory, descriptive, and explanatory case studies. The researcher chose the explanatory case study as per the research questions of this study. Zainal (2007:3) defines the explanatory case study as one that examines “the data closely both at a surface and deep level in order to explain the phenomena in the data”.

The researcher therefore found the explanatory case study an ideal approach to this study because it “helps explain both the process and outcome of a phenomenon through complete observation, reconstruction and analysis of the cases under investigation” (Zainal 2007:1). Considering the research topic, a case study was ideal and assisted the researcher with hearing the real-life experiences, perceptions, and thoughts of the participants with regard to their Christian faith, as well as their African traditional bereavement rituals.

### **3.5 POPULATION OF THE STUDY**

Welman *et al.* (2003:52) state that “[t]he population is the study object and consists of individuals, groups, organizations, human products and events or the conditions to which they are exposed”. Therefore this component of the research is key due to the fact that a “research problem therefore relates to a specific population and the population encompasses the total collection of all units of analysis about which the researcher wishes to make specific conclusions” (Welman *et al.* 2003:52).

For the purpose of this research, the population that was researched to achieve the research objective are members of the MCSA, who reside in Mamelodi, Pretoria. The target population was specifically those members who have recently experienced bereavement.

### 3.6 SAMPLE AND SAMPLING

Babbie and Mouton (2001:164) define sampling as “the process of selecting observations”. Therefore, for the purpose of this research, the researcher identified 25 participants: 18 were females between the ages 27 and 80 years, and seven were males between 34 and 58 years, all residing in Mamelodi, who have recently experienced bereavement.

According to Emmel (2013:1),

“[s]ampling in the sense most often used in research refers to two activities: first, defining a population from which a sample will be drawn and of which the sample will be representative; and secondly ensuring that every person or thing from this predefined population has the chance of inclusion that is greater than zero and can be measured”.

These were people who were all members of the Methodist Church in Mamelodi, Pretoria. The researcher interviewed people from the age of 18 and above. Babbie and Mouton (2001:57) state that “[b]efore researchers draw a sample of the population for analysis, they should obtain clarity about the population”.

Therefore, for the purposes of this research, the researcher chose purposive sampling. Gentles *et al.* (2015:1778) note that

“[t]he notion of purposive sampling is sometimes used to indicate that interviewees or participants are selected on the basis of their knowledge and verbal eloquence to describe a group or (sub) culture to which they belong ... Yin (2011), for example, defines purposeful sampling as ‘The selection of participants or sources of data to be used in a study, based on their anticipated richness and relevance of information in relation to the study’s research questions’”.

The researcher’s target population comprised people who have recently experienced bereavement, and in line with this research, purposive sampling was used.



### **3.7 RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS**

Bazeley (2013:4) states that “[r]esearchers engaging in a qualitative study focus on observing, describing, interpreting, and analyzing the way people experience, act on, or think about themselves and the world around them”. Therefore, for the purpose of this research, the researcher observed, described, interpreted, and analysed data from the literature review and as obtained from conducting interviews (Bazeley 2013:4). Gillham (2000:2) states that this is a useful method for research because through interviews the researcher is able “to obtain information and understanding of issues relevant to the general aims and specific questions of a research project”. The researcher utilised the interview guide, fieldnotes, and audio recordings to capture the required data for this research.

### **3.8 PROCEDURE OF DATA COLLECTION**

This process was articulated in Section 3.8 above. The researcher used document analysis, as well as the conducting of interviews, as articulated below. The researcher used focus group interviews for the control group.

#### **3.8.1 Document analysis**

Bailey (1994:194) states that document analysis refers to the use of documents that contain information about a phenomenon that a researcher wishes to study. Babbie and Mouton (2001:5-6) further state that when a researcher embarks on document analysis,

“one of your aims should be to find out what has been done in your field of study ... You want to learn from other scholars: how they have theorized and conceptualized on issues, what they have found empirically, and what instrumentation they have used and to what effect”.

Welman *et al.* (2005:38) indicate that reviewing other documents is helpful in order to determine if one’s interest or field of research has not been explored before. It is helpful in order to identify research gaps, and to find new perspectives on the topic in question.

In this research, the researcher used other documents to examine and identify what other scholars have written and identified on the subject matter. The sole purpose was to examine the duality that the research topic seeks to study with regard to African bereavement rituals.

### **3.8.2 Interviews**

Babbie and Mouton (2010:249) state that

“[t]he role of the interviewer is indispensable, as data collection is one of the most crucial phases in the research process ... The interview has the explicit purpose of one person obtaining information from another during a structured conversation based on a prearranged set of questions”.

Gillham (2000:1) defines an interview as “a conversation, usually between two people. But it is a conversation where one person – the interviewer – is seeking responses for a particular purpose from the other person: the interviewee”. Seidman (2006:9) states that at the heart of an in-depth interview is to understand the lived experience of the participants. An interview emerges from an interest to understand another person’s perspective or worldview (Seidman 2006:9).

Welman *et al.* (2005:198) state that

“[i]n unstructured interviews an attempt is made to understand how individuals experience their life-world and how they make sense of what is happening to them. The interviewer’s question should thus be directed at the participant’s experiences, feelings, and convictions about the theme in question”.

Therefore, for the purpose of this study, the researcher interviewed specified participants for the purposes of collecting data. A semi-structured interview was used to collect data for this specific research due to the fact that “it allows a certain degree of flexibility and allows for the pursuit of unexpected lines of enquiry during the interview” (Grix 2004:127). Denscombe (2003:167) states that

“[u]nstructured interviews go further in the extent to which emphasis is placed on the interviewee’s thoughts. The researcher’s role is to be as unobtrusive as possible – to start the ball rolling by introducing a theme or topic and then letting the interviewee develop his or her ideas and pursue his or her train of thought”.

Barbour (2008:119) affirms semi-structured interviewing as helpful due to the fact that “it refers to the capacity of interviews to elicit data on perspectives of salience to respondents rather than the researcher dictating the direction of the encounter, as would be the case with more structured approaches”. As mentioned above, the research mainly used document analysis and interviews with a group chosen from the members of the Methodist Church in Mamelodi, Pretoria.

### **3.9 PROCEDURE OF DATA ANALYSIS**

Data analysis is a process whereby collected data are analysed and interpreted in order to find answers to the research question(s) raised. Huberman and Miles (2002:431) state that “[q]ualitative studies ultimately aim to describe and explain (at some level) a pattern”. Babbie and Mouton (2001:101) state that in qualitative research, “we interpret the collected data for the purpose of drawing conclusions that reflect on the interests, ideas, and theories that initiated the inquiry”. The researcher therefore describes how this process will unfold. Bazeley (2013:4) states that “[r]esearchers engaging in a qualitative study focus on observing, describing, interpreting, and analysing the way that people experience, act on, or think about themselves and the world around them”.

For the purposes of this study, the researcher described, portrayed, interpreted, and explored the meaning of bereavement rituals to Methodist Church members in Mamelodi, Pretoria. This means the researcher interpreted the interviews conducted, texts read, and observations made during the process. Each research question was taken as a separate theme, which guided the analysis in order to develop answers and findings to the research questions.

### **3.10 CREDIBILITY AND TRUSTWORTHINESS**

Babbie and Mouton (2001:277) state that for research to be credible and trustworthy, the following steps should be followed:

1. **Prolonged observation** – refers to taking time in reaching a conclusion. Instant conclusions are not reliable or trustworthy. This is more relevant to field research or work.
2. **Persistent observation** – refers to continually pursuing interpretations of a phenomenon in different ways.

3. **Triangulation** – “This means asking different questions, seeking different sources, and using different methods” (Babbie & Mouton 2001:277).
4. **Referential adequacy** – using other methods to document findings.
5. **Peer debriefing** – sharing insights with a similar-status colleague.
6. **Member checks** – checking with sources whether they agree with the interpretation and analysis of the findings.

This study followed all the required academic methods and adhered to the level of professionalism that is required for the benefit of credible findings. For this research to be credible, the researcher followed the following processes:

1. The chosen research design and methodology are recognised academically as qualitative research (Babbie & Mouton 2001:269). Before the interviews were conducted, ethical clearance was applied for from the University of the Free State Ethical Committee for approval. All the necessary ethical requirements were met.
2. The participants to be interviewed were firstly given letters asking for permission to interview them. No participant was coerced by the fact that the researcher is a Methodist minister. In the process of collecting the data, all the ethical requirements were at all times respected and followed, for example:
  - The participants were given the option to withdraw at any stage of the interview if they felt uncomfortable or did not want to proceed with the interviews. Babbie and Mouton (2001:521) state that “voluntary participation is important”.
  - Participants were given all the respect they deserved due to the sensitivity of the subject of research (the death or loss of loved ones). Therefore, great consideration and sensitivity were prioritised. “Social research should never injure the people being studied” (Babbie & Mouton 2001:522).
  - The research question and objectives were clearly explained to all the participants so that they were fully aware of what this research sought to achieve.
  - The interpretation and analysis of the findings were communicated to all the participants. Where errors or misinterpretations were found, corrections were made.
  - The researcher was open and honest with all the participants throughout the research process.

### **3.11 TRANSFERABILITY**

According to Babbie and Mouton (2001:277),

“the qualitative researcher is not primarily interested in (statistical) generalizations. All observations are defined by the specific contexts in which they occur ... The qualitative researcher, therefore, does not maintain, or claim, that knowledge gained from one context will necessarily have relevance for other contexts in another time frame”.

### **3.12 DELIMITATIONS AND LIMITATIONS**

Creswell (2003:147) states that “delimitations and limitations are the two parameters that establish the boundaries, expectations, reservations and qualifications inherent in every study”.

#### **3.12.1 Delimitations**

This study was limited to the interviewing of members of the Methodist Church in Mamelodi, Pretoria. These members reside in different sections of the Mamelodi township. This study specifically focused on bereaved families. For the purpose of this research, 25 families were identified. The ages of the participants ranged from 18 years old and older.

#### **3.12.2 Limitations**

This research was limited to people who experienced bereavement recently, and who were Methodists in Mamelodi, Pretoria. Therefore, having limited this research to this group of people, this research might not be relevant to other religious orientations besides the Methodist people or mainline churches. The other limitation to the study is the fact that the researcher is a Methodist minister interviewing Methodist members. This might be a limitation because of the respect he commands as a minister, and his subjectivity might be in question. Therefore, the researcher selected Methodist members from another section of the church, and did not focus on the members the researcher pastors to.

### 3.13 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical considerations were taken into account to ensure that this process of research met all ethical requirements. Grix (2004:142 citing Blaxter *et al.* 1997:148) states that a researcher “has a set of moral principles that guides her in the choice of how to conduct herself with regard to such topics as confidentiality, anonymity, legality, professionalism and privacy when dealing with people in research”.

Duffy *et al.* (2010:53 citing Christensen 1988) state that researchers must uphold ethical standards at all times and that

“participation in research should not endanger people in any physical, psychological, or social way. All participants must be informed about the purpose of the research as much as possible (without jeopardizing the integrity of the research, and the use of deception must be minimized. It is ethically undesirable to do otherwise”.

The researcher applied for and received ethical clearance, which bound the researcher to follow and uphold all required ethical standards. Furthermore, due to the emotional nature of the research topic, the researcher identified a group of therapists who were on standby to assist in case any of the participants had an emotional breakdown, as this research deals with bereavement.

Welman *et al.* (2005:201) state that there are four ethical considerations a researcher must pay attention to:

- **Informed consent:** “The researcher should obtain the necessary permission from the respondents ...” (Welman *et al.* 2005:201).
- **Right of privacy:** The participants should be assured that their identity will remain anonymous.
- **Protection from harm:** “The respondents should be given the assurance that they will be indemnified against any physical and emotional harm” (Welman *et al.* 2005:201).
- **Involvement of the researcher:** Researchers should refrain from treating respondents as objects or statistics, but should treat them with respect as human beings.

The researcher ensured that all of the above guidelines and expectations were observed at all times while conducting this research in the following manner:

- A letter requesting permission to interview was sent out to all the participants in this study.
- An ethical clearance letter was sought from the ethics committee of the University of the Free State before any interviews were conducted. All the necessary ethical requirements of the institution were noted.
- A letter requesting permission from the senior minister (superintendent) to conduct interviews amongst the Methodist Church members in Mamelodi was sent out.
- Therapist services were sought to intervene in case the participants needed emotional support.
- Interview consent forms were sent out to all the participants before the interviews were conducted.
- Participants who decided not to participate in this research were not forced to participate, as stipulated in the interview consent forms.

### **3.14 SUMMARY**

This chapter clearly articulated the research methodology. The following areas were fully discussed in this chapter: research methods, research design, population of the study, sample and sampling, research instruments, credibility and trustworthiness, procedure of data analysis, and ethical considerations. This chapter sought to clarify the direction the researcher intended to take in order to achieve the research objectives as outlined.

## **CHAPTER 4: DATA PRESENTATION**

### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

This section of the chapter presents the data that were collected from various participants for the purpose of this study in order to establish the role of African traditional bereavement rituals for Methodist Church members in Mamelodi, Pretoria. The data were collected from 25 people; 10 of whom who were engaged using one-to-one interviews. The other 15 were engaged in a focus group where a group interview was conducted. In total, 25 participants were interviewed for this study. These interviews included various ethnic groups.

The researcher chose to classify the participants in the following way: The first 10 people who were interviewed were classified as Participants AA to JJ. Focus group participants were classified as Participants A to R. The data are presented by clustering common themes, reflections, tallying, and by the ranking of responses to uncover the main issues that arose from the interviews. These will establish the findings of the study.

### **4.2 BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

The first part of this chapter provides the background information of the participants. The background information helped the researcher to identify basic information about the participants in the study. Therefore, all the participants who were interviewed were people who were seen as suitable respondents as they had experienced bereavement in their families. The collective background information of all the individual participants is presented in the form of a table (see Table 4.1). The individual (one-on-one) interviews with the participants from the Methodist Church were taken as an experimental group, and the focus group discussions were considered to be the control group of this study.

It should be noted that the participants who were interviewed comprised both males and females. However, during the process of this research, males withdrew from the research, and the researcher could only conduct one-on-one interviews with the female participants.



#### 4.2.1 One-on-one interviews: Males and females

**Table 4.1: Background information of individual interview participants**

Participant no.	Gender	Age	Educational level	Denomination	Years of church membership	Location of the participant	Ethnicity	Occupation
AA	F	40	BA	Methodist	10 years	Mamelodi East	Xhosa	Nurse
BB	F	65	Grade 8	Methodist	58 years	Mamelodi Nellmapius	Ndebele	Factory worker
CC	F	80	Hons	Methodist	35 years	Mamelodi East	Zulu	Teacher
DD	F	60	Hons	Methodist	Born into it	Mamelodi East	Tsonga	Teacher
EE	F	50	Diploma	Methodist	Born into it	Mamelodi East	Zulu	Factory worker
FF	F	46	Hons	Methodist	Born into it	Mamelodi Nellmapius	Zulu	Manager
GG	F	67	Grade 7	Methodist	Over 60	Mamelodi East	Ndebele	Domestic worker
HH	F	27	Grade 12	Methodist	31 years	Mamelodi East	Sotho	Student
II	F	70	Grade 6	Methodist	Born into it	Mamelodi East	Tswana	Domestic worker
JJ	F	58	Matric	Methodist	28 years	Mamelodi East	Ndebele	Retired

Table 4.1 provides the collective background information of the participants who were approached for the individual interviews, which included one-on-one interviews. The information reveals that all the participants were female; however, this refers to the main interviewees. Participants AA, FF, and HH had males present with them who also participated in the interviews. All the participants were residents of Mamelodi, from different sections of the Mamelodi township. The age group of the participants ranged from 27 to 80 years. Five participants ranged from 20 to 38 years, and the second group ranged from 50 to 70 years of age. The researcher focused on families; other families were represented by an individual (one person) who is an elder, or close relative to the deceased, while others had two to four family members representing the entire family in the interview.

All the participants were staunch members of the MCSA in Mamelodi, Pretoria. Four participants have been members of the church for the past six to 15 years, and the other six members 15 to 40 years. This indicates that all the participants who were approached to participate in this study had the relevant capabilities and knowledge of the MCSA, and could also make a worthwhile contribution to what this study sought to discover.

### 4.3 PROFILES OF PARTICIPANTS

#### 4.3.1 Participant AA

Date of interview: 21 March 2018

Were you born in Pretoria?	<i>No, Eastern Cape, eDongwe in Berlin.</i>
How long have you been in Pretoria?	<i>Since 2001.</i>
When did you join the MCSA?	<i>2008.</i>
What made you join the Methodist Church?	<i>I just fell in love with the Church, and I decided to join it when I moved to Pretoria.</i>
Is your family MCSA members?	<i>No, they're Baptists.</i>
Do you practise ancestral-related rituals?	<i>No.</i>
Have you lost a family member?	<i>Yes, mother-in-law.</i>
What was the cause of death?	<i>Old age.</i>
Who communicated the bereavement news?	<i>The elders in the family.</i>
Which bereavement rituals were practised during bereavement?	<i>A day after the funeral, the deceased's clothes were washed, and distributed amongst the relatives shortly afterwards. Immediately after the burial, the elders of the family called a meeting where the immediate family members were given guidance as to how to live going forward after the funeral. Seven days after the funeral, traditional beer was prepared, a goat was slaughtered, and the immediate family members were shaved. Before this period the immediate family members were not allowed to go anywhere due to the bereavement in the family.</i>

#### 4.3.2 Participant BB

Date of interview: 16 April 2018

Were you born in Pretoria?	<i>Yes, Lady Selborne.</i>
How long have you been in Pretoria?	<i>Since birth.</i>
When did you join the MCSA?	<i>In the 1960s, not certain about the exact date.</i>
What made you join the Methodist Church?	<i>Their family were Methodists and they also joined it.</i>
Is your family MCSA members?	<i>Yes.</i>
Do you practise ancestral-related rituals?	<i>Yes.</i>
Have you lost a family member?	<i>Yes, a son.</i>
What was the cause of death?	<i>Murder.</i>
Who communicated the bereavement news?	<i>Elderly males in the family.</i>
Which bereavement rituals were practised during bereavement?	<i>The morning before the deceased could leave the mortuary, some family members went to the mortuary to wash the body with pure</i>

	<p><i>water. A ritual was made by the cousins of the deceased but the interviewee was not familiar with it nor present when it was done. The body of the deceased arrived at home a day before the burial, people carrying the deceased stopped at the gate where one of the family members (a man) said family clan praises and the spirit of the ancestors was invoked. Thereafter the body of the deceased was taken to a bedroom which he slept in. The kids of the deceased saw the deceased first. It is believed this is helpful so that they are not problematic after the burial. Problematic in this instance means the children might struggle to come to terms with the loss of their parent by being rebellious, struggle to sleep, or even see the deceased from time to time. A day after the burial, the children of the deceased were bathed in traditional herbs together with immediate family members. The house was also cleaned. That marked the end of mourning.</i></p>
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### 4.3.3 Participant CC

Date of interview: 16 April 2018

Were you born in Pretoria?	<i>No, KZN.</i>
How long have you been in Pretoria?	<i>Since in the 1950s.</i>
When did you join the MCSA?	<i>Married into it.</i>
What made you join the Methodist Church?	<i>Marriage, this is due to the cultural practice that after marriage you join your husband's church.</i>
Is your family MCSA members?	<i>Yes.</i>
Do you practise ancestral-related rituals?	<i>No.</i>
Have you lost a family member?	<i>Yes, husband.</i>
What was the cause of death?	<i>Car accident.</i>
Who communicated the bereavement news?	<i>The elders of her husband's side.</i>
Which bereavement rituals were practised during bereavement?	<i>Immediately after death occurred, furniture was moved out of the house and the base of the bed and the widow sat on the mattress. After the burial, traditional beer (called go tlhatswa digarafo) was prepared for people who borrowed the family tools to dig and fill up the grave. This is a custom that goes back for many years.</i>

#### 4.3.4 Participant DD

Date of interview: 16 April 2018

Were you born in Pretoria?	<i>No, Braamford.</i>
How long have you been in Pretoria?	<i>Since 1973.</i>
When did you join the MCSA?	<i>Born in a family of Methodists.</i>
What made you join the Methodist Church?	<i>Family church they grew in and continued to worship in it.</i>
Is your family MCSA members?	<i>Yes.</i>
Do you practise ancestral-related rituals?	<i>Yes.</i>
Have you lost a family member?	<i>Yes, brother-in-law.</i>
What was the cause of death?	<i>Natural causes.</i>
Who communicated the bereavement news?	<i>The elders.</i>
Which bereavement rituals were practised during bereavement?	<i>The bereaved were not allowed to leave the family yard. The widow had to wear a head-scarf covering her eyes and ears at all times. When the corpse left the mortuary, a member of the family had to tell the deceased of all the activities happening around him, especially when moved from one point to another (hospital to mortuary, mortuary to home, home to the cemetery). This takes place when the corpse enters or leaves his home. Thirdly, a blanket was used to cover the casket; it is believed this is done so that the deceased doesn't feel cold. After the burial, the family's food was put aside, mixed with herbs and eaten by the whole family. The rest of the people who attended the funeral ate separate food, dished out separately. After a week, the family were washed or cleansed, only then the widow was allowed to go back to work and can then start cooking for herself and everybody in the house. For three months the widow will drink traditional herbs prepared by a traditional healer to clean her system. After a year she changed her mourning clothing (which is normally black attire or scarf put around the neck, or even doek) and the diseased is fetched to be home as an ancestor.</i>

#### 4.3.5 Participant EE

Date of interview: 17 April 2018

Were you born in Pretoria?	<i>Yes.</i>
How long have you been in Pretoria?	<i>Born here.</i>
When did you join the MCSA?	<i>Born in the Methodist Church.</i>
What made you join the Methodist Church?	<i>Family church they chose.</i>
Is your family MCSA members?	<i>Yes.</i>
Do you practise ancestral-related rituals?	<i>Yes.</i>
Have you lost a family member?	<i>Yes, female.</i>
What was the cause of death?	<i>Illness.</i>
Who communicated the bereavement news?	<i>Children of the deceased.</i>
Which bereavement rituals were practised during bereavement?	<i>The deceased was spoken to when moved from point A to point B. One of the deceased's daughters went to the mortuary to dress them. A blanket was put inside the casket for the deceased to sleep on top of it. Ten days after the burial the family was not allowed to go anywhere, or even attend church. After that period, the family gathered to be cleansed together with the house; that it called ukuhlanjululwa. A month afterwards the elders came around to talk to the children how they should behave henceforth.</i>

#### 4.3.6 Participant FF

Date of interview: 23 April 2018

Were you born in Pretoria?	<i>Yes.</i>
How long have you been in Pretoria?	<i>Born here.</i>
When did you join the MCSA?	<i>Born in the Methodist Church.</i>
What made you join the Methodist Church?	<i>Grew up and loved it.</i>
Is your family MCSA members?	<i>Yes.</i>
Do you practise ancestral-related rituals?	<i>Yes.</i>
Have you lost a family member?	<i>Yes, father.</i>
What was the cause of death?	<i>Old age.</i>
Who communicated the bereavement news?	<i>Children of the deceased.</i>
Which bereavement rituals were practised during bereavement?	<i>The elders in KZN were made aware of the death case, immediately after it happened. On their arrival, elderly men in the family left with the elder daughter of the deceased to the nearby field to look for a specific branch of a tree, which was used to communicate with the deceased each time there was a movement like from the hospital to the mortuary, and mortuary to the deceased's homestead. A cow was also slaughtered for the funeral. The slaughtering had to</i>

	<p><i>happen before the deceased's body arrived at home. The beast was not supposed to be shot but slaughtered. Traditional beer was also brewed, and a snuff used to communicate with the ancestors regarding the death case, which has taken place in the home. A candle was lit, and a cup with the traditional beer remained in the room of the deceased. The widow was not permitted to sit on a chair, but a traditional mat throughout this time. The casket was covered with a blanket. After the funeral, the widow was expected to sleep on the floor, not her bed, for a month. A day after the funeral, the deceased's children were cleansed by a sangoma. The widow was given traditional herbs to drink for three months. The widow wore mourning clothing for a year. Two weeks before she completed her mourning period, she had to go back to the sangoma for some more rituals to cleanse her.</i></p>
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**4.3.7 Participant GG**

Date of interview: 23 April 2018

Were you born in Pretoria?	<i>Yes.</i>
How long have you been in Pretoria?	<i>Born here.</i>
When did you join the MCSA?	<i>In the 1950s.</i>
What made you join the Methodist Church?	<i>Recruited by a colleague.</i>
Is your family MCSA members?	<i>No.</i>
Do you practise ancestral-related rituals?	<i>Yes.</i>
Have you lost a family member?	<i>Yes, brother.</i>
What was the cause of death?	<i>Illness.</i>
Who communicated the bereavement news?	<i>Siblings of the deceased.</i>
Which bereavement rituals were practised during bereavement?	<p><i>Clan praises were said to the departed before the body entered the home a day before the funeral. This continued again before they left hospital, before entering the home a day before the burial, as well as before going to the graveyard. After a week, a sister to the bereaved was cleansed with African herbs. Other members of the family were washed as per their church's customs. A day after the funeral, clothes of the deceased were distributed amongst immediate family members. Before the distribution of the clothes happened, aloe was mixed with water and the clothes were sprinkled with it.</i></p>

#### 4.3.8 Participant HH

Date of interview: 30 April 2018

Were you born in Pretoria?	<i>No, Limpopo in Lebowakgomo.</i>
How long have you been in Pretoria?	<i>Since 1987.</i>
When did you join the MCSA?	<i>1987.</i>
What made you join the Methodist Church?	<i>It was the nearest church when we arrived in Pretoria.</i>
Is your family MCSA members?	<i>No.</i>
Do you practise ancestral-related rituals?	<i>No.</i>
Have you lost a family member?	<i>Yes, mother.</i>
What was the cause of death?	<i>Illness.</i>
Who communicated the bereavement news?	<i>Children of the deceased.</i>
Which bereavement rituals were practised during bereavement?	<i>The elders of the family were in charge of most of the funeral proceedings. After death, immediately the elders were called, one of the children narrated the story of how the deceased passed on. The one narrating the details normally welcomed people who came to comfort the family, and they narrated what was told to them to all who come to the home of the deceased to pay their respects and express their condolences. Children of the bereaved were barred from arriving home after dark. On the mattress sat the elder daughter of the deceased together with the sister of the deceased. Candles were lit in the house for the whole week. Children were not allowed to play radio, watch TV or even cook during that period. Other relatives did the cooking. The family did not go dress the deceased, nor go fetch her, but instead the deceased was washed at the mortuary and was also delivered by the undertaker. Before she entered her yard, traditional praises were said. The casket was then opened to confirm if indeed it was the deceased's body. There were no further rituals which were done during the funeral and afterwards.</i>

#### 4.3.9 Participant II

Date of interview: 30 April 2018

Were you born in Pretoria?	<i>Yes, Winterveld.</i>
How long have you been in Pretoria?	<i>35 years.</i>
When did you join the MCSA?	<i>Born in it.</i>
What made you join the Methodist Church?	<i>Born in it.</i>
Is your family MCSA members?	<i>Yes.</i>
Do you practise ancestral-related rituals?	<i>Yes.</i>

Have you lost a family member?	<i>Yes, mother.</i>
What was the cause of death?	<i>Chest pain.</i>
Who communicated the bereavement news?	<i>Grandchildren of the deceased.</i>
Which bereavement rituals were practised during bereavement?	<i>After death, a grandchild to the deceased had to first tell the uncle about the death case. The culture is that they had to put R10 note on the gate before they could break the news to the uncle. The uncle will then take leadership in all the funeral arrangements. From the day of death until the end of the funeral a candle is lit both on the head and feet of the deceased's bed. No other ritual was observed, other than washing the spades used to fill the grave. The washing of the tools used for the grave goes along with liquor to thank all who assisted in that process. Only children of the deceased were all shaved, not grandchildren. The uncle takes a lead even in the rituals that are performed.</i>

#### **4.3.10 Participant JJ**

Date of interview: 11 May 2018

Were you born in Pretoria?	<i>Yes.</i>
How long have you been in Pretoria?	<i>Born here.</i>
When did you join the MCSA?	<i>1990.</i>
What made you join the Methodist Church?	<i>A grandchild.</i>
Is your family MCSA members?	<i>No.</i>
Do you practise ancestral-related rituals?	<i>Yes.</i>
Have you lost a family member?	<i>Yes, husband.</i>
What was the cause of death?	<i>Illness.</i>
Who communicated the bereavement news?	<i>The husband's family.</i>
Which bereavement rituals were practised during bereavement?	<i>A sangoma was called to cleanse the widow.</i>

#### **4.4 INTERPRETATION OF THE THEMES**

All the participants have had bereavement in their families. For the purpose of this study, the researcher's approach was to take the participants through the whole process from the time of death, until after the burial. The researcher wanted to learn all the rituals that are performed during all the steps of bereavement.



The researcher used the unstructured method of interviewing. The interviewees were asked to relate their story according to the following areas:

- Death – the researcher probed the interviewees regarding the kind of death, and how the death was communicated.
- The in-between period.
- Burial.
- After-burial rituals.

#### **4.4.1 Common themes**

The following research question and sub-research questions guided these conversations:

##### ***4.4.1.1 Question 01: What does bereavement mean to members of the Methodist Church in Mamelodi, Pretoria?***

###### *(a) The meaning of bereavement rituals: They mean nothing*

Participant AA highlighted the fact that bereavement rituals meant absolutely nothing to them. They went as far as saying that whether performed or not, they did not make any difference to their lives. Participant AA had just buried their mother-in-law, who died due to old age. Participant HH also alluded to the fact that bereavement rituals meant nothing to them. They had just buried their mother. Their late mother had categorically instructed them before she passed on not to perform any bereavement rituals. This participant grew up in a family who practised them, but as she grew up the rituals no longer made sense, nor did they have any significance to her life. That is what the deceased taught and instilled in all her children as well.

###### *(b) The meaning of bereavement rituals: Respect*

Participant BB was married in a polygamous marriage. A child of another wife had died. All the rituals that were observed were following the instructions of the elders of the family. She, as a daughter-in-law in the family, respected what she observed as a culture that her in-laws have been practising over the years. Participant FF had buried her father. While the father was alive he would relate how, in his Zulu culture, things were done during bereavement. The deceased had told his daughter what should happen when he had passed on. After the father died, she did all she could

remember what her father taught her, as well as what he wished should happen when he had passed on. The elders of the family also assisted, and she respected all of their wishes during the time of bereavement.

(c) *The meaning of bereavement rituals: Culture*

Participant BB had said that the bereavement rituals were observed because it is a culture which needs to be observed in her family. Participants DD, EE, GG, II, and JJ also alluded to the fact that it is a culture that should be observed at all times.

(d) *The meaning of bereavement rituals: Identity*

The abovementioned participants (BB, DD, EE, GG, II, and JJ) also emphasised the fact that it was not only cultural, but their identity as African people as well. For them, bereavement meant observing certain rituals; without those rituals something would not have happened accordingly.

**4.4.1.2 Question 02: What is the significance of African traditional bereavement rituals?**

(a) *Significance of bereavement rituals: They mean nothing*

Participants AA, CC, and HH were the ones for whom African traditional bereavement rituals had no significance in their lives. The main reason for them was the fact that they were not raised in homes where such practices were performed. Some of these bereavement rituals meant nothing to the teaching of the Christian faith. Therefore, they did not see any significance in the bereavement rituals. They also shared that due to their Christian faith, they did not see any significance in African traditional bereavement rituals.

(b) *Significance of bereavement rituals: They mean something*

Participants BB, DD, EE, FF, GG, II, and JJ said that African bereavement rituals had a big significance in their lives due to a number of reasons. One of the main reasons that emerged from the interviews was that African bereavement rituals had to do with their African identity. They were significant because they were part of their identity as African people and the heritage their forefathers/-mothers had left them. Furthermore, these rituals were quite significant because by observing them, one honours the teachings of the elders of the family – not only the only ones alive, but also those who have passed on years ago.

These bereavement rituals were quite significant because practising them assisted the bereaved to close the chapter of death in their lives so that they would not have bad luck or anger the ancestors. These rituals were significant because they assisted the living with avoiding the misfortunes that could befall one if not observed as culture dictates. Others went as far as saying that these rituals had a great significance due to the fact that if not performed, the deceased would trouble the family. The family will dream of the deceased, or see the deceased in such a way that they will be tormented and unable to find closure regarding their passing. They believe deceased can torment the family by inflicting harm, bad luck, diseases, and even death.

#### ***4.4.1.3 Question 03: What is the significance of Christian bereavement rituals?***

All of the participants whom the researcher interviewed agreed that Christian bereavement rituals such as prayer services, preaching, and the singing of hymns and choruses were quite significant in their lives. Participants BB, DD, EE, FF, GG, HH, II, and J strongly expressed the fact that they were both Africans and Christians. Therefore, for them, having performed traditional bereavement rituals alone and not involving their Christian faith was not sufficient. Therefore, as Christians they could not do without the bereavement rituals that the church offers during this time.

#### ***4.4.1.4 Question 04: Why do members of the Methodist Church prefer to combine these bereavement rituals?***

##### ***(a) Communality***

Participants AA, BB, II, and JJ highlighted the fact that from an African perspective, a person belongs to the collective. A child belongs to both immediate families, and both paternal and maternal families. In a married setup, children belong to the husband's family. Therefore, when death occurs, no single person makes a decision. Traditional bereavement rituals therefore come into play depending on whether the collective wants them to be performed or not. The decision does not lie with an individual.

In some cases the deceased might not have believed in the traditional bereavement rituals but when they pass on, the surviving spouse or children, in some cases relatives, might choose which rituals will be observed during the bereavement process. Another view that was expressed was the fact that sometimes the deceased might have had special requests regarding certain rituals they want

performed when they have passed on. Therefore, those left behind will have no option but to comply with the deceased's requests, especially because it is believed by African people that the final words of a deceased should be complied with, or else one might have serious misfortune in life.

(b) *Norm or culture*

Participants DD, EE, FF, GG, II, and JJ brought two aspects to this question. They spoke about norms, and secondly that they grew up seeing these things happening in their own families as they grew up, and that is what they were exposed to when attending relatives' funerals. Therefore, for them it is what they have become accustomed to. It is something that they were taught, have observed, and have also passed on to their children. So there is no other reason but that it is a norm they are accustomed to.

(c) *Culture*

Participants DD, EE, and FF stated that it was their culture. They were taught that it is how things are done. Church is part of the bereavement process, as well as certain traditional bereavement rituals. Therefore, that is their culture and it is what they believe. They believe that such rituals should at all times be observed during bereavement.

**4.4.1.5 Question 05: Why is the practice of African bereavement rituals kept secret?**

All the participants said that African bereavement rituals were not performed in secret. These rituals were, however, family rituals, meant for the immediate family only. Therefore, the community or the church was often not involved because of that fact, not because they were secret.

However, the researcher was also made aware that some rituals were performed publicly, like the saying of clan praises for the deceased (in the case of Participants BB, DD, and EE, clan praises were chanted by the elders of their families in public). The covering of a casket with a blanket was also done publicly, often at the graveside, before the casket is lowered into the ground.

## 4.5 FOCUS GROUP

The researcher also conducted one focus group discussion. These participants came from various places around Mamelodi, Pretoria. Their age varied from 21 to 61 years old. Gender and age variation was not considered by the researcher, as only people willing to participate in the focus group were accepted.

### 4.5.1 Presentation of themes

#### 4.5.1.1 Participants' background information

**Table 4.2: Background information of focus group participants**

Participant No.	Gender (M/F)	Age	Educational level	Occupation	Years of church membership	Residential area
1.A	M	23	Diploma	Service consultant	16 years	Mamelodi
2.B	F	23	BA Honours	Admin. / sales consultant	5 years	Mamelodi
3.C	F	21	BA Psych	Student	14 years	Mamelodi
4.D	F	58	–	N/A	41 years	Mamelodi
5.E	F	55	BA Psych	N/A	6 years	Mamelodi
6.F	F	46	Grade 12	Self-employed	40 years	Mamelodi
7.J	F	55	–	Self-employed	35 years	Mamelodi
8.K	F	52	Degree in Teaching	Educator	35 years	Mamelodi
9.L	F	61	BCUR	Nurse	3 years	Mamelodi
10.M	M	53	Master's	Minister	40 years	Mamelodi
11.N	M	47	LLB	Lawyer	7 years	Mamelodi
12.O	M	60	Grade 12	Pensioner	14 years	Mamelodi
13.P	M	58	Diploma	Broker	1 year	Mamelodi
14.Q	M	48	Grade 12	Cashier	38 years	Mamelodi
15.R	M	34	BA Honours	Minister	34 years	Mamelodi

Table 4.2 shows the background information of all the participants of the focus group. The background information shows that there were 15 participants, who came from different places in Mamelodi. Their age was 21 to 61 years and they were all adults. Furthermore, it should be noted that all the participants were long-standing members of the Methodist Church. The background of the above focus group participants shows that all the participants as a collective control group were

capable of offering credible information for this particular study. The researcher personally conducted these interviews.

#### **4.5.2 Presentation of focus group**

The researcher met with the focus group on 13 May 2018. All the participants were practising Christians who indicated that they all practise African traditional bereavement rituals. The researcher dealt mainly with the following four sub-questions for control purposes:

- What is the significance of African traditional bereavement rituals?
- What is the significance of Christian bereavement rituals?
- Why do members of the Methodist Church prefer to combine these bereavement rituals?
- Why is the practice of African traditional bereavement rituals kept secret?

##### ***4.5.2.1 Sub-question 1: What is the significance of African traditional bereavement rituals?***

###### *(a) Participants A, F, J, K, L, and M: Respect for the deceased*

The participants indicated that they performed these bereavement rituals, and have observed others perform them, out of respect for the deceased. Some said they respected the deceased because that is what they requested while still alive. Others felt that as Africans, that is what is done out of respect for the dead. Hence, for them, bereavement rituals had to do with respect.

###### *(b) Participants B, E, G, H, N, and O: Keeping our culture alive*

These participants indicated that for them, bereavement rituals are an African way of burying their loved ones. The opposite of African rituals is the Western form of bereavement; therefore, these rituals are a way for them to feel African and keep the culture alive.

###### *(c) Participants C and I: Socialisation*

These participants indicated that bereavement rituals were quite significant to them because it was their identity. More so because that is how they were socialised, and that is how funerals and bereavement were conducted. Therefore, for them, a funeral goes hand in hand with rituals or else it becomes very strange to them.

(d) *Participant I: They do not have any significance*

One of the participants indicated that these bereavement rituals meant absolutely nothing to them. They actually went as far as saying that whether they are performed or not does not make any difference to them.

#### **4.5.2.2 Sub-question 2: What is the significance of Christian bereavement rituals?**

The whole group affirmed the fact that Christian bereavement rituals, which include the singing of Christian hymns and choruses, offering prayers, and sharing the word of God, were quite important to them. Those rituals were quite significant because that is what they lived by, found strength in, and used to connect with God.

#### **4.5.2.3 Sub-question 3: Why do members of the Methodist Church prefer to combine these bereavement rituals?**

(a) *Participants O, J, E, B, and K: It is a norm*

These participants indicated that for them, practising African bereavement rituals as well as Christian rituals was a norm with which they grew up, and it was impossible for them to separate the two. That is the only practice they knew.

(b) *Participants A, B, C, and L: It is the way we were orientated*

To these participants it was almost similar to the group above who said that was what they were taught growing up. It is what they have observed and are carrying on in their life.

(c) *Participants D, F, G, H, I, M, and N: It is what the elders want, and all must comply*

These participants indicated that it was not about what or how they felt. If the elders of the family directed them to perform certain rituals, that is what they did. For them it was out of respect not only for the elders who are alive today, but also for those who have passed on and they were continuing with these teachings by observing and respecting these rituals.

#### **4.5.2.4 Sub-question 4: Why is the practice of African traditional bereavement rituals kept secret?**

*(a) Participants A, I, and M: Stigma and discrimination from the church*

These participants indicated that if people were aware of the African traditional rituals that were practised by a particular family, they would be discriminated against. They further said that due to their churches being former missionary churches, such things were not spoken about freely in the church. There is no particular guideline with regard to rituals. Due to other traditional practices not spoken about, people feared being stigmatised and discriminated against, hence the secrecy.

*(b) Participants A, B, C, D, and H: Association with witchcraft*

These participants said that some of these rituals were associated with witchcraft; especially because such topics were not spoken about freely. They said that nobody wanted to be known as a witch, hence the secrecy.

*(c) Participants E, F, G, J, K, L, N, and O: Family affair*

This group said that these rituals were not necessarily a secret. Instead, they were for immediate family members only. They were a family affair, hence the perception that they were secret. Therefore, in their nature these rituals involve only those affected, not the entire community.

## **4.6 SUMMARY**

This part of the research dealt with data presentation. As such, the empirical data that were gathered from the participants for the purpose of this study were presented following the process indicated in the methodology section under data analysis (Chapter 3) in order to achieve the objectives of this study. The subsequent chapter (Chapter 5) analyses the data presented in this chapter, in order to put them into context and to establish the findings of the study.

This chapter presented the outcomes of the methodology applied, as indicated in the methodology chapter, to address the research questions that this study seeks to answer. The findings of the one-on-one interviews, as well as the group interviews, were clearly presented in this chapter.



## **CHAPTER 5: DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION**

### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter analyses and discusses the data that were presented in Chapter 4. The goal of this chapter is to interpret and put into context the presented data so that the researcher can establish the findings of the study. The discussions are set to follow the format that was used in Chapter 4, which means that each main research question of the study serves as the main heading for a particular topic, which has its own four elaborative sub-questions.

### **5.2 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS**

This study sought to explore the role of bereavement rituals for Methodist Church members in Mamelodi, Pretoria. The objectives of the study were:

- to explore the meaning of bereavement rituals for the Methodist Church members in Mamelodi;
- to establish the significance of African traditional bereavement rituals;
- to establish the significance of Christian bereavement rituals;
- to examine why the members of the Methodist Church combine African traditional and Christian bereavement rituals; and
- to find out why African traditional rituals are often kept secret.

The objectives laid out above were achieved, as the findings were established in Chapter 4 (data presentation). This section of the research provides a summary of these findings. Therefore, going forward, each research objective is addressed as a topic with its own findings. The findings of this research are grounded within the theoretical frameworks that are used in this study, which are attachment theory and dual process theory. These theoretical frameworks, as applied in this study, provide the grounds on which the perceptions and views of the participants are understood and explained by the researcher.

### **5.2.1 To explore the meaning of bereavement rituals amongst Methodist Church members in Mamelodi**

The findings established under this topic revealed that the participants understood the history and meaning of African traditional bereavement rituals. All the participants acknowledged that these rituals were practised and taught to them by their forefathers/-mothers from generations ago. The participants who especially practise these rituals, even those who do not practise them, indicated that they were exposed to and were taught these rituals by their parents. When referring to parents, they meant biological parents, as well as the relatives they grew up around. This then emphasises the fact that oral tradition continues to be a favourable teaching method Africans use to teach and guide one another from generation to generation.

All the participants related what they have observed, heard, and were taught by their elders during times of bereavement; none of the participants made reference to a book or a record as a reference source. Eastman (1993:421) and Broodryk (1997:22) note that until modern times, the remarkable arts of Africa did not include the art of writing. Therefore, African traditional bereavement rituals have been practised from generation to generation, and they are chiselled in the minds of those who believe and practise them. Hence Eastman (1993:421) states that religion in African societies is written not on paper but in people's hearts and minds. Ikenga-Metuh (1987:1) affirms this phenomenon that African traditional religion is unlike other prophetic religions. The history of these bereavement rituals therefore lies with the elders who taught many generations before us. Ikenga-Metuh (1987:25) states that the greatest handicap in the study of African religion is that unlike the world religions like Christianity and Islam, it is not a religion of the Book. Ikenga-Metuh (1987:31) states that a major source of African religion is oral tradition. Furthermore, the researcher noted that the meaning of these bereavement rituals differed between the participants as a number of understandings emerged from the interviews. Ndubuisi (2014:149) adds that African traditional religion originated from the soil of Africa. It is a religion that has no known founder and scripture, unlike Christianity and Islam.

Other participants felt that these bereavement rituals were their culture. Culture for them is who they are, therefore bereavement rituals for them mean they do what defines them as African people. The rituals defined their ethnicity; they spoke about their Zuluness, Sothoness, Vendaness, etc. Therefore culture and identity are what these bereavement rituals do for them. Lang (2004:45) and

Amanze (2002:13) state that the meaning of culture is the totality of people's way of life. This includes their values, beliefs, aspirations, and modes of behaviour, which are learned and passed on within the group. This refers to the whole range of human activities that are learned and that are not instinctive, and that are transmitted from generation to generation through various learning processes. Amanze (2002:13 citing Giddens 1986) argues that without culture, we would not be human at all, for without culture there would be no language in which people could express themselves, no sense of self-consciousness, and people's ability to think or reason would be severely limited. Therefore, some participants understood bereavement rituals as doing for them all that the literature states above.

Other participants in this study noted the fact that they practised these rituals out of respect. Respect was said to come in three forms. The first form of respect is to respect the elders in their families, who are often the ones giving direction as to what rituals are supposed to be performed during bereavement. Therefore, the participants shared that they participated in the rituals out of respect for the elders of the family. Secondly, other participants spoke about respect for the deceased. The rituals are observed due to the fact that the deceased might have issued a directive that when they pass away, certain rituals should or should not be performed. Thirdly, some participants spoke about observing the bereavement rituals out of respect for the ancestors. They feared experiencing some form of misfortune in their lives if they stopped a tradition. Mbiti (1993:449) elaborates that if the deceased were offended before they died or were buried improperly, it was feared by the relatives or the offenders that the living dead would take revenge. This would be in the form of a misfortune, especially illness, or disturbing frequent appearances by the living dead. Isaak (1997:91) elaborates that a person who is physically dead is greatly revered by living relatives, friends, neighbours, and the entire village. They believe that death is a partial departure from life, not a complete end. The person who has died is believed to have moved on to join the company of those who have gone before.

### **5.2.2 To establish the significance of African traditional bereavement rituals**

The researcher also discovered that among the participants, there were those who did not know about or practise these bereavement rituals. For them these rituals had no significance in their lives, and they did not even bother to understand their meaning. Other participants knew what these

bereavement rituals meant, but their Christian faith, and for others their upbringing, changed their perception or valuing of these bereavement rituals. However, the literature shares that traditional bereavement rituals stem from African epistemology. They stem from African people seeking to find answers to their questions of life. These rituals are ways in which they respond to and understand life. Turaki (1999:187) states that rituals represent four things, namely:

- a means of acquiring spiritual and mystical powers;
- a means of maintaining harmony or restoration of breached relationships between man and a spirit and mystical world;
- a means of communication between man and the spirit and mystical world; and
- a means by which African specialists acquire their knowledge, skills, and spiritual and mystical powers for carrying out their professional roles.

Traditional Africans have developed elaborate rituals and ceremonies as a means of controlling, conciliating, and acquiring spiritual and mystical powers and life force. Broodryk (1997:167) states that at death, the rituals send off the departed and normalise life for the survivors. The death/funeral rites have a mentally healing effect that enables the survivors to go on with life. Kyalo (2013:36) states that rituals help us individually and communally to make sense of life's transition, by providing some structure to ease movement from the familiar to the unknown. Funeral rites also reflect the threefold pattern of separation, transition, and reincorporation (Kyalo 2013:40).

### **5.2.3 To establish the significance of Christian bereavement rituals**

Christian bereavement rituals were quite significant to all the participants. The church as a significant part of their lives plays a key role in the service they offer to them. This is quite evident seeing that other participants do practise African bereavement rituals, but still need the Christian rituals too. This shows the significance of Christian bereavement rituals to them. The researcher also observed that in comparing and analysing the data presented in Chapter 4, for those who practise both African bereavement rituals and Christian bereavement rituals, Christian bereavement rituals are dominant in their period of mourning by prayer services that are held daily, and during the arrival of the deceased a lay preacher or clergyperson receives the body and follows Christian rites or rituals. This also applies during the time of the burial, where Christian

bereavement rituals dominate the burial process as a lay person or clergyperson is in charge of the burial service.

The presence of the church, the reading of the Bible, the preaching of the word of God, the singing of hymns, and other rituals performed during bereavement are quite significant. The debate among Methodists, as well as other Christian denominations, attests to the fact that they are quite significant to both the church and the bereaved families. It is during this time that the attachment theory states that

“attachment continues across the life span of humans ... Attachment behaviour refers to any form of behaviour that results in a person achieving or maintaining a desired proximity to an identified individual whom the person sees as better able to cope with the world” (Erdman & Kok-Mun 2010:4).

This attachment comes forth especially when the person needs protection, help, soothing, etc. (Erdman & Kok-Mun 2010:4). Therefore, the Church as a body that nourishes the spiritual wellbeing of the deceased or bereaved family with its rituals plays a significant role.

#### **5.2.4 To examine why members of the Methodist Church combine the African traditional and Christian bereavement rituals**

The findings of the research are that the church offers everything to console the Christian aspect of the participants; however, the church seems not to be able to address their Africanness during the process of bereavement. For the participants, the church presently offers the necessary support, and also gives hope with regard to their loss. However, the church does not address the issues of *sefifi*, mourning period, cleansing, ancestors, etc. Tshoba (2014:22) defines *sefifi*, and what causes *sefifi* in Setswana, which implies a negative shadow, which also means that the family is thrown into a state of disequilibrium. Letsosa and Semanya (2011:1) further state that during the time of *sefifi*, the rights of the bereaved to perform certain duties in the community are reduced until such time that they are purified traditionally.

Agulanna (2010:20) states that performing death rituals is often intended to help the deceased from a state of impurity to a state of harmony with the spirit world. Tshoba (2014:20) states that in traditional African societies, when a family member has died, the family of the deceased is

regarded as contaminated or polluted by contact with the dead. Broodryk (1997:180) states that African people seek solutions for their problems from the African perspective or worldview; whether the problems are of a material, spiritual, or social nature.

Moyo (2013:221) states that Africans are very religious and in their religiosity still seek solutions and guidance from African traditional religions despite being Christian converts. This kind of research exposes the fact that Christianity is not able, through its Western-based pastoral care systems, to respond to the care needs of Africans, whose challenges are at times based on African paradigms such as witchcraft (Moyo 2013:224). Sherman *et al.* (2014:3) note that

“[t]he overarching assumption of dual-process theorizing is that the mental processes underlying social phenomena can be divided into two distinct categories depending on whether they operate in an automatic or non-automatic fashion. According to dual process theory, certain types of responses are traceable to what are often called ‘System I’ processes – processes that operate automatically and quickly, with little effort or no effort and no sense of voluntary control”.

The dual process theory is triggered by habit, among others. Wood *et al.* (2014:371) detail this link between these theories together with habit, and cite James (1890) that “[d]ue to the frequent repetition of the response, this representation is likely to be highly accessible in the sense of being strong, stable, and distinct”.

Turaki (1999:188) writes about the importance and meaning of rituals in African communities and states that “[w]ith this background, traditional Africans may find religions that do not address this area of their worldview not relevant to their needs”. The African traditional bereavement rituals address all these questions for them. Isaak (1997:11) notes that the mainline churches have practices that often leave Africans with “split personalities”. He further states that Christianity has given Africans splendid answers to questions they have not asked. Lubbe (1990:209) states that religious pluralism has always been a feature of society in Southern Africa, and is a social reality in South Africa.

Therefore, for the participants, African traditional bereavement rituals fill the gaps that the rituals observed by the MCSA do not. Hence, Idang (2015:30) states that various rituals and ceremonies that are performed are primarily concerned with the explanation, validation, and integration of

people's view of the world. The MCSA belongs to the mainline churches, which are former missionary churches. These churches are inclined to the Western culture, and there is no room for guidance with regard to African cultural practices. The MCSA does not even have guidelines with regard to which of the rituals are not accepted or in breach of its beliefs and doctrine. Hence the participants perform the rituals that work for them. Biwul (1978:9) recommends that the Church in Africa today must not forget that culture has a firm grip on the Africans even in their conversion state. As such, the living Christian relatives of a deceased person whose burial fails to measure up to this cultural norm are likely to cast doubt on the integrity and force of the Christian gospel, as well as the authority of the Scriptures. This tension requires adequate biblical and theological response.

The biggest challenge is that there are no guidelines or even openness with regard to African bereavement practices in the MCSA. Therefore people do what seems to work for them and what has been practised by others whom they interact with, while the church remains silent on such matters. The Creeds alone without detailed guidelines are not helpful for the laity, as per the findings of the researcher. Bujo (1992:31) asks a question that he later responds to:

“[W]hy do so many African Christians return to the traditional practices for comfort in times of crisis? It is by no means unknown for a Christian to seek the sacraments of the Church in the morning and go off into the bush in the evening to consult the witchdoctor. This surely suggests that the African finds more comfort and liberation in the traditional practice than in the rituals of the Christian Church.”

### **5.2.5 To find out why African traditional rituals are often kept secret**

The participants explained that death is not an individual affair; it is a communal affair. Mapaya and Mugovhani (2014:913) state that African funeral ceremonies are communal events. A funeral is not organised by one person; hence Amanze (2010:298) states that in African societies the interests of the individual are subordinated to that of the community. Turaki (1999:101) states that in African thought, a man is not an individual living in a state of independence, but he is communal; that is, living in a state of relationships and interdependence. The notion of a person belonging to the collective comes into play when death or major life events take place. Three reasons came to the fore. Firstly, what was highlighted by the interviewees was the fact that Africans belong to and

embrace community (*motho-ke-motho-ka-batho*), therefore a decision in matters such as death involves the collective community. Turaki (1999:240) further elaborates on the understanding of community in African thought by saying the community makes life; the community gives purpose and meaning to life. Outside the community, there is no life, no hope, no peace, no identity, no destiny, and no existence; in short, no salvation. The community is both the lawgiver and the judge. It takes the custody of life in its hands. It is supreme in all matters of life. This notion of community not only includes human beings but nature and the spirit world of the ancestors as well. Agulanna (2010:288) states that Africans believe that it is only in the community where the life of the individual acquires true meaning. Therefore, a community has powerful effects on what and how decisions are arrived at. Attachment theory also guides in understanding this phenomenon that “[a]ttachment behaviour refers to any form of behaviour that results in a person achieving or maintaining a desired proximity to an identified individual whom the person sees as better able to cope with the world” (Erdman & Kok-Mun 2010:4).

This attachment comes forth especially when the person needs protection, help, soothing, etc. (Erdman & Kok-Mun 2010:4). Therefore the community or family with its rituals becomes a safe space for the bereaved.

The community decides where and when the deceased might be buried, and how. The community in this case refers to family and relatives, especially the elders. Agulanna (2010:21) states that in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, death is ideally dealt with by elders, as in other African communities. Bujo (1992:22) elaborates with regard to the role of the elders in a family, stating that God and the ancestors, and the elders in their respective positions, take care and lay down rules. Broodryk (1997:72) states that in traditional society, old people are venerated and it is regarded as a privilege to look after them. Their counsel is sought on many matters. Emeakaroha (2002:3) states that Africans generally have deep and ingrained respect for old age, and even when we cannot find anything to admire in an old man, we will not easily forget that his grey hairs have earned him the right to courtesy and politeness. Van Wijik, Hans-Arendse and Makhaba (2013:58) specify that cultural traditions often designate the elderly and men as principal figures in guiding bereavement rituals.

Therefore, using African traditional bereavement rituals happens because other members of the family want it to happen. In that case, it does not matter whether the deceased was a practising



Christian or not. The final word normally comes from the collective, mostly the family (and mainly the elders). Isaak (1997:72 citing Kameeta *et al.* 1986) states that from an African understanding and social context, to be human means to be a corporate being, a social being, or a being in relation. Furthermore, Isaak (1997:83) states that in the African worldview, a person is only human because of others, with others, and for others. In short, one is defined in one's own social context, namely one's community. Isaak (1997:83 citing Mbiti 1989) states that nature brings a child into the world, but society creates the child into a social being or a corporate person. A person is thought of first of all as a constituent of a particular community for it is the community that defines who he is and who he can become. According to Ray (1976:132), African philosophy tends to define people in terms of the social groups to which they belong. Ikenga-Metuh (1987:193) says that African thought tends to define a person in terms of the group to which the person belongs. Turaki (1999:241) states that life passages, such as birth, puberty rites, and death, are all gateways into community life. Broodryk (1997:163) states that a ritual embodies a belief. Mapaya and Mugovhani (2014:912) highlight that in African communities, death imposes a set of protocols. Therefore an individual does not just act any way; there is a particular protocol that must be followed.

Some participants observed these bereavement rituals because it is their culture. Bujo (1992:22) states that when the living conduct themselves according to the patterns established by the ancestors, they are strengthening the tribe or clan as a whole and are contributing to the wellbeing of each individual member. They observe the rituals because they understand what they mean for them and their loved ones. Amanze (2002:13 citing Lewis 1976) states that culture is the protective shell of a community. Isaak (1997:72) notes that culture is about what we do today, as well as what our parents did yesterday. It is something that they did out of their hearts as Africans. Being Christians, however, they need Christian rituals to also be observed as it is their other identity, which is as important as being African.

Some participants referred to the fact that despite their Christian faith, they observed or practised African bereavement rituals due to the fact that these are the norm or culture they are accustomed to. Others used the word "orientation". Broodryk (1997:100) states that every human being who grows up in a particular society is likely to become infused with the culture of that society, whether

knowingly or unknowingly, during the process of social interaction. That is how they were raised, and that is what they have observed, and that is what they continue doing.

Having observed this practice/norm/culture or orientation, they continue without questioning or seeing anything wrong with this practice. Kochlumctuvattil (2010:115-116) states that one of the major issues facing contemporary Africa is a lack of personal identity or personal self-direction, which reduces the individual to simply living instead of existing historically, culturally, and socially. It is precisely this ability to make choices and decisions that is stifled by the domination of the cultural community, thus contributing to the prevailing culture of dependency in Africa. Magezi (2006:513) notes that rituals are significant due to the fact that without a ritual performance, a person would not experience psychological healing. A ritual confirms that a person receives the necessary attention and healing.

Some participants also noted that they did not practise these bereavement rituals during bereavement in their families. However, what that really meant was that they chose bereavement rituals that seemed acceptable, like just wearing mourning clothes after the funeral. For others, they would just go for cleansing after the funeral.

Having noted all of the above, bereavement rituals are not kept secret but are family-based rituals. The participants noted that they were perceived as a secret due to the fact that not all other community members are invited to participate in those rituals other than the immediate family members. Other rituals are community related, like the reporting of death, burial, etc., while some rituals are for those who are closest to the bereaved family, like washing of the body, the cleansing ceremony for the family, shaving of hair, etc.

### **5.3 CONCLUSION OF THE STUDY**

This study explored the role of African traditional bereavement rituals for members of the Methodist Church in Mamelodi, Pretoria. The purpose was to evaluate the impact of this phenomenon beyond the Methodist Church, as well as to determine the significance of these bereavement rituals.

Firstly, this study found that not all Methodist members in Mamelodi, Pretoria, find any significance in or practise these bereavement rituals. Some of the participants were quite content

with their Christian faith, and they did not see the need to add African traditional practices or rituals to their bereavement practices. This study, however, found that most Methodist members could not articulate their Christian faith clearly, noting the confirmation classes, which are a requirement of the church's membership. They could not articulate their faith, noting that every Sunday during a time of worship they declared their faith before their fellow Christians and before God through the singing of Creeds. It appeared to the researcher that many identified with the MCSA but did not necessarily know what it entailed or meant. This study found that the confirmation class must start conversations regarding African cultural practices. The syllabus should be strengthened with the sole purpose of making all who attend it disciples of Christ with a firm understanding of the doctrines and teachings of the MCSA.

Furthermore, the researcher also found that the understanding of community is a hindrance to discipleship due to the fact that many had different views of bereavement rituals. However, their views were overturned by their elders. Given the challenge of corruption and crime in South Africa, does it mean that Methodist members will fail to witness in their workplaces and other spaces due to the overwhelming views of the majority?

#### **5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY**

In light of this study and its findings, the researcher discovered the following points. Some of the MCSA members interviewed could not articulate their faith, nor clearly state what the bereavement rituals meant to them with regard to the Creeds, as well as what Wesley taught. The research also found that the MCSA does not have a clear liturgy or guidelines for its members regarding African bereavement rituals or bereavement rituals in general. Therefore, this does not assist its members with regard to guided and biblically sound practices in times of crisis or bereavement.

The researcher therefore recommends the following:

- Further investigation is needed regarding the effectiveness of confirmation classes in equipping mainline churches' new members (including the MCSA) with the teachings that affirm their Christian faith, and preparing them to witness their faith to the world.

- There should be further studies as to which African traditional bereavement practices can be added to the mainline churches' liturgies and rituals during bereavement in order to be relevant to its African people.
- There should be further study with regard to the effectiveness of African understandings of community in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and the relationship between the individual and the community.
- More studies are needed regarding some values that can be found by Christians in African traditional bereavement rituals.
- Research should be conducted regarding the two worldviews of African traditional religion and Christianity, especially in the mainline churches.

## **5.5 CONCLUDING REMARKS**

This chapter presented a summary of the findings of this study and some conclusions based on the findings of this study, as well as making some recommendations for future research. The findings of this study were presented in line with this study's research objectives, and those objectives were achieved by this research study.

Data were analysed using theories adopted for this study, and recommendations for further and future research were presented in this chapter. The analysis was conducted according to the objectives identified in Chapter 1 of this research.

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## ANNEXURES

### Annexure A: Letter Requesting Permission to Interview

08 September 2017

Dear:.....

#### PERMISSION TO INTERVIEW YOUR FAMILY FOR MY RESEARCH

I greet you in the most wonderful name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. I hope that this letter finds you and your family well.

I am currently a registered student with the University of the Free State, Bloemfontein Campus. I am busy with a research for my master's degree in Theology, in the Department of Religious Studies. My research topic is: *African traditional bereavement rituals amongst Methodist Church members in Mamelodi, Pretoria*. My interest is understanding the origins and meaning of African bereavement rituals. My other interest is to understand why Christians observe them.

With this brief background, I would like to ask permission from you to have some time with your family for an interview with regard to your family's practices regarding bereavement rituals as you had a bereavement recently.

Kindly note that the aim of this intended interview is going to be purely research; I am not intending to bring back those sad memories of your loss in any way. If perhaps you are not ready or not comfortable to have an interview with your family, you are free to decline this request. I will be conducting this interview as a researcher, not as a minister, and the findings are purely for my research purposes and have nothing to do with your church membership. Kindly note that I have applied for and was granted ethical clearance by the University of the Free State, so be assured that all the necessary ethical procedures will be followed and respected when conducting this research.

If yourself and your family agree to this request, kindly identify for me a date and a time that will suit you and your family.

I look forward to your response

Mokhutso, J. (Cell: 076 358 6030/071 362 0477)

Email: [jacobnonopi@webmail.co.za](mailto:jacobnonopi@webmail.co.za)

UFS Master Degree Student

Promoter: Prof. Luvuyo Ntombana

## Annexure B: Ethical Clearance Letter



07 Feb 2018

Dear **Rev. Jacob Mokhutso**

Ethics Clearance: **African traditional bereavement rituals amongst Methodist Church members in Mamelodi, Pretoria.**

Principal Investigator: **Rev. Jacob Mokhutso**

Department: **Theology (Bloemfontein Campus)**

### **APPLICATION APPROVED**

With reference to your application for ethical clearance with the Faculty of Theology. I am pleased to inform you on behalf of the Ethics Board of the faculty that you have been granted ethical clearance for your research.

Your ethical clearance number, to be used in all correspondence is: **UFS-HSD2017/0874**

**This ethical clearance number is valid for research conducted for two years from issuance.** Should you require more time to complete this research, please apply for an extension.

We request that any changes that may take place during the course of your research project be submitted to the ethics office to ensure we are kept up to date with your progress and any ethical implications that may arise.

Thank you for submitting this proposal for ethical clearance and we wish you every success with your research.

Yours faithfully

Dr. Juanita Meyer

Chairperson: Ethics Committee

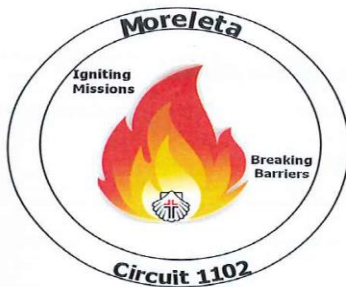
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University of the Free State, P.O. Box 339, Bloemfontein, 9300, South Africa

## Annexure C: Letter Giving Permission to Conduct the Research



**The Methodist Church of Southern Africa**  
P O Box 9051304  
Garsfontein, 0042  
Tel: 012 – 3485198  
Email: [admin@glenmethodist.co.za](mailto:admin@glenmethodist.co.za)

**12 OCTOBER 2017**

### **LETTER OF PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH**

#### **To Whom It May Concern**

This letter serves to confirm that Rev Jacob Mokhutso, an Ordained Minister of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa, and stationed at Mamelodi Central in the Moreleta Circuit, has been given permission to conduct research for his studies towards his Master's Degree. The research will involve interviews with families that have experienced bereavement in the recent past. Rev Mokhutso has assured me that the highest ethical standards will be maintained throughout the interviews, and that he will respect the privacy and confidentiality that goes with personal information that might be shared during these interviews.

Yours in Christ's Service

Smanga Bosman(Rev)  
Circuit Superintendent

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**Circuit Superintendent:** Rev. Smanga Bosman  
**Circuit Stewards:** Mr Jos Charle 073 816 4483; Mrs Brenda van Wyk 083 453 8365; Mrs Wilma Cloete 082 570 0837; Mr Tlou 0765740230  
**Circuit Treasurer:** Mrs Renny Stoltz 082 653 4356



## Annexure D: Letter Confirming Therapeutic Support to the Participants

08 November 2017

To Whom it may concern,

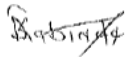
This serves to confirm that the following Therapists are involved with treating families that are bereaved.

Tabea Kabinde (MA Clinical Psychologist)  
Esther Chinkanda (PHD Social Work)  
Mable Radebe (PHD Clinical Psychologist)

This team would be able to assist Reverend Mokhutsi with counselling of the bereaved family while he does his research on the matters related to bereavement.

For any queries, kindly contact the Team Leader, Tabea Kabinde on 082 451 4761.

Sincerely,



Tabea Kabinde

## **Annexure E: Interview Guide**

**Research Topic: African traditional bereavement rituals amongst Methodist Church members in Mamelodi, Pretoria**

### **Respondents' Particulars**

**Age:**

**Gender:**

**Educational status:**

**Occupation:**

**Years of church membership:**

**Place of birth:**

**Residential area:**

### **Open-ended questions to the respondent**

1. As a family, did you have bereavement recently in your home? If yes, whom did you lose as a family?
2. Immediately after the death, what did you do as a family? Who takes charge of what during this time? Kindly share the whole process you followed.
3. Kindly share the rituals you do or don't do as a family from death until the day of the burial, even after the funeral?

**Annexure F: Interview Consent Form**

I..... give consent to be interviewed for the research conducted by **Jacob Mokhutso** under the research topic “African Traditional Bereavement Rituals Amongst Methodist Church Members in Mamelodi, Pretoria”.

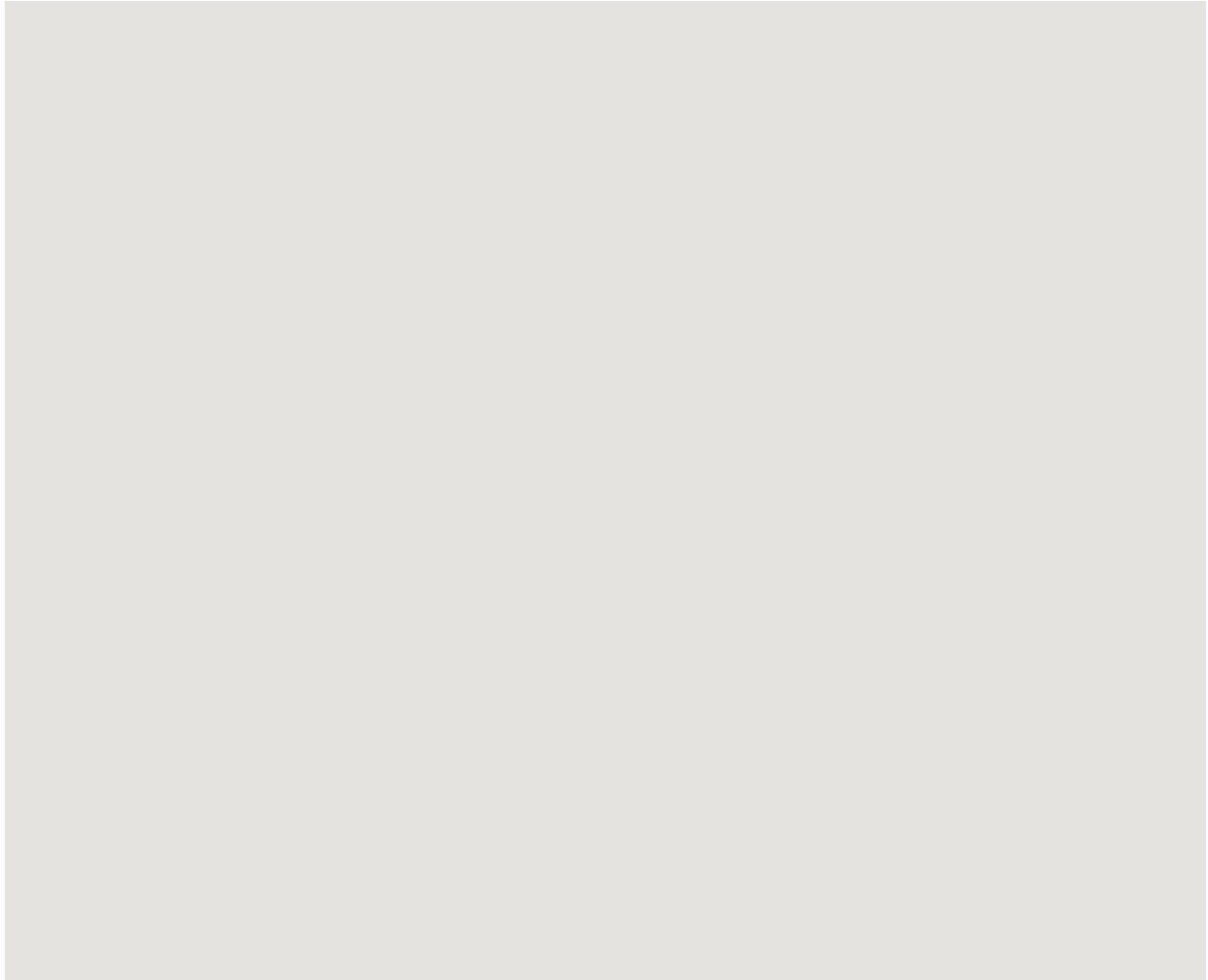
I declare that I have willingly given my consent for participating in this research work. I have been made aware that even after signing this consent form that it is not a legally binding contract, and I am still free to recuse myself in this research anytime I feel uncomfortable or decide to change my mind.

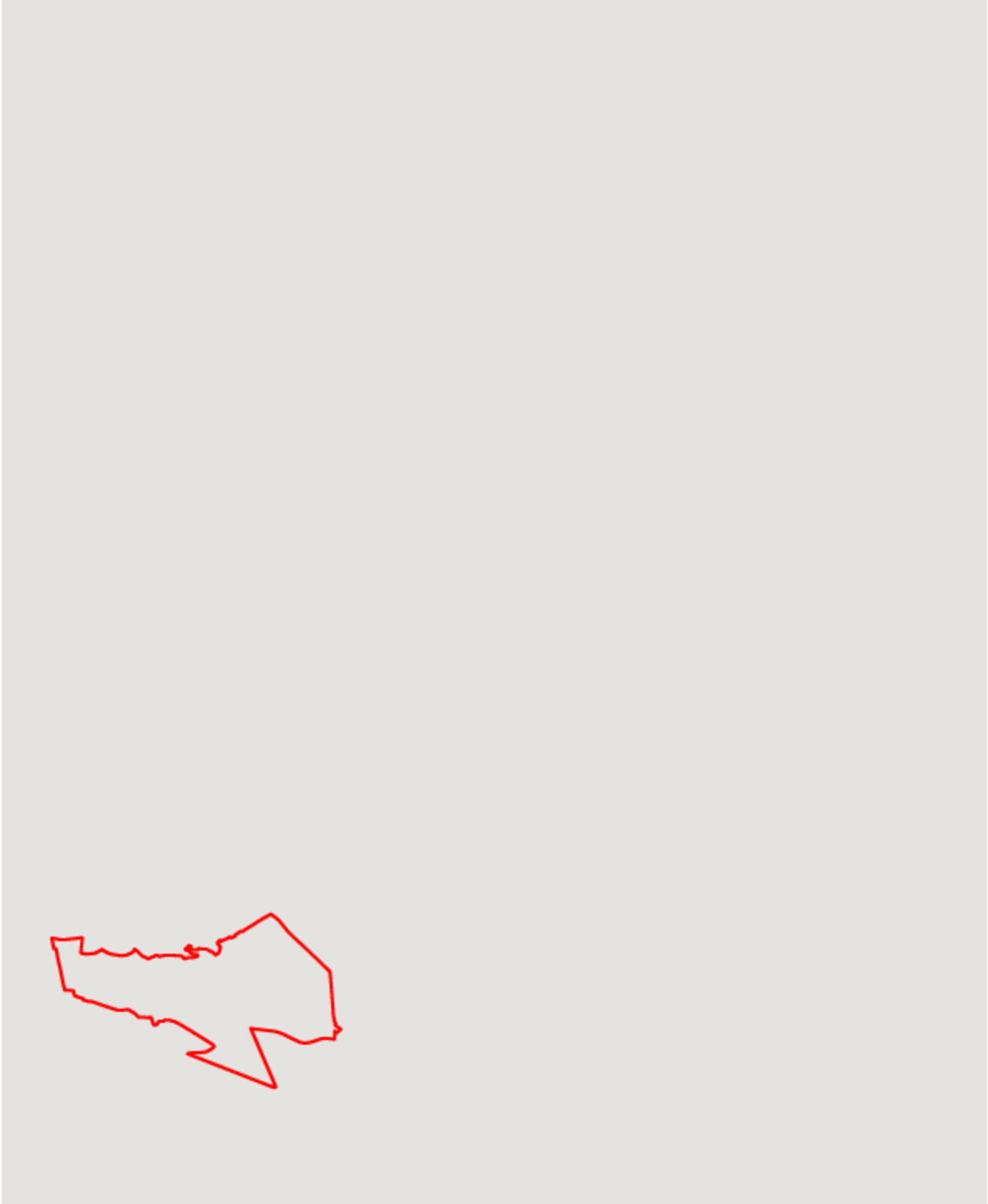
Signature:..... Date:.....

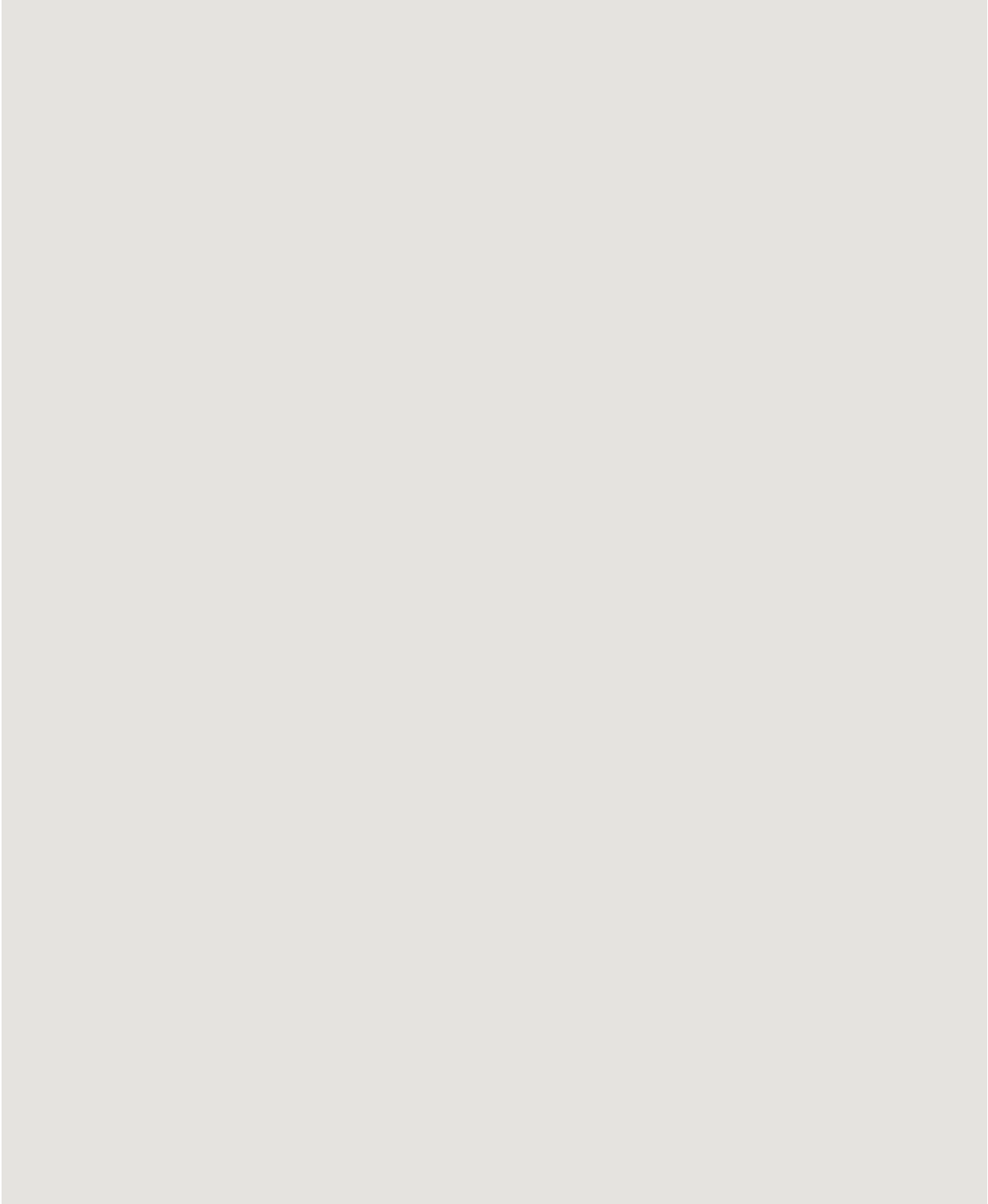
## **Annexure G: Maps and Graphs of Mamelodi Township in Pretoria**

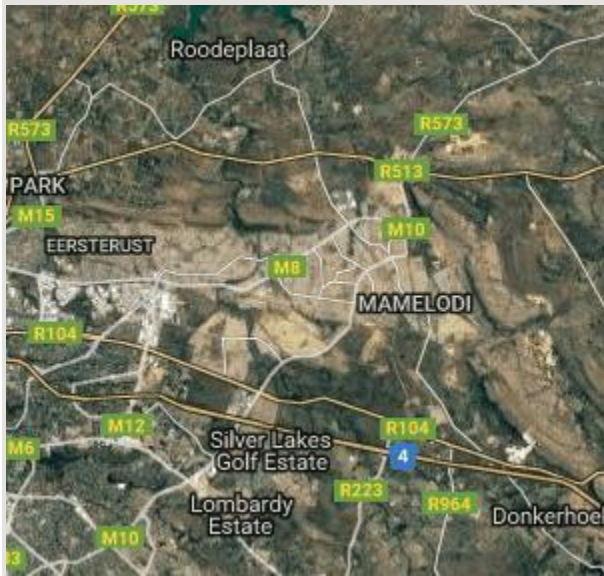
### **Mamelodi**

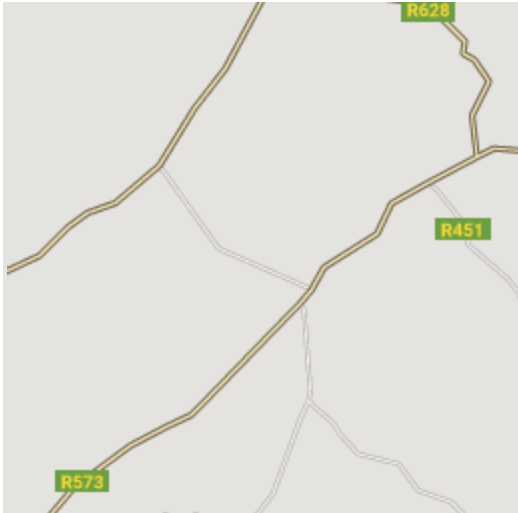
Main Place 799046 from Census 2011



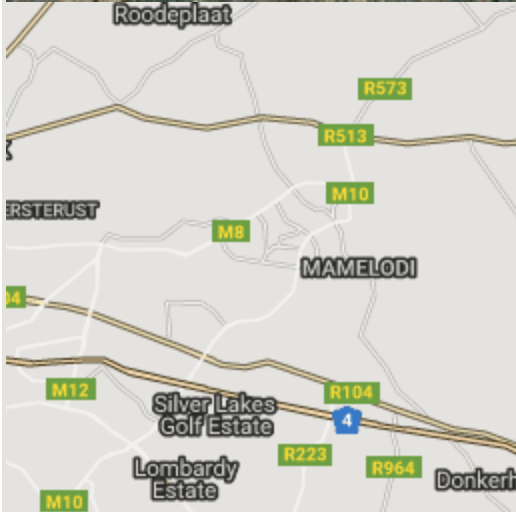


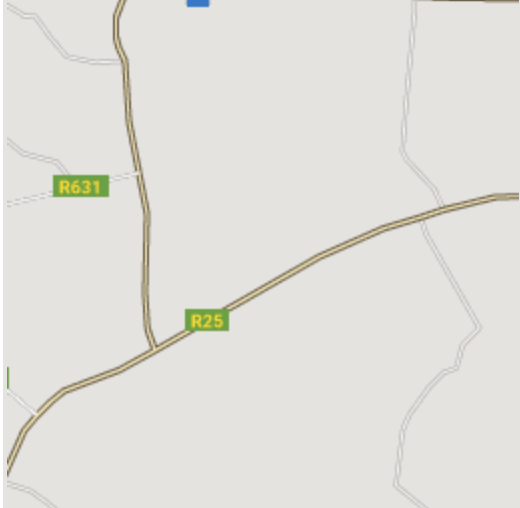
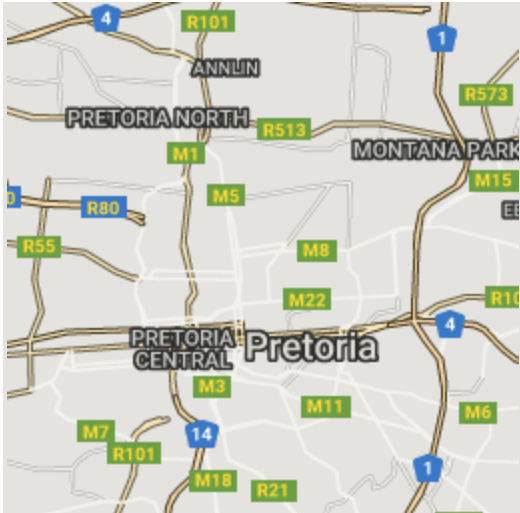


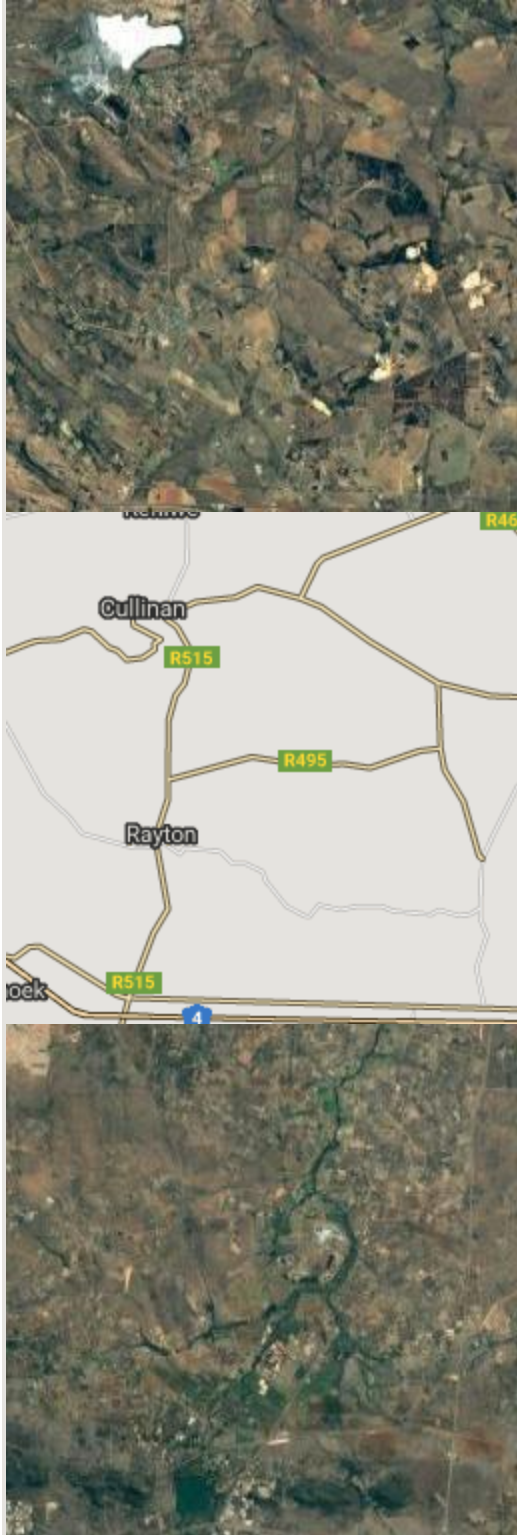


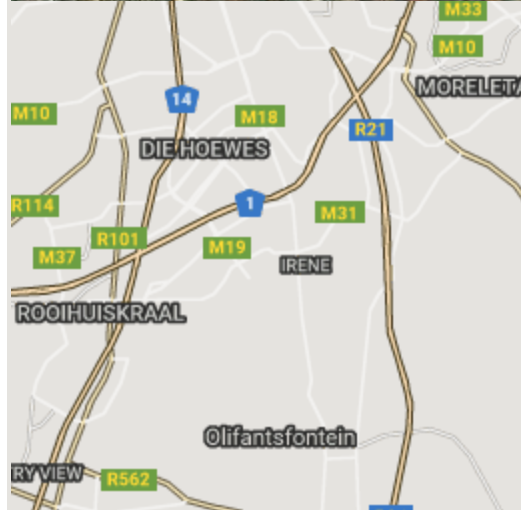
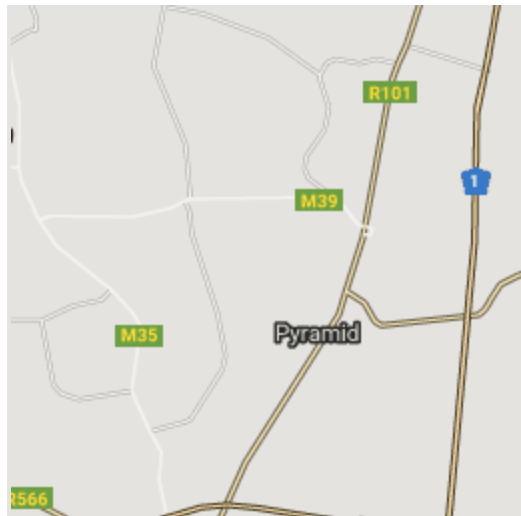


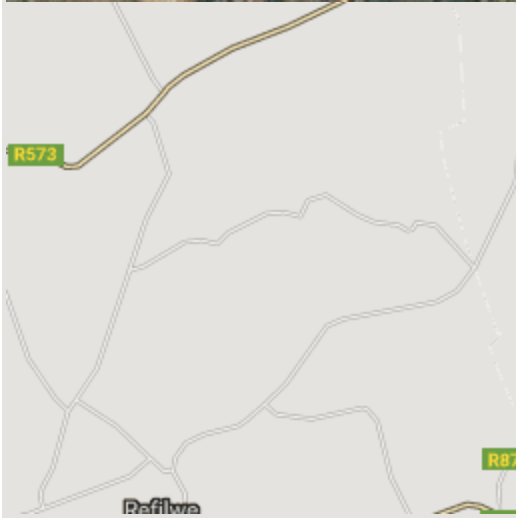












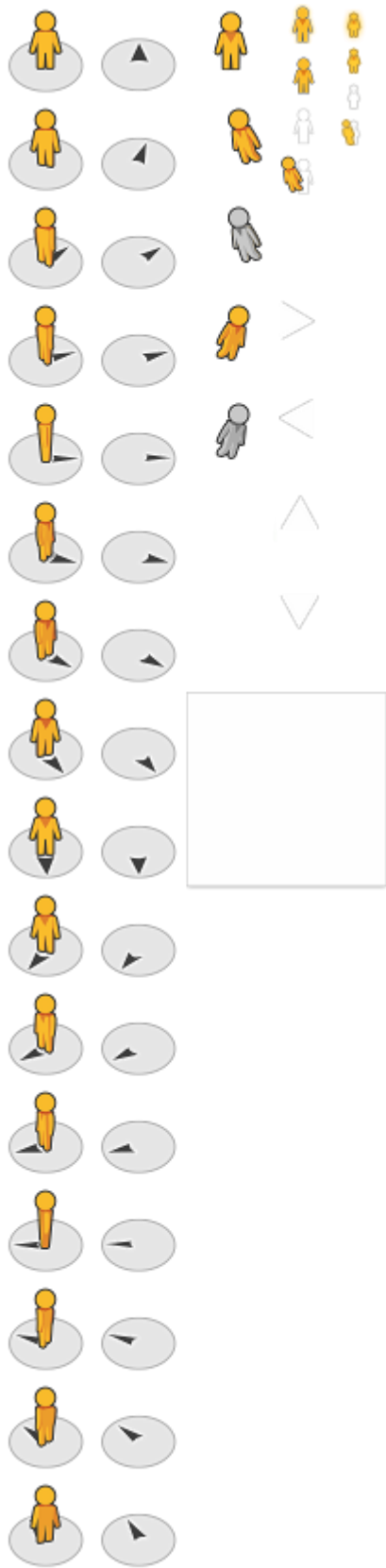
Google

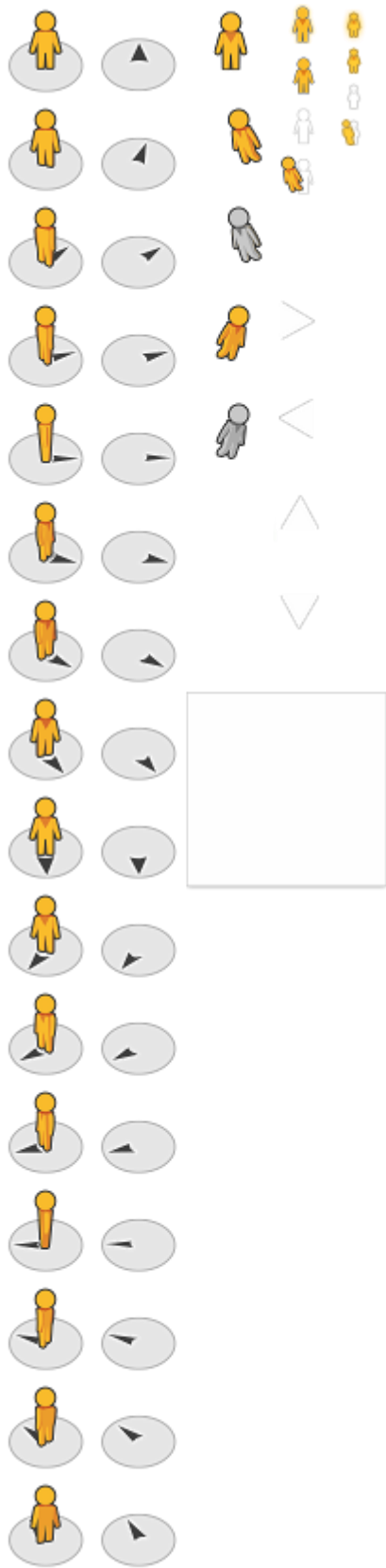
Map data ©2017 AfriGIS (Pty) Ltd, Google Imagery ©2017 TerraMetrics

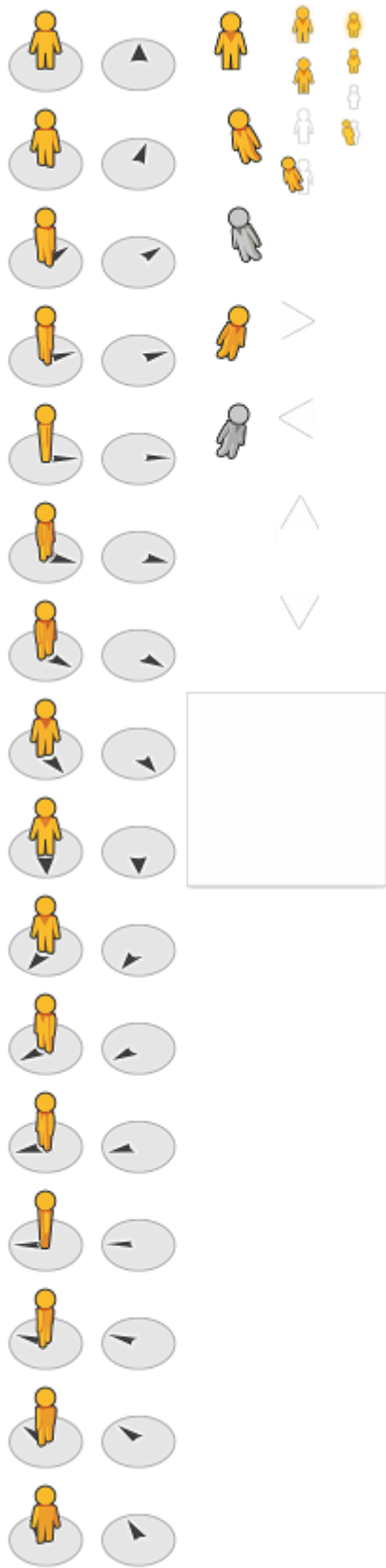
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Map  
Satellite



[view larger map](#) • [download KML file](#)

**Area:** 45.19 km<sup>2</sup>  
**Population:** 334577 (7403.17 per km<sup>2</sup>)  
**Households:** 110703 (2449.52 per km<sup>2</sup>)

Gender	People	Percentage
Male	173912	51.98%
Female	160665	48.02%

Population group	People	Percentage
Black African	330875	98.89%
Coloured	1351	0.40%
Other	1142	0.34%
Indian or Asian	746	0.22%
White	462	0.14%

First language	People	Percentage
Sepedi	141511	42.35%
isiZulu	40614	12.15%
Xitsonga	35693	10.68%
isiNdebele	29483	8.82%
Sesotho	22377	6.70%
Setswana	21918	6.56%
SiSwati	9445	2.83%
Tshivenda	8396	2.51%
isiXhosa	7392	2.21%
English	6965	2.08%
Other	6296	1.88%
Afrikaans	2752	0.82%
Sign language	1306	0.39%
<i>Not applicable</i>	428	

## Made up of:

Name	Type	Population	Area (km <sup>2</sup> )
<a href="#">Eastwood 1</a>	Sub Place	4866	0.41
<a href="#">Khalambazo</a>	Sub Place	2736	0.59

<a href="#">Khutsong</a>	Sub Place	1192	0.33
<a href="#">Mahube Valley</a>	Sub Place	4430	0.54
<a href="#">Mahube Valley Ext 1</a>	Sub Place	2936	0.46
<a href="#">Mahube Valley Ext 2</a>	Sub Place	2045	0.22
<a href="#">Mahube Valley Ext 3</a>	Sub Place	6370	0.62
<a href="#">Mamelodi AA4</a>	Sub Place	2084	0.15
<a href="#">Mamelodi BA1</a>	Sub Place	2458	0.23
<a href="#">Mamelodi CA3</a>	Sub Place	3339	0.27
<a href="#">Mamelodi DB1</a>	Sub Place	3779	0.25
<a href="#">Mamelodi EB2</a>	Sub Place	2207	0.16
<a href="#">Mamelodi Ext 10</a>	Sub Place	14850	1.12
<a href="#">Mamelodi Ext 11</a>	Sub Place	16626	1.54
<a href="#">Mamelodi Ext 12</a>	Sub Place	7601	0.75
<a href="#">Mamelodi Ext 14</a>	Sub Place	132	6.79
<a href="#">Mamelodi Ext 17</a>	Sub Place	4385	0.94
<a href="#">Mamelodi Ext 18</a>	Sub Place	14346	1.57
<a href="#">Mamelodi Ext 2</a>	Sub Place	7628	1.01
<a href="#">Mamelodi Ext 20</a>	Sub Place	3243	0.21
<a href="#">Mamelodi Ext 22</a>	Sub Place	17238	1.49
<a href="#">Mamelodi Ext 3</a>	Sub Place	4067	0.43
<a href="#">Mamelodi Ext 4</a>	Sub Place	8315	0.95
<a href="#">Mamelodi Ext 5</a>	Sub Place	15110	1.76
<a href="#">Mamelodi Ext 6</a>	Sub Place	27164	6.07
<a href="#">Mamelodi Ext 7</a>	Sub Place	3414	0.24
<a href="#">Mamelodi Ext 8</a>	Sub Place	8492	0.59
<a href="#">Mamelodi FB3</a>	Sub Place	11834	1.92
<a href="#">Mamelodi Fifteens</a>	Sub Place	3447	0.27
<a href="#">Mamelodi Fourteens</a>	Sub Place	7914	0.81
<a href="#">Mamelodi JB3</a>	Sub Place	2672	0.22
<a href="#">Mamelodi K18</a>	Sub Place	0	0.49
<a href="#">Mamelodi KC4</a>	Sub Place	6035	1.06
<a href="#">Mamelodi LC5</a>	Sub Place	3223	0.34
<a href="#">Mamelodi MD1</a>	Sub Place	4532	0.45
<a href="#">Mamelodi ND6</a>	Sub Place	3173	0.46
<a href="#">Mamelodi OD2</a>	Sub Place	3073	0.40
<a href="#">Mamelodi PD3</a>	Sub Place	3863	0.39

<a href="#">Mamelodi QD4</a>	Sub Place	4312	0.36
<a href="#">Mamelodi RD5</a>	Sub Place	3729	0.35
<a href="#">Mamelodi SA5</a>	Sub Place	2545	0.26
<a href="#">Mamelodi Seventeens</a>	Sub Place	5653	0.40
<a href="#">Mamelodi Sixteens</a>	Sub Place	3422	0.21
<a href="#">Mamelodi SP</a>	Sub Place	30763	1.76
<a href="#">Mamelodi S&amp;S</a>	Sub Place	10377	0.94
<a href="#">Mamelodi Sun Valley</a>	Sub Place	2332	0.37
<a href="#">Moretele Park</a>	Sub Place	200	0.33
<a href="#">Moretele View</a>	Sub Place	1767	0.34
<a href="#">Naledi</a>	Sub Place	5227	0.48
<a href="#">Phumulamcashi Buffer Zone</a>	Sub Place	8205	1.61
<a href="#">Selbourne Site</a>	Sub Place	1769	0.17
<a href="#">Stanza Bopape</a>	Sub Place	8508	0.55
<a href="#">Tsakane</a>	Sub Place	3518	0.41
<a href="#">White City</a>	Sub Place	1432	0.13

This site is developed by Adrian Frith. This site is not affiliated with Statistics South Africa, nor is it affiliated with my employer. Statistics South Africa is the source of the basic data, while the information displayed results from my own processing of the census data. Population statistics were obtained from the Census 2011 Community Profile Databases, and geographical areas were calculated from the Census 2011 GIS DVD.