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**THE SOCIAL COINONIAL CONSTRUCTION OF
PASTORAL THERAPY IN CLERGY TRAINING**

BUNYAN FOUCHÉ JOUBERT

**THE SOCIAL COINONIAL CONSTRUCTION OF
PASTORAL THERAPY IN CLERGY TRAINING**

by

BUNYAN FOUCHÉ JOUBERT

Submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of

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Promotor: Prof Dr D J Kotzé

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1. The word 'coinonial' is derived from the Greek word '*koinonia*' which means communion or fellowship. The transcription from the Greek language is spelled with a 'k', however in this thesis I have used the word 'coinonia' as well as the adjective 'coinonial' as English words and it is therefore spelled with a 'c' throughout the manuscript.

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CHAPTER ONE

THE RESEARCH PROJECT

The active involvement of the observer implies that the observer is responsible for his/her description because it is his/her construction, and can therefore not be accepted as the mere reflection of an objective external reality.

(Kotzé 1994)

1 Introduction

Our ways of knowing are influenced by how we see reality. Reality is either an ontological existence or reality is our way of understanding and talking about some ontological existence. To exist in this world we must have a knowledge about this ontological reality or we must have some way of relating to one another and to "reality" as we see it. One's concept of how one comes to gain knowledge will also have a direct influence on how one teaches.

This chapter will focus on the birth of this research project, the research problem, the aim of the research, the methodology according to which it is constructed, the outlines of the research of literature, the participatory action research, and an explanation of the research report.

2 Birth of this research project

To describe the birth of this research project I will reflect on my personal experience and

then include a more theoretical focus.

2.1 Personal experience

I enrolled for a Master's degree course in pastoral therapy. While doing it I experienced paradigm shifts in my way of thinking and in my way of gaining knowledge. It was within this period that several questions came to mind:

How am I to understand pastoral therapy?

What are the tangent planes as well as the differences between pastoral therapy and family therapy?

What are the tangent planes as well as the differences between pastoral therapy and pastoral psychology?

Out of which paradigm has pastoral therapy developed?

What are the tangent planes as well as the differences between pastoral therapy and theology, and specifically reformed theology?

Is pastoral therapy and reformed theology reconcilable? Are they contradictory in any way?

How would one use Scripture and prayer within pastoral therapy?

What is the relationship between pastoral therapy and Scriptural principles?

In which way can all of this be conveyed to future pastoral therapists through training?

How must the training be done if the trainer does not claim to have a higher position than the trainees?

What is the correlation between actual pastoral therapy and the teaching/training of it?

How can theory and practice be integrated in training pastoral therapists?

I also experienced some kind of tension between theological principles which presume to be presented as representations of an ontological reality and pastoral therapy practice which presumes to be presented as a social coinomial construction of reality. This tends to create confusion when in practice it seems as if the applied theological principals are counter to what is believed in theory.

There is a tremendous need for the practical training of pastors in the field of therapy. Potgieter (1988) states in his study on pastors of the Dutch Reformed church, that almost all the respondents claimed to have very little practical training during their formal studies. More than a third of the respondents emphasised the need for continuing education (specifically practical training) in respect of pastoral counselling. This need most probably lies on two levels. The first level is that of formal training through a degree in pastoral therapy. The second level is that of further informal education courses for practising

ministers.

This has challenged me was to open the door of adaptability between pastoral therapy and theology as well as to broaden the range of pastoral therapy in such a way that it is accessible for both formal and informal training courses.

2.2 Theoretical focus

Theoretically there is quite a vast array of approaches to pastoral counselling and the training of pastoral counselling. Amongst those are the approaches that strictly adhere to the Scriptures with little or no reference to psychology: The Nouthetical approach of Adams (1970); Poimenic approaches followed the same vane and were developed by De Klerk (1978), Dreyer (1981) and Trimp (1988); The Kerygmatic approach of Thurneysen (1968) and other Reformed approaches (Louw 1993:7) such as those of Fiset (1977) and Heitink (1979), although the bipolarity in Heitink's approach does provide a bridge between pastoral counselling and psychology (Louw 1993:14; Dill 1996:124). In the approach of Louw (1993) he uses both the deductive and eductive elements although the former predominates (Dill 1996:134).

In contrast to these deductive approaches the pastoral theology movement in America, with its reference to psychotherapy, focused more on the needs of the person and developed more eductive approaches (De Klerk 1978:36; Louw 1993:9). Exponents of the latter were Rogers (1951) with his non-directive counselling (De Klerk 1978:36) and Hiltner (1958). Other voices, focussing not only on Biblical revelation but also on human experience tried

to find a way through the impasse between theology and other disciplines.

Capps (1984), Gerkin (1984), De Jong van Arkel (1987), Veltkamp (1988), Van der Ven (1994), and Müller (1996) are all examples of approaches that have changed from only using theology as to using philosophies and theories of other disciplines. As De Jong van Arkel (1987:196) states: "In developing a paradigm for pastoral diagnosing, I rely heavily on the developments in Systems theory, Holism and Cybernetics". He is also very critical about empirical positivism and describes his own viewpoint as post-positivist (1987:242). These changes, thus, relate to changes in epistemology and epistemological changes, ultimately, relate to the shift from modernism to postmodernism.

My challenge is to participate in the negotiation of the shift from modernism to postmodernism concerning pastoral therapy and the training of pastoral therapy. This shift, as it is reflected in social construction theory, poses new challenges to the idea of pastoral therapy, what it is, and especially to training in pastoral therapy. To my mind there is still much to be researched in order to comprehend the influence of such a major shift as that of modernism to postmodernism. This shift, therefore, poses questions that form my research problem.

3 The research problem

This research is more likely to be a "discovery-oriented inquiry rather than a hypothesis-testing research" (Chenail 1994). It is, therefore, not my intention to falsify or verify anything, thus the research problem will not be posed as a hypothesis but rather as

questions, which opens the way, not to find something “out there”, but rather to “discover” or co-construct solutions to the following questions:

What would be the influence of postmodernist paradigms on pastoral therapy? If one departs from social construction theory as a postmodern epistemology how will pastoral therapy be co-constructed? Will one be able to build a bridge between modernist theology and postmodernist pastoral therapy through social construction theory? If one applies postmodernist assumptions and principles to training how will this change the way in which pastoral therapists are trained? What will the influence on the training of pastoral therapy be if there is a movement from praxis to theory to praxis? How will social constructionist objectives and assumptions influence supervision in pastoral therapy training? What will the central issues be if intelligibility and adaptability between a postmodern social construction discourse and a modernist theological framework is to be achieved through multiple conversations in small groups?

To attend to the research problem I will now continue to reveal the aim and the methodology of the research.

4 The aim of the research

The aim of this research can be formulated as follows:

To co-construct pastoral therapy in training according to a postmodern social construction discourse so that it is intelligible and adaptable within a modernist

theological framework, and to contribute to the training of pastoral therapists on a post-graduate and continuing education basis.

This research does not aim to create a model of pastoral therapy in addition to other models of pastoral therapy, but rather to contribute to the postmodern discourse in pastoral therapy as well as to the discourse concerning pastoral therapy in general. It must therefore be a discourse in which trainer, trainees, theory, clients, colleagues, and cultures participate.

The research will have two major parts. Part one will be the research of literature and part two the participatory action research. My inner dialogue will be interwoven into both parts as a parallel text.

5 Research methodology

5.1 Introduction

"Constructing is a social process, rooted in language, not located inside one's head" (Steier 1991:5). "We abandon the problem of the origin of ideas within the head, and shift concern to the emergence of language within communities" (Gergen & Gergen 1991:80). Because constructing is a socio-linguistical process, this research is not to describe something that already exists, or to "find" something which is "out there" and not yet previously found. From a social constructionist's viewpoint this research observes pastoral therapy and pastoral therapy training "not as an accomplished fact, as a thing made and finished, but in the process of being made" (Ortega quoted by Becker 1991:228). It is the intent of this

research to construct something, with others, over a period of time. This construction takes place in language through languaging (act of language). We understand things within the domain of discourse. It is there that our shifting orientations take place. The way I understand the world is therefore not created by me alone but rather by my "recurrent, multiple interactions with others" (Becker 1991:230). From the viewpoint of Maturana and Varela (1987) we share worlds because we specify them together in our actions, in our languaging together.

This research, therefore, cannot but take place within conversations and the researcher is part of the constructing process. Using recurrent conversations as a basis of research, reflexivity (Steier 1991) and self-reflexivity (Steier 1991a) will necessarily be part of the research. Kotzé (1994) identifies four implications that this has for the research of a family therapy training process and I am applying it as follows to the pastoral therapy training process:

The first implication is that the researcher as trainer, together with the trainees as participants, are involved in the construction of pastoral therapy, as well as pastoral therapy training. Findings of research are largely the product of this social construction process.

Implication two states that the research is not concerned with the application of a predetermined training curriculum; rather, it is an open co-evolving process involving trainer and participants.

Thirdly, reflection on the training and the research process is not an activity meta to the

training process, but is part of the process itself and in this way is also constitutive of the training. This reflection comes from multiple conversations or dialogue (Steier (ed) 1991) between all the participants. It is not only constructing pastoral therapy, but simultaneously reflects on the constructing process.

The fourth implication states that clients are not merely objects of pastoral therapy in the training process, but rather active participants in constructing pastoral therapy, pastoral therapy training and the research on pastoral therapy in training. It is also important to take into consideration clients' thoughts on pastoral therapy, if the training and the research claim to be a social construction.

A fifth implication concerning the researcher can be added. The researcher cannot enter the research *tabula rasa*. Discourses that have shaped the researcher such as culture, theology, family of origin and previous training should be considered. This consideration will be presented as the inner dialogue or biographical reflection (Middleton 1995) of the researcher. The inner dialogue will be presented in an alternative column next to the main discussion. The main discussion can be read first under each heading and after that the inner dialogue of that section can be read. Sometimes one of the two columns may be longer than the other. To save space the longer column will be extended to the full page width, but it should be easily recognisable because of the difference in fonts. Documented conversations are discussed in chapter five. The transcription of each conversation can be read before the main discussion and, after the latter, the inner dialogue can be read.

5.2 Social Coinonial Construction

From the modernist point of view, scientific descriptions are the product of *single* persons, or isolated teams of scientists. Through their scientific methodologies they believe that they can arrive at objective knowledge. Their observing skills yield insights for all. They communicate through scientific language generated within a scientific milieu, negotiating, competing, conspiring and so on. Scientific representations are thus largely products of the individuals or isolated teams of the *community of scientists*. This leads to singularity in narrative which tends to presume the functionality of a single formulation of understanding (Gergen & Kaye 1992). It is however, intelligible and authoritative because it is spoken within the community of those who honour those particular ways of speaking.

“Within a post-modern frame what we take to be knowledge is a *social* product” (Gergen & Kaye 1992:174). Knowledge, being a social product, will therefore be presented in this research project not by singularity in description but rather by multiplicity in narrative. A multiplicity of views of different people will be taken into account. The factual warrant will also be removed from the scientist’s narrative. In the research the *understanding* of pastoral therapy will be enhanced. “Conversation - language and communicative action - is simply part of the hermeneutic struggle to reach understanding with those whom we are in contact with” (Anderson & Goolishian 1988:378). The research project takes place within a specific community - a community of believers (those with whom we are in contact). Within this *coinonia* there is interaction between all the participants taking part in the discourse on pastoral therapy, making the construction a social one. The understanding reached will be constructed out of these multiple conversations on pastoral

therapy within a community of believers, hence a *social coinonial construction!*

5.3 Research design

5.3.1 Paradigm

The social constructionist discourse constitutes the paradigm of this research project. It can also be defined as qualitative constructional research because of the focus on the social coinonial construction of pastoral therapy under unique conditions at a particular time and place (Becvar and Becvar 1996:329). De Jongh van Arkel (1991:61) quotes Engel in saying that we create the world that we perceive, not because there is no reality outside our heads, but because we select and edit the reality we see to conform to our beliefs about what sort of world we live in. This places practical theology within cybernetic and systemic perspectives that bridge practical theology to other sciences. This kind of multidisciplinary and interdisciplinarity poses a complementarity between quantitative and qualitative research (Van der Ven 1994). The interaction between disciplines marks a transition between paradigms and this research process forms part of that transition. The social constructionist paradigm serves the parameters for such an endeavour. This process-oriented project will include work with Masters degree student groups over a two-year period as well as work done with clergy in continuing education courses on pastoral therapy, also over a two-year period.

Therefore the objective is to follow a social coinonial construction process. The social coinonial construction process allows for a reflexivity between outcome and construction.

"Outcome is important with regard to enhancing the construction process itself" (Kotzé 1994:10). Outcome will therefore form part of the research design through continuous reflections on the training process. However, the intension, is not to present pastoral therapy as a model for conducting therapy but to enhance the discourse in this field. The purpose would be to construct something and while constructing it also to make it the "object" of research. In this way reflexive conversations "act(s) back upon the speaker to change the nature of the speaker too" (Shotter 1993:2). Therefore I felt myself at home with Müller's (1996:1) choice not to distinguish between *theoria* and *techné* but rather to use the concept of *phronesis*. This means that I do not wish to apply abstract principles to concrete situations (Browning 1991:39), but rather have a value-oriented reflexive discourse between what is experience in practice and what is said in theory. This provides a praxis-theory-praxis movement (Heitink 1993:151; Müller 1996:2).

In this praxis-theory-praxis movement the more languaging about something that occurs, the more that something will be constructed and understood. The use of "social-dialogic procedures for the generation and the expansion of intelligibility" (Gergen & Gergen 1991:86) is thus invited. The different conversations during training as well as those about the training are introduced on as many levels and occasions and between as many participants as possible. These include the different Masters groups, the clergy groups (all as trainee-participants), colleagues within and from outside the training of pastoral therapists, clients, and literature concerning therapy, social construction theory and practical theology. Reflexive dialogue thus forms the heart of the training and research process. "The inclusion of all these various reflexive conversations forms part of both the training and the research process" (Kotzé 1994:11). Although as many conversations as possible

are used the number and duration are limited for the purposes of this study, as there actually is unlimited multiplicity.

Together, trainer, trainees, texts, clients and others talk about pastoral therapy as an “object” through the externalising method of White (White & Epston 1990). The effects of pastoral therapy and of pastoral therapy training on participants and vice versa can thus be explored. In this way trainees not only gain knowledge of pastoral therapy but also participate in the construction of pastoral therapy and in the construction of the pastoral therapy training process itself (Kotzé 1994).

5.3.2 Practical theology

The objective of research is *pastoral* therapy in *clergy* training. This brings us within the domain of practical theology. The research project falls within the concept of practical theology as communicative action (Heitink 1993; Louw 1993; Pieterse 1993). This form of participatory action research in practical theology has tangent planes with the discourse about the hermeneutic phenomenology of Gadamer (Heitink 1993; Pieterse 1993; How 1995), the discourse about the method in interpretation of Paul Ricoeur (Thompson 1981a; Thompson 1981b; Madison 1988; Pieterse 1993; Vanhoozer 1998), and the discourse about the critical social theory of Jürgen Habermas’ communicative action (Thomson 1981a; Heitink 1993; Pieterse 1993; How 1995; Vanhoozer 1998).

6 Outlines of the research of literature

The literary research forms the first of two major parts of the research project. Whilst chapter one explained the research project itself in terms of the birth of the project, the aim of the project, the research methodology and the outlines of the research, chapter two will begin the literary research by referring to two major ways of gaining knowledge - *realism* (ontological knowledge of reality) and *social constructionism* (constructional knowledge of reality). These two forms of acquiring knowledge are embedded epistemologically either in modernism or postmodernism. The influence of epistemology on pastoral therapy would therefore clarify the way in which pastoral therapy is practised and taught. Because this research project claims to be postmodern, the specific approaches that will be used within that paradigm will be explained. These are the social constructionist approaches: the Narrative, the Linguistic and the Reflecting team approaches. Chapter two takes into account one of the various "worlds" that are brought together in this study, namely that of social construction.

Chapter three commences with the "worlds" of practical theology, social sciences, family therapy, and pastoral work. The relation of pastoral therapy to practical theology will be discussed. I shall discuss several practical theology discourses, and how pastoral therapy is linked with them. The subject field of practical theology as well as the relationship between theory and praxis will be brought into perspective. The tangent planes of pastoral therapy in practical theology with the philosophical theories of Gadamer, Ricoeur and Habermas will be dealt with. Then the specific influence of the family therapy movement and its implications for pastoral therapy will be considered. Finally the discourses in

pastoral work will be discussed and an alternative paradigm for pastoral therapy consistent to this research programme will be posed.

Chapter four brings into contention another "world" - that of pedagogy - by concentrating on the concept of education/training, which entails teaching and learning. The traditional, modernist paradigm is contrasted with a postmodern paradigm. Different suppositions concerning world view will be discussed and reflected upon. Supervision is a major component of any therapy training process. The constructionist approaches to supervision and different ways of supervising form an essential part of this research and will be discussed at the end of chapter four.

7 Outlines of the participatory action research

The second major part of the research project is the actual empirical construction process. This process, taking its departure from a social constructionist viewpoint, consists of multiple reflexive conversations in which there is a certain kind of power sharing between trainer and trainees. All who participate in these conversations co-construct pastoral therapy as they go along. In training, this diversity of conversations is interwoven throughout the construction process. Because of the multiplicity of these reflexive conversations not all of them can be reported on. Although the researcher recognises the importance of every conversation for the construction process, albeit between trainees outside the formal setting of their training, only selected conversations will form part of the participatory action research.

Chapter five will elaborate on the trainee groups, the training courses and report on the reflexive conversations during training. The reflexive conversations, that were either audiotaped or videotaped and transcribed, form the appendices A-G at the end of this research report after the index of references. In this chapter each of those conversations will be discussed and the deconstructions that form part of the understanding of pastoral therapy and pastoral therapy training will be reflected upon.

7.1 Conversations during the participatory action research

The multiple reflexive conversations include: reflexive conversations between student-participants and the trainer; between trainer and colleagues; between trainer and another theology colleague; between student-participants and the other theology colleague; between student-participants, trainer and clients; between participants of a masters' degree group and a continued education group, between student-participants and theory, between student-participants and family-of-origin, between student-participants and own culture as well as reflexive conversations with the promoter. However, only seven of these conversations were transcribed and used in the discussions in chapter five. Various concepts, such as , position of the supervisor, knowledge/power, subjectivity/objectivity and inter-subjectivity, sensitivity towards marginalised people and others were co-created through our languaging about them.

8 Research narrative

Although all chapters form part of the research report or the research narrative, chapter six

is a final reflection on the research. When reporting on the research process a linear cause-effect method will be avoided. The report will rather be in the form of a research narrative. The multiple conversations between different entities influence one another and the influence of the conversations on these entities is of importance. It was never the intention to "convert" anyone to another way of believing or another way of doing but rather to establish some kind of "fit" (von Glasersfeld 1991) between the different entities. Everyone who participated helped in co-constructing an understanding of pastoral therapy and pastoral therapy training. As each person, through the act of languaging, told the dominant story (White & Epston 1990) of his/her experience of pastoral therapy the concept of pastoral therapy became deconstructed (White 1991) and simultaneously retold in a new dominant story. It is this new story that will be referred to as the research narrative. The research narrative will not be presented as an accomplished fact, but rather as a narrative in the process of being told, thus leaving an open end for discourse in order for the narrative of pastoral therapy to continue - ad infinitum.

CHAPTER TWO

SOCIAL COINONIAL CONSTRUCTION

Inner dialogue¹

1 Introduction

Introduction

In this chapter the “social coinonial construction”-part of the title of this research project will be elucidated. To do that I want to start out by mentioning a few of the major conceptual eras in history. Two very important eras are those of modernism and postmodernism, therefore I will be discussing briefly some of the discourses within these two epistemological vantage points, so as to place the concept of social construction

When I first encountered social constructionism I could not fully understand why it poses so many problems for research and validity. As I look upon it now, I realise that I did not have the barriers of the scientific community which had to comply with specific rules and method in order to validate knowledge claims. The only

¹ Chapter 2 to chapter 5 is presented in two columns. The left-hand column corresponds with conventional style academic writing representing the discourse of theory and offers some implications of postmodernist, social construction theory for pastoral therapy. In the right-hand column I reflect my own thoughts. These thoughts represent my own thinking about the issues in the left-hand column, but also reflects on who I am. It brings into contention my own locality concerning culture, education, belief systems, and heritage. Writing in this way acknowledges self-reflexivity in research (Steier 1991a). It is also consistent with postmodernist writing techniques in placing together seemingly disconnected issues, circumstances and experiences with theory (Middleton 1995:88). Therefore there will be points at which ideas in the theoretical (left-hand) column and the biographical (right-hand) column converge, merge, and cross over. Ideas on one side often echo ideas on the other - at an explicit or at a subconscious level. Each column is self-sufficient and one can choose which of the two to read first. Conventionally, one can start by first reading the left-hand column under each caption and then the right-hand column under the same caption. Alternatively, one can read the work like a textual collage by occasionally jumping across columns. As Sue Middleton (1995:88) states: “If form and content are to be consistent, postmodernist writers should structure their texts in ways which encourage readers to experiment with unorthodox, multiple, and idiosyncratic readings”.

Because of the two columns I have chosen not to make the indent of quotations to wide - the space does not allow it - instead I will present longer quotations in a different font so as to enable the reader to distinguish properly between text and quotations. Whenever one of the two columns under a specific caption is too long, that specific column will be widened to full page width in order to save space. The specific column will however be clearly recognisable by its specific font.

into perspective. Epistemology has everything to do with our understanding of social construction and a discussion of epistemology will also be beneficial to our apprehension of pastoral therapy as described through this research project. I then want to review some approaches that emerged from the social constructionist theory which are constitutive of how this research project was conducted. After that the focus will be on the term *coinonial* and how it relates to and is constitutive of what we are to understand about pastoral therapy.

experience I had was that of helping people with faith and life problems. Almost all these problems had to do with relationships. In helping people by talking with them about their experiences, certain aspects of our conversations were highlighted in my mind. I was astonished by how easily people misunderstood each other. It dawned upon me how important language, perspectives, culture, belief systems and even gender are for coming to conclusions about specific situations in people's lives. What

struck me, was that no situation was as secure as in the sense of a natural entity that is the subject of research in the natural sciences. Instead, everything was open to interpretation and therefore influenced by innumerable factors. It reminded me of what Paul said in the first epistle to the Corinthians (13:9-10 and 12): "For our gifts of knowledge and of inspired messages are only partial; but when what is perfect comes, then what is partial will disappear. What we see now is like the dim image in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. What I know now is only partial; then it will be complete, as complete as God's knowledge of me". Yet, the church, through her theology, seems to be so sure of everything. Many church members experience dogma as the positivism of theology and as such totalising. Because of these experiences and because I had so little exposure to scientific research the logical positivist way, I suppose social constructionism made sense to me.

Social constructionism opened vistas to me within which I was enabled to accept different interpretations of the same situation as being, respectively, 'the truth' for the persons presenting it. I also realised, because of that, their respective accounts of what happened were not representations but rather interpretations or constructions of how they experienced the events individually. Social constructionism, to my mind, is helping

us to understand many things that we have been doing all along in our counselling of other people, but we have never had the proper means to describe them, for the descriptions were not accepted as being valid, because of the lack of acceptable research parameters.

1.1 Major conceptual eras

When referring in general to the term “modern” we are referring to the “now”, that is, to the present era (Cahoone 1996:4). Similarly this means that previous eras had other terms referring to them. I am thinking of the Hellenistic era, the term usually describing the two hundred years B.C. in which, through the efforts of Alexander the Great, the world was to be Hellenised. Then too, the Roman era and the Dark Medieval era spanned several centuries. These were eras, as I see it, in which specific rulers (Alexander the Great, the Roman Caesars etc.), thinkers/philosophers/ scientists (Aristotle, Plato, Copernicus, Newton, Einstein etc.), and groups (Roman Catholic Church etc.), through their specific ways of doing and thinking and perceiving, dominated the world. After the Medieval ages and the era of Protestant Reformation, an era called the Enlightenment heralded the Modern Western world which has developed to where it is today with a strong reference to European culture (Cahoone 1996:6). These

Major conceptual eras

This lack of acceptable research parameters, I think, can be connected with the different conceptual eras. Each of these eras directed the way in which man perceived and described knowledge, influenced the way in which man acted, spoke, interpreted, and related to reality. It was also constitutive of research methodology. People who went beyond the acceptable were either ignored, regarded as heretics or even stopped in their endeavour to explore the limits of human existence. However, through history, we have experienced that transition cannot be stopped and therefore I have realised that I have to be content with the feeling of awkwardness that accompanied the seemingly relativity of otherness, difference, ambiguity and plurality in the so-called post-age. This very feeling compelled me to grasp at the

eras, however, are not encapsulated within clearly demarcated times and the ideas and ways of thinking within them are not time-bound either. Discourses on the different eras overflow into those following them:

In K  ng's diagram of paradigm shifts in theology, he indicates that the Hellenistic paradigm of the patristic period still lives on in parts of the Orthodox churches, the medieval Roman Catholic paradigm in contemporary Roman Catholic traditionalism, the Protestant Reformation paradigm in twentieth-century Protestant confessionalism, and the Enlightenment paradigm in liberal theology.

(Bosch 1993:186)

Although traces of these eras are still visible, it is the influence of the modern and postmodern eras that are constitutive of our contemporary discourses. Discourses of today are filled with the traces of transition:

The signpost marking our age is the 'post' sign - it is a post-age. Theoretical discourse in the post-age is stamped by signifiers like 'otherness', 'difference' and 'plurality'... each post-age inevitably shows the present power of the past. Ambiguity and uncertainty mark the post-age, for the future is indeterminable and invisible and the past paradoxically both dismissed and kept.

(Le Roux 1996:93)

certainties of the past only to realise that they are not certainties any more, that is, not steadfast, unchangeable, ontologic descriptions of the truth, to which I could anchor myself, but rather my own choices of constructing reality, even if those choices were made together with the community within which I had grown up. The only anchor I could hang on to was choice. I remember how my parents would say things like: 'Never destroy your good name', I can see traces of the Romantic period in that; 'Education brings prosperity', and I can see the footprints of modernism in that statement. Many other things were said in which I could see the traits of eras gone by, but eventually I had to make the choice as to which of those I do believe in, and which of those I am to apply in my daily life. Surely these choices said (and still say) a lot about who I am, not only to myself, but especially to other people. It is because those people measure my choices against the accepted social norms of the community that they will

be able to place a plus or a minus in front of my name. This power of choice also broadened my perception of faith and responsibility. The things in which one has faith are exactly those things that one cannot see, that one cannot prove scientifically. As Hebrews 11:1 says: "To have faith is to be sure of the things we hope for, to be certain of the things we cannot see". To have faith, therefore, is a deliberate choice to believe in something. To choose something also infers that one deliberately forsakes others and therefore has to take responsibility for one's choices. In this research project I have made a choice to look at things the postmodern way, which means that I accept that everything done, concerning pastoral therapy, is meaning created through language. I accept that the description given inevitably involved choices to use the most sensible accounts of what we (all the participants) perceived to be pastoral therapy.

1.2 The constituting of 'Self' within these eras

In his book *The Saturated Self* Kenneth J. Gergen (1991) has postulated how the prejudice of the "Self" (also called "person" or "I" or "individual") has evolved over time. During the 19th century - the Romantic period - the Self was constituted from personal depth, that is, from passion, soul, creativity, and moral fibre. The Self was governed by the heart and was deeply committed to relationships, friendships and life purposes. In the late 19th and early 20th century when modernism was at its hight, the Self was constituted by rationality and cognition and was governed by the brain. The ability to reason, to form opinions, and to deal with conscious intentions made education, moral training and rational choices in

The constituting of 'Self'

Within my togetherness with others during research, I also encountered several 'Selves' as I shifted from supervisor to learner participant, to colleague, to pastoral therapist, to supervisor, to be supervised, to challenger, to be challenged, et cetera. At first it is difficult to think of it as different 'Selves', because of the concept of 'Self' within the romantic and modernist eras as a person with a character or personality that cannot change. Within these eras the community would speak of someone with more than one 'self' as 'two-faced' and it would be interpreted quite negatively. And yet I found that Paul himself in 1 Corinthians 9:19-22

relationships beneficial. These Selves were seen as stable over time and therefore one could speak of an essence of man that could be called either character or personality or personhood. In the so-called postmodern era, starting in the middle of this century, the idea of one Self has been challenged by the idea of many Selves. Relationships, conversations and language became the constitutive factors of one's shifting Selves, and the governing factor of the multiple Selves became "the togetherness with others" or as Shotter (1993:180) puts it: "Our 'official' ways of being, our 'selves' are produced in our 'official' ways of interrelating ourselves to each other - these are the terms in which we are socially accountable in our society". When therapeutic processes began to enjoy the postmodern view of Self, persons would be seen, first of all, "as creating meanings through language" (Andersen 1993:304).

2 Discourse: Modern and Postmodern

We are in a transition period, moving from the modern to the postmodern era. Everything is not clearcut, but as Gergen and Kaye (1992:175) say: "We stand at a

favoured many 'Selves' for the sake of saving people: "For though I be free from all [men], yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all [men], that I might by all means save some" (NIV 1984). In order to help people then, be it student participant, client or colleague, I have chosen to move between different 'Selves', without ignoring the choice I have made to submit myself to Christ's law in the first place and, in the second place, to the principles of the specific community within which I am working.

Discourse: Modern and Postmodern

The modern/postmodern discourse

point of embarkation: a radical departure from traditional assumptions about knowledge, persons, and the nature of the 'real' is at hand". In the words of Middleton and Walsh (1995:41):

We live in a time of cultural transition, where we are experiencing the continuance - even the heightening - of central features of modernity, side by side with genuinely novel, postmodern elements. One of these central features is a continuing commitment to human autonomy.

Discourses that are prominent to the modern/postmodern era are: the reliability of man on his own mind and power of judgement (Rossouw 1995:155); the continual changing of the world for the better; individualism within which the most important building-block of society is the individual (Cahoone 1996:11); rationality/irrationality (Cahoone 1996:10); scientifically proven or socially constructed (Fuller 1988; Steier 1991; McNamee and Gergen 1992; Gergen 1994); the debate about objectivity/subjectivity (Von Foerster 1991, Gergen 1994); power/knowledge (Foucault 1980; Gergen 1985; White & Epston 1990; Söderqvist 1991; Steedman 1991); and sensitivity for the marginalised (Hare-Mustin & Marecek 1988; Hoffman 1990; McGoldrick 1993). I shall continue by

spans all the different domains within which one can operate. However, as it is presented here, it is viewed primarily from the perspective of the domain of counselling and the domain of theology. I must acknowledge that we are in a transition period between two eras, and in this transition period nothing is clear. Therefore I am part of an endeavour in which, together with others, through multiple conversations, we are trying to make sense of the transition. We are accepting the challenge of the so-called differences between modernism and postmodernism, seeking for compatibility and intelligibility. For me the urge was strong to label new ways of thinking negatively, in other words to ask questions like: 'What will this new way of looking at the world and at life deprive me of? Where must I block it out, or even counter it?' I am convinced that this reaction to the new and the foreign relates to the way in which I was raised, not particularly by my parents, but by the culture and era we all lived in. It was, however, wonderful to start asking questions

momentarily focussing on those discourses (the last three mentioned) that are of particular value to this study.

2.1 Objectivity / subjectivity

Objectivity is the word used to defend the notion that one can describe something as it is, outside of oneself. The modalities of that something are not influenced by what anyone thinks, does or says. It is something that exists ontologically. To be objective about something or someone is to be unbiased - not to be influenced by one's own notions or opinions. Subjectivity, on the other hand, is the word used to describe that one allows - whether one wants to or not - one's views and convictions to influence one's ability to be unbiased, and therefore to act prejudicially. From a modernist point of view some objective reality can be known, a reality outside oneself that can be observed and described as it is. Semin and Gergen (1990:3) call this "the traditional commitment to knowledge as individual representation of the external world". The postmodernist view of reality, however, postulates a socially constructed reality. That is a reality

like: 'What can I gain by this new way of thinking and how can I profit by positively criticising what I already have, through the eyes of the new rather than vice versa.

Objectivity / subjectivity

Everything described is described in language. Language is such an integral part of mankind that the subject can never be separated from it. As one describes in language, the object described can also not be separated from the subject, which means to me that objectivity as such cannot be achieved. Therefore my own culture, the views of the community within which I am living, the theory that I have read, my own circumstances while growing up, my present situation as a minister in a Dutch Reformed Church, my education at a Dutch Reformed Faculty of Theology, my interaction with students and with clients, as well as my own views about all of these, will influence the way in which I will describe what I am busy researching. The describing

constructed, not as it is ontologically, but as we describe it in language in our relationships and conversations with one another within our specific cultures. Objectivity in this sense is "primarily a rhetorical achievement" (Gergen 1994:166). This does not mean that the world "out there" does not exist, but that knowledge of it can be none other than inter-subjective. Inter-subjective knowledge means that the world "out there" can only be known indirectly: "The *Ding an sich* is always known indirectly, always in the language of the knower's posits... ..but there is objectivity in reflection, however indirect, an objectivity in the selection from innumerable less adequate posits" (Campbell 1987:85). Becvar and Becvar (1996:85) describe it as follows: "The observer is understood to be part of that which is observed, and thus may only describe observing systems". Therefore reality is understood to be constructed as a function of belief systems that one brings to bear on a particular situation and according to which one operates. This means that we have to take responsibility for what we "find" in research, and for our own belief systems. From the postmodernist point of view "objectivity", "subjectivity" and "individual responsibility" would

of pastoral therapy, therefore, is not a description of something that exists outside the therapist and the client, but a description of something that happens in a social environment within a specific time through the eyes of all participants. The only 'objectivity' lies in the reflexivity of conversations, in the social agreement upon universal norms. What we are about to construct in research then is something that has been making sense at the time of construction and will continue to evolve towards the needs of our specific society, as long as pastoral therapy is needed. Because I am part of the phenomenon observed, and because the phenomenon observed is not something out there, to me it is not a question of 'seeing is believing' as much as it is a case of 'believing is seeing'. This research project, then, is part of a continuing social construction of what people experience pastoral therapy to be rather than a secure description of something objective.

have to be put in parenthesis.

2.2 Power/knowledge

Because of the modernist stance that reality can be known as it is, and because of the fact that this knowledge is gained through specific objective scientific methods and described in unique scientific terms, the man in the street is usually regarded as a layman. People with knowledge thus have power over laymen. Foucault (1980:94) argues that the modernist form of power through knowledge subjugates, when he says that we, as subjects of this power through knowledge, are "judged, condemned, classified, determined in our undertaking, destined to a certain mode of living or dying, as a function of the true discourses which are the bearers of the specific effects of power".

Knowledge and power are such a part of the same coin that Steedman (1991:57) supports the notion of Foucault (1980) to speak of power/knowledge instead of "knowledge" and "power". This underlines the claim that all knowledge is the reflection of strategies

Power/knowledge

One of the concerns I had, that formed part of the prompting for this study, was the question of power/knowledge. My experience in a congregation is that people with problems choose to avoid the minister for fear of adjudication. The minister is the one knowledgeable enough to diagnose your sins and condemn you for it. Even though I have preached a lot about this to soften the suspicion and to motivate members of my congregation to reach out for help, this predisposition about power/knowledge remains an obstacle. Something significant about power/knowledge surfaced when I asked numerous clients about this, and that is that somehow they think that the minister, having so much knowledge about them and their lives, will from that point on have power over them. It is as if the notion of power/knowledge prevents them from thinking past their problem and then they envision that the problem will be used against them instead of them being helped to

of power. In the postmodern era, however, attention is given to an awareness of knowledge as framework-relative, challenging the hierarchy of the expert with his privileged information, hence power. "Facts are being replaced by perspectives and with this shift comes a challenge to the power and privilege previously attributed to the possessors of 'knowledge'" (Becvar and Becvar 1996:87).

To deconstruct power/knowledge, the focus on discourse and the role of language became imperative. Söderqvist (1991:143-159) gives quite an extensive account of how power/knowledge can be deconstructed through reflexivity in the writing of biographies. He highlights the advantages of ethnobiography - the stories people tell about each other in *local* settings - for satisfactory reflexivity, because they are tacitly known to be social constructs. Similarly reflexivity in postmodern therapeutical approaches serves to deconstruct power as it promotes transparency and an open relationship between therapist and client (Anderson and Goolishian 1990; White 1991; Kvale 1992; Hoffman-Hennessy & Davis 1993; Andersen 1993). Also in theology the power of knowledge can

overcome the problem.

Another level at which the power/knowledge discourse subjugates is in my own mind, where sometimes I found myself thinking that this research project must be inferior because it does not claim 'the truth' for all times and circumstances irrespective of culture, denomination, location, ethnicity, et cetera. Experience, however, has rewritten this notion as I have experienced by myself the worthiness of giving help without claiming to be an expert and by inviting clients to partake in the therapy process as equal partners, with equal responsibility for the positive outcome of the process. The client's experience of this was equally rewarding as will be reported on in chapter five.

On the level of training, the discourse on power/knowledge was conducted openly with the students. My role as supervisor was constructed as trainer-participant and the roles of the students as student-participants. This

be destructive, especially when people who need help feel as if the church is judgemental instead of liberating. Bosch (1991:349-362) in his chapter about the emergence of a postmodern paradigm postulates that two things are needed in order to break the grip of the spurious doctrine of autonomy and retrieve what is essentially human:

First, we must reaffirm the indispensableness of conviction and commitment... Tolerance is not an unambiguous virtue, especially the 'I'm ok, you're ok' kind which leaves no room for challenging one another. Secondly, we need to retrieve togetherness, interdependence, 'symbiosis'... The 'psychology of separateness' has to make way for an 'epistemology of participation'... The 'instrumental' reason of the Enlightenment (and the scientific reason of the modernist era - my insertion) has to be supplemented with 'communicative' reason, since human existence is by definition inter-subjective existence.

When power is deconstructed it opens up many new possibilities among which is a sensitivity for the marginalised and for the other. A new ear and a new eye is developed for ethnicity, cultural diversity, gender sensitivity and, in theology, for the other (Hoffman 1990; Bosch 1991; McGoldrick 1993; Le Roux 1996).

construction paved the way for a participation in discussions of theory that was correlatory to, and yet completely different from what I experienced in the classroom situation of my undergraduate years of study. In my undergraduate years I had the boldness to ask questions and even to challenge the lecturer, but always with the repressing fear, however faint, that what I had said would be countered by the greater knowledge and expertise of the lecturer. I also experienced the predisposition from the lecturer's point of view, that the lecturer has the position - and he must uphold that position - to know better and more than the students. Notwithstanding how well the relationship between the students and some of the lecturers was, I never felt liberated from the expert/layman position. To have experienced the deconstruction of power/knowledge through the reflexiveness of discourse where everybody who participates co-constructs meaning through language and everybody's participation is viewed as equally decisive to the

outcome, was liberating in the sense that every participant accepted ownership of the constructed meaning and no one felt subjugated into any acceptance whatsoever. I, as trainer-participant never felt threatened by anyone's opinion in the sense that it might be better than my own, or would show more insight than my own; I never felt myself in the position of over and against the student-participants. The student-participants were liberated to share their views freely, without fear of repudiation, but with assurance of acceptance.

The transparency of the therapeutical process (explained further in chapter 4) and the openness between therapist and client, enhances the deconstruction of power in the therapist/client relationship and creates a reflexiveness that promotes the acceptance of responsibility by clients and the conviction that they are able to cope on their own. Especially from a theological point of view, clients are of the conviction that they themselves are able to distinguish right from wrong according to the Bible; the minister, as the expert, need not spell it out to them in every situation. Indeed it is in the togetherness, interdependence, 'symbiosis' and participation of communicative reason, that the fears of inferiority, adjudication and condemnation can be dissolved and the boldness of challenging convictions and commitments can not only be tolerated, but can also be life-changing. Communicative reason helped me to be much more sensitive in respect of marginalised people.

2.3 Sensitivity for the marginalised

Exactly because of the way in which power has become constituted through knowledge, a kind of 'blindness' has struck the Western world. Majority groups live under the illusion that they have true knowledge and therefore their cultural values determine the dominant values of society. "The grand narrative of Western progress, like all grand narratives, results in the devaluation and suppression of other stories"

Sensitivity for the marginalised

The particular part of the Western world within which I myself, the student-participants and most of our clients have grown up was marked by white male dominance. This metanarrative influenced - and this influence must still be acknowledged - everything in our lives. The marginalised in such a world are women, children, people of colour,

(Middleton and Walsh 1995:72). The opinion or value system of minority groups is so often disregarded that most of the majority groups do not even know about them, let alone take it into consideration in mutual situations. However power can be so commanding that even minority groups can set the pace of what is to count as right, proper and fair, while all other opinions are marginalised, as it happened in South-Africa for many years. To be sensitive for people in cultural context "means having a concept of normality that encompasses everyone together in a context that connects us all (McGoldrick 1993:334).

Eastern and African cultures tend to define the person as a social being and define development by the growth in the human capacity for empathy and connection. This, I believe, help them to be sensitive to the other. By contrast, many Western cultures begin with the individual as a psychological being and define development as growth in the human capacity for differentiation (McGoldrick 1993:335). This individuality, I think, promotes not only independence, but unfortunately also a non-sensitivity towards the other:

people with alternative sexual orientation and everything that is 'other' to the traditional way of thinking. This was enhanced by the way in which the Bible was interpreted and the metanarrative of white male dominance again, influenced the way in which the Bible was interpreted. This to my mind was a vicious circle that maintained the status quo, disregarding the marginalised.

The fear of this kind of totalization was prominent in the structuring of this research project and proper theoretical material on this subject was included. Also, changes in South-Africa made sensitivity for others an imperative. Soon clergy would be in the position where cross-cultural help in marital and family affairs would be inevitable.

The status quo way of thinking also influenced me towards a kind of individuality that was projected to the church. This kind of individuality nurtured the notion that my own was the best and everything else second

As the postmodern world moves more and more in the direction of pluralisation, multiculturalism, or even a planetary civilisation, difference rather than sameness becomes the order of things and the Other becomes the ethical challenge of the present.

(Parry & Doan 1994:31)

best. To me the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) was the norm and every other denomination marginalised. This was not only as regards its (DRC) interpretation of the Bible (which I think is sound and in harmony with the

rest of the reformed world), but also its way of doing things - liturgical form, counselling, et cetera, became the norm and made it difficult to work together with other denominations. The focus was always on the differences between us and others. In this research project, however, a definite choice was made to be sensitive towards others irrespective of colour, culture, creed or denomination. However, the choice to be true to what we (the DRC community of faith) believe from Scripture to be the norm, remains the point of departure for all charitable actions. As a minister I experience that some people are reluctant to reach out for help, especially those with problems that they know are not Biblically acceptable for example, gay people, people who are co-habiting as if they were married but are not married, people who are divorced, people with extra-marital love affairs, even people with religious problems whose opinions differ from that of the church. The reason is that they are afraid of being judged or even rejected by the church. I hope that this research project will help to rewrite the dominant narrative about Reformed Churches in general and the DRC in particular, and help to dispel the perception that their counsellors (i.e. clergy) are judgemental and ignorant, especially in regard to the marginalised. In this study I have accepted the ethical challenge of the Other that is facing us in the postmodern world. The quest to link up with the marginalised is something I can associate with, because in my family I have always made it my duty to identify with the 'black sheep' of the family in an attempt to draw them back in, in spite of what the rest might say. This was the duty of my maternal grandfather, but, being his namesake, after his death and because of my occupation I felt the pressure to take over his role. My position as second of six children in my family also made me my mother's perfect choice to take care of the youngest two siblings, both ten years my junior.

3 Epistemology and Social Construction Theory

3.1 Research

Epistemology is the word normally used for "theory of knowledge". Traditional researchers are convinced that the only way to come to claim valid knowledge is through quantitative research consistent with the simple (or first-order) cybernetics, modernist tradition (Becvar & Becvar 1996:327). Research in this tradition is based on the presumption that individual knowledge gained through proper methodological scientific experimental observation equals reality and is therefore normative. Through history grand narratives or metanarratives were formed that constituted society within the established explanatory-evaluative discourse of modernism (Middleton & Walsh 1995). This was true both for natural sciences and the humanities, but since the second half of this century challenges from different fields have contrasted with this modernist stance. A delegitimisation of the "grand narratives" in favour of local narratives occurred (Shotter 1993:69; Middleton & Walsh 1995:69-71). Modern rationality paved the

Epistemology and Social Construction Theory

Research

I am deeply dissatisfied by the negative results produced by something seemingly meant to solve all the problems of humanity. The negative results of the progressive ideal of modernism was totalisation and violence and it accomplished exactly the opposite of what it was trying to achieve. Instead of harmony and equality people with 'knowledge' gained power over others and marginalisation and abuse, discrimination and inequality became the norm. To me this shock meant a disbelief in and a questioning of all the certainties with which I had grown up. I desperately asked myself whether I could still hold on to the belief systems of the community within which I had grown up, if part of that belief system was part of the totalisation and violence we experienced in our country.

On the other hand, postmodernism's

way for a postmodern condition:

Modernity places man in the centre, and sees man as a rational being. There is a basic assumption of emancipation and progress through reason and science... Postmodernity indicates a condition... after the modern belief in progress through more knowledge has become difficult to sustain... Postmodern thought is characterised by a loss of belief in an objective world and an incredulity towards meta-narratives of legitimisation... With a pervasive decentralisation, communal interaction and local knowledge become important in their own right. Even such concepts as nation and tradition are becoming rehabilitated in a postmodern age.

(Kvale 1992:32-34)

In the epistemology of social construction a shift occurred from an objective reality to a focus on the social and linguistic construction of a perspectival reality, therefore it "urges us to abandon the obsession with truth and representation" (Longino 1990:9), as if science gives us an unbiased view of the real world. Qualitative research is more consistent with therapeutic practice at the level of cybernetics of cybernetics or second order cybernetics (constructionism). Lather (1986) as mentioned by Becvar and Becvar (1996:329) states that qualitative research has the feel of a perspective which emancipates people from the tight

solution brought even more uncertainty because I felt as if it robbed me of the only certainties I thought I had. However, it made a lot of sense in the counselling process. If people could challenge the meta-narratives of their lives, for instance, the stories they believe about themselves and their marriages, solutions start to develop out of the untold stories of their lives and marriages.

The experience of life-changing processes in the lives of people with relational problems, through the application of postmodern principles in the counselling process, was a driving force behind the selection of an epistemological framework for this research program. My intention was to use as a point of departure that there is no ultimate model of doing pastoral therapy and that by constructing pastoral therapy through social interaction within a specific community of faith, an understanding of pastoral therapy and an application thereof can be achieved that will not be

boxes of normative social science and mental health practice. Becvar and Becvar (1996:329) go on to say:

Some forms of qualitative research move the researcher out of the role of expert who believes his or her observations and interpretations of the data are better than those of the subjects. Subjects of investigations may be invited to participate and dialogue with the researcher throughout a research project. Indeed, qualitative research and therapeutic conversations may be indistinguishable from one another.

In the epistemology of social construction language and knowledge do not copy reality. Rather, language constitutes reality, and different languages construct different aspects of reality in their own way. "The focus is on the linguistic and social construction of reality, on interpretation and negotiation of the meaning of the lived world" (Kvale 1992:35). Discourse, therefore, becomes increasingly important.

3.2 Discourse

Language used in conversations, either verbally or in writing, can be called discourse. Language is a way of being. Accordingly "to be in language" is a dynamic,

totalising or abusive.

This led to the choice of qualitative research through social construction. It being a social construction, everyone who was part of the process was viewed as an equal participant. This included the clients worked with during the construction process, the researcher-participant, the student-participants, colleagues, et cetera. This form of research also requires discourse and discourse was established by means of multiple conversations throughout the construction period and will continue thereafter.

Along these lines a social construction of pastoral therapy and pastoral therapy training was formed. This construction constitutes reality through language and gave meaning to our understanding of pastoral therapy rather than being an ontological representation of what pastoral therapy is.

This research program therefore does

social operation and not a simple linguistic activity (Anderson & Goolishian 1988:377; Andersen 1993:309). Habermas' contention is that discourse is communicative action within which people are tending to come to some kind of an understanding about something and/or an inter-subjective agreement over norms and values through an argumentative praxis (How 1995:134). Thus, in a social construction paradigm, 'knowledge' is gained through the meaning and understanding that come about in our languaging together (Becker 1991:226-233). Discourse in this sense does not so much look for techniques of 'saying' - how turns are taken in conversations, for example, but as in Foucault's discourse theory, rather looks for techniques of 'what can be said' (McHoul & Grace 1987:31). Discourse, also, as it is used in this research, is linguistic functioning that views the act of speaking and writing not as working by the use of already fixed codes simply to represent 'reality' but as "being continuously creative or formative processes in which we construct the situation or context of our communication *as we communicate*" (Shotter 1993:101). Because pastoral therapy and the training of pastoral therapy gets constructed through discourse one

not claim to have found something 'out there' or to have established some kind of normative knowledge concerning pastoral therapy, but claims to be a construction of pastoral therapy within a specific setting and time.

Discourse

It is my conviction that all participants in this research project developed a specific understanding of and attached meaning to what we call 'pastoral therapy' through a process of interacting in discourse. Nevertheless, however specific our understanding, it remains open for discussion and interaction with others and therefore sensitive to new ideas and practices. In trying to establish more of an intelligibility one should have an open ear for these new ideas on the one hand, whereas on the other hand one should test these ideas within one's existing understanding of norms and values and allow either side to react with the other. Discourse is an excellent way in which to accomplish this kind of reciprocity which again

should always be open and watchful for 'what can be said' and creative towards diverse understandings of pastoral therapy and the training thereof. It also implies that a social construction can never be finished, but the process will continue as long as the discourse about pastoral therapy and pastoral therapy training remains.

3.2.1 Goals in discourse

"The postmodern therapist comes into the family without any definition of pathology, without any idea about what dysfunctional structures to look for, and without any set idea about what should or should not change" (Hoffman 1990:10). This does not mean, however, that the therapist or the client has no goals with which to enter into the therapeutical process. It does mean that the goals are quite open or simply, as Craig (1990:163) describes them, 'quasi-goals'. He contends that only 'prototypical' goals are intentional, positive, and strategic. All other goal-concepts are at best 'quasi-goals' in relation to this prototypical sense of the term. Craig (1990:168) also cites Bavelas' opinion:

enhances intelligibility. Because of the openness of discourse in that it is an ongoing process, a time period of two years for each Masters' degree course as well as each continuing education course was set for the purposes of this study. Even so the outcome of this construction remains open-ended.

Goals in discourse

In this research project there were no prototypical goals other than a social coinomial construction of pastoral therapy and pastoral therapy training in a specific community. This means that there was, despite the reading material, no set idea of what pastoral therapy should or should not be. Rather, quasi-goals were used in that the situation was allowed to set the goals so that the participants could be open to new ideas and concepts. Focus was therefore placed on the impact of messages on the receivers rather than on the intentions of the senders of the messages. Throughout the research all participants continually changed between being

Discourse is to be treated entirely 'from the outside' - as a public event rather than a private mental process. Goals are in the situation rather than in the person. And messages are analysed in terms of their impact on receivers or decoders, rather than making inferences about what the sender intended or meant by the message.

In the social coinomial construction of pastoral therapy and pastoral therapy training, therefore, messages from participants, theory, clients, experiences of the past, that made an impact on the participants, were used to influence our understanding of pastoral therapy and pastoral therapy training.

In this research one would propose to be consistent with one's conceptual framework. Doing traditional, normative, medical-model mental health research would thus require traditional quantitative research, but doing research on pastoral therapy and pastoral therapy training via multiple reflexive conversations, the epistemological framework of social constructionism is the logical choice. Accordingly some social constructionist approaches will be discussed because of their high correlation to this project. These are the *Linguistic approach*, the *Narrative approach* and the *Reflecting team approach*.

sender and receiver within the discourse. Therefore new meanings could be derived from the receivers' understanding and not only a one-sided reflection of the senders' intention.

This does not mean that the senders' norms and values as depicted from within the specific community are ignored or struck out, but rather that those same norms and values could be understood in new and other ways. Accordingly neither the sender nor the receiver could be abusive of each other or their opinions be totalised. This paves the way for thorough understanding. It opens the possibility to be good to others and to take responsibility for one's own abusiveness toward others rather than placing the responsibility on the "community's norms and values", i.e. how I interpret the community's norms and values. The conceptual framework of this study thus leaves room for plurality of meaning and understanding which is consistent with social construction and qualitative

4 Social Construction Theory approaches

4.1 Linguistic approach

Anderson and Goolishian (1988:371) postulate that their work with difficult populations, which do not respond to current treatment technologies, has reminded them of the inadequacies of their theoretical descriptions and the limitations of their expertise. This influenced them in such a way that they evolved from “thinking of human systems as social systems defined by social organisation (role and structure) to thinking of them as distinguished on the basis of linguistic and communicative markers”. Thinking of human systems in this respect implies that they exist only in the domain of meaning or inter-subjective linguistic reality. As social systems they are communication networks in conversation with each other. This linguistic or conversational domain consists of “the aggregate of language interactions (communicational interactions) of participants engaged in dialogue and conversation” (Anderson & Goolishian 1988:377).

This linguistic approach, however, should be

research.

Social Construction Theory approaches

Linguistic approach

This being a study that exists mainly within discourse, it was important to take note of language and particularly the study of language in a social constructionist environment. Because this study does not claim to discover something ontological, it would not be proper to describe the outcome with a view of language that is consistent with the logical positivist perception of reality. The latter, to my mind, would have a view of language that is clearcut as if language is some kind of ontological entity from which one can derive universal meaning. It would therefore be possible for different people to arrive at the same conclusion after reading a particular text according to the meaning and understanding derived from the logic of signs and symbols and from the grammatical structure and its logic, irrespective of the time and setting of the reader. To me it would then not be

distinguished from the psycholinguistic model - as G A Miller (1981) describes it in his book *Language and speech* - within which meaning and understanding are thought to be derived more from the logic of signs and symbols, from grammatical structure and its logic and not from its use. Claudia Grauf-Grounds (1982) differentiates between "digital" and "analogic" communication. Digital communication concerns itself with the structure or "grammar" of words. She says: "It is a class of messages where each statement has one and only one referent" (Grauf-Grounds 1982:212). Digital statements are digital, since there is shared agreement as to the referents of these statements and the rules for making them. I presume these are statements used in computer programming where a statement can have only one referent. Analogic language, on the other hand, refers to the context of multiple messages which may be expressed verbally or nonverbally. When humans deal with one another there is no longer a single message and response, but multiple messages and responses. Analogic or metaphoric language, then, "carries with it multiple reference points and a context of meaning in which it can be interpreted" (Grauf-Grounds 1982:212).

the meaning of the text itself that one will arrive at, but the meaning forced upon it by certain universal rules of grammatical structure and the shared agreement of the logic of signs and symbols. The heart of this research, however, lies not in the grammatical structure of language, but in the use of language.

I accept that human systems exist in the domain of meaning and that no meaning can exist outside of the use of language, be it verbal or nonverbal. It is meaning and understanding that concerns us in this project, specifically meaning and understanding of pastoral therapy and the teaching/training thereof. In our languaging together throughout research, multiple messages and responses shaped our understanding of pastoral therapy and the teaching/training thereof in such a way that intelligibility between old accepted and established ideas and new creative - sometimes contradictory - ideas could be enhanced.

Becker (1991:226-233) also focuses on this distinction when he differentiates between the noun *language* and the verb *linguaging*. Linguists and others (as Miller) have tended to see language as an abstract structure, as if it only consists of a set of general rules or constraints operating on or within a lexicon. However, Becker (1991:228) quotes Ortega:

In effect, language is never a 'fact', for the simple reason that it is never an 'accomplished fact' but is always making and unmaking itself, or, to put it in other terms, it is a permanent creation and a ceaseless destruction. [He]...studies language not as an accomplished fact, as a thing made and finished, but as in the process of being made, hence *in statu nascendi*.

Linguaging therefore is an act experienced *in statu nascendi*. It is not something that you can use by throwing it through a funnel into someone else's mind in the hope that understanding will be achieved. Understanding is therefore always in context and never lasts through time and it is always a process 'on the way' and never fully achieved (Anderson & Goolishian 1988; Shotter 1993:183). The understanding of pastoral therapy and the training thereof, through this study, can therefore only be supplemented and not be

In this process the linguistic approach served to alleviate my unease with accomplished facts in the domain of meaning, understanding and interpretation. It is accomplished facts within the hermeneutical domain that can easily be totalising, especially when working with people in a therapeutical situation. Just like the behaviour of the teachers of the Law and the Pharisees in John 8:3-11 with their cold and rigid interpretation of the Law and their desire to apply it ruthlessly. In its stead language is constantly making and unmaking itself, therefore linguaging provides pastoral therapy and the training thereof space for different interpretations, meanings and actions in new circumstances as time goes on, and room for dealing acceptably with difficult situations despite cold and rigid theological convictions.

Pastoral therapy, like linguaging, is experienced in statu nascendi and is therefore a never-ending process within which new developments in the domain of social sciences and in

described as a finished product; something that is discovered and described and then never changes again. This is also true of the therapeutic process itself: "That is why conversations in the consulting room never consist of simply 'transmitting' intact chunks of knowledge from one person to another or stuffing information into a waiting, receptive (Lockean) mind. The process is (and must be) 100 percent participatory" (Efran, Lukens & Lukens 1988:33).

Because language, as seen through this lens, is a living enterprise, it would also have *autopoiesis*. Autopoiesis, according to Maturana and Varela (1980), is a feature of living things as distinct from non-living things and means 'self-generating' or 'self-creating'. What we do and how we react as living things is self-generated. That is precisely why no two persons would react in exactly the same way, for instance, in a therapeutic situation. One can therefore say that therapy is a thoroughly collaborative enterprise for which neither the therapists nor the person or family in therapy can take sole responsibility. As they are languaging together they must also take responsibility together for the world they are specifying through their words and

theology can and should be considered if not applied. This means that the research project is also open-ended and that at the time of description new developments were considered and applied where applicable.

Because of the importance of language I have used dialogue on numerous levels and between various people and all of them are considered to be equal participants in the process. Each person was viewed by myself as someone with a valid self-generating opinion and thus a unique response to stimuli from outside. This kaleidoscope of responses is not representative of what pastoral therapy and pastoral therapy training is, but specifies their understanding and their experience of the process called pastoral therapy. These descriptive responses would not have much of a meaning in themselves, but together, in a social construction, they specify a world within which we are able to learn from one another, solve problems, live, develop and grow. In this research project, through

actions. Words, indeed, do not *represent* the world but *specify* a world (Becker 1991:231). Reality therefore is a social construction. "We live and take action in a world that we define through our descriptive language in social intercourse with others (Anderson & Goolishian 1988:377).

In the therapeutic situation one constantly has to do with linguistic utterances. I would like to agree with Becker (1991:230-233) when he mentions three axioms in connection with utterances as taken from Ortega, Marturana and Varela: "Every utterance is deficient - it says less than it wishes to say. Every utterance is exuberant - it conveys more than it plans, and everything said is said by someone". I would like to add to these axioms: Everything heard is heard by someone. To me it is exactly these axioms that illustrate why *meaning* is to be taken so seriously and if meaning is to be taken seriously so is interpretation. Because of the deficiencies and the exuberances of utterances and because of the differences in background and assumptions of speaker and hearer there is a space between utterances and understanding that must be filled with interpretation (Maranhão 1991:241). These

language (dialogue), all participants specified (co-created or socially constructed) a world (pastoral therapy and pastoral therapy training) within which problems can be addressed and solved in accordance with the specific community's beliefs and norms, but without being totalising or abusive.

However, the research does not, claim to have said everything or the thing about pastoral therapy. Yet when someone reads the description thereof he/she may well comprehend more than what is said. Pastoral therapy is such a rich endeavour that one can hardly say everything about it. In addition, what I see and describe must be understood as my interpretation because of my frame of reference. What you hear as you read must also be understood as your interpretation because of your frame of reference and the space between my frame of reference and your frame of reference can only be filled with interpretation.

The postmodern view of language with its context related plurality, to my

interpretations within a therapeutic situation are co-constructed by all participants in order to create an understanding that enhances the position of the clients.

As Anderson and Goolishian (1988:378) state: "Meaning and understanding do not exist prior to the utterances of language", but come into being within language, therefore they have moved to a more "hermeneutic and interpretive position" (1992:26) regarding therapy.

4.2 Narrative approach

The narrative approach to therapy was developed by White and Epston (1990) in their reconnaissance into the domain of human problems. Tomm wrote in the foreword to their book, *Narrative means to therapeutic ends*, that they have drawn on the notion of 'narrative texts', based on text analogy by Foucault, in an attempt to provide a conceptual framework for their exploration of narrative means. He goes on to say that they propose the analogy of therapy as a process of "storying" and/or "re-storying" the lives and experiences of persons who present with problems. In this process they utilise

mind, was the ideal environment to develop intelligibility between a status quo position of pastoral therapy and new vistas in the domain of counselling. The status quo position is one that is sceptical about the insights and methods of the social sciences and based on the truths of Scriptures alone. The new vistas are the constructionist approaches to counselling. It helped me to be receptive, although critical, of new developments while simultaneously appreciative of the positive contributions of the status quo and without disregard for the norms and values of my community of faith.

Narrative approach

The principles and stages of the narrative approach were used to explore the 'story' of our experience of pastoral therapy. Thereafter new insights were re-storied into the narrative of pastoral therapy. It was done in order to dismiss the problems that we encountered and to include solutions that we experienced in actual therapeutic work and in

documentation of selective events and meanings "in black and white", and therapeutic letters and certificates in a tangible way to the co-creation of new, liberating narratives. The narrative approach to therapy believes that clients should participate in inventing their own explanations and experiences of themselves and their relationships. People relate life according to the stories they tell about themselves in discussion with the therapist or therapeutical team. Andersen (1992:61) states that "these discussions introduce the idea that we relate to life based on our perceptions, descriptions and understandings of the world. Squarely spoken, we do not relate to life 'itself' but to our understanding of it". In the postmodern sensibility, the story is set free to perform as simply a story that allows for re-invention as the story-teller finds a voice rooted in his/her own experience and in the connection of his/her story to those of others, and to larger stories of culture and humanity (Parry 1991:37). In this way people are able to hear their own voices because they are not engulfed and smothered by some totalising, subjugating meta-narrative against which they are not able to speak out. In a storied reality people are enabled to form relationships congruent with their own story:

conversations with different participants.

Some of these conversations and therapeutical sessions were recorded and transcribed so that selective events and meanings could be used to rewrite the pastoral therapy narrative.

This was particularly liberating to me because I could see that some of the 'negative truths', that were part of my conviction within a Dutch Reformed community of faith were not truths at all, but applications of some of our interpretations of some of our beliefs. Because of the tradition of logical positivism these so-called truths were perceived as being 'the truth' as if truth is an ontological entity outside of oneself. If that is so then one cannot but obey the Word to the letter irrespective of the situation. Interpretations were made to be 'the truth'. In my experience these 'truths' were also applicated in a linear fashion. For example: If a person commits adultery there is no other way to help him/her other than censuring

To speak of stories rather than reality means that truth, in the tradition of logical positivism, is no longer available to us. According to the notion of a storied reality, the form of our relationships with self, others, and creatures and things necessarily takes the form of the way we story ourselves and others.

(Becvar & Becvar 1996:348)

In the narrative approach of White and Epston (1990) re-authoring a person's life is achieved by validating the dominant story for what it is, while simultaneously exploring the alternative stories that became subjugated. "Stories or self-narratives and telling of experiences are meaning constituting, not representing something about somebody's life, but actually shaping and constituting the present, past and future" (Kotzé 1994:54). When people reach out for help they usually present only the negative picture of their experiences, that is their "problem-saturated description or their dominant story of family life" (White & Epston 1990:39). People are then helped to separate themselves and their relationships from the problem by means of externalisation. Once the problem has been externalised possibilities are opened for the clients to describe themselves, each other and their relationships from a new, nonproblem-saturated perspective, so as to

him/her in order to obtain a confession to sin and an assurance of repentance (everything done out of love), and only then can one work therapeutically with that person. If he/she does not confess and repent no other form of help can or would have any lasting results.

What happened to me was that I was more able to see interpretations as interpretations and not as 'the truth'.

By looking at the dominant story of pastoral therapy while simultaneously exploring new alternatives through participating in the telling of, and listening to the telling of the experiences of the counselling of different people by the church, helped us to shape part of the present, past and future of pastoral therapy.

Another eye-opening stage of the narrative approach was the process of externalisation. To look at a person or an institution through a logical positivist lens would mislead one to conclude that the person or the institution is the problem. I think that

enable the development of an alternative story of family life.

Constant focussing on the problem-saturated story is subjugating and even abusive in itself. O'Hanlon (1994:23) views this solution-oriented therapy as growing the solution/life-enhancing part of people's lives rather than focussing on the pathology/problem parts. By externalising the problem the intention is to personalise the problem so as to map the influence of the problem in the lives of the people through relative influence questioning.

I have constantly found that relative influence questioning, of itself, precipitates significant changes that are empowering to family members and to therapists. My understanding of this is informed by the explanation that Bateson proposes for events in the 'world of the living'. He argues that we can only know the world under description...

(White 1988:38)

Once the influences of the problem are illuminated people start to oppose it, therefore people become active resisters of their problems and not passive victims of it (O'Hanlon 1994:23). The influence of the people in the 'life' of the problem opens the possibility

many members of the Dutch Reformed Church experienced just that: They are the problem! This is one of the reasons why they experience the church as judgemental. Consequently they label the minister or the church itself as the problem. Externalisation, however, focusses one's mind on the problem so that the person can be the person and the problem the problem.

At first I had my doubts about this line of thinking because I thought that it would rob a person of responsibility. Someone can then say that it is not his fault; he is not the problem, the problem is the problem. This is true. One cannot take responsibility for the problem, but one can surely take responsibility for one's reactions to the problem, especially those reactions that keep the problem alive! The problem is externalised precisely for the purpose of mapping the influence of the problem in a person's life, and to map the influence of the person in the problem's life.

In the research and training of

for clients to see how they have operated to maintain the problem. It places them in the position to make decisions counteracting their problem-sustaining efforts. To help with this, questions are asked to identify 'unique outcomes', that are located in the historical account of events as well as those that are located within events that occur in the interaction of family members and therapist during the session (White 1988; White & Epston 1990). Anderson and Goolishian (1988:381) say: "We believe that therapy is a process of expanding and saying the 'unsaid' - the development, through dialogue, of new themes and narratives and actually the creation of new histories" (cf Anderson 1993:232-344).

These unique outcomes are real-life situations, both in the recent and the distant history of the client's life, in which the client succeeded in counteracting the problem (Becvar & Becvar 1996:285). Unique outcomes are then explored as to their landscape of action and their landscape of consciousness, whereas the landscape of action focuses on the events of the unique outcomes and landscape of consciousness on the meaning of those events (White 1991:30). By

pastoral therapy externalisation made it clear that the church or the clergy was or is not the problem, but that the church and the clergy have problems concerning pastoral work which need to be addressed. Because of our (clergy's) response to people in need and because of their response to pastoral work, misconceptions about the church and its pastoral work amounted to problem saturated stories about the counselling of the church. We (clergy and the church) have to take responsibility for this and we need to do something about it. This research wants to describe the "world" of the church's counselling in order to precipitate changes that will be empowering to the church, its clergy and to church members. I hope that this research will contribute to the rewriting of the story about the counselling of the church, counselling that I would like to call 'pastoral therapy'.

Obviously there are historical accounts of 'unique outcomes' in the story of pastoral therapy as it is, but in this

exploring the meaning of the events, to my mind, an *internalisation* of the unique qualities of the person is established and the re-authoring of his life starts to take shape. The gaps in his life story, left by the captivating effect of the problem-saturated dominant story are filled with alternative stories, thus re-authoring takes place (Morgan 2000:64). "To assist a person in re-authoring his own life, the alternative stories are accentuated in order to increase the constitutive effects of these in the person's life, and to marginalise the dominant problem discourse" (Kotzé 1994:56). This meticulous prospecting at the heart of White's approach to narrative therapy is called *Panning for gold* by Wylie (1994:40), while Parry and Doan (1994) speak of *Story Re-visions*.

This process of re-authoring is enhanced by what Epston (1994:31) calls *extending the conversation*. By this he means that, through writing letters and giving certificates, one can confirm the outcome of therapy over a period of time. In his own words: "Words in a letter don't fade and disappear the way conversation does; they endure through time and space, bearing witness to the work of therapy and immortalising it...

research process 'unique outcomes' were precipitated by actual pastoral therapy sessions within which postmodern models of therapy were incorporated, underpinned by the theological background of the therapists as well as by the norms and values of the specific community of faith. These accounts were also documented so that the landscape of action and the landscape of consciousness could be reflected upon. This reflection then results in the internalisation of the positive accounts of pastoral therapy that counteract the problems as described in the opening chapter, thereby forming part of the alternative story of pastoral therapy and the training thereof.

The careful documentation of conversations and therapeutical processes and the writing of this thesis would serve the purpose of extending the conversation. It is the intention that this extension would be one of the 'unique outcomes' in the discourse of practical theology in general and pastoral therapy in particular.

A client can hold a letter in hand, reading and rereading it days, months and years after the session" (Epston 1994:31-32).

According to White and Epston (1990:39-40) the narrative approach through externalisation:

1. decreases unproductive conflict between persons, including those disputes over who is responsible for the problem;
2. undermines the sense of failure that has developed for many persons in response to the continuing existence of the problem despite their attempts to resolve it;
3. paves the way for persons to co-operate with one another, to unite in a struggle against the problem, and to escape its influence in their lives and relationships;
4. opens up new possibilities for persons to take action to retrieve their lives and relationships from the problem and its influence;
5. frees persons to take a lighter, more effective, and less stressed approach to 'deadly serious' problems; and
6. presents options for dialogue, rather than monologue, about the problem.

4.3 The reflecting team approach

Andersen and his Norwegian colleagues (Andersen 1987; 1991; 1992; 1993) have developed a practice that is consistent with the postmodern, social constructionist/narrative traditions. Andersen had a long journey to his present approach, moving from medical school to psychiatry, to structural approaches (Minuchin, Haley), to Bateson's ideas as well as those of Boscolo and Checcin of the Milan team, and

The reflecting team approach

The reflecting team approach introduced an open method of reflecting within the therapeutical process. In an open method of reflecting not one of the therapists' thoughts are kept from the client. Nobody considers himself to be better qualified than anybody else, but everybody's opinion is rendered positively and productively even if the

Hoffman and Penn of the Ackerman Institute (Becvar & Becvar 1996:273). After their contact with the Milan team and the Ackerman Institute's team they had a better understanding of Bateson's work. The Milan team in particular used a kind of 'intervention' in the therapeutical process, where the therapist disconnects with the family and joins the team behind the mirror only to rejoin the family with the new understanding of the team.

Eventually, after trying to apply these ideas from the perspective of the expert, which did not feel right, Andersen and his associates changed observations such as "‘This is what we see’, or ‘This is what we understand’, or ‘This is what we want you to do’", to "‘In addition to what you saw we saw this’, or ‘In addition to what you understood we understood this’, or ‘In addition to what you have tried to do yourself, we wonder if you might try to do this’" (Andersen 1992:57). One preferred rule for Andersen is that comments and questions by team members should introduce some difference, but should not be too different from the family's experience. However, they should also not introduce too little difference (Kotzé

client rejects an opinion outright. The value is that so many different alternatives are being presented that it helps the client to be liberated from a stuck position.

A 'stuck position' is probably a fitting description of how I sometimes felt about the pastoral work of the church in general and the abilities of clergymen in particular to render pastoral help. Once I began to study pastoral therapy I felt even more frustrated because of the apparent differences between theology and secular counselling methods. It felt as if there were no alternatives left, but to disregard secular help giving methods altogether. At the same time I knew that what I had to offer theologically would not supply wonder cures either.

It was the reflecting team approach that encouraged us to have reflecting conversations about pastoral therapy and pastoral therapy training. This venture proved to be a highly productive one. The impasses were addressed because it was no longer a

1994:57).

The birth of *the reflecting team* then, came about when Andersen and his co-workers decided to *reflect* upon the clients' stories in front of them instead of elsewhere. The reflecting team sharing its thinking about the family punctuated a difference between 'public language' and 'private language', the latter being the language of the professionals, intellectuals, and academics (Becvar & Becvar 1996:274). The reflecting-team mode offers the various persons present the possibility to shift back and forth between listening and talking about the same issues. It is Andersen's contention that "these two different positions in relation to the same issues seem to provide two different perspectives, and these two different perspectives of the same will most probably create new perspectives" (Andersen 1992:62). The shifting talks between the team and family members or amongst team members are called 'the Reflecting Process' and provides shifting between 'inner' and 'outer' talk. "Actually, the reflecting process was only to highlight something we long have had in hand but not yet 'organised' in daily conversations" (Andersen 1992:63).

question of 'either - or', éither theology ór secular methods, but rather a question of 'both - and', bóth theology ánd secular counselling methods. It was liberating not to disregard past experiences or insights from theology and it was wonderful to be able to use what is productive and sensible from the humanities.

Within the community of believers, however, we had to offer them a different approach in counselling, but not be too different. We also had to be cautious not to be too conservative in our appraoch, or it would have no innovative, developmental or generating value.

To me it meant that the too elevated position of the minister has been changed and that he is now closer to the level of the client. The anxiety of the client because of his fear of evaluation or adjudication as well as the probability that the minister will evaluate or adjudicate are thereby minimised. This has paved the way for clients to co-evolve with the minister

This new approach within the process has also moved the therapist into the role of participant-observer (Becvar & Becvar 1996:274). The professional's high-levelled status changed to that of a sensitive participant who uses language stripped of evaluation or adjudication. The open conversations that constitute 'the Reflecting Process' have brought clients and professionals toward more egalitarian relationships (Andersen 1992:66).

The developments around the Reflecting team, the use of reflecting conversations and reflexive questioning, the prevalence of 'co-' prefixes to describe a therapeutic conversation ('co-author', 'co-evolve'), indicate a preference for a mutually influenced process between consultant and inquirer as opposed to one that is hierarchical and unidirectional.

(Hoffman 1992:17)

According to Kotzé (1994:57-58), White developed his own version of a reflecting team and he identified four classes of response when a team from behind the one-way mirror switches places with the family and reflects on the interview:

1. Team members introduce themselves, acknowledge family members and join some of the stories of family

and vice versa, instead of the minister instructing the client as to what to do and how to do it. The ground is prepared for the client to realise by himself what the norms and values of Scripture are instead of being compelled to accept to the opinion of the pastor without understanding it.

In relation to pastoral therapy and pastoral therapy training it has meant that the transcendent position of theology above social sciences has also been significantly weakened and preference is given to a mutually influenced process rather than to a relationship of suspicion and disregard.

The reflecting conversations about pastoral therapy and the training thereof were approached in a not-knowing manner so as to be as open and receptive as possible for whatever new insights were presented or co-constructed. The effects of the dominant story of pastoral therapy and pastoral therapy training as well as those of the alternative stories of

- members by commenting on certain aspects thereof;
2. Team members speculate and express their curiosity about certain developments (either the dominant or the alternative story) in the family;
 3. Team members interview one another regarding the above mentioned comments, by using landscape of action and landscape of consciousness questions to highlight the preferred or alternative stories that have developed within the family itself;
 4. Deconstruction - team members comment on some relevant personal experiences, not with the purpose of providing a 'moral story', but as sequel to their curiosity, for the sake of transparency and because it provides a more 'egalitarian therapeutic context'.

clients and therapists alike were explored in the reflecting conversations so as to highlight the preferred story of pastoral therapy and the training thereof.

The not-knowing approach emphasised the locality of the research within a specific community of faith where local language, meaning, understanding and description of pastoral therapy and its training could be developed dialogically.

Listening to clients in such a sensitive way, and not from a high-levelled professional stance is in accordance with the therapeutic approach of Anderson and Goolishian (1992:25-39) with their *Not-Knowing* approach to therapy. According to them the client is the expert on his life and therefore the position of 'not-knowing' results in the development of a locally (dialogically) constructed understanding and a local (dialogic) vocabulary. "Local refers to language, the meaning, and the understanding developed between persons in dialogue, rather than broadly held cultural sensibilities (Anderson & Goolishian 1992:33). In therapeutic conversations the

search for new meanings, which often comprises searching for new language, is a search for us to be the selves with which we feel most comfortable. So-called 'therapeutic' talk might be regarded as a form of search; a search for new descriptions, new understandings, new meanings, new nuances of the words, and ultimately for new definitions of oneself.

(Andersen 1992:65)

5 Social Coinonial Construction

Von Foerster (1991:63) quotes Brün saying: "Teach me my, not your language. Teach them their, not your language. Teach us our, not your or their language".

As with the dialogical reference to language, meaning and understanding mentioned above, this quotation also has a ring of locality to it. Anderson and Goolishian (1992:33) state that in using stereotypical, theoretical concepts as pre-knowledge to understand the client's narrative, therapists often lose touch with the client's locally developed meanings and can constrain the client's narrative. In training, the trainer engages with participants in a meaning creating process, using their existing constructs of meaning as a starting point (Kotzé 1994:62), therefore, says Kotzé (:64), from a social constructionist viewpoint every family therapy training program can be seen as a unique construction of its participants within the *social context* (my italics) in which it comes about.

To acknowledge this locality and to be sensitive to the influence thereof the term *coinonial* was brought into the title, because the construction of pastoral therapy

Social Coinonial Construction

In 'listening' to the story of pastoral therapy and the training of pastoral therapy from a specific community's point of view one cannot escape the danger of doing so through the filter of stereotypical, theoretical concepts that one has as pre-knowledge. I have tried to acknowledge this phenomenon to lessen the constraining effect it has on the narrative of pastoral therapy and the training of pastoral therapy. The point of departure was our existing constructs of meaning about pastoral therapy from whence we all participated in a unique construction of pastoral therapy in the context of pastoral therapy training.

The word 'coinonia' is well established amongst Christians to describe the fellowship between them. In the domain of its meaning it also conveys the concept of exchanging thoughts with one another which makes it particularly suitable for using in the title. It also acknowledges the close mutual relations of the participants

and the training thereof engaged a specific community. The social context of this research program is a context that finds itself within the Christian community-of-faith discourse (Roux 1996). The specific community of faith within which the construction of this research program occurred can be translated with the New Testament Greek word '*koinonia*' meaning *communion* or *fellowship* or *intercourse* according to Liddell and Scott's (1980) Greek-English lexicon. The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, third edition (1992), declares the word 'communion' as a religious or spiritual fellowship or as the act or instance of sharing, as of thoughts or feelings.

The word has been used in the Septuagint referring to the communion between men. In the New Testament it also refers to the different aspects of the relationship of believers towards Christ and the Holy Spirit (Roux 1996). For Louw and Nida (1988:446) the word belongs to the sub-domain of 'fellow', 'partner' and 'companion' and describes the concept '*coinonia*' as an association involving close mutual relations and involvement.

because of their mutual set of norms and values and because of their shared faith.

'Coinonia' is quite a general concept for the fellowship between all Christians, but I wish to focus on the Dutch Reformed community of faith for the purposes of this study. Because the principles of faith form part of one's being in this community of faith, one cannot but operate as reformed Christians. Faith in, and dependence upon God form part of one's lifestyle and will inevitably form part of the way in which one does therapy.

In contrast with the dominant story of pastoral therapy, the alternative story will not give prominence to the use of Scripture and prayer per se, but it will have an important position if the therapeutical process demands it. This does not mean that Scripture or prayer has less value in the alternative story, but rather that we acknowledge that the norms and values of Scripture form an intricate part of being. One is not compelled to use Scripture for clients

The word 'coinonial' is used in the title to refer to the specific Christian fellowship of the participants in my research, which is a Dutch Reformed community of faith. Within this community of faith the point of coinonia is, as the Reformation declares: *sola scriptura*, which means that the Scriptures contain all that is necessary for salvation; *sola fide*, which means that salvation (justification) comes by faith alone; *sola gratia*, which means that salvation is given by God through grace alone and that man cannot *deserve* to be saved at all (Barth 1949; Bavink 1956; Schulze 1978; De Jong 1980). People within this community of faith have chosen to operate inside the boundaries of their creed and denomination. Their interpretation of the truths of Scripture as contained in the articles of faith forms the directive through which they construct reality.

To be in, or to operate within a specific community, for instance a scientific community, implies that an unique language be used in order to be understood. Concepts are being formed in their socialising together that constitute the way in which they would perceive and describe and construct. Scientific explanations, therefore, arise as actual human actions in the domain of experiences of individual standard observers (scientists) and are valid as such

to realise that one's background and code of conduct is Scriptural. On the contrary, many people feel that ministers are using Scripture, but that their code of conduct is anything but Scriptural or Christian.

Being aware of that and so many other features of being a minister, as well as of the expectations of congregation members and other clients, I have tried to be as sober and well balanced as possible between being biased on the one hand and open for conviction on the other in the narration of pastoral therapy and the training thereof. Being cognisant of this, I accept that what I am about to present is my construction of all the participants' thoughts. Even if the realisation of the inter-subjectivity of the project is open it remains ultimately my personal report of our dialogue. Nevertheless, the outcome of the study is a collaborative social coinonial construction of pastoral therapy and pastoral therapy training.

in a community of them because of their consensual participation in the domain of scientific explanations. Accordingly

only those observers who can participate with other observers, and to their complete satisfaction, in the realisation of the criterion of validation of scientific explanations and, furthermore, accept this as their only criterion of validation for their explanations, are scientists and members of the community of scientists.

(Maturana 1991:33)

Therefore, what I am going to present here are, as Jorgenson (1991:223) says, socially situated constructions, for, in representing them I have had to rely on my own intuitive judgements about which elements constitute relevant clues to this process; my view is guided by my own presuppositions and past experiences as is the way I have chosen to present these features to a relevant research community, a 'you' of my own construction. To recognise the context in which the research takes place, that is, in a social *coinonial* construction context, opens the realisation of the inter-subjectivity of the project and enables the acceptance of responsibility for the description I am about to give for that event in time. I also realise that all participants in this research project are part of this specific coinonial community, that is, are influenced by it, in the way they were brought up in it. Therefore this research project cannot but be a social, coinonial construction.

6 Summary

In this chapter I have explained the place of social construction theory within a specific conceptual era called postmodernism. Within this era the Self is constituted not by rationality and cognition into a singular Self, but rather through relationships, conversations

and language into a plurality of Selves.

The discourses of the modern/postmodern era relevant to this study explained the choice for the postmodern concept of inter-subjectivity instead of the modernist dualism of objectivity/subjectivity. Power/knowledge is the concept that reveals the subjugating power that people with knowledge have over laymen. From a postmodernist point of view power must be deconstructed, by acknowledging locality of knowledge and by being open for other constructions as one's own. Thus one would have a sensitivity for the marginalised and for the other.

For research to be consistent with social construction theory I have chosen not to research some objective reality, but rather to focus on the social and linguistic construction of a perspectival reality, on interpretation and negotiation of meaning of a lived world - pastoral therapy and the training of pastoral therapy. This was achieved through discourse in which an open mind was kept in order to perceive new meanings as participants, theory, clients, and experiences of the past were all allowed to influence our understanding of pastoral therapy and pastoral therapy training.

In order to comprehend what social construction theory concerning therapy would be like in practice and to explore the tangent planes thereof with pastoral therapy and pastoral therapy training I discussed three social constructionist approaches to therapy: the Linguistic approach, the Narrative approach and the Reflecting Team approach.

Finally in this chapter I explained that the word 'coinonia' is used in the title to

acknowledge the specific Christian fellowship, the Dutch Reformed community of faith, within which I find myself. It is also the coinonia within which the participants in this venture grew up and were educated in. The research is therefore called a social coinonial construction.

Having discussed the social coinonial construction part of the research programme I will focus on the relation of pastoral therapy to practical theology, social sciences and family therapy in chapter 3.

CHAPTER THREE

THE RELATION OF PASTORAL THERAPY TO PRACTICAL THEOLOGY, SOCIAL SCIENCES AND FAMILY THERAPY

1 Introduction

In this chapter I shall be locating pastoral therapy and the research thereof within practical theology. I will render a very brief history of practical theology through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries after which I will look at practical theological discourses by reviewing several practical theological approaches. Thereafter I will discuss the subjectfield of practical theology as well as the relation between theory and praxis in theology.

Pastoral therapy can be described as interaction between people taking place within conversations. The object of this research is *pastoral* therapy in *clergy* training which brings us within the domain of practical theology and the object of practical theology is the Christian *communicative* praxis (Pieterse 1993:40). Pieterse, therefore, suggests that the Christian

Inner dialogue

In this column I am continuing to express my inner dialogue as I progressed through the research project in dialogue with all the participants. Theory, student participants, colleagues, culture, clients, theological background, belief systems, I and my supervisor all form part of the dialogue.

Chapter 3 is the chapter in which I would like to bring the "pastoral therapy" part of the title of the research project into perspective. The specific questions that I would like to address here are: where does pastoral therapy fit into practical theology? What are the tangent planes with the humanities? How do the different developments within family therapy influence pastoral therapy? and, What

communicative praxis forms the ontological object of research in practical theology, rendering the latter a science. However, I think that there is a distinct difference between Christian *communicative* praxis and an ontological object as is researched in the natural sciences. Christian *communicative* praxis is much more fluid because it is constructed in language and therefore open to various interpretations. Another set of rules as those that are used in the research of natural sciences should therefore be applicable in the understanding and interpretation of research in practical theology. Understanding and interpretation brings us within the realm of hermeneutics. Pastoral therapy as in this research project will thus be viewed through what Madison (1988:26) calls *phenomenological hermeneutics* and not positivist hermeneutics.

Some contributions of Habermas, Ricoeur and Gadamer in the field of the methodology of social science will be utilised and applied to research in practical theology. Family therapy contributed largely to concepts within pastoral therapy. I will thus briefly elucidate some of the concepts in family therapy and the implications thereof for pastoral therapy. I will then

are the current discourses in pastoral therapy in South Africa at present?

It is as if two incompatible worlds - that of theology and that of the humanities - try to find a connection somehow. I often felt like a physician trying to do a transplant only to experience the receiving body rejecting the organ. I wanted to find out why this happens because I am convinced that there must be a solution. Most probably the answer lies in epistemology and I was confronted with my own world view.

At first it was difficult to let go of the firm foundation that I had in the modernist way of thinking where everything seems to have its place. The security of exact knowledge was most compelling and tended to drag me along into a realm where I was not compelled to take responsibility for what I was saying. The rules and regulations were to take that responsibility and the only thing I had to do was to know the rules and apply them. Yet when applying these rules -

focus on the discourses in pastoral work and show how this research project adds to the discourse in pastoral work.

even though one's applications are not perfect - I could not solve all the problems of everyday life for other people. This was a most distressing

feeling. I had a variety of questions going through my mind - especially about the church and its function in the world of today. I felt that the church should be able to provide answers to people struggling with problems of faith and life. And yet, I myself, as part of the church that must be able to provide the answers, could not do so in the area of life's problems. I wanted to know how the church went about addressing the need of people in this respect. This brought me directly into the field of practical theology.

2 Practical Theology

Practical Theology

It is not my intention to give a full historical review of the development of practical theology but rather to highlight some lines appropriate to this study.

Practical Theology: nineteenth century

2.1 Practical theology in the nineteenth century

Practical theology developed in relation to the process of modernisation. Modernisation, as Van der Ven (1993:18) understands it, is the social development characterised by the endeavour to dissolve problems through the perspective of rationality. According to Heitink (1993:45-59), modernisation caused phenomenons such as differentiation, rationalisation, pluralisation, specialisation, and in coherence with it

Through the history of practical theology I realised that epistemology was a problem right from the start. Epistemology again could not be seperated from world view and was therefore moulded into a logical positivist perspective of rationality that was proper to the natural sciences - something can be true and helpful to solve problems only when it can be verified scientifically as objective

all, secularisation. In the nineteenth century secularisation caused problems for Christian mediation which made it necessary to develop something like practical theology. The church as acting subject came into focus through an empirical interest in its factual functioning. Gerben Heitink (1993:54) describes it as follows:

De praktische theologie ontwikkelt zich tegen de verdrukking van de moderne samenleving in. Zolang godsdienst en kerk bestaan bij de continuïteit van de vanzelfsprekendheid, is reflectie op hun functioneren overbodig. Naarmate het kerkelijk handelen een probleem wordt, is bezinning op de empirische kerk noodzakelijk en bewijzen de sociale wetenschappen hun nut. Deze maken het namelijk mogelijk op een andere wijze over de kerk te spreken, niet in het theologische ideaalbeelden maar in beschrijvende en verklarende taal, uitgaande van het feitelijk functioneren van de kerk.

To reflect on the actions of the church the elucidation of the social sciences proved to be of great help. The social sciences, especially sociology, reflect on the acts of people and society and developed empirical methods to study structures and processes through a functional and rational approach (Heitink 1993:56). This helped theologians to participate in discourse about the church and its actual functioning through descriptive, explanatory language. Practical theology became liberated from speaking about the church only in rigid,

knowledge. This posed a problem for practical theology because, once faith enters into research the research itself could no longer be scientific for it is no longer considered as objective knowledge. Moreover, the process of modernisation brought about a focus on human skills and capabilities (secularisation) that in the end caused disregard of the power of God. To my mind the church found itself in a prejudicial impasse: The church had to help people for which it needed the skills of the humanities and yet it definitely did not want to disregard God. The danger of the latter was so acute that the church decided to disregard the humanities altogether. Something that, to me, was sound development in practical theology to help the church reflect on its own functioning so as to improve it, was completely blocked out by the church because of the danger of secularisation. It was like throwing out the baby with the bath-water.

inflexible, infallible theological terms and concepts.

2.2 Practical theology in the twentieth century

At the end of the nineteenth century Herman Bavinck, a reformed theologian, took much interest in modern culture. "It was during the later years of his professional life that Bavinck became expressive in those two further provinces of life and thought, namely, applied ethics and morally grounded psychology" (Bavinck 1980:9). He wrote two books on psychology, in 1897 *The Principles of Psychology*, and in 1920 *Biblical and Religious Psychology*. His interest in psychology led to an openness towards *human experience* even in his doctrinal work. After his death the theological climate in the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands - that is, of the *Gereformeerde* as distinguished from the *Hervormde Kerken*, became more doctrinal and less open (Heitink 1993:78).

In opposition to Bavinck another theologian, A. Kuyper, introduced a complete new philosophy of life in accordance with Calvinism. Klapwijk as quoted by Heitink (1993) calls it "een geestelijke totaalvisie, ja

Twentieth century

I was amazed by the fact that there were strong theologians like Bavinck who stressed the importance of the empirical through the use of social sciences and yet this way of thinking in the church, especially the Protestant churches, did not develop equally strongly or parallel to the theological thoughts of people like Kuyper and Barth. This had a direct influence on the form of pastoral help given by the church as well as the training of clergy in this field. The focus from the church's point of view, as I see it, was therefore not on human experience as to what we can learn from it, but on human action as to how we must adjudicate it.

From Schleiermacher to Bavinck the attitude was to learn from human action in "those other provinces of life and thought, namely, applied ethics and morally grounded psychology". From Kuyper and Barth up to the

een aan de geschiedenis ontsprongen, hernieuwde vormgeving van het Christendom als zodanig". This 'neo-calvinism' created a turning point in practical theology as opposed to the empirical. For Kuyper man is the subject of science but cannot learn to know God through experience, only through the Holy Scripture which is supernatural in character (Heitink 1993:79).

This line was followed by K Barth with his dialectical theology. For him theology is divided into the three parts of **exegesis** (the question as to the source or provenance of the Word - from *whence* our saying?), **practical theology** (the question about the shape and form of the proclamation enjoined upon the Church - *how* we are to say it?), and exactly halfway between exegesis and practical theology stands dogmatics, or, more comprehensively expressed, **systematic theology** (the question of *what* are we to think or say). The latter is a *critical* science which measures the Church's proclamation and doctrine by the "standard of the Holy Scriptures, of the Old and New Testaments" (Barth 1982:13). Barth's dialectical theology left little or no room for a methodical approach which, in turn, hampered the development of practical theology as a

second half of this century it seems as if the attitude was to adjudicate -and to reject - every human endeavour that was not considered to be theology. To me it felt as if everything was swallowed by a kind of a pan-theology. If, for instance, somebody with some kind of problem must be counselled it can only be done properly through some kind of theological approach whilst a psychological approach to counselling would not only be inappropriate but also against the will of God.

I was brought up within this way of thinking. At first I could not understand why anybody would have a problem with psychological approaches. I believed that, ultimately, God is the One that heals and that we as humans are only instruments in His hands. I still believe that, but that is also exactly where my problem lies: How can it be possible that God works through ordinary people in the realm of the natural sciences, for example, the medical sciences, and that the church

science of action. "Zo heeft de dialectische theologie de ontwikkeling van de praktische theologie als een empirische handelingswetenskap sterk afgeremd" (Heitink 1993:82).

This scientific approach in theology was in accordance with the standard scientific contemplation of that time. Rationality was of major importance. What would be known as *logical positivism* culminated in the foundations of *objectivity, universally accepted, valid norms and sense-perception*. Johan Dill (1996:13) describes these foundations as follows:

Objektiwiteit. Wetenskap beskryf die werklikheid soos dit 'werklik' is. Hieronder word ook die ongeaffekteerde 'toeskouer'-houding van die wetenskaplike veronderstel. *Universeel aanvaarde en geldige norme.* Hieronder word rasionaliteit en sogenaamde wetenskaplike metodes van kennisverwerwing veronderstel. *Sintuiglike ervaring.* Menslike sintuiglike vermoëns betrokke by kennisverwerwing word veronderstel.

For practical theology to be scientific these foundations would also have to be applicable. For Kuyper and Barth this would mean that the point of departure towards knowledge must be from the Holy Scriptures

accepts it as valid and proper without trying to theologise the medical field, yet when the assistance is in the realm of the humanities, for example in psychology, then suddenly the Church does not accept that God is working through people but that the psychologist is working on his own. The psychologist - in the specific method used to heal - must be adjudicated according to the principles of Scripture but the medical doctor not. To my mind this is so because the medical world is in accordance with the standard scientific contemplation within which scientific rationality is of major importance. If something can be proven as scientifically exact and correct it will also be accepted as if it is in accordance with the will of God, but as soon as something cannot be scientifically proven Scripture must be used to adjudicate whether it is in accordance with God's will. Accepting the triad of body, soul and mind in the existence of people, counselling for the reformed minister in two of these areas would not be as problematic as counselling in the other one.

alone and not from human experience, because the Bible is the only valid norm for critique.

In the later stages of the twentieth century, especially since the sixties the intellectual-cultural underpinnings of science have shifted decisively. Theologians such as H. D. Bastian reacted against Karl Barth's view that the "what" of theology is the determining factor while the "how" is of no real importance. A G. Van Wyk (1995:86) commented on that: "The normative-deductive approach was rejected, and the need for praxis to correct and critically evaluate theory was stressed". It is here where practical theology should follow the example of the modern operational sciences and adopt an empirical method. Therefore the need to focus on practical theology as a communicative operational science became imperative.

Out of this historical background several approaches to practical theology developed, which I would like to regard as practical theological discourses in which theologians participate in a discussion of fundamental questions in the discipline of practical theology.

Assistance to people with physical problems is accepted through medical science and assistance to people with problems of the soul is accepted because in such cases the minister uses the "truths" of the Holy Scriptures to solve the problem. However, once the problem that is experienced lies in the realm of the mind - which includes the world of one's relationships with other people and one's actions in this world - the reformed minister would have difficulty in using secular forms of counselling because it is perceived to be counter to the principles of Scripture.

This posed a major challenge to practical theology that has the task and responsibility also to help people with problems in the realm of the psyche.

This research project is an endeavour within which I am hoping to participate in accepting that challenge by trying to create more of an intelligibility between reformed theological thinking and the

2.3 Practical theology discourses

In this short discussion of the discourses within practical theology, I would first like to focus on the basic approaches and then on the approaches that are particularly relevant to this study. Three basic approaches that characterise the scene in South Africa were distinguished by Coenie Burger (1991:59). These are the *confessional*, the *contextual* and the *correlative* approaches.

2.3.1 The confessional approach

The term *confessional* is used in this approach because of the intention to adhere to the confession of the church. Pieterse (1993:100) uses the term *diaconological* approach. According to Van Wyk (1995:88) this approach that is essentially a "Dutch-Reformed" approach to practical theology, heavily influenced most Afrikaans South African Universities. Johan Dill (1996:113) characterised the confessional approach as one in which the Holy Scriptures, as only norm and source, are regulative, normative, and prescriptive to the actions within the practical

counselling of people through the humanities.

Practical theology discourses

By doing so I realised the importance of focussing on practical theology as a communicative operational science. It is the only way in which practical theology can be accepted as scientific because then it would have a proper empirical method with a sound base for critique. To me this is the way in which the interrelation of the "what" and the "how" of theology can be balanced. The "what" and the "how" of theology - that is the theory and the praxis - can never be separated and should therefore be allowed to interact in balance. This balanced interaction should include a reflexivity of critique between theory and praxis.

Confessional approach

The different approaches within practical theology helped me to find the place of this research project within the major discourse of practical theology. I realised the strong influence of the diaconological

theological domain. To Pieterse (1993:104) this approach is a post-Kuyperian approach because of the deductive manner through which theoretical theologising takes place in praxis. Within this approach only a study of the diaconia in Scripture can stamp practical theology as theology. Practical theology has as its most important task the training of ministers. Therefore the church as well as the service of the church are central to this approach.

2.3.2 The contextual approach

The term *contextual* implies that this approach gives priority to the context, therefore Burger (1991:61) characterises the contextual approach as follows: (1) The context and situational analysis of praxis is important. (2) There is a world orientation rather than a church orientation. (3) The task of practical theology is to bring about social change and a reconstruction of society. (4) The use of Scripture varies from a fundamentalist approach to a selective use of Scripture. (5) The community of believers takes precedence over individuals. (6) The major concern is not with the training of ministers but rather with equipping the

approach in my own schooling. I also realised that this approach emphasises theory above praxis and is therefore normative deductive in its approach to counselling. I gradually understood why it was so easy to "create" a difference between praxis and theory. If my inclination was to adjudicate my own actions all the time because of how I was "brought up" it would tend to create confusion when in practice it seems as if the applied theological principles are counter to what is believed in theory. This to my mind created a dualistic dilemma in which the church is bound to the realm of religion and the world to the realm of secularity (i.e. the problems of life). If the church does want to deliver a service in helping people with their problems it must be done through Scripture only. However, I am glad for the high regard this approach has given me for Scripture as well as for the realisation that nothing can be achieved without the power of God. It has influenced me to choose to be completely dependent upon God for everything in life.

community of believers. (7) The approach is ecumenical.

In South Africa an own contextual approach developed within communities that suffered under apartheid. The intention of this approach is to be a disciplined, reflective theological activity which seeks to relate the faith of the Christian community to its life, mission and social practice. The aim is to bring about political and social change through a critical reflection on the relationship between church and society (Louw 1993:76). Dill (1996:114) calls it a descriptive approach that neither arrives at a definitive theory nor is concerned with an explicit interaction with theological theory.

2.3.3 The correlative approach

The term *correlative* is used to acknowledge that there must be a high correlation between normative theology and empirical observation in the application of theological suppositions. Pieterse (1993:100) calls the correlative approach the *operational science* approach. Van Wyk (1995:86) mentions that J. A. Wolfaardt

Contextual approach

The contextual approach on the other hand emphasises praxis above theory. The danger here lies in the fact that the situation becomes the norm. The problem of secularisation, in the sense of doing what feels right to the person in the situation, is quite immanent. One can be blinded by the principle of "the end justifies the means". This approach helped me to realise that the situation cannot be disregarded altogether, but must be taken into consideration.

Correlative approach

I felt myself more at home within the correlative approach. I maintain the necessity of the acts of God in Christ through the Holy Spirit as directive but also accept the importance of empirical observation and verification to ensure the reliability of practical theology in the application of theological suppositions. In this research project I found myself exactly in the position where I needed to have reflexivity between the deductive and

introduced practical theology as a communicative operational science to South Africa. Dill (1996:113 - cf. Louw 1993:76) says that

aan die een kant word daar vasgehou aan 'n normatiewe teologie wat die handeling van God in Christus deur die Gees erken as rigtinggewend vir die lewe. Aan die ander kant word empiriese waarnemings en kontroles net so belangrik geag om die werklikheidsgetrouheid van die praktiese teologie te verseker in die toepassing van die teologiese aannames.

In this approach, thus, a reflexivity exists between the inductive and deductive approaches. Phenomenology are used to direct practical theology more towards praxis so as to change the object of practical theology more towards religious communicative operations (Louw 1993:76).

According to Van Wyk (1995:86) three different approaches pertaining theology as an operational science can be distinguished: (1) The empirical-analytical approach; (2) an approach based on dialectics and the criticism of ideology; and (3) a hybrid or intermediate approach.

inductive approaches because in therapy one finds oneself in the position where there needs to be a hermeneutical balance between Scriptural dogma and sensible living. This is so because human actions are subject to various interpretations and points of view. It cannot always be forced into the black and white clarities of Scriptural dogma. Because of this I chose to explore the approaches in practical theology that are pertinent to theology as an operational science.

All these approaches have something that was made part of this research project, albeit directly or indirectly. Out of the empirical-analytical approach the interaction between facts and theory that modify each other relates to the reflexivity that I tried to establish and that exists in itself throughout the process. I also did not want to disregard the dogmatical aspect of theology in giving help to anybody although the dogmatical aspect was not prominent either, for example as the point of departure from

The critical rationalism of K. Popper and H. Albert strongly influenced the first of these approaches. Scientific verification of the actions of the church is prominent in the theories of this approach. To Bastian, the main advocate of this approach, facts and theory do not exist independently but interact and modify each other. He does not want to dispense with systematic theology, but uses it to back up the normative aspect of empirical research.

The second approach to practical theology as a theological operational science contradicts the first by rejecting empirical-analytical theories. Otto, the main defender of this approach according to Van Wyk, accuses modern theology that it does not even affect the praxis at all. He reflects Otto's opinion when he says that theologians have been so busy with their own theological traditions that they have had no time to address contemporary society or the contemporary church. To rectify the situation practical theology must focus on the interrelationship of religion, the church, society and theology. This approach is closely linked to the *critical theory* of Jürgen Habermas and wants practical theology to be a critical theory of religiously

where the help is given. The dogmatical was rather accepted as part and parcel of the lifeworld of the helper or minister.

As for the approach based on dialectics and criticism of ideology, this research project would take the warning seriously of not being in contact with the lifeworld of the person being helped at all. It is my contention that we deliberately chose to recognise the interrelationship of religion, the church, society and theology.

One of my initial discomforts was the one-sided concentration on the church and its practice that resulted in ignorance of the problems of people. Therefore the reciprocating influence between the church and social processes have to be taken into consideration if the minister wants to make any difference in the lifeworld of the people with problems. In therapy the aim would be to create the context for successful communication. It would also be an environment in which social factors and processes can be

influenced praxis in society.

allowed to play their part in successful communication.

Van Wyk (1995:87) states that C. Baümler represents the third approach of practical theology as a theological operational science. To him the best solution toward the formulation of theories for practical theology would be a combination of functionalism and critical theory. He is against the one-sided concentration on the church and its practice. He would rather acknowledge the reciprocating influence between the church and social processes. The object of practical theology would then be a Christian-ecclesiastical communicative operation in which social factors and processes play an important part:

The principle that should govern practical theology is that of ideal communication as developed by K. O. Apel and Jürgen Habermas. The task of practical theology, according to Baümler, is to analyse the disrupted communication process and to design successful communication.

(Van Wyk 1995:87)

Johan Dill (1996:114-115) lists two more approaches that are important to this study. They are the hermeneutical approach and the constructivist epistemological approach.

2.3.4 The hermeneutical approach

Hermeneutical approach

Hermeneutics relate to the interpretation and understanding of a message sent from a sender to a receiver. Sense and meaning become the centre focus

Hermeneutics is a science that has to do with understanding. Together with the student-participants I am trying to

of practical theology in this approach and not religious communicative operations (Louw 1993:79). When that which the sender wants to communicate is successfully understood by the receiver the hermeneutical problem is solved (Rossouw 1980:18). Dill distinguishes this approach from the correlative approach because, although closely resembling the latter, it is a clear departure from the science of hermeneutics.

Hermeneutics initially started by interpreting language as written language, in other words, as texts (Thompson 1981b:44). For Veltkamp (1988:202) hermeneutics is not only the theory of the exegesis of texts but also of people, of themselves and of others, of situations and of one's whole being.

Donald Capps (1984:34) is of the opinion that pastoral

understand pastoral therapy as part of practical theology. Within the counselling process itself the counsellor and the client seek to understand the client's lifeworld in order to facilitate choices that will enhance the quality of life for the client in the first place, but will also have a growing influence on the counsellor(s). Hermeneutics interprets language as written language, that is as texts. In this research project both the stories of clients and the actions of the helper(s) will be regarded and interpreted, and reflected upon as texts. I hope that to look at pastoral therapy in this way will enable us to understand what makes it meaningful and effective in counselling. I also hope that it will help to enhance the intelligibility of pastoral therapy towards theology.

actions are *like* texts. In practical theology this means that the theological communicative operations, especially pastoral actions, are viewed as texts and must be interpreted and understood. Along this line practical theology can make a contribution to develop methodologies of pastoral care for understanding what makes pastoral care meaningful.

2.3.5 The social constructionist epistemological approach

According to Dill social constructionist epistemology followed the general systems approach in family therapy and the social sciences. The general systems approach has become more prominent in the social sciences since the sixties. First and second order cybernetics developed at the same time. First order cybernetics deal with control and feedback processes, thus focussing on the interaction processes in systems (Sluzki 1985:26). In second order cybernetics, however, "recursiveness of processes, self-reference of the therapist, meta-position, the punctuation of reality, aesthetic and dialectic processes became part of this new language" (Kotzé 1994:24). The word *self-reference* became important because the observer realised that he is part of the observed. The observer has an influence on his observations. Thus, all his descriptions are a reference to self (Von Foerster 1984:288).

The social constructionist approach joins second order cybernetics when it says that knowledge never

Social constructionist epistemological approach

As I said earlier, the problem of practical theology was a question of epistemology right from the start. If one has to describe any phenomenon as it exists ontologically it becomes an impossible endeavour in the field of the humanities or in the field of religious communicative operations, simply because in these fields one has to do with interpretations of human experiences. The postmodern viewpoint of constructivism opened up new ways of thinking and provided adequate solutions for describing the sense and meaning of communicative operation. This viewpoint provided applicable methodologies to do sound research in the realm of meaning and understanding, that is of communicative action. It also allowed for the development of suitable approaches to practical theology. The nature of pastoral therapy is highly interpretive with no rigid lines or simple definite answers to life's problems and therefore the social constructionist epistemological

represents reality outside the observer (Von Foerster 1984; Marturana & Varela 1987). Kotzé (1992:51) describes it as follows: "Kennis kan nie beskou word as inligting wat ware weergawes is van 'n objektiewe werklikheid buite die waarnemer nie. Kennis is die kognitiewe konstruksies van waarnemers in interaksie met die waargenome". J. T. de Jongh van Arkel (1987:197-198) follows a social constructionist approach in his attempt to develop a paradigm for pastoral diagnosis when he states:

There is also a growing awareness that the so-called reality that we find is the *construction* of what we believe we have discovered and investigated. From these ideas flow the dictum that scientific, social, individual and ideological realities are invented (constructed) as a result of the inevitable need to approach the person (or his religious convictions, or the situation, or the independent reality "out there") from certain basic assumptions that we consider to be "objective" properties of real reality...

Having reflected upon the different approaches to practical theology I also felt the need to reflect upon the subject field of practical theology so as to identify an appropriate fit for pastoral therapy.

approach opened up new and creative ways of counselling to people with problems. Another benefit of this approach, to me, was the realisation of the reflexivity between observer and observed. The recursiveness of the therapeutic processes together with the knowledge of self-reference made me realise the responsibility I have to take for what I "found" to be or understood to be pastoral therapy. Responsibility now lies with me and not, as I said in the beginning, with certain rules and regulations.

I cannot but mention the social constructionist approach in my own thoughts here, because it obviously has a great influence on this research project as well. However it was discussed in depth in chapter two where the "social coinomial construction" part of the title of the research project was explained fully.

2.4 The subject field of practical theology

One of the major discussions in practical theology concerns its subject field. Randy L. Maddox (1991) renders a brief description of the recent discussion in practical theology concerning the identification of the subject field of the discipline (see also Mente 1978; Bäumlér 1984; Zerfass 1988; Van der Ven 1990; and Pieterse 1993). The question: "What praxis does practical theology deal with?" is important. Van der Ven (1990:40) speaks about the different orientations of the praxis of practical theology, while Pieterse (1993:42) states: that the "praxisbegrip in die praktiese teologie 'n komplekse en veelkantige begrip is". I will, however, follow the brief description of Maddox, for it is sufficient for the purpose of this study.

At first the only subject field of practical theology was that of pastoral ministry. If pastoral ministry, namely the range of tasks involved in pastoral ministry, was the only subject field of practical theology, one might as well speak of pastoral theology instead of practical theology.

Subject field

In encountering the theory of the subject field of practical theology I realised that the borders within which the subject field of practical theology finds itself determined the approach towards practical theology and vice versa. This directly influenced the curriculum of the training of pastors. The discomfort that I felt when I realised that the church is not able to help people with life's problems forced me to widen the horizons of my own thinking about the subject field of practical theology. To my mind it has to include the service (communicative operation) of the church in the world. To me the need for interaction with the humanities was of absolute importance otherwise the church would not be able to be of service to people in their lifeworld outside of their action within the church. In order to neutralise this dichotomy between church and society the subject field of practical theology will have to focus on the actions of people within or outside of the church. Therefore practical theology will have

There was a need for theology to become more relevant to the whole Church by entering into greater dialogue with the sciences. A broader definition of the subject field of pastoral theology consequently found expression in the Catholic *Handbuch der Pastoraltheologie*, which defined its subject as the nature and task of the whole church. Maddox (1991:163) describes the intention of the handbook as “it defined the ministry that it was trying to understand and foster in a manner inclusive of all members of the church, not simply the clergy”. This led to a title change from *pastoral theology* back to the previous *practical theology*.

A third identification of the subject field of pastoral theology goes one step further. It still deals with the church as a whole but focuses on the mission of the church *in the world*. “Accordingly, the discussion of even ‘internal’ topics such as worship takes on a new focus concerning how they prepare for, encourage, or express ministry to the world” (Maddox 1991:163). Again, because of the greater interaction with the world, practical theology required an increased dialogue with the social and human sciences that analyse the world. This proposed identification of the life of the church in the world has a further nuance - it is not enough to understand the world, the church must also change it! In Germany this endeavour culminates in the articulation of practical theology as a *Handlungswissenschaft* - a human science oriented directly to action. It is also in this subject field that practical theology becomes closely associated with critical theory.

Maddox (1991:164-165) goes on to name two other subject fields of practical theology. One is religious/moral life in the world within which the goal of practical theology becomes the development of a “public” account of proper action in the world. Such an account is

not confessionally-dependent upon the Church. The other one is human spiritual/existential experience and advocates of this subject field want practical theology to focus less on human action than on fundamental human *experiences*. Pieterse (1993:43) remarks that the dichotomy between church and society has been neutralised and that the interaction between church, society and Christianity are stamped as communicative.

Because of the empirical nature of this study, most of these subject fields will be taken into consideration. According to Wolfaardt (1992:7) it is important that practical theology should not be concerned only with a structural-functional approach, but that its field of research should be extended to communicative operations. He shows that this establishes a link between theology and other sciences, each from its own perspective. Van Wyk (1995:95) reports as follows:

A practical theology that concerns itself with the theory of communicative acts has the effect of breaching the traditional divisions within the subject area. The communication of the faith is not limited to official activities of the church, nor even to the very form of the church, for communication that mediates the faith outside the church is also a valid object of study.

It will, therefore, be necessary to devote some space to the contributions of some authors (Gadamer, Ricoeur and Habermas) in the social sciences who are important to this research project. They will be viewed through the eyes of other writers, not necessarily through their original works. The reason for that is the substantial body of discourse that has developed from their original philosophies. In this study I am working primarily with discourse in practical theology, more specifically in pastoral work, therefore, I want to position myself in the greater discourse of their works through the eyes of people that presently work in the

discourse of practical theology and pastoral work. The important issues for this study, therefore, are those that are presently active in these discourses and not the individual authorities' original input. To work with the insights of other people within the discourse will also enhance and widen the *social* part of the social coinonial construction of pastoral therapy and pastoral therapy training. This I will do in 3, for now I wish to explain the relationship between theory and praxis in theology.

2.5 Theory and praxis in theology

Van der Ven (1988:7) calls the relationship between theory and praxis the "*crux theologica practica*". The specific relation between theory and praxis is of major importance to practical theology. Theory and praxis interactively and reflexively influence and change each other. Louw (1993:66) says that two biases should be prevented: "(a) Die dominansie van teorie oor die praktyk en (b) die dominansie van die empiriese navorsing en die suigkrag van die praxis bo die teorie". Therefore, neither theory nor praxis must take priority over each other (Heitink 1993:149). Whereas theory requires a constant critical evaluation from praxis, praxis must be transcended by theory (Janson & Wolfaardt n.d.:120). If theory has priority over praxis it will result in a platonic alienation between the Christian message and reality. Praxis then becomes a mere theological application of a God-willed theory (Pieterse 1993:174). When praxis takes

Theory and praxis in theology

The relationship between theory and praxis has a determining effect on our thoughts on and our actions in practical theology. Nearly all in literature state that there must be a balance between theory and praxis. The problems occur when one has precedence. Although this is widely accepted, it seems to me that no one can state where that point of homeostasis must be. To my mind

superiority over theory a practical ideology develops or praxis becomes completely pragmatic. Van Wyk (1995:101) says: "A real interaction between critical theological theory and critical praxis can take place only if practitioners drop their antipathy to theory and if theorists get rid of their claims to absolutism".

Van Wyk (1995:98) also reports on Bastian's opinion that theory represents a synthesis between experience and understanding, rather than being a replica or mere reflection of it. Therefore empirical research is not concerned with experience as such, but with experience interpreted in the light of theory.

For Louw (1993:66) the solution lies in a spiral model that is dialectical in nature and he quotes Van der Ven: "This dialectical relation implies the richness of the empirical-theological approach. It has its basis in the fullness of the two compounding elements: 'empirical' and 'theology'".

N Greinacher (1974:110) most probably has the best metaphor for explaining a healthy relationship between theory and praxis with his bipolar tension of the ellipse.

there are only two ways of determining whether either theory or praxis has precedence over the other. The first is to evaluate the outcome of one's practical theologising. This is a difficult venture but quite necessary if the church is to be effective in its counselling of people with problems. If people experience the church as highly critical and condemnatory, the focus of the church is most probably too sharply on theory. However if people are allowed to promote the practical as the norm the emphasis on praxis is too heavy. The other way of measuring yourself is to be in constant communication with the opposite stance, that is theorists and practitioners should confer with one another about their position. In the light of this it is clear that a constructive equilibrium has to be maintained by continual critical reciprocity between theory and praxis. One of the aims of this research project was to have a well correlated interaction between theory and praxis. This reflexivity between theory and praxis was facilitated by the multiple

An ellipse has two centres or poles, and between them there is a tension that is in perfect equilibrium. If the tension relaxes completely, the poles move together, so that we have a circle with only one pole. If the tension becomes too great, the poles move too far apart, so that the result is two circles (also see Pieterse 1993:173-174 and Van Wyk 1995:100). This means that theory and praxis should be neither identical nor totally separate.

When the relationship between theory and praxis is in perfect balance Maddox (1991:167) articulates the task of practical theology as the correlation of critically-appraised theological theory with critically-investigated praxis. Pieterse concludes: "Dit is duidelik dat teorie en praxis op mekaar betrokke is en dat beide slegs dinamies tot ontwikkeling kan kom as die huidige praxis veranderbaar, dit wil sê histories bepaald is en beide die teorie en die praxis oor en weer kritiseerbaar is". Müller (1996:1-2) agrees with the concept of *phronesis* in the sense of a value-oriented discussion of reflexivity between experience in practise and knowledge of existing theories. In this way a praxis-theory-praxis movement is established.

conversations between all the participants about the practical cases they have done and the way in which theory relates to each specific case. In this way a praxis-theory-praxis movement was established. The theory concerned covers theory in psychology, family therapy, pastoral therapy as well as theology.

Having so many tangent planes with the humanities, I would like to reflect on some figures (Gadamer, Ricoeur and Habermas) from the social sciences as to how their thoughts are implemented into this research project.

3 Discourse about representatives from the social sciences

This research project fits within the concept of practical theology as communicative action (Heitink 1993; Louw 1993; Pieterse 1993). This form of empirical research in practical

theology has tangent planes with the discourse about the hermeneutic phenomenology of Hans-Georg Gadamer (Gadamer 1982; Bernstein 1983; Madison 1988; Heitink 1993; Pieterse 1993; How 1995), the discourse about the method in interpretation of Paul Ricoeur (P Ricoeur 1991; Thompson 1981b; Heitink 1993; Pieterse 1993; Vanhoozer 1998), and the discourse about the critical social theory of Jürgen Habermas' communicative action (Thompson 1981a; Bernstein 1983; Heitink 1993; Pieterse 1993; How 1995; Vanhoozer 1998).

3.1 Discourse about the hermeneutic phenomenology of Hans-Georg Gadamer

Hans-Georg Gadamer

In the field of hermeneutics there are two irreconcilably different theories of understanding and interpretation. The one can be called phenomenological hermeneutics and the other positivistic hermeneutics. According to Madison (1988:25), E. D. Hirsch, an American professor of English, is the main exponent of positivistic hermeneutics, and he argues that there is or should be no significant difference between the empirical sciences and the humanities and that the hypothetical-deductive method as advocated by positivist-style philosophers of science is as applicable in the matter of literary textual interpretation as it is in the physical sciences. To the contrary "Gadamer seeks

Gadamer's thoughts clarified the purpose of this research project for me. I realised that my intention was not to prove something about pastoral therapy, but rather to achieve a more comprehensive understanding of pastoral therapy through the eyes and tradition of self and others. Since the intention is not to test knowledge gained from our lifeworld it is not imperative to follow the same hypothetical-deductive method as is used in the physical sciences. Because of the aim of pastoral therapy to help people with problems of faith and problems of life the subject field of this study lies within communicative action. This generates modes of experience

to defend what is proper to the humanities against encroachment by the ideal of 'scientific' knowledge and to this end attacks the concept of 'method', arguing that method, as it is understood in the positive sciences, has no role whatsoever to play in the humanities" (Madison 1988:25). According to Gadamer the generality of our knowledge lies in tradition and not in specific method (Pieterse 1993:82; How 1995). In Gadamer's case,

when we interpret something we do not escape from our tradition to a place where disinterested objectivity reigns, but rather we interpret what we have already 'understood' by the way of the tradition that produced us and it. For Gadamer 'understanding' is what makes interpretation at the empirical level possible; both are woven together in a way that objective methods cannot separate. In fact in a sense, Gadamer reverses the normal assumptions of what a successful interpretation consists of: instead of a brand new understanding emerging, he claims that we amplify and extend what we already know, by disclosing more thoroughly the tradition in which we are immersed.

(Alan How 1995:8)

The question that Gadamer therefore asks is not that of how one can test knowledge from one's lifeworld but rather how one can learn from tradition. Insights from tradition can be retrieved through 'understanding'. Understanding in Gadamer's sense is not scientific

which lie outside science and therefore they are modes of experience in which a truth is communicated that cannot be verified by the methodological means proper to science. His views helped me to move from a negative to a positive evaluation of the temporal distance between text and reader as well as a positive evaluation of my prejudices with which I am interacting with tradition, student participants, theory, et cetera. In pastoral therapy these positive evaluations provided yet another position from where understanding is improved so that new choices can be made, thereby enhancing multiple reflection. It also enhanced the notion that understanding is an ongoing process that can be positively utilised to rewrite the negative influences of the past whenever dysfunctional interpretations limit one's happiness.

This kind of research needed a widened rationality which Gadamer brought through the communicative character he has given our interactions with one another and with tradition. I

method but Gadamer's quest, quoted by Pieterse (1993:80) is...

concerned to seek that experience of truth that transcends the sphere of the control of scientific method wherever it is to be found, and to inquire into its legitimacy. Hence the human sciences are joined with modes of experience which lie outside science: with the experiences of philosophy, of art, and of history itself. These are all modes of experience in which a truth is communicated that cannot be verified by the methodological means proper to science.

Gadamer thus opened new ways of acquiring practical knowledge that enable us to a moral praxis within which values and purposiveness according to those values are playing a vital part. Heitink's (1993:180) evaluation of Gadamer's contribution to hermeneutics is that Gadamer has given a positive value both to the temporal distance between the reader and the text and the prejudices with which one interacts with tradition. About temporal distance Bernstein (1983:140) quotes Gadamer in *Truth and Method*:

Temporal distance is not something that must be overcome. This was rather the naive assumption of historicism, namely that we must set ourselves within the spirit of the age, and think with its ideas and its thoughts, not with our own, and thus advance towards historical objectivity. In fact the important thing is to recognise the distance in time as a positive and productive possibility of understanding. It is not a yawning abyss, but is filled with the continuity of custom and tradition, in the light of which all that is handed down presents itself to us. Temporal distance lets the true meaning of the object emerge fully. But the discovery of the true meaning of a text or a work of art is never finished; it is in fact an infinite process.

agree with Pieterse that it is a rationality that has to do with practical knowledge because that which is learned must also be practised. It is exactly this kind of rationality that gives sense and meaning to our actions in pastoral therapy.

Obviously there are some defects in the theory of Gadamer. The main problem is that he does not allow for proper criticism of society. This opens the door for arbitrariness in interpretation and spurious, distorted consensuses. The danger is that praxis can be allowed to dominate theory and pragmatic ideology can be developed.

Gadamer also broadened rationality by giving it a communicative character: “Binne ‘n simmetriese verhouding waarin die eie vooroordele en standpunte op die spel geplaas word, is daar openheid vir kritiek van die ander en ‘n bereidheid om van ander te leer. Dit is ook ‘n rasionaliteit wat met praktiese kennis te make het, omdat dit wat geleer word ook geleef moet word” (Pieterse 1993:86).

The most fierce criticism of Gadamer’s contribution is that he does not allow for a justified, grounded critique of society. Heitink (1993:180) describes the anxiety of Dingemans: “Kritici, die overigens veel waardering hebben voor de interpretatietheorie van Gadamer, zouden hieraan toch via historisch-kritisch onderzoek enig tegenwicht willen bieden om al te vrijmoedige en willekeurige interpretaties te ondervangen”. Habermas would also like to add to Gadamer’s theory good grounds for criticising spurious, distorted social consensuses.

From the hermeneutic phenomenology of Gadamer I will now go over to the hermeneutic of Ricoeur.

3.2 Discourse about the method in interpretation of Paul Ricoeur

Ricoeur

Ricoeur sees language as a structure that exists not for its own sake but for referring beyond itself to the world. The principle features of Ricoeur’s theory of interpretation can be derived from the characteristics of

Ricoeur’s theory of interpretation has valuable insights for pastoral therapy. Language is something that exists between texts and reader as it exists between speech act and hearer. Language is thus viewed as discourse. To me the analogy of human action

written *discourse*, where discourse “has a *sense* (something said), a *reference* (about something), and a *destination* (to someone)” (Vanhoozer 1998:214). From these characteristics four forms of distancing are produced: 1) The surpassing of the event of saying by the meaning of what is said. 2) There is no overlapping of what the text signifies with what the author meant. 3) Whereas there is a specified dialogical relation between speaker and hearer there is no specified relation between text and reader. The text ‘decontextualises’ itself from its social and historical conditions of production, opening itself to an unlimited series of readings. 4) “The text has a referential dimension which is of a different order from that of speech, a dimension which is unfolded in the process of interpretation” (Thompson 1981b:14).

The first principle feature of Ricoeur’s theory of interpretation is derived from the first two forms of distancing - the objective meaning of a text is something other than the subjective intentions of its author and therefore Ricoeur concludes that the problem of the right understanding can no longer be solved by a simple return to the alleged intention of the

with written discourse clarified the reason why people are able to read so much from someone else’s actions. The same distance that exists between the event of speaking and the written discourse of what was said also exists between human action and the discourse about that same action. People decontextualise the actions of others and fill those actions with meaning from their own frames of reference. Therefore people do not react on what is said or done, but on their own thinking about what was said or done. One arrives at meaning through the interaction of explanation and interpretation within the process of discourse. If this is true for the therapeutic process it is also true for the process of teaching/training and of research. The research project consists of discourse through multiple conversations to expand the meaning of pastoral therapy. What Ricoeur has provided is a method of interpretation that can be used to study the actions of people and it is from this notion that the research project proceeds. As discourse the texts, as do the

author. Another principle feature is derived from the other two forms of distancing - to understand a text is to move from its sense to its reference, from that which it says to that which it says it about. Because of this, explanation and understanding are no longer contradictory attitudes. On the contrary "it seems possible to situate explanation and interpretation along a unique hermeneutical arc and to integrate the opposed attitudes of explanation and understanding within an overall conception of reading as the recovery of meaning" (Thompson 1981b:15). The procedure of interpretation of Ricoeur has a distinctive scientific

character and objectivity. By focussing on human action as analogue to written text he can relate the methodology of interpretation to that of human action. "Unlike spoken discourse but like written texts, meaningful actions have significance beyond the moment" (Capps 1984:37). As written text influences readers, so meaningful actions have effects on those involved in the action. In analogue to written texts meaningful action also has unintended consequences, it creates a world that exceeds original intended meanings and is always open to reinterpretation. Pieterse (1993: 88) comments that human actions...

meaningful actions of co-participants (as texts), offer something to be appropriated by the reader or co-participant in discourse. The openness towards continual reinterpretation creates a breeding-ground for reflexivity that causes a positive circle of meaning and change. In this research project pastoral therapy is changed by us as we are changed by pastoral therapy, therefore the description and understanding of pastoral therapy is an ongoing process.

het ook 'n eie lewe en kan verskillend in verskillende kontekste verstaan word. Die neerslag van betekenisvolle menslike handeling is dus, soos tekste, geadresseer aan enigiemand wat kan lees (interpreteer). Dit is oop vir 'n praktiese interpretasie (toe-eiening in die eie lewe en situasie) in elke historiese konteks en situasie. Op grond van hierdie analogieë kan menslike handeling die objek van (wetenskaplike) interpretasie gemaak word.

This methodological model of interpretation is important to this study within the interpretive paradigm of practical theology. Interpretation is important because of the dialectic nature of this study, which brings us in the realm of communicative action and it is therefore necessary to look into the discourse about Jürgen Habermas's communicative action.

3.3 Discourse about the critical social theory of Jürgen Habermas Habermas's communicative action

According to Habermas there are two quite different forms of social action: *purposive-rational action* and *communicative action* (Thompson 1981a; Richard Bernstein 1983; Honneth & Joas 1991; Alan How 1995; Vanhoozer 1998). Purposive-rational action is a form of social action that successfully achieves goals by using the most technically effective means. Communicative action "is guided by the idea of reaching a consensus through mutual understanding and dialogue" (Alan How 1995:15).

For Habermas "communication is an inter-subjective phenomenon that is not merely monologic but dialogic" (Thompson 1981a:80). It is a form of interaction within which participants acknowledge one another

The major contribution of Habermas for practical theology is the broadening of the bases of rationality. A kind of "objectivity" can be reached through argumentation in communicative action. Through this he created the concept of communicative rationality that refers to an interconnection of universal validity claims. To me this means that where Gadamer fails to provide firm ground for critique Habermas produces it with his universal validity claims that can be reached through a consensus of mutual understanding and dialogue. I could use these valuable insights in the research project because in this research the focus is on the communicative action between people. Although my aim in

implicitly, communicate on even ground, aimed at mutual understanding and consensus (Pieterse 1993:94). Even though communicative action includes value-laden areas of life such as the moral rules that underpin social life, it is based on a kind of "objective knowledge". This kind of objectivity, born through universal validity claims, can be achieved through an inter-subjective agreement about what is to count as right, proper, fair, and so forth. "Op hierdie wyse verplaas Habermas die werklikheidsbenadering en die waarheidsopvatting tot 'n subjek-subjek relasie" (Pieterse 1993:94).

Communicative action, therefore, is the type of social interaction that is oriented towards reaching understanding but the understanding can only be achieved by agreement. As quoted by Bernstein in *Beyond Objectivism and Relativism* (1983:185-186): "The goal of coming to an understanding [*Verständigung*] is to bring about an agreement [*Eindverständnis*] that terminates in the inter-subjective mutuality of reciprocal understanding, shared knowledge, mutual trust, and accord with one another". Agreement, again, can be reached by basing it upon the

this research project was not to develop a theory of practice for the pastoral therapy aspect of practical theology, the meta-theory of Habermas' communicative action could well be used to do so. My aim in this project was rather to put into practice what others have said in theory.

Habermas' "objectivity" relates to a postmodernist way of thinking because the "objectivity" that he arrives at is constructed in language through universal validity claims in communicative action. I think of it as a social endeavour that takes place in conversation. A further relation to postmodernity is the approach to reality - be that objective, normative or subjective - because reality becomes expressed not through an object-subject relation but through a subject-subject relation. Based on that, what happens in this research project does not refer to an objective reality, but forms a description of a social and inter-subjective reality.

corresponding validity claims of comprehensibility, truth, truthfulness and rightness (Vanhoozer 1998:217).

In Habermas's own words as quoted by Thompson (1981:104): "The universal validity claims (truth, correctness, sincerity), which the parties concerned must at least implicitly maintain and reciprocally acknowledge, make possible the consensus which carries the collective action". Schnädelbach (1991:13) puts Habermas's conviction into words by saying:

The rationality proper to the communicative practice of everyday life points to the practice of argumentation as a court of appeal that makes it possible to continue communicative action with other means when disagreements can no longer be repaired with everyday routines and yet are not to be settled by the direct or strategic use of force. For this reason... the concept of communicative rationality, which refers to an unclarified systematic interconnection of universal validity claims, can be adequately explicated only in terms of a theory of argumentation.

The point that Habermas would like to make is that this form of action is just as worthy of being called 'rational' as is its technical counterpart. Through this *communicative rationality* one can provide firm ground for critique that "can serve as a critical benchmark, helping us to evaluate the validity of any actual social consensus" (Alan How 1995:16).

I view this research as communicative action within which all participants acknowledge one another implicitly, communicate freely and on even ground, whilst committed to mutual understanding and consensus. Like Habermas's theory, this research thus work with a communicative-theoretical grounding for rationality. I agree with Vanhoozer (1998:218) that this "action" model of meaning provides the best account both of the possibility of stable meaning and of the transformative capacity of texts.

This research project is an endeavour to understand something, that is to grasp what has been done, together with its effects, about pastoral therapy; the possibility of attaining such understanding is the pre-supposition of communicative action (Vanhoozer 1998).

Habermas's theory of communicative action has great value for practical theology. It serves as a meta-theory from which the development of basis-theories and theories of practice for different aspects of practical theology, like pastoral therapy for instance, can be launched (Pieterse 1993:96).

Having discussed the relation of the contributions of Gadamer, Ricoeur and Habermas to the discourse in practical theology and pastoral therapy it is also necessary to relate the influence of the family therapy movement to pastoral therapy.

4 Family therapy movement

Apart from the philosophical contributions that underpin pastoral therapy the family therapy movement also contributed largely to the development of what we perceive to be pastoral therapy. Family therapy has become one of the fastest growing fields in mental health services during the past forty years (Kotzé 1994:1). The shift in family therapy from the individual to the family and therefore to the larger relationship circles of clients resonates with the same shift in pastoral therapy. In this research pastoral therapy also follows the movement away from the medical model as it developed in family therapy. In the world of family therapy huge changes and epistemological shifts have taken place since its inception in the middle of the 20th century. These tangent planes of family therapy to pastoral therapy necessitates the focus on family therapy and therefore I would like to give a brief overview of its history and focus on the major epistemological shifts.

4.1 The first of two different world views - modernism

The epistemological shifts within family therapy have to do with different world views. The first of two basic world views is called the world of *modernism* (Gergen 1991). In this world view problems are solved by asking the question Why? Linear cause/effect thinking, subject/object dualism, either/or dichotomies, value-free science, laws and law like external reality, historical focus and the necessity of diagnoses, are most of the assumptions of reality in a modernistic world view (Becvar & Becvar 1996:5). When these beliefs were translated from physical sciences into behavioural sciences, they were interpreted into theories that described human behaviour as determined either by internal events or external environmental sequences to which we may react. Within this context the prevailing view held that symptoms and problems involved only the individual. The psychological approaches therefore all focused on the individual and the individual's specific behaviour or on the internal events of the human mind. Psychological relief was achieved through a prolonged process of becoming aware of (diagnose) repressed feelings associated with traumatic

World view: Modernism

It was when I came into contact with the family therapy movement that several changes occurred within my own thinking about counselling to people with problems of faith and life. It was also during this process that I was really confronted with my own world view. At first my approach to therapy was quite rigid. Through my acquaintance with the developments within family therapy I was able to change in my approach to therapy. The only way I knew at the time was to assess people's actions according to my knowledge of the principles of Scripture and to guide them as best I could through difficult times. My experience was that people were reluctant to be helped because of feelings of guilt and shame. They felt judged even though I deliberately tried to free them of guilt and shame through confession. It was as if my actions contradicted my intentions. I could, with the most neutral voice possible, ask the question "why?", only to experience a flurry of blame

historical development (Anderson & Goolishian 1988:374). Ronald F Levant (1984:10-11) describes von Bertalanffy's opinion of this Galilean-Newtonian mechanistic world view as concerned with undirected events, eschewed vitalistic explanations of intrinsic purpose, directedness, or teleology, and sought only the explanation of how a given cause created a given effect.

4.2 General systems theory

A newer perspective represented by general systems theory was initially developed as a science of living systems (Levant 1984:11). Amongst others Bateson and his research group in communication and cybernetic theory gave momentum to this newer perspective. It involved a shift in epistemological perspective, the focal point of which is general systems theory. Up to the mid 1980's researchers and therapists were influenced by general systems theory and cybernetics and this became reflected in therapeutic practice itself (Levant 1984; Anderson and Goolishian 1988; Hofmann 1992; Kotzé 1994).

The centre of attention shifted from the individual and

and accusations. I felt then that it was my responsibility to "diagnose" the guilty. In fact, that was what was expected of me. I was the one with the knowledge to discern who was at fault and I was the one who had to provide the solution. As a minister I felt vulnerable and inadequate, not expert enough and I felt I had to try harder. I realise now that in my approach I was concerned about the individual and the individual's conduct. The individual with his or her conduct became the problem and prejudice crept in. Looking back upon it now, it seems as if I stepped into every pothole the modernist way of thinking could provide. In spite of my painting the picture so black, not everything was futile and many people were helped. However, I can understand the way in which I have operated then much better now, in the light of the assumptions of the modernist world view.

General systems theory

The first of my mind shifts occurred

individual problems in isolation, to the family. In other words a shift toward relationships and relationship issues between individuals and groups of individuals of which the family unit was not the only, but the best description. In resolving problems the question asked would be *What?* rather than *Why?* The basic assumptions about reality and the appropriate description of reality changed significantly and included the following: reciprocal causality, holistic perspective, dialectical process, subjective/perceptual, freedom of choice/proactive, patterns, here-and-now focus, relational and contextual assumptions. They are expressed by Becvar and Becvar (1996:8) as follows:

Thus, subjectivity is seen as inevitable as the observer perceives, acts on, and creates her own reality. In addition, the interdependence of observer and observed is an important aspect of a wholistic perspective that takes into account the context of their interaction. Such interaction is seen as a noncausal, dialectical process of mutual influence in which both are equally involved. Finally, understanding requires assessing patterns of interaction with an emphasis on what is happening rather than why it is happening.

4.3 The second of two different world views - postmodernism

It seems to me that general systems theory, as far as

when, through the perspective of general systems theory, my focus changed from individuals to the relationships in which individuals find themselves. Because of the insights gained through theory I began to see therapy itself differently. I looked for the patterns that evolved in relationships between family members. I forced myself not to ask the question "why" and fall into the pit of cause and effect that compels one to seek for a culprit, but to ask the question "what" so as to gain an understanding of what is going on within a family. I must confess that I had to abandon much of my expert opinion on the rights and wrongs of people's lives. I felt much more uncertain because there were no more culprits to blame or to train, and yet I found myself in a liberating position of discovering with people restrictive patterns in their lives which they undertake to change. Suddenly I felt more equipped to counsel although I did not work as hard as before to try to explain the problem or to solve it. I could use Scripture much more freely and

family therapy is concerned, created a bridge between modernism and postmodernism. According to Anderson and Goolishian (1988:375) family therapy's continued discourse moved into two opposing directions:

The first direction appears to be an extension of the underlying assumptions of the traditional and prevailing paradigm in the social sciences. This direction derives meaning and understanding from observing patterns of social organisation such as structure and role. For example, family therapists have moved from the individual to the context (family) and from the family to the context of the larger social system. Within this perspective, social systems can be understood as having meaning derived from observed patterns of social organisation.

This direction seems to be drawn along by the first of the two different world views because central to this direction of social systems is the notion of empiricism or objective reality (White & Epston 1990:20, 23). According to this direction problematic behaviour, pathology, or deviance within components of a system represent inadequacies in social role and structure. The task of therapy within this framework is the repair of the social defect. To induce change the therapist is then the expert or a kind of "Master Interpreter" (Hoffman

appropriately without being judgemental. It seemed as if people were liberated to accept their choices and to take the responsibility to live with them out of their own free will and not because an expert's opinion has forced them to do so.

World view: Postmodernism

However, my world view was thoroughly challenged within the ongoing discourse about family therapy. One of the concepts in general systems theory, homeostasis, suggested that when change occurs within a system the system's equilibrium is disturbed, but the system will have an inclination to get back into equilibrium as soon as possible. The easy way out will be to fall back upon the previous homeostasis.

This was exactly what I had experienced. I fell back into my old way of doing simply by looking at the system as an individual. It dawned on me that I was still using the assumptions of a modernist world view. However, I was applying them,

1990:9) of the system who uses the descriptive language of diagnosis and expert treatment through the knowledge of social systems and their functions.

The second direction is based on the proposition that systems can be described as existing only in language and communicative action. This direction constitutes the shift from social structure to generation of human meaning. It is a direction built upon a conceptual framework that bypassed the earlier empiricism of theories of therapy. "These developments shifted family therapy thinking to what is called second-order cybernetics and ultimately constructivism" (Anderson and Goolishian 1992:26). At the level of second-order cybernetics,

the observer is understood to be part of that which is observed, and thus may only describe observing systems. From the former perspective, one may define problems as existing "out there" in a real, knowable reality. From the latter perspective, reality is understood to be constructed as a function of belief systems that one brings to bear on a particular situation and according to which one operates... Rather than discovering behaviour we create it, or believing is seeing, and how we language something becomes crucial.

(Becvar and Becvar 1996:85)

In this direction of family therapy human action takes

not to the individual, but to the system. I was again asking the question "why" and began to apply the same answers to every system as if I had discovered how systems should work ontologically. The solution would then be to uncover the defect in the system and repair the defect so that the system could operate again according to how it should be ontologically. I realised that it was difficult to change one's world view. Again our discussions about theory elucidated my understanding of what was happening in family therapy as well as in my own thoughts. It changed my way of looking at how we are to gather knowledge - not by discovering what something is ontologically, but rather by "discovering" our own perceptions of phenomena by constructing them in language. It was shifting the focus from ontology to human meaning. This meant a complete shift in assumptions and the assumptions of a postmodernist world view began to settle in my own framework of thinking.

In this research project I tried to apply

place in a reality of understanding that is created through social construction and dialogue which immerse both therapist and family in a hermeneutic and interpretive position. The assumptions on which this direction is built are that of the second of two different world views - *postmodernism*. Some of these assumptions are: human systems are language-generating and, simultaneously, meaning-generating systems; meaning and understanding is socially constructed; the therapeutic system is a problem-organising, problem-dis-solving system; therapist and family members are equal participants in the constructing process; problems exist in language and are unique to the narrative context and change in therapy is the dialogical creation of new narrative (Anderson & Goolishian 1992: 27-28).

these assumptions because within pastoral therapy it made so much sense to view the problems of people as constructions of their way of understanding their own world. These constructions could then be deconstructed so as to render new liberating meaning to old restricting convictions. This, to me, was also a creative solution to my own restricted way of looking at pastoral therapy. I did not have to discard anything that I had learnt in the past, but I could use it with wider perspective and new meaning.

This other way of perceiving things had its own quota of problems, especially because it sometimes seemed to contradict my theological

belief systems. It seemed as if what I was doing in practice sometimes contradicted what I believed in theory. For example: in therapy therapist and clients could come to the conclusion that they (clients) should not read their Bible nor pray for a month, where in theory we believe that to read one's Bible and to pray every day are an essential if not vital part of everyday life.

I have, up to this point, discussed the relation of pastoral therapy to practical theology, the social sciences, and family therapy, but now want to come closer to the actual position of pastoral therapy within pastoral work by reviewing some pastoral work discourses.

5 Pastoral work discourses

Pastoral work discourses

5.1 Theology and psychology

Theology and psychology

A prominent discourse of pastoral therapy as part of pastoral theology within practical theology is the relationship between theological and psychological disciplines. Within practical theology, as discussed earlier (2), the problem of integration was between *natural sciences, the humanities and theology*. Within pastoral theology the problem of integration is between theological and psychological *models* of counselling. The points of view differ from an outright rejection of psychological disciplines to a complete identification of pastoral theology with psychology, with quite a number of attempts of integration in between (De Klerk 1978; Heitink 1977; 1993; Müller 1981; Louw 1984; 1993; 1994; Rossouw 1992; Veltkamp 1988). Within pastoral therapy the problem of integration lies in the application of theological and psychological *principles*. To my mind, therefore, there are different levels within this discourse. At the levels of practical theology and pastoral theology the discourse is mainly *theoretical* whereas at the level of pastoral therapy it is largely

My perception of pastoral therapy at this stage was that it was one of the practical applications of pastoral work and that pastoral theology formed a theoretical focus, through the lens of theology, on pastoral work. Pastoral psychology would then be a theoretical focus, through the lens of psychology, on pastoral work. I also perceived that we, as participants, through this study, were busy experiencing the development of an application of pastoral work that are completely different to those that I have encountered in the paradigm of pastoral theology up to now. The decisive difference to my mind lies in world view. Whereas previous models of application departed from the modernist stance of positivism some of the recent models of application departs from the postmodernist stance of social constructionism. The difference that I experience is that the former has to describe things as they are ontologically whereas the latter

practical.

Several questions come to mind that form the crux of this discourse: What distinguishes pastoral therapy from other modes of therapy? What would the place of God be in pastoral therapy? How should Scripture and prayer be used within pastoral therapy? What is the specific subject field of pastoral therapy? It is not my intention to answer these questions yet, but to bring these questions to the fore at this point. The intension of research, however, is to co-construct an understanding for and give meaning to (Gergen 1985; Anderson & Goolishian 1988; Andersen 1993; Kotzé & Kotzé 1997) the actions of the pastoral therapist and pastoral therapy itself by means of multiple conversations (Steier 1991) throughout the research process so that these questions will be addressed.

could construct things in language through communicative action (narrative) in such a way that it has sensible, acceptable and reliable meaning. Describing things as they are ontologically creates dichotomies that form barriers of impossibilities which hamper our effective operations as counsellors. For example, either psychology is essentially so different that there can be no compatibility with theology or it has so many tangent planes that it is virtually the same. It is precisely because of this that so many theologians who experienced the need tried so hard to theorise solutions to make psychology acceptable to theology. All of their insights helped me to broaden my perception about counselling in such a way that both God and humankind were recognised

in my counselling service to others. The tension, however, of making a mistake, of not honouring my obligations of faith in and dependence upon God by ignoring some or other theological comprehension, was never eased. Within the social constructionist epistemology I found it possible to integrate psychological insights and skills without endangering theological convictions. I hope that within this research project this integration can be constructed through multiple conversations by using universal validity claims (Thompson 1981; Schnädelbach 1991:13) or inter-subjective agreement, as a form of critique.

5.2 Therapy and pastoral action

Pastoral action within pastoral theology has been termed in correlation with the specific model that is used. Examples that are thoroughly discussed in De Klerk (1978); Heitink (1977; 1993); Müller (1981); Louw (1984; 1993; 1994); Rossouw (1992); Veltkamp (1988) are, among others, the *kerygmatic* model of Thurneysen which focused on the proclamation of Scripture, the *eductive* model of Hiltner which focused on the use of positive power as an inner ability of man and made eductive use of psychology. Then there is the *communication* model of Stollberg's therapeutic caring of the soul within which he contends that the connection between proclamation and therapy, Scripture and healing are united in communication. Firet's *agoric* model was set to bring about change through the intermediation of pastoral care and Heitink with his bipolarity principle attempted to find a balance between the gospel and human sciences.

A few models appeared recently in South-Africa. Louw (1993; 1994) saw pastoral action essentially as *faith care*, in its concern towards people as *life care* and in its aim as *victory care*. There is also the *cognitive* approach towards pastoral therapy of Steenkamp (1996) in which he describes the cognitive ability of people as part of their creation in the image of God as decisive in the healing process. In the *narrative diaconal pastoral action* of Van

Therapy and pastoral action

It is not the intention of this study to provide an alternative model of some kind, but rather to co-construct pastoral therapy. In such a co-construction all the models mentioned and unmentioned played a part, whether directly or indirectly.

To me the latest developments in pastoral therapy through the epistemology of social constructionism bridged the problem of incomprehensibility and non-compatibility adequately. I hope that through the social coinomial construction of pastoral therapy in clergy training this conviction of mine will become apparent.

Heerden (1996), in which the servitude of the pastoral therapist brings the narrative of the person in need and the Great Narrative of God in the lives of people together in a problem-solving event.

5.3 Essential distinctions in pastoral work

Part of the pastoral work discourses are the distinctions made in pastoral work. Since the early sixties psychotherapeutic methods were "forced" on all forms and levels of pastoral work. As a solution for this confusion a distinction between three forms of pastoral work was suggested: mutual care, pastoral care and pastoral counselling (De Jongh van Arkel 1988:1).

5.3.1 Mutual care

Mutual care would be the most original and most essential form of ministration. Mutual care consists of the spontaneous care amongst believers and is the expression of the *ecclesia* and the *coinonia* (De Jong van Arkel 1988:4). There are two dangers threatening the pastorate in our time. On the one hand a lack of professionalism, marked by dilettante counselling and on the other hand too much of a clericalism that inhibits

Essential distinctions in pastoral work

It is indeed essential to have order in one's own house. Without that order one would not be able to place oneself at all within a specific framework. It would be extremely difficult to theorise or to teach, for one would not be able to express oneself accurately. If what one wants to say is not said within a specific setting, understanding cannot be achieved. To socially construct understanding it was necessary for me to place pastoral therapy within the discourse of pastoral work.

Mutual care

We (believers) are the instruments in God's hand through which He heals, shows His love and compassion and through which He cares. This is true for every believer. We agree on a multitude of passages in the Bible (for

the role of the ordinary church member in ministration. Clericalism leaves the ordinary member in congregations with the impression that only the minister can help others and this robs the church of its greatest untapped potential. The vast number of support groups in churches and self-help groups outside of the church are indication enough of the potential of ordinary church members to care for one another.

5.3.2 Pastoral care

Pastoral care is that part of caring in a congregation that reaches out to people in personal and spiritual need. It is a supportive ministry to people experiencing difficulties of everyday life. Pastoral care is administered by church officials as well as by pastoral co-workers and groups in a congregation (De Jongh van Arkel 1988:6). In pastoral care one would prefer to exclude professionalism for it has various negative features: lack of mutuality, maldistribution of influence and power, intellectualism, neglect of communal dimension and resistance to radical change. Pastoral care is part of the *human* vocation and aimed both at maintenance and at ongoing transformation of the community (Fowler 1988:21). Actions like home visits

example 1 Corinthians 12 and 13; 1 Peter 4:7-11) that they confirm that God wants us to care for one another. God also prepares and equips his children to serve one another. At present, however, it seems as if believers neglect that responsibility by leaving it to the clergy. It is my experience that, especially in the case of the reformed churches, people tend to talk of "minister churches" as if the minister is the person who must do everything. Ministers themselves have helped this notion to take root by not delegating responsibilities to members of their congregations or expecting members to help where need exists.

Pastoral care

There are persons who are particularly equipped to support others with life's difficulties. This equipment is part of their natural ability to assist or is obtained through own experience in difficult situations. Others are ex officio, because God has called them for a specific office, available to support members in their particular

and visits to ill people are typical of pastoral care. Care should be taken that pastoral care is not overshadowed by pastoral counselling.

5.3.3 Pastoral counselling

Pastoral counselling, although not more important than mutual care and pastoral care, lies on a tertiary level of pastoral work. It is therefore in the same field as other professions which provide help. On this level the professional minister is simultaneously theologian and helper (De Jongh van Arkel 1988:7). De Jongh van Arkel (1988:8) also gives a definition of what pastoral counselling comprises: "Kenmerkend van pastorale beraad is dat 'n hulpvraer(s) en die pastor saam, via duidelike afsprake oor die duur en die frekwensie van die gesprekke, sistematies, met die oog op verandering, aan die probleme werk wat die hulpvraer(s) ondervind". Pastoral counselling is thus a specific process over a specific time period in which the problems of people are systematically worked through in order to establish change.

Pastoral counselling requires specific skills and

vicinity. If congregations succeed in applying this form of pastoral care properly, the work of the minister as pastoral counsellor will be much less. Again, we as pastors are guilty of not expecting elders (for instance) to give pastoral care where and when it is needed, thereby placing pastoral counselling above pastoral care.

Pastoral counselling

My own experience as a counsellor compelled me to do further study in pastoral counselling. I felt quite awkward when members of my congregation with acute problems in their marriages came to me for assistance and I could not counsel them properly. Mostly my counselling would amount to single session support in the hope that everything would be all right. Processes within which help was given systematically virtually never existed. I was convinced that a minister could not survive on the normal education for ministers. Specific skills and knowledge about counselling in special circumstances is

knowledge about practical theology, pastoral theology and pastoral psychology. Pastoral counselling does, however, not stand for a separate profession, but rather wishes to express the way in which pastoral work can be done: professionally (De Jongh van Arkel 1988: 8).

However, pastoral counsellors who operate outside of the church are on the increase and the need for a joint association for pastoral counsellors of all denominations is of paramount importance. At present the South African Association for Pastoral Work (SAAP) is working towards an accreditation system for pastoral care and counselling. They are also working towards professional registration for pastoral care workers and counsellors. At this stage it will only be a provisional in-house registration in five categories: basic, post basic, intermediate, advanced and specialist (SAAP Notes 1999 Nr. 10:3).

Eventually pastoral counselling cannot be restricted to the congregation only, for the church has a calling in the world and has to reach out to people in need, not only in the church, but also outside of the church.

essential for pastoral counselling.

I realised that the need for further education and training concerning practical counselling in a congregation is one of the greater needs of ministers today. This research programme forms part of my response to that realisation. One of the ways in which the masses of ministers can be reached with this training is through continuing education courses in pastoral work on a decentralised basis. Part of this research programme was exactly aimed at such an endeavour.

Pastoral work done outside of the church is something that is as yet still not controllable and much is still to be done to organise and standardise pastoral counselling in South-Africa. Getting people educated and trained can also not be done haphazardly. This is one of the major challenges of pastoral work in South-Africa.

5.3.4 Pastoral therapy

De Jong van Arkel (1999:95) also mentions a further distinction, which he calls *pastoral therapy*. For him the origin of pastoral therapy is linked to psychotherapy and uses long-term *reconstructive* therapeutic methods to heal deep and/or chronic problems. The classical distinction between pastoral counselling and pastoral therapy thus lies in *depth* and *length*. He goes on describing it as follows: "This would mean that pastoral therapy deals more "in depth" with problems and the action may take longer than that of pastoral counselling". Louw (1993:26) mentions that in the New Testament the verb *therapeuo* mainly has the meaning of healing. The therapeutic service of pastoral work, therefore has a dimension of healing and recuperation. He also highlights the relation of therapy to the Jesus' Messianic fulfilment of God's promises. To my mind, this means that a pastoral therapeutic action, therefore, necessitates an active relationship with God on the part of the pastoral therapist, for he/she is the instrument through which God heals. It also means, however, that a pastoral therapist should have the necessary training and theoretical background to be able to use reconstructive therapeutic methods.

5.4 An alternative paradigm for pastoral therapy

In the discourse of practical theology in South-Africa, Dill's (1996) work proposes an alternative paradigm for pastoral therapy. His contention is that the standard scientific method (logical positivism and empiricism) has led to several epistemological dilemmas for natural scientists as well as social scientists. Together with Kotzé (Dill and Kotzé 1997), he says that although postmodernism is a reaction to the standard scientific method,

it also proposes new epistemological outcomes, such as critical realism, holism, pluralism, hermeneutics, discourse analysis and the narrative paradigms, to problems. According to them these metatheories, as an alternative to the limiting effect of subject centred objective thinking (as is the case with the standard scientific method), can also be beneficial to practical theology and, therefore, to pastoral therapy. The problem with modernism's subject centred objective thinking, they (Dill & Kotzé 1997:21) say, is that it enabled an "interiority" - a separated individual consciousness that in fact has no reference point outside itself - that permits itself to generate its own certitude resulting in the self as an absolute point of reference (Brueggeman 1993:4). Against this viewpoint of an autonomous individual they join König (1990:1-13) in saying that humans exist essentially in relationships.

They also join Gergen (1991) in his postmodern epistemological vantage point for social sciences stating three important aspects of his new epistemology:

- * A subject centred knowledge orientation resides the origin of knowledge in the intrinsic processes of the individual (like his mind and emotions).
- * His own theory (social construction theory), though, resides knowledge in relationships or communal interaction.
- * He also accentuates the intertextual relation of his theory to all other theories - promoting a social basis for reasonable life.

They (Dill & Kotzé 1997) call their new epistemology an *epistemology of communal dialogue*. It is new in the sense that it enables pastoral therapy not to be normatively oriented, but to depart from a 'not-knowing' (Anderson & Goolishian 1992) position. Also,

meaning (described in modernist terms) is derived from the relationships we engage in through communicative acts. Dill (1996:251) says: "In die pastorale terapie beteken dit dus dat persone in diskoerse ontmoet en dat terapie gaan oor dit wat in die verhouding gebeur". Pastoral therapy, he says, exists in dialogue. Understanding, therefore, is not given by laws of nature, it is the result of active cooperative negotiation of people in a creative relationship.

The epistemology of communal dialogue forms the heart of this research programme, therefore, it is called a social coinonial construction of pastoral therapy.

6 Closing remark

The roots of pastoral therapy lie deep in practical theology. The specific manner in which this research project went about describing and constructing pastoral therapy also finds roots in the hermeneutic phenomenology of Hans-Georg Gadamer, the method in interpretation of Paul Ricoeur, and the critical social theory of Jürgen Habermas's communicative action. The interaction with the psychological field, especially that of family therapy, are of great importance for the understanding of pastoral therapy and the discourse within pastoral work itself locates pastoral therapy as a part of pastoral theology within practical theology. The work of Dill (1996) and Dill and Kotzé (1997) places this research in the epistemology of communal dialogue.

In the following chapter I will be focussing on the educational side of pastoral therapy training within a social coinonial discourse.

CHAPTER FOUR

TRAINING WITHIN A SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION DISCOURSE

The first act of a teacher is to introduce the idea that the world we think we see is only a view, a description of the world. Every effort of a teacher is geared to prove this point to his apprentice. But accepting it seems to be one of the hardest things one can do; we are complacently caught in our particular view of the world, which compels us to feel and act as if we know everything about the world. A teacher, from the very first act he performs, aims at stopping that view.

(Casteneda, 1974:231)

If we assume learning is sufficient at a given level of success, then we have missed one of the primary objectives of education.

(Fosnot, 1984:200)

1 Introduction

The third subject of study that is merged into this thesis comes from the sphere of education. Training involves two distinctive events: that of teaching and that of learning. The task of teaching could also be divided into a process of analysis, decision making, and evaluation regarding curriculum (what should be taught) and instruction (how one should teach) (Fosnot 1984:195; Pasch et al. 1991:1-8). Part of teaching and learning is the process of supervision (Estadt et al. 1987:13-37; White 1992:75-95; Hardy 1993:9-20). It is the intention in this chapter to focus firstly upon teaching, secondly upon learning and then upon supervision.

2 Social construction discourse and teaching

Inner dialogue

2.1 Curriculum (what should be taught)

Social construction discourse and teaching

In determining curriculum one can never be neutral. There are biases that control our way of thinking about reality. These biases are things like world view, politics, ideology and belief systems. As Aronowitz and Giroux (1991:89) state:

...various discourses of curriculum theory are neither ideologically innocent nor politically neutral. Deeply entrenched in the world of politics, curriculum... represents both expression and enforcement of particular relations of power.

It is not the aim of this study to question specific curricula, but rather to draw a distinction between traditional (modernist) development of a curriculum and the social constructionist approach to curriculum theory. It is also not the aim to fully saturate all the aspects of difference, but only to illuminate some of those that are of importance to this study.

power and "forcefed" us their interpretations (especially those from the Bible) and opinions, which were sometimes nothing else than blind politics, as absolute truths.

Curriculum (what should be taught)

I must admit that prior to this study I did not know much about curriculum or for that matter about pedagogy. As a matter of fact I was quite naïve about the politics of education and the immense power that one has within one's hands: power that can be used to direct laymen in a particular field into almost any direction. It was a complete totalising position and, to say the least, rather unnerving. The more I read about it the more became the load of responsibility I felt.

I definitely evolved much more appreciation for all of my tutors, past and present, although I also felt anger, disappointment and sometimes even outrage at those who have abused their

Being new in the field of postmodern thought I could not help but be polarised between the challenges and possibilities of postmodernism and the "failures" of modernism. Therefore I was most probably caught up in a pendulum action within which I saw the worst of modernism's choices and simultaneously the best of postmodernism's. I am not even sure whether it is proper to make a value-distinction like that, but I think that value-distinctions are part and parcel of a postmodernist point of view. In the distinction between these points of view, however, I acknowledge the pendulum effect.

2.1.1 Traditional (modernist) development of curricula

Traditional (modernist) development of curricula

Traditionally teachers' thinking and beliefs about knowledge and the acquisition of knowledge influenced a specific approach to determining curriculum. Young (1990:96) reflects the influence of traditional thinking when he states:

I can understand that when a teacher is convinced that a body of knowledge, compiled over years, is equal to the "right knowledge" in a particular instance, that would be the knowledge that the teacher would want to convey to the students.

Traditional pedagogy resolves the dilemma in favour of teaching a pre-decided curriculum in a manner which does not stress students' own validity-judgements but rather proceeds by constant evaluation and correction against imposed models of valid responses.

Obviously the student does not possess the "right knowledge" and cannot but receive what is offered passively. What is more: it can only be the teacher with the "right knowledge" who can test whether what has been received passively, has been received correctly. Thus a new generation of "right knowledge"-bearers can convey the "right knowledge" to the next generation.

The contention is that if teachers present the "right knowledge" to students, the students will automatically learn something. In the presentation of knowledge the position of the learner is passive (Fosnot, 1984:196). The learner only receives what the teacher has to offer and the teacher evaluates the success of the reception by

testing the memory skills of students concerning the content of the work studied. In this case the dominant view of literacy reduces reading and writing to essentially descriptive categories that "tacitly support forms of pedagogy emphasising individual mastery and the passive consumption of knowledge and skills" (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1991:93).

The passive consumption of knowledge and skills supports an educational practice which is dominated by structuralist assumptions based on positivist modes of thought. The traditional approaches to curriculum employ an assumptive structure which consistently emphasises expertise, hierarchy, homogeneity, instrumentalism, linear development and rationalism (Solas 1994:4-6, 66). The contention is that the aim of education is to train experts in every field so that they can apply the valid knowledge that has been gained over years and years of research and experience. This cumulative "correct knowledge" will therefore form the backbone of any compilation of a specific curriculum and since only the experts (teachers) have knowledge of these gathered "truths" it is obvious that only the experts will compile a curriculum. Traditionally, one

When I was still in the undergraduate phase of training (even in the post-graduate fase) I supported this view without question. That is, without questioning why we as students were never involved in compiling a curriculum, for instance. We did, however, question what we had to learn on many occasions. To this day there is a percentage (however small) of what we had to learn that I cannot directly fathom the need of. On the other hand, we had certain needs that were never met. We did not even have a forum through which we could convey these needs to anyone. The only privilege that students had was that they could decide, from a few of the prescribed choices, which particular subjects they wanted to take. But within those subject syllabi they simply had to receive what was given.

I agree that there should be a body of knowledge that one has to learn if one is to make sense of a particular subject. My concern is that there are so few active designers for so many passive consumers. Even more

might say, the ownership and control of the learning process rests firmly with the educator (Solas 1994:55). Mostly teachers (consumers) are only the passive receivers of a curriculum determined and organised by others (i.e. textbooks). In contrast to the *consumer* teacher a teacher *designer*, is an able professional who helps in designing curricula and makes decisions about instructional material. "In effect, the teacher, not the textbook, is the major curriculum designer" (Pasch et al. 1991:1).

2.1.2 Social constructionist approach to curriculum theory

Thinking from the perspective of social construction, devising a curriculum is a social process. This means that planning a curriculum cannot be the task of any one person (teacher) or one group of persons (educators) alone. Gerber's (1994:372) question: "Which knowledge has precedence in designing or applying a curriculum? Mine? Yours? Theirs?", is exactly the kind of question that will be asked if a social constructionist approach to curriculum theory is to be followed. A question like this emphasises that there is more to

alarming is that what is presented, is presented as if it were absolute. The alarming, even infuriating, part of it is the absolutely totalising position it can create for everyone concerned.

Social constructionist approach to curriculum theory

To switch from traditional development of a curriculum to a social constructionist approach to curriculum theory is a process and not something to be done in an instant. Therefore much of the study material of this study course is still traditionally developed. However, choices were made to incorporate knowledge from various groups of people. In the designing process of this curriculum the input of students as well as clients were incorporated with that of the academics. This was done by actually doing family-of-origin-work with students throughout the two-year course so as to address the needs and knowledge derived from it. The needs of students already in congregational settings were also taken into consideration.

knowledge than my own accumulation and compilation of "facts" or "truths". Likewise there should be more to developing a curriculum. The development of a curriculum is an ongoing process with input from different angles. "Curriculum is not a tangible product but the actual, day-to-day interactions of students, teachers, knowledge, and milieu" (Cornbleth 1990:153). Not only my own input as a teacher is needed, but also the input of students and, in the case of pastoral therapy, at least the input of clients.

The reason for this is that knowledge is viewed as something that is socially constructed (Gergen & Gergen 1991:76-79). In social construction the learner is not a passive receiver of information, but an active participant in the construction of it. Steedman (1991:61) confirms this as he states that social constructionist teachers are committed to "understanding learners as active rather than passive, acting in and on their worlds rather than 'receiving' knowledge". Furthermore knowledge is self-reflexive in the sense that the "knower always is a constitutive part of his or her own process of knowing" (Krippendorff 1991:115). The development of a social

To me it was a new experience even to respect the specific needs of clients by receiving their comment on therapy and what they expect from it. Giving them the opportunity to speak about their experience in therapy and then to incorporate that into the curriculum just felt like a move in the right direction. It liberated me from the burden of totalising other peoples' lives by forcing my own "correct" views upon them. It definitely made a difference to the knowledge I have and the way I choose to use it and make sense of it. It also opened me up to be constantly receptive of other points of view and to be sensitive to the way in which I present knowledge - as an open-ended constantly evolving and growing entity.

My world view is that one cannot know unless knowledge is interpretation and construction. In order to survive in this world one has to know what the interpretation and construction of others in the world are. It is thus important to have an introduction to any field of study through the

constructionist curriculum would therefore suggest that the educator must make both the mechanism of learning and the learner the focus, rather than an empirical subject matter (Fosnot, 1984:203).

In connection with devising a curriculum Becvar and Becvar (1996:370-372) highlight two important considerations. They suggest that any curriculum should be consistent with one's world view. Since social constructionism is inclusive rather than exclusive so also should the curriculum be. Therefore they say it should be required that:

...information about families and family therapy be balanced by information about individuals and individual psychology; that knowledge of a cybernetic perspective be balanced by knowledge of the positivist-empirical view of science...

In the construction of pastoral therapy and the training of pastoral therapy there should also be a balance between various secular fields (psychology, anthropology, philosophy, family therapy, et cetera) and theology. A question to be considered is how to encourage ourselves and the students we train to reflect on, and be guided by, our theological world views, as

recognised body of knowledge which must be acquired and utilised in specific ways. However, it is important to me that this body of knowledge must be opened up to new interpretation and new construction.

The terrible feud between theology and psychology is something that I could never fully comprehend. In my mind it should have been two sides of the same coin like our relationship with God and our relationship with other people. To me social constructionism is a gateway to merge what never should have been divorced in the first place. It is my hope that the intelligibility between theology and psychology will be enhanced within the narrative of pastoral therapy. My theory of everyday life is that these two aspects of life, that is what I believe (theology) and my way of life (psychology - relationship with others) must be congruent and must be developed together. My experience of everyday life as a pastor is that ordinary people do not separate these two aspects, but rather integrate them.

well as, for instance, our psychological ones (Means et al. 1986:85). Foster (1988:149-156) describes the contribution of Carroll Wise in this regard as: "...his formulation of the separate but interactive roles of theology and psychology and his provision for his students of opportunities to grow in an experience of theological and psychological self understanding". It seems as if these are two different worlds that must be brought together, but my contention is that it is already integrated in the daily lives of people whether they are trainers, trainees, therapists, or clients.

Their (Becvar & Becvar, 1996:370-372) second suggestion is that an education for social scientists should include helping them to develop a conscious awareness of their epistemology and its arbitrariness. What we teach (content) should be logically consistent with how we are teaching (the process). I shall consequently also have to draw a distinction between traditional instruction and social constructionist instruction.

2.2 Instruction (how one should teach)

2.2.1 Traditional instruction

The positivist point of view is that knowledge of reality

To acknowledge arbitrariness in the development of curriculum opens our receptiveness to other possibilities and prevents stagnation. To me the social constructionist approach to curriculum theory propagates a way of gaining knowledge that makes us sensitive both to what we should teach and how we should teach it. It makes us sensitive and open to marginalised interpretations and understandings, thus helping to prevent totalisation. For me as a minister this means boldness and approachability in respect of members of my congregation towards me. As a teacher and a therapist it means I should be ready to learn from students and clients in our construction of meaning.

Instruction (how one should teach)

Traditional instruction

The effect of having a range of work that one must memorise in order to achieve success is that students tend to learn just what they expect to be asked in the examination. If they cannot find

can be gained objectively. Knowledge gained objectively is regarded as true knowledge and it is therefore universal in validity (Davies 1992:82). All true knowledge concerning a specific subject previously gained can therefore be used to teach a student with no knowledge of the subject. The curriculum (x) is usually divided into different parts for example a , b and c . When the learner, as a passive knowledge receiver, completes a , b and c , respectively, x is assumed to have been achieved (Fosnot, 1984:202; Young, 1990:96).

The hierarchical position of the teacher in traditional instruction does not encourage students to challenge the views of their instructors. Solas (1994:56) states Towle's conviction that if students persist in asserting their own divergent views and try to build their own theories, they run the risk of being seen as rigid and uneducable. Criticism from students is not allowed because it has already been carried out by the knowledge producing community of experts. Only criticism that is mere parroting of that of the experts is acceptable (Young, 1990:97).

The hierarchical structure also calls for a specific kind

out from the teacher what is important and what not they will do a selection by themselves. The range a , b and c might be too vast to be memorised properly. The result is a fragmented focus on some of the material with little or no insight of the whole. In effect it is a venture in which short term memory is used excessively to reproduce theory.

Eventually one learned the preferences of tutors and became trained in answering what they want to hear or read in order to gain as many marks as possible.

In this process of learning (memorising; pleasing the tutor) anxiety is always present. Anxiety because I did not memorise well enough to pass the test or examination. There are many reasons for the increase of anxiety or for that matter, not learning (memorising) enough. If I think of myself, laziness on the part of the student is probably one of the reasons. So is resistance against learning material that does not make

of discipline amongst students that claims respect for all superiors but sometimes even creates fear of teachers and the repression of students (DeSobe 1986:105). This fear is connected to evaluation and the reaction of teachers to the results of the evaluation. A build up of anxiety muddies the relationship between teacher and student with a direct effect on the results of examinations. The fear is also connected to the fact that a single teacher has the sole power of assessment: "Assessment involves only the teacher, who evaluates the progress of the student towards the required stage and goal of learning" (Solas, 1994:62). If every goal is reached the task of teaching is complete and the end result is accomplished.

2.2.2 Social constructionist instruction

In social constructionist instruction the traditional scope and sequence of skills has been replaced by broad outcome goals related to higher-order thinking, problem solving, and natural uses of language in reading and writing. To achieve goals, dialogue between students, group interaction and cooperative learning are encouraged (Gerber 1994:373). The social

sense or does not interest the student. The hierarchical structure, however, to my experience even depleats one's memory - one tries to remember, but because of anxiety is not able to recall. The hierarchical structure robs boldness from the student especially if the specific teacher has a reputation amongst the learners. When the teacher is the only one to make an assessment of the student's ability and success a tremendous power imbalance occurs, which in my mind is detrimental not only to the relationship between teacher and student but also to the learning process.

Social constructionist instruction

If the goal can be attained where the student will give his/her opinion (even critique) of the work rather than parroting what the textbook says, higher-order thinking will be enhanced. To achieve that, students should be given the opportunity not only to consume and memorise content, but also to digest it by communicating their opinions of the

constructionist teacher will not primarily be concerned with the results of a student, but will rather be interested in what students “*think* they are doing and *why* they believe that their way of operating will lead to the solution of the problem at hand” (Von Glasersfeld, 1991:24). Steffe (et al. 1995:151) remarks that the current knowledge of students must be taken seriously, and must be given a central place in the design of instruction. The social constructionist teacher is “constantly trying to connect new learning experiences to students’ current knowledge and to their present interests and concerns” (Poplin 1988:410).

The social constructionist teacher will also be more interested in the errors of students than in correct memory recall. To him errors are essential to learning and he will enhance the capability of students to perceive incongruencies themselves. The focus, in contrast to traditional instruction, will be on a different type of error. Whereas reductionistic teaching, in mathematics for example, focuses on mechanical or form errors (number facts; mechanical problems in addition, etc.), social constructionist teaching will focus on “higher level concepts such as conservation of

work and their understanding to one another. By continually challenging their thinking and encouraging them to express their opinions, I as a teacher am taking their knowledge seriously. In this way theory and practice are integrated. Every piece of information and my understanding of it are interwoven with how I shall use it in relationship to others.

To give the students an idea of the incongruencies of their own opinions momentarily put them in the chair of the teacher. To me it was most illuminating to “change places” with the teacher in order to comprehend errors. It was refreshing to question myself and be “forced” to think about something from different angles. It opened up the larger picture and helped me to see the relation between theory and practice.

Not being ridiculed or reprimanded about errors, but guided to think wider also enhanced the relationship between myself and the teacher and gave me more boldness to express

number or thematic maturity" (Poplin, 1988:409). Through paying attention to the sources of mistakes teachers will have some notion of what is going on "inside the student's head" and will learn much of the student's stage of conceptual development (Von Glasersfeld, 1991:24). The teacher will not only learn something about the student's understanding of the work but will gain a wider perspective of his own "knowledge". That means the constructionist teacher is simultaneously a learner in the activity of teaching (Pasch et al. 1991:343-345; Steffe et al. 1995:146).

Keiny (1994:158) views the social constructionist teacher as a developmental teacher, whose role it is to develop his students as learners who will be able to construct their own conceptual structures. This is in direct contrast to the instrumental teacher who is a transferrer of knowledge. These conceptual structures will be constructed through language. For instruction to take place conversations are of real importance. Shotter (1993:179) describes social constructionism in general:

Common to all versions of social constructionism is the central assumption that - instead of the inner dynamics of

opinions of my own. As a matter of fact, in a teaching position, letting the student explain his/her "error" helped me to understand and even to learn from the experience. It often felt as if I had learned more - gained more understanding - out of a particular conversation than did the students.

In these conversations not giving a direct answer to questions helped everyone to be able to construct and express their own conceptions. It was quite creative to not know outright what the correct answer would be or what the textbook said, but to have a challenging conversation in which the natural and contingent flow of words precipitated the participants into new concepts and brought new understanding.

In these situations I always felt that learning is inhibited when I am doing too much work, that is when, as the teacher, I am too busy explaining and the students are too busy receiving what I have to offer. This situation was reversed when I was able to

the individual psyche (romanticism and subjectivism), or the already determined characteristics of the external world (modernism and objectivism) - it is the contingent, really vague (that is, lacking any completely determinate character) flow of continuous communicative activity between human beings that we must study.

When social constructionism is taken as the point of departure *meaning* instead of ontological knowledge becomes the focus of instruction. Meaning is constructed in participation with others through language. This participation is what Bamberger and Schön (1991:191) call "talk back". It is different from the closed reaction or "feedback" of something like a thermostat in that the response is open-ended. Social constructionist teachers will therefore instruct in such a way that their students will be able to interact upon one another and the study material, so as to construct meaning. This process of construction cannot be accomplished by individuals on their own, but is a social endeavour (Burr 1995:39). Because the construction of meaning can never cease, the process of learning is an ever evolving one that can never stop or be fully comprehended.

Criticism and assessment are natural and ongoing parts

encourage the students to partake in the unraveling of meaning.

"Talk back" is thus an important part of instruction and should be encouraged continually. This continuous flow of discussion triggers the process of learning through the construction of meaning. Once this process is started it never ends. The social constructionist method of instruction begins a neverending process of interaction with others so as to construct meaning and therefore sensible knowledge that can be positively used in the relationships among one another.

Because of the construction of meaning the whole (x) will be more than the sum of the parts (a, b and c). Therefore assessment cannot take place only at the end of a or b or c, but will be an integral part of instruction throughout the course.

To be able to assess with other students the work of one of our peers was a tremendous help in formulating

of social constructionist instruction. Students' criticism is not unwelcome, in fact it is encouraged. One of the key assumptions of social constructionism is that one should be critical of taken-for-granted knowledge (Burr 1995:3). Because of the essentially social context of social constructionism, teachers and students work collaboratively to influence and determine student performance. If learning and teaching is a collaborative, social accomplishment it follows that assessment should also take place in a social context. Therefore assessment is something in which both teachers and students participate. Assessment in social constructionist theory is also something that occurs continually throughout the study course and not only at certain stages and at the end (Brown et al. 1992:122; Harris & Bell 1994:88).

Throughout the instruction process assessment must be allowed to inform instruction. The curriculum or the particular way of instructing or the collaboration of students should be amended if necessary at any time during the course. There is thus a reflexivity in the instruction-assessment process (Brown et al. 1992:123; Baird 1992:47; Burr 1995:161), or as Hoffman

my own presentations and expressions.

As a teacher this collaborative way of assessment was liberating and informative to my own perspective. The response of clients to what they experienced in therapy as a form of assessment gave a new perspective to both teacher and students. It made us all vigilant for and sensitive to the experiences of clients in a therapeutic setting.

The collaborative endeavour of assessment is also significant because of the informing character of assessment on instruction. The actual experiences of teacher, students and clients alike were used to influence instruction in two ways. There was either an immediate influence or a delayed influence. The immediate influence leads the teacher to make an immediate change within the same session, for example to use role play instead of a discussion of theory when students are unresponsive for some or other reason. The delayed influence was when assessment brought about an amendment to the instruction of a

(1992:18) states: "Knowledge, being socially arrived at, changes and renews itself in each moment of interaction".

Social constructionist instruction effects self-development. The self-development of teachers concerning their knowledge of teaching is constructed in a social setting with students, and teachers are "frequently forced to formulate fresh interpretations of students' actions and reactions when the original sense made of events no longer seems sensible" (Carter 1992:112). Self-development also lies in the incorporation of teachers' acknowledgement of the ways they had already shaped their lives prior to teacher education as well as the ways they continue to live their stories in the context of their teaching (Clandinin 1992:124-126). Therefore to guide and facilitate a self-developmental process with a particular teacher will enhance the instructional quality of that teacher. Personal stories are constitutive of professional stories (Kotzé 1994:86).

Social constructionist instruction is perceptive of differences amongst students. The social

next group of students, for example where a curriculum change was made.

The social constructionist way of doing allowed me to integrate my life story with teaching. I could recognise my inclination to take over the responsibility of family members and be careful not to assume the responsibilities of students. Actually there are numerous parts of my own story that informs the story of my teaching and enhance self-development. The more I accentuated the social character of the acquisition of knowledge to the students the more it reminded me to incorporate and acknowledge my own local social environment and the influence it has on me. I also realised that by listening to the different personal stories of students and clients there was a reflexivity that informed my own personal story and constituted the professional one.

One of the more liberating aspects of social constructionism is the sensitivity to difference. I remembered how

constructionist teacher is sensitive, inter alia, to differences of gender, race, culture, position of power and language. This affects the role in which the teacher operates. "The role of the teacher changes to a guide, facilitator or even a co-traveller rather than a presenter or performer" (Harris & Bell 1994:89).

3 Social construction discourse and learning

3.1 Traditional learning

Learning is traditionally perceived as either a body of content to be consumed or a body of skills to be mastered (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1991:95). Learning is something an individual is doing when he is memorising a body of content in order to write an examination about it. Memory is very important as far as traditional learning is concerned. Pasch (et al. 1991:108-115) describes the working of memory in three concepts: *sensory memory, short-term memory and long-term memory*.

The sensory memory takes in everything the senses perceive, which is billions of pieces of information.

female students in my formal study years were marginalised, not on purpose, but because of cultural and even theological factors. There were only a few of my peers who felt an uneasiness about it, the rest accepted it as it was. In this study course we had the opportunity to work with people of colour both as students and as clients. The response from them was quite informative to our behaviour and general perspective of others. It made us sensitive to their feelings and experiences in a white dominated society. It certainly informed my instruction and my behaviour as a teacher.

Social construction discourse and learning

Traditional learning

Traditionally learning is something only the individual can do. Even in cooperation with others actual learning occurs when the individual memorises something and nobody can do this for someone else. I can remember the various techniques we used to memorise pages and pages of

Because all of these cannot be processed at once the sensory information stays in our memory only for a split second. Only when something captures our attention it is taken into our short-term memory for processing. Thus the only way to make sure that a piece of sensory information remains in our memory is to concentrate on it. The short-term memory is also called the working memory for it is here that information is consciously worked with. However, the short-term memory will only be remembered for about thirty seconds and can handle only about seven pieces of information. Information needs to be stored in our long-term memory for it to be useful. The long-term memory is the storehouse of information. Information, however, is not stored randomly, but it is organised into networks to make it possible to be retrieved if we want to remember something. These networks are networks of related meaning and are stored through learning and experience. If we remember something it is transferred back to the short-term memory in order to work with it consciously.

In traditional learning a set of learning principles is of major importance. These principles, like congruence,

facts. We knew the expectation was that we had to come as close to the textbook wording as possible. The best way was to concentrate on a particular piece of work and then to repeat it as often as possible in order to memorise it virtually photographically.

We used to form study groups where four to six students would digest a piece of work only to present it to the others. Before an examination we would gather several times to do revision of the work studied. Sometimes it was difficult to comprehend another student's way of memorising for different forms of association and organising the work were used.

Reading about the different learning principles helped me to understand our awkwardness in those situations. I also realised that the presentations of teachers were based on some of these principles and it helped me to understand why some teachers were more acceptable in their presentation to me than others. Departing from

organisation, variety, experienced based learning, are to be incorporated into the design of a lesson or to help a teacher to select learning activities (Pasch et al. 1991:115).

Different learners have different learning styles (Pasch et al. 1991:99-104; Harris & Bell 1994:15-18). It is not the intention here to discuss the different learning styles, but merely to illustrate the importance of memory. Each of the styles described below is a representation of different ways in which different people will try to memorise a body of content (i.e. learn). Two dimensions are involved in the different learning styles. In the dimension of *perception* people either prefer to grasp information in a concrete manner (accessible to the senses) while others are most comfortable taking in and manipulating information in abstract (ideas and feelings) form. The dimension of *organisation* is seen in people who prefer to organise their information in a sequential or linear way and others who prefer to organise information in a non-linear or holistic approach.

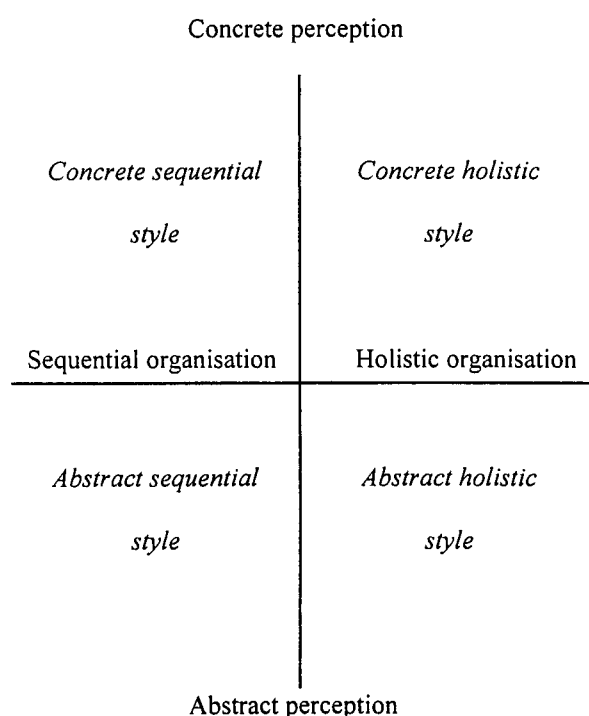
When the two dimensions of perception and

positivist premises there is a "right" way to learn, but most of the students never had the opportunity to develop learning skills as based on these principles. It was and still is the expectation that learners should develop these skills by themselves.

I am convinced that if a person has the opportunity to discern for her/himself which learning style suits him best, he would be able to achieve higher success in recollection. One will then be able to choose the technique of memorising that suits one's particular learning style best.

Quite extensive research has been done on the subject of memory. I have merely highlighted particular opinions about it. By judging the energy spent on this form of research one can measure the importance of memory for traditional learning. However, it is not only of value to traditional learning but to any form of learning, even social constructionist forms of learning because without memory no continuity will be possible. In the case of social

organisation are illustrated in a diagram in which the vertical line represents perception, with its two poles concrete and abstract, and the horizontal line organisation, with its two poles sequential and holistic, four quadrants are formed and each represents a different learning style:



There are various techniques for learning to memorise, some of which Harris and Bell (1994:20) list as:

Mnemonics (eg. ROYGBIV for the colours of the visible spectrum: **R**ed, **O**range, **Y**ellow, **G**reen, **B**lue, **I**ndigo and **V**iolet).

Picture storage (eg. where a familiar room/scene is remembered and facts are located in particular drawers,

constructionist learning memory will play a quite different role for it will not be focused as much on the recollection of the textbook, but rather on the different meanings various people would attribute to something.

One of the greatest barriers to the memorising of a body of content is time. Students usually do not have the time to memorise masses of work. In my experience, as mentioned above, students turn themselves to task specialisation. I always had a great admiration for the individuals who were able to work on their own and succeeded in memorising all the prescribed work. Those were the cum laude students and this is proof that this kind of studying is meant for individuals.

Most of us, however, turned to cooperative learning. Here again we never had formal training as to how to utilise cooperative learning most effectively. We made our own rules, which usually meant that the quiet, unassuming student got the worst part

or on a particular tree).

Using numbers (eg. where the person remember numbers better than words and associates ideas with number sequences in order to recall them).

of the material to work through and present. Often students delivered poorer presentations which usually had me doing several parts of the work all over again.

Traditionally learning is subject-based in a fixed curriculum. The subject is constructed around content, concepts, and frameworks. "It is taught in a fixed time scale often ignoring the development of the learner, at worst in a lock-step-time oriented basis" (Harris and Bell 1994:30).

However much we talked about the work this was never to form our own opinions about it, or to develop insight, but rather to memorise the content in order to be examined about it.

To become effective learners a set of learning strategies are proposed. These strategies include "a recognition of the goal to be achieved, the ability to work out the appropriate action to achieve the goal, a capacity to evaluate progress towards the goal, and the right to assess whether the goal has been achieved" (Edwards & Knight 1994:18). This way of learning suits the individual. Traditionally school learning has been viewed as an isolated, individual accomplishment. In individualised learning, students work on their own to accomplish an objective. Individual structures are useful when students are well motivated and need little guidance (Pasch et al. 1991:195; Brown et al. 1992:122).

Cooperative learning methods were introduced to help learners that were not so strong to be helped by their peers. Although research on cooperation dates back to the 1920s, "research on specific applications of cooperative learning did not begin until the 1970s" (Slavin 1990:2). For cooperative learning the groups are heterogeneous and have four to

five students. Interdependence is fostered among members and individual accountability is encouraged. In such groups cooperative skills are taught explicitly, with much feedback (Pasch et al. 1991:195). Equal opportunities for success, team competitions to enhance the cooperation within teams, task specialisation to involve each team member, and adaptation to individual needs are also characteristics of cooperative learning (Slavin 1990:12). Some of the pitfalls of cooperative learning named by Slavin (1990:16) are the "free-rider" effect where some of the group members do all the work while others go along for the ride. Some of the students who are viewed as less skilful are ignored by other group members. In task specialisation students tend to know much about the piece of work they were responsible for but not about the rest of the content. However, cooperative learning, in the traditionalist way, remains another method of learning a body of content or of mastering a body of skills.

3.2 Social constructionist learning

Social constructionist learning

The social constructionist view of learning is that learning is active and generative rather than reactive and receptive. From this vantage point learning can never be an individual endeavour and social interaction is indispensable to the process (Aldridge et al. 1994:364). Learners actively construct meaning through language in conversations with others according to what they already know and believe (Baird 1992:36). In this view of learning the current

During the past eight years I have felt myself more and more at home with the view of active participation in the learning process. My own thinking and forming of concepts is never a solo effort, even if I am by myself, because I always have someone else in mind and how that person or persons would react to or understand what I had to say. It has brought a completely new focus to any discussion about content. We are rarely satisfied with a direct

knowledge of students is taken seriously (Steffe et al. 1995:151). MacKinnon and Erickson (1992:201) comment as follows:

The constructionist perspective on the acquisition of knowledge is informed by thinking in the philosophy of science, cognitive psychology, the sociology of knowledge and ethics. Briefly stated it portrays learners as being purposeful sense-makers, constantly engaged in the task of *constructing* ideas to make sense out of the situations and events they encounter.

Aldridge (et al. 1994:361-362) describes Piaget's contribution to the understanding of knowledge acquisition in that knowledge is not something that is internalised from the outside in, but rather a construction from the inside out, in interaction with others and with the environment. People also construct knowledge, and therefore learn, through creating and coordinating relationships. Learners are active and take the initiative in constructing meaning. The assumption is that learners have an internal motivation for learning and therefore actively and continually search for meaning (Poplin 1988:406; Keiny 1994:159).

Different subject-positions of learners are encouraged

answer to any question. Instead all of the participants eagerly give their opinions and await the opinion of the others as we co-construct meaning and knowledge.

Language became increasingly important and participants frequently have to describe their understanding of a particular word or phrase. It became clear that nothing is taken for granted and everyone had to actively partake in the sense-making process. One can only express oneself in language even if it is non-verbal. Language, words, do not mean anything if not used in conversation where context will heighten meaning.

Knowledge acquired in this way can never be forced onto someone from the outside. Every bit of information has to be integrated with previously acquired meaning to make sense of it. One's own story, developed through interaction with other significant people and events in one's life, constantly influence one's understanding of new bits of

in order to maximise the learning opportunities of all the participants. Harris and Bell (1994:129-132) describe four roles in which the learner can experience learning: receiver, detective, generator, and facilitator. The receiver receives the input from other students actively and integrates it with his already existing knowledge and understanding. As a detective the learner is open to and actively busy decoding meanings of others in the group. In the role of generator new ideas, new ways of viewing events and new meanings are created. The facilitator role focuses on interpersonal relationships and helping others to learn. The learner becomes the tutor. "One of the most effective means of elaboration is explaining the material to someone else" (Slavin 1990:16). In the social constructionist way of learning it would not be as much an explanation of the content as it would be an explanation of one's understanding and constructed meaning about the content.

Learning, being a social construction in participation with others through language, would most definitely incorporate multiple conversations. Within these conversations one could have a reflective orientation

information. This, I believe, is the way in which we were created. Without relationships and the use of language (conversations) the world would be meaningless.

Throughout the study, students were placed in different roles. They used role play to experience the role of the client and the therapist. Family-of-origin-work placed them in a position to explore their life stories and to facilitate understanding as to how real life issues influence one's interpretations and actions. My family-of-origin-work helped me to integrate theory and practice. Any participant could ask any question at any time, which helped us to be sensitive to one another's feelings, viewpoints, experiences, et cetera, but also to explain how theory relates to practice in our own lives. It was in such moments and in discussions about ourselves as therapists that the most generative initiatives emerged.

We tried to have as many conversations as possible so as to give

and a reflexive orientation. A reflective orientation is when one is reflecting one's own understanding about content or process to other participants. In a reflective orientation one has to do with a particular operation of thought by means of which the process of thinking folds upon itself rendering the subject capable of thinking about thinking (Maranhão 1991:236) and enhancing one's own understanding. A reflexive orientation is when one *acknowledges* that other participants' reflections, as well as one's own understanding, again instruct one's own understanding either of content or process. To be reflexive is to "acknowledge that 'the same self' may be different as a result of its own self-pointing" (Steier 1991a:2). White (1995:178) talks about reflexive self-consciousness that establishes a knowing that "knowing is a component of their conduct".

3.2.1 Learning as reflective/reflexive conversations

Keiny (1994:159) speaks of the dialectical process of reflection in the group. The dialectical process is the kind of social interaction that encourages reflection and underlies all teaching/learning actions (Steffe et al.

everyone as much opportunity as possible to reflect. Sometimes we could not stop and time ran out on us. My first encounter with a reflecting team experience was nerve-racking especially because I was being discussed. However, it started a reflexive process that remains to this day and is constantly instructing my own therapy. At first one did not want to allow this form of scrutiny and then later one feels that one cannot go without it.

Learning as reflective/reflexive conversations

It is amazing how easily one can come to negative conclusions about oneself. On the other hand it is amazing how powerful and convincing other peoples' opinions about one can be. That one main story about oneself that sometimes is so abusive is shattered in the light of many different opinions.

These reflexive conversations forced all participants into different roles that enabled us to construct meaning in multiple ways. I constantly moved

1995:156). In the reflectiveness of conversations where different reflections of meaning are distributed, reality ceases to constitute one objective truth and is conceived instead as complex, multifaceted, and multidimensional (Kvale 1992:33; Keiny 1994:158).

In a variety of reflexive conversations learners' sensitivity for working with various contexts and with people from various contexts is enhanced (Kotzé 1994:131). In this way a coevolution of knowledge is established. This Batesonian perspective on learning also incorporates a cybernetic circle in which one's own knowledge is constantly informed by others' and evolves to new meanings and understanding (Combs & Freedman 1990:27-43).

3.3 Basic assumptions and world view

Becvar and Becvar (1996:5-13) describe two basic lines of thought about viewing the world which have a profound impact on how one would operate in the world. The difference between the two lines of thought lies in their basic assumptions and describes the difference between individual psychology and family

myself from one position to the other, between student, teacher, and client. In these positions I did widen my perspectives and cybernetically evolved (learned) new meaning, understanding and knowledge.

Basic assumptions and world view

The assumptions that are mentioned by Becvar and Becvar are actually not the assumptions of individual psychology and family therapy, but a consequential result of the difference between a positivist and a social constructionist world view. Therefore in my mind these are also applicable to the difference between traditionalist learning and social constructionist learning.

The overall impression of the positivist assumptions is that they portray a world within which everything is either black or white; that every action can be traced back to its origin; that every thing or situation can be dissected into its minute detail and therefore can be known as it is; that there is nothing to

therapy. To my mind this is also a valid description of the differences between traditionalist learning and social constructionist learning.

They (Becvar and Becvar) list the basic assumptions for individual psychology as: asks why; linear cause/effect; subject/object dualism; either/or dichotomies; value-free science; deterministic/reactive; laws and law-like external reality; historical focus; individualistic; reductionistic, and absolutistic. The assumptions for family therapy are listed as: asks what; reciprocal causality; wholistic; dialectical; subjective/perceptual; freedom of choice/proactive; patterns; here-and-now focus; relational; contextual, and relativistic.

4 Social construction discourse and supervision

Having discussed teaching and learning some form of assessment and guidance still needs to be explored. Supervision is the vehicle through which this will be done. I shall give a description of supervision from a positivist vantage point in 4.1 through to 4.5, and then make a few comments from a social constructionist perspective in 4.6.

say or comment about, once a particular conclusion is made because it was made from an objective observation outside of oneself.

With social constructionist assumptions a much more unrestricted approach to life is possible. Dissection is not necessary to see the impact of the whole. Ontological reality is overwritten by inter-subjective perceptions and choices can be made from inside oneself, here and now, to cope with whatever challenge one is facing. Meaning in conversations with others constitutes one's world.

Within a therapeutical setting this approach to reality helps people to challenge their problems in faith. Despite the writing of "ontological reality" on the wall, about one's marriage for instance, one can make a choice in faith to rewrite the story of one's marriage in a new meaningful and proactive way.

4.1 Definition of supervision

The term "supervision", derived from the Latin 'super' meaning above or over and 'visio' meaning sight (Page & Wosket 1994:15), broadly designates the process of *overseeing someone else's work* (Steere 1989:10). The image one usually has of a supervisor is someone who oversees production lines and gets people to do their jobs up to standard. Negatively viewed, supervisors are the people who boss everyone about. Positively they are the people you can look up to and ask for help with your problems and guidance in your challenges. In the managerial practice the image of supervisors has turned from authoritative figures to trainers, advisers, facilitators and instructors (De Beer et al. 1998:34). The term "supervision", however, still carries with it connotations which can distort the way the role is understood in the world of pastoral counselling and therapy, usually favouring the managerial function at the cost of the educational and supportive functions (Page & Wosket 1994:15).

The supervision of pastoral care is defined by Steere (1989:22) as "an extended relationship in which an

Social construction discourse and supervision

Definition of supervision

The emphasis of supervision in this study is more on guidance than on assessment. The negative perceptions about supervision as well as the hierarchical connotations to teachers were clearly visible to me at the beginning of each course. Sometimes students could hardly control their anxiety. It reminded me of the feeling we used to have before an examination. Once we got to know each other and once they got used to the particular approach to supervision, students relaxed and used the supervision to their full benefit.

In our formal study years most of us had healthy relationships with most of our teachers on a personal level. Therefore we had no fear of being victimised by them. The more I thought about it, the more I realised that it was not the person of the examiner that caused the anxiety as much as it was the form of assessment,

experienced clinician helps trainees to reflect upon the concrete processes of their care of others in order to increase their competence in the pastoral role". Mead (1990:4) lists five key elements in a definition of supervision in the mental health professions:

...(a) an experienced therapist, (b) safeguarding the welfare of the clients by (c) monitoring a less experienced therapist's performance (d) with real clients in clinical settings, and (e) with the intent to change the therapist's behaviour to resemble that of an exemplary therapist.

In his explanation of supervision he states that it is not education, nor therapy. "Supervision is the clinical preparation of novice therapists for the practice of therapy" (Mead 1990:5).

4.2 Supervision and structure

One of the stumbling blocks of supervisors is the lack of training and therefore also of structure for supervision. There are not many institutions that have a training course for supervisors and those that do have, lack consistency in universal standards. Supervisors mostly tend to supervise in relation to the way they were supervised (Munson 1993:26).

with the emphasis on memory. The stricter the teacher was about the specific recollection of theory, the more the anxiety of the student.

My own experience as a novice therapist was saturated with a deep desire to see an expert at work so that I could follow in his footsteps. I actually thought that this was what was expected of me, but later on in my training I realised that my destination was to "create" a new therapist with his own special style of doing therapy. The most comforting experience was to know that the supervisor was close at hand and that the clients would be helped properly.

In my own experience as a supervisor I quickly learned that while a student is busy with a therapy process, the latter can not be used to educate the student nor can it be used as therapy for the student. The intention and application of supervision is to guide the student as therapist through the therapeutical process. Obviously parts of the same therapeutical process can be used later

Since the mid eighties counselling supervision has come of age (Page & Wosket 1994:ix). A growing body of knowledge has contributed to the structure of supervision in various respects. One of these respects is the identification of models of supervision that can be applied to any model of therapy. Two such models are the "Task-Oriented model" of D. Eugene Mead (1990) and the "Cyclical Model of Counsellor Supervision" of Page and Wosket (1994). Both these models reflect the basic functions or goals of supervision as well as giving a basic route to be taken for supervision to be successful and complete. Thus, structure is given to the supervisory process.

4.2.1 Goals of supervision

There is a difference in opinion as to what the actual focus of supervision should be. Must the focus be on the student in order to help the student to become a matured therapist, that is on his practice, or must it be on his knowledge of theory? Should the focus rather be on the client to ensure that the client receives genuine help?

to educate the student or to help the student therapeutically, but then the "overseer" would rather be in the position of a teacher or a therapist and not a supervisor.

Supervision and structure

One of the greatest deficiencies in pastoral therapy training is the lack of training for supervisors. Once a person in this field has a masters degree he would be regarded as qualified enough to be a supervisor. I know this is probably because we are still so new in this field and that there are not yet enough persons qualified to initiate a course specifically for supervisors, but we are getting there and it should be on the agenda soon. With so few supervisors it stands to reason that students cannot be supervised over long periods of time. Live supervision especially is a dilemma because of distance problems between supervisor and supervisee.

Goals of supervision

One of the reasons why I entered a

Means (1988:214) describes C. A. Wise's perspective:

"The central role played by supervision comes from the fact that the main emphasis in supervision is the integration of theory and practice as demonstrated in and through the person of the student". Estadt (1987:5) agrees in his thoughts on professional integration that theory alone cannot suffice, one has to aspire after a mastery of practice as well. He goes even further and states that in the art of counselling one also needs to focus on the personal qualities of the counsellor which facilitate personal growth. For some supervisors the effect of intensive daily encounters with deeply troubled persons or students, necessitates assistance of students in order to cope with these situations. These supervisors even "adopted a more *therapeutic stance* towards their task" (Steere 1989:23-24).

Generally speaking, supervision should include goals to help clients get what they want, to help students not only to advance them as therapists, but also to grow as persons, and to evaluate students (Estadt et al. 1987:8; Steere 1989: 65-70; Mead 1990:3-4; Page & Wosket 1994:9-12). In particular, supervision includes specific goals for specific sessions and for specific purposes of

course in pastoral therapy was that I did not know how to help people with problems of life. The need was not only for myself, but also for those who would be helped by me. If I had to ignore the practical part of that course and only focus on the theory...; if I had to forfeit the guidance of a supervisor, nothing would have been accomplished. To me it is crucial to integrate theory and practice and if that is not part of supervision it would be a waste of time. To integrate theory as part of one's own equipment in therapy, one has to experience it first hand by application in real life situations.

These real life situations can either be therapy to actual clients or family-of-origin-work where one can experience therapy in one's own life story. The latter aided personal growth and in many instances helped me to understand what theorists try to say.

The evaluation part of supervision is sometimes viewed as a necessary menace, but it definitely encouraged

meeting students' specific needs (Mead 1990:60).

4.2.2 Levels of supervision

Supervision should be appropriated according to the skill levels of therapists. The assumptions of Mead (1990:5, 14-15) are that students in their first practicum (a practicum is a period of time - one, two or three weeks - in which the students gather at the training institute to do practical work) are at a beginning level, second year students are at an intermediate level and those in an advanced practicum (doctorate) are at advanced skill levels.

Supervision, on the first level, should be concerned with non-specific areas such as developing communication skills. A warm and supportive atmosphere should be maintained. At the intermediate level supervision should be concerned with the application of a variety of models, different theories and specific technical skills. The focus of supervision at the advanced level should be on the therapist's personal attributes in therapy and the development of the therapist's personal style of therapy.

me in some instances, contributing to a growing picture of myself as therapist, whereas in others it helped me to focus on weaknesses.

Levels of supervision

I can remember how important it was in the beginning to hear that a particular therapeutic session went well. If I could only deduct from the reflection of a therapeutic session that I was fine as a therapist the criticism was much more bearable. It is so important for a supervisor to realise this and to give the support and encouragement needed. In that early stage if I tried to use different models I forgot all about communication skills and vice versa. I was much more concerned with the basic steps of applying theory than aware of clients' needs. I also realised that the categories of theory concerning things like skill levels are much more fluid and overlapping in practice. Right from the start for instance, I felt that a personal style of therapy was already busy taking shape.

4.2.3 Route of supervision

The intention of a model of supervision is to give the supervisor a map. From this map a route can be planned along which the supervision is conducted. Mostly these models are independent of therapy models (Page & Wosket 1994:4-5, 13, 30), but some models are developed with a specific therapeutic model in mind (Munson 1993:163). Some are convinced that supervision should be congruent to the specific model of therapy: "We assume that clarity and direction can be improved if supervision models are used which are isomorphic with models of therapy taught and practised in the training program" (Keller & Protinsky 1986:84).

It is not the intention to discuss these maps or routes here, but to emphasise that the developers of such models are adamant that they organise one's supervision from a clear beginning to a definite end.

4.3 Supervisory formats

There are a variety of supervisory formats that can be utilised. It is not imperative to choose only one or all of

Route of supervision

Another aspect of supervision that was obscure in my experience was the specific route that supervision should take. I was never under the impression that my theoretical knowledge or therapeutic skills or administrative skills or personal relationship skills or any facet of my training was under the particular scrutiny of the supervisor at any one time, except in oral examination. It took away anxiety but contributed to an uneasiness about not knowing if I was satisfactory or not in a particular aspect of therapy.

We also had the benefit of having tutors from different theoretical backgrounds. Sometimes it was confusing and yet it enabled us to discern for ourselves and choose our approaches according to our own personal style as well as the intelligibility of the clients.

Supervisory formats

Live supervision

I had a feeling of ambiguity when, as a

them in a specific supervisory process. Mostly supervisors integrate more than one of these formats in a specific therapy process. A distinction can be made between *live supervision* and *documented supervision* as well as between *individual supervision* and *group supervision*.

4.3.1 Live supervision

By *live supervision* is meant direct observation while the therapy is actually happening. This may be through the use of a one-way mirror, a video camera or when one is a co-therapist (Mead 1990:79). Live supervision is especially valuable in family therapy where more than one person is in therapy, because it is quite difficult if not impossible for one person to focus on all the clients simultaneously (Voss 1987:202). The supervisor can therefore reflect on those unseen incidents. It is also one of the most effective ways of doing supervision because the supervisor has direct contact with the therapist through a telephone or a "bug-in-the-ear" device (Munson 1993:299). The supervisor can give immediate support if the therapist gets "stuck" in therapy or he can open up avenues for

young therapist, I was supervised while doing the therapy. I was trying to think as the supervisor and sometimes did not know whether to use my own discretion or to wait for the supervisor to suggest something. Luckily it was shortlived and one soon got to know the style of the supervisor. It was, however, quite disturbing if your own pattern of thought was disturbed by the supervisor's intervention.

In retrospect one realised one's own tunnel vision and learned to trust the supervisor without hesitation. Many a time when the silence in the therapeutic session was involuntary the ring of the telephone was a welcome sound.

As supervisor some tension exists within yourself about the question whether to intervene or not. It is a supervisory skill that develops with experience - the more you practise the more your "gut feeling" becomes accurate.

Live supervision allows the supervisor

further exploration by the therapist. Supervisor and student no longer have to work retrospectively:

Supervisors can instruct students to try something new or different, with the opportunity to apply the idea immediately. In addition to immediate feedback, overall guidance of the ongoing process between therapist and family becomes possible.

Lindsey 1989:184

4.3.2 Documented supervision

The earliest forms of supervision were conducted by the use of written accounts of the work of a particular therapist. These written accounts consisted of verbatim recordings of the actual conversation in a session. A written record of the process of therapy was kept after every session so as to create a case history (Steere 1989:22). Sometimes without even observing one live therapeutic session, the supervisor will use these written accounts to do his supervision (Mead 1990:11). These written accounts can be useful when none of the modern recording devices are available. Verbal reports, supported by case notes, are the preferred way for many counsellors to bring their work to supervision (Page & Wosket 1994:79).

to be part of the therapeutic process in such a way that he/she can instruct the therapist to read about the specific needs of the clients (loss of a loved one for instance) so as to integrate theory and practice.

Documented supervision

Although one has to complete reports after live supervision as well, documented supervision, to me, was a dreadful and time-consuming endeavour. My gravest concern was whether the verbatim report was an accurate reflection of what actually happened in the therapy session. Have I presented myself differently in the verbatim report to what I actually was in therapy?

As supervisor I encountered students who were much more inclined to do well practically than through the written word. This convinced me that supervision will give a much more accurate reflection of a student's work if one can incorporate other means of supervision besides written reports. To

Some other ways in which to document one's work is to use technological instruments such as an audio recorder, or a video camera. These methods of recording are much more effective because the account of what happened is much more accurate and makes the supervisory process much more versatile by using the stop-start method of reflecting (Steere 1989:273). With video recordings the non-verbal aspects of both the therapist and the client are available and could be reflected upon. They could also be used by the therapist to observe himself or herself in action. On the one hand video or audio recordings can be quite time-consuming for the supervisor, on the other they can save time because only that section of the tape that is of importance can be used (Munson 1993:283-300).

Documented accounts of one's work can also be used when distance between supervisor and supervisee is a problem. The accounts could be mailed, e-mailed or faxed to the supervisor and supervision of a case can be done by telephone.

me the most frequently used and most time effective way of supervision is the verbal report supported by case notes. It gives the student an opportunity to express him/herself better and to clear up questions which might arise immediately.

Although written reports are disliked by most, they are a worthwhile method to encourage students to think and to formulate which activities enhance one's ability to integrate theory and practice.

Quite indispensable in our day and age are the technological wonders of audio and video recordings. It made a huge difference to me, as a student, when I had the opportunity to see myself in action. Several mannerisms showed vividly and could be addressed immediately.

In our specific circumstances, with students from all over the country, even the fax machine and personal computer has proved its worth. In the further guidance of students, beyond

4.3.3 Individual/group supervision

Individual supervision is more time-consuming, but much more personal time can be spent on developing the therapist in various aspects of therapy. A relationship of trust, caring, sharing and respect can be built up between supervisor and student that "allows the supervisory thrust to focus on the very special and individual learning needs of this one student" (Compton 1987:54).

Group supervision, however, is more time effective and delivers much more information for discussion, to the benefit of all the participants (Mead 1990:79-80; Munson 1993:169-170).

Studies have shown that both individual and group supervision are equally effective but that each form of supervision has its own strong points and weaknesses.

It is therefore more productive to make use of both individual and group supervision (Munson 1993:64).

To the pastoral therapist group supervision is particularly helpful for it develops one's ability to understand group dynamics and will enhance the

the practicums, information about clients, such as genograms and case notes, could be sent to the supervisor so that supervision could be done by telephone or via e-mail.

Individual/group supervision

Individual work with students in this research project was mostly done through family-of-origin-work. This develops the student's own ability to form successful relationships. When a student has a particular difficulty to overcome then individual supervision would be the most effective way to address it. In the short practicums of this course, individual supervision is reserved for when the students are back in their congregations and they have to make arrangements for supervision by telephone.

The bulk of time within the practicums is spent in live group supervision in order for the students to have the benefit of all the students' therapeutic processes. It also helped me as a student to see through the supervisor's

minister's effectiveness in all group situations (Skaggs 1989:172).

4.4 Supervision, authority and power

Authority should not be confused with power. Authority is something someone has *ex officio*. Power is not coupled to a particular position, but is related to certain influences such as rewards, coercion and subject knowledge (De Beer et al. 1998:142). "Authority is the right to supervise; power is the ability to effectively exercise that right" (Kadushin 1992:88). Power should not be built upon authority, but rather upon superior knowledge, skills and professional ability. Munson (1993:163) talks about power that originates externally, that is from one's hierarchical position and power that originates internally, that is from one's own performance and skill.

There is, however, a natural imbalance of experienced power in the relationship between supervisor and student because of an imbalance in vulnerability along with the authority within the supervisor's role. The supervisor also "has influence over the student's future

eye and adjust my own therapy accordingly. To have peers as supervisors also proved a beneficial option. As a student, I could hear my own strengths validated, but also receive open and honest criticism from persons whom I knew would presently find themselves in a position similar to mine.

Supervision, authority and power

It is not only superior knowledge, skills and professional ability that gives power. The sincerity and willingness to serve are inherent qualities of the supervisor which are promptly perceived by students. In my experience as supervisor the building up of a healthy relationship, where hierarchy and position do not form the boundaries to delineate the positions of the supervisor and student respectively, is the key to successful supervision and proper cooperation.

In my own experience the agreement arrived at at the beginning of a course, where teacher and student alike can

in a form that is not reciprocal" (Page & Wosket 1994:11). Sound agreement before the supervisory process commences, will however provide a proper base to develop a relationship that will benefit both supervisor and student. "Good supervision, we believe, should allow for a two-way flow in which both supervisor and supervisee are responsive to each other's input" (Page & Wosket 1994:38).

4.5 Supervision and evaluation

Evaluation and criticism by supervisors and peers are said to be among the most crucial aspects of pastoral therapy training. Evaluation is, ideally, an ongoing process from the first supervisory session to the last and not something that takes place only at the end of the supervisory experience (Compton 1987:61). Evaluation, therefore, occurs in various settings, through peer group interaction as well as one on one, student to supervisor situations (Smith 1989:136).

Self-assessment is an invaluable part of any training program. It enables the student to observe himself from the supervisor's point of view and thus widen the

spell out their commitments for the course to come, forms the foundation of healthy relative powers. It is here that the teacher/supervisor can give the student the right to speak whenever the need arises and it is here that the student can commit himself to hard work in the study of theory and ensure proper participation in the discussions thereof and other conversations that might take place. Everyone involved should have the confidence to express any concerns at any stage during the course.

Supervision and evaluation

Without evaluation not only students but also supervisors will grope in the dark. There will be no markers to give direction and this will culminate in a lopsided development of students. However, anxiety need not occur in examinations. Evaluation should therefore never be used as a deterrent nor as a coercive measure for students to perform better. Rather it is meant to be used as a guiding principle to guide both student and supervisor as to the

perspective of the student. It also helps in the assessment of peers (Munson 1993:214). When students observe themselves, via video, their self-reflection is effective in producing behavioural change (Fosnot 1984:196).

Val and Wosket (1994:140-144) use two forms of assessment which they call *formative assessment* and *summative assessment*. Formative assessment refers to the student's work and development as he or she proceeds through the course of supervision. It is not experienced as evaluation because it stresses process and progress, not outcome. Summative assessment on the other hand means the moment of truth when the supervisor steps back, takes stock, and decides how the trainee measures up.

4.6 Social construction discourse and supervision

Not much is to be found in literature about supervision within the social construction discourse, apart from

White's (1992:75-95) comments on the subject in a narrative setting. It is a subject that is occasionally mentioned but not specifically described. Therefore much of what I am about to say has to do with my own observations from the empirical part of this study and

direction into which most energy should be spent to develop the student.

When I had to give a specific mark to fellow students it helped me to evaluate my own position better. It also helped me to know that the marks given were in camera and would eventually, together with the supervisor's mark, form the actual mark awarded. To do this in camera was beneficial to everyone concerned and allowed us to give our honest opinion without fear of rejection.

Throughout the course the marks given were for different aspects of the work, for instance technical skills, communicative skills and theoretical knowledge. In almost every instance, the intention was formative assessment in order to address weaknesses in one's attributes. The final mark of the summative assessment was in the hands of the supervisor.

deductions from the theory.

Instead of using the word "supervision" the concept of "reflexivity" (Steier 1991:2-3; Lax 1992:74-75) fills the function of responsibility and accountability. Now the student changes from the *observed* to a participant *observer* (Shotter 1993:95). It can be understood as a "narrative of self-reflexivity, through which a self-definition is constructed" (Steier 1991:3), or as White (1992:85) explains: "They (participants/students) must recruit their own lived experience and imagination to fill the gaps in their story, and resolve, for themselves, any inconsistencies and contradictions. In this process, the story about therapy is re-authored, and the participant's 'life as therapist' is transformed".

4.6.1 World view and supervision

It is one thing to supervise someone that practices another therapeutic approach than one's own - one can use some of the models, mentioned earlier, that are compatible with any therapeutic approach - however, it is something completely different to supervise someone with a different world view than one's own. Although one can still follow the steps of a particular model it will be done completely differently by a positivist as opposed to a social constructionist. The positivist would try to mould the student as closely as possible to an ideal concept of a therapist (Mead 1990:4). The social constructionist would aim to co-construct the student into the most meaningful, effective therapeutic-self that the student can be (Keiny 1994:157-167; Kotzé 1994:87; Lax 1995:150-153).

4.6.2 Social constructionist objectives and assumptions

I would therefore like to highlight some of my views regarding social constructionist objectives and assumptions:

- 4.6.2.1 Within a social construction the supervision will not be the assessment of only one person, although only one person will have the responsibility to eventually write the supervision report. The contents of the report, however, will be the social construction of all the participants in a particular training program, including the clients of the particular therapist.
- 4.6.2.2 Supervision will be an ongoing process throughout the training course and it will be done not only by personal conversations with the supervisor, but also by reflexive conversations with peers and even clients.
- 4.6.2.3 Peers and clients as well, and not only the supervisor, can therefore allocate a particular mark to the student therapist's work.
- 4.6.2.4 Supervision will be in the interests of all the participants including the client, student therapist, peers and even the supervisor.
- 4.6.2.5 The outcome of supervision is to enhance the narrative of the student therapist about him/herself as a therapist.

- 4.6.2.6 Supervision will enhance the narrative of pastoral therapy itself, as it is co-constructed through all the different student therapist's therapy sessions.
- 4.6.2.7 Supervision will not try to mould the student into an image of an "expert" supervisor, but rather attempt to enhance the particular personal style of the student therapist as a therapist.
- 4.6.2.8 Although there is still a power difference between student therapist and supervisor, its effects will be minimised by giving the student-therapist the opportunity to openly discuss his/her feelings, experiences and ideas about supervision if there is a need to do so.
- 4.6.2.9 Self-assessment through self-reflection will be promoted to establish a "self" as therapist.
- 4.6.2.10 Attitudes, perceptions, and behaviour are considered within a cultural context, for they gain their meaning from culture (Hardy 1994:13).
- 4.6.2.11 Power and hierarchy in the therapeutic sessions itself are shared between supervisor and student-participant. Because of the advantage of privileged context (the student-therapist being with the client in the same room has access to a part of the context that the supervisor does not have) the supervisee's view should ultimately guide the direction of the session if supervisor and supervisee have divergent views during live supervision (Hardy 1994:17).

5 Summary

This chapter concludes the study of literature within which various “worlds” were disclosed. In chapter two the “world” of social construction and in chapter three the “worlds” of practical theology, social sciences, family therapy, and pastoral work were elucidated. Chapter four brought to the fore another “world” - that of pedagogy - by concentrating on the concept of education/training, which entails teaching and learning. The traditional, modernist paradigm was contrasted with a postmodern paradigm. Different suppositions concerning world view were discussed and reflected upon. The constructionist approaches to supervision and different ways of supervising were discussed.

In the next chapter the empirical part of the research project will be described and discussed. Several issues concerning the narrative of pastoral therapy and the teaching/training of pastoral therapy will be dealt with through a discussion of several conversations which were recorded and transcribed during the various training courses.

CHAPTER FIVE

TRAINEE GROUPS, TRAINING COURSES AND REFLEXIVE CONVERSATIONS

1 Introduction

This chapter will be devoted to a description of the trainee groups, the training courses and a discussion of the reflexive conversations that took place during the course of this research. The inner dialogue of the supervisor/researcher will also be given in a parallel text next to the discussions of the reflexive conversations. Through a discussion of the reflexive conversations new meanings that arose will be highlighted and reflected upon. These new meanings, together with existing ones, will form part of the narrative of pastoral therapy and the training of pastoral therapy.

2 Trainee groups

The trainee groups participating in this study consisted of three masters degree groups: Groups H, I and J, and two continuing education groups: Groups K and L. The groups were labelled H-L so as to avoid confusion with the conversations labelled A-G. The supervisor of Groups H and K was myself (Ben), as researcher of this study. All the other people involved in this research are given pseudonyms for the purpose of confidentiality, although they all are conscious, with approval, of this report. The supervisor of Groups H and L was Arthur and the supervisor of Group J was Charles although I participated in some respects, especially to introduce social constructionism to the group and to

conduct the personal development part of the course. All three have done master degree courses, Ben in Pastoral Therapy, Arthur in Pastoral Therapy and Psychology and Charles in Psychology. All three are ordained ministers of the Dutch Reformed Church.

2.1 Masters groups

The three masters degree groups had three different supervisors. To begin with each of the groups had six student participants. Group H consisted of six male white Afrikaans-speaking Dutch Reformed ministers from different congregational settings and with experience in ministry ranging from two to ten years. Group I had a male participant from the Coloured community and from a different denomination (Lutheran Church) than the five white male participants, who were all from the Dutch Reformed Church. All of them had been in the ministry for between two to eight years. Group J had five participants. One of the original six participants postponed his studies for personal reasons. One of the five that remained is a white female participant. She was allowed into the course although she was not yet ordained, and therefore had not yet had the opportunity of full time ministry experience in a congregation. The other four white male participants of Group J had been in the ministry for between two to nine years. All five were from the Dutch Reformed Church.

2.2 Continuing education groups

Group K consisted of four white male Dutch Reformed ministers. All of them had more than five years of ministering to a congregation. Group L consisted of seven Dutch

Reformed ministers, and all of them served in congregations for more than three years.

3 Training courses

There are two different courses applicable to this study. The first course is a continuing education course and the other one a masters degree course.

3.1 Continuing education course

The continuing education course consisted of eight one-day sessions during the first week of each month from the start of the course. Reading material about the different themes for each session were given to the participants in advance in order that they could acquaint themselves with the theory in such a way that they would be able to participate in the conversations about theory. This course had as its aim assisting the minister to be more effective in pastoral work in his congregation. It had different components, consisting of a personal development section (family-of-origin work), and a therapeutic skill enhancement section (communication skills, question-asking skills and genogram skills). It also served as a vehicle to introduce different approaches to counselling, contrasting modernist, diagnostic approaches with postmodernist narrative, linguistic, social constructionist approaches. All of these theoretical sections were practised in role play situations. On special occasions the supervisor would do live therapy with clients, while the group were behind the one-way mirror. A multiplicity of conversations about theory and practice were used to deconstruct old beliefs about counselling and to co-construct new ones.

3.2 Masters degree course

The masters degree course ran for two years. It consisted of two workshops and one practicum. In the first year of study there were two one-week workshops, one in February or March and the other in November of that year. The second year practicum was a three-week practicum in February or March. Participants received the theory for each workshop or practicum in advance (theory for the second workshop and theory for the practicum was given at the end of each previous workshop). Participants were expected to have a thorough reading knowledge of theory in order to communicate their understanding of it to other participants and to be able to debate it.

This course had as its aim the training of the congregation minister to become a pastoral therapist in his own congregation. It had different components, consisting of a personal development section (including family-of-origin work, leadership enhancement), a therapeutic skill development section (including communication skills, question-asking skills, genogram skills), and a theological section (including hermeneutics). Different approaches to counselling, contrasting modernist, diagnostic approaches to postmodernist narrative, linguistic, social constructionist approaches, were included in the curriculum. All of these theoretical sections were practised in role play situations. In the second year of the course participants counselled their own clients, while the rest of the group acted as a reflecting team. In the masters degree groups a multiplicity of conversations about theory and practice were also used to deconstruct old beliefs about counselling and to co-construct new ones.

Between the first and second workshops participants had to describe a personal approach to therapy derived from theory in a 15 page essay. After the third practicum participants had to do two practical case studies under supervision and one that had to be done completely on their own, but in writing, in order for them to be examined on it at the end of the second year. Students in pairs had to prepare a framework in writing on an A3-format page in which all of the theory was internalised in such a way that the students could enunciate and illustrate their integration of the work into an own approach to pastoral therapy. A second examination was done by some participants about a specific section of the work in which they had to include an extra range of theory in collaboration with their supervisor. From this range of theory a written task was prepared for examination purposes. The other students had to prepare a dissertation under supervision. This essay was to contribute to research in the field of pastoral therapy as well as to prove that the student was able to do independent research, which is a requirement for a masters degree.

Both the continuing education course and the masters degree courses were meant to be part of the social coinomial construction of pastoral therapy as it is described in this thesis. However, it is the researcher alone who was responsible for the description of this process. It was not the specific aim of any of the other supervisors or student-participants to study the social coinomial construction of pastoral therapy. In their endeavour to enhance their pastoral therapeutic skills or to become pastoral therapists or to teach pastoral therapy they formed the willing subject-participants of this study.

4 Reflexive conversations

4.1 Introduction

A multiplicity of reflexive conversations on pastoral therapy and pastoral therapy training were undertaken during the training courses both of the continuing education groups and the various master degree groups.

Pastoral therapy and the training thereof was co-constructed through a process of multiple reflexive conversations (Steier 1991). Multiple conversations created multiple realities and although some conversations were about other conversations, none of them were meta-conversations, transcending or subsuming others. These reflexive conversations should rather be seen as conversations with and within conversations (Kotzé 1994), in this way further constituting pastoral therapy.

Various reflexive conversations were initiated throughout the process of training. Conversations occurred between a diversity of people. There were conversations between supervisor and student-participants and between the various participants of some of the different groups. Conversations took place between one of the master degree groups and a theology colleague and between the same colleague and the supervisor. They also took place between the different supervisors, about the training, and there were conversations about pastoral therapy among clients on the one hand and supervisor and student-participants on the other. One can safely say that there were also an extensive range of informal conversations related to pastoral therapy and training that occurred

among participants, between participants and colleagues in ministry, or friends or family members. This diversity allowed for a multiplicity of stories and meanings to emerge, and in this way contributed to the co-construction of pastoral therapy and pastoral therapy training (Kotzé 1994:135).

Throughout the different training processes opportunities were given after each discussion of theory, all role play situations and sessions with clients to reflect on how each person made sense of and gave meaning to the respective events. Reflections were mostly conducted through the reflecting team concept. When utilised the reflecting-team mode offers the various persons present "the possibility to shift back and forth between listening and talking about the same issues" (Andersen 1992:62). In this way two perspectives are provided within each person, which will most probably create new perspectives. Participant students were encouraged to re-read some of the theory or were given some questions to rethink in order to enable "inner" talk. The process of "inner" talk (Andersen 1992) internalises ideas and meanings from "outer" talk and constitutes how these ideas and meanings will be used by the student-participant. This eventually constitutes pastoral therapy and pastoral therapy training.

Several of the reflexive conversations were either audiotaped or videotaped (with the permission of everyone included) and replayed and transcribed afterwards. The conversations were conducted in Afrikaans, but translated into English for the purpose of this study. The complete transcriptions of these reflexive conversations are attached in Appendices A-G. It was not possible (due to time and place) to record all the reflexive conversations and not all of the recorded conversations were used as examples in this

research. All the therapy processes were videotaped for instance, but only the reflexive conversations with clients about pastoral therapy are described in this research. This was because of confidentiality, but all of those processes were part and parcel of the inner dialogues (Andersen 1995:18) of each participant and therefore formed part of the co-construction of pastoral therapy and pastoral therapy training.

It is impossible to convey the non-verbal messages, the atmosphere, emotions and silences in the transcriptions of the conversations. What is said below applies to the supervisor/researcher of this project as much as to Kotzé (1994:136), who said:

Transcribing and replaying the conversations while simultaneously following the transcripts, gave the trainer/researcher the opportunity to allow these non-verbal actions to be experienced and incorporated into the meaning construction process and dialogues. The trainer used self-reference in an inner dialogue as a way of dealing with this aspect. Transcriptions, however, exclude the reader from this experience because the trainer's presentation limits the reader's experience.

These reflexive conversations produce what Bamberger and Schön (1991:190) call 'conversational learning'. By that they mean the gradual evolution of making something through reflective conversation between makers and their materials in the course of shaping meaning and coherence. In the setting of this research it means that there is a reflexivity in the various conversations between student-participants and supervisor/researcher; between student-therapists and clients; between students and theory; between students and family of origin; between student-participants, supervisor and theology colleagues; between everyone and the influences of the specific coinomial community's belief systems. Some of these conversations are external (Andersen 1992),

that is can be audiotaped or videotaped and some of them are internal, that is in the inner language between a person (student or researcher or client or family member, etc.) and something (theory or coinonial community's belief systems or conversation on tape, etc.) or someone (student or researcher or client or family member etc.) else. There are a reciprocity between the maker and the materials. The maker (researcher and co-participants) talks back to the material (theory, clients, student-participants, et cetera and their interactions form the subject *pastoral therapy*), and the material (pastoral therapy) talks back to the researcher. "Talk back, then, is a construction, an interactive function, in the course of *making meaning*" (Bamberger & Schön 1991:191). In this way the reflexive conversations become constitutive of pastoral therapy. Andersen (1995:19) views one of the aspects of qualitative research as:

... the researcher might talk with another, for example, about his "data" and his attempts to search for something in his data, either a specific category or something unknown or not yet "discovered". Others who listen to that talk can then talk about what they were thinking when they heard about the researcher's search and about the not yet known, before the researcher gives his/her comment on what he heard.

The reflexive conversations that will be discussed further in this chapter are the ones that have been transcribed and appear in appendices A-G. These conversations are arranged chronologically and are set out in figure 2 for the sake of clarity. The same order is followed in the appendices.

Figure 2

REFLEXIVE CONVERSATIONS ON PASTORAL THERAPY AND PASTORAL THERAPY TRAINING	
Conver- sation	Parties and time from the beginning of training
A	Conversations between supervisor (Arthur) and continuing education group L, at the end of sessions four and six. Month 4 and 6.
B	Conversations between supervisor (Ben) and continuing education group K, at the end of their eighth session. Month 8.
C	Conversation between supervisor (Ben) and masters degree group H, at the beginning of their second year. Month 14.
D	Conversation between colleague in Theology (Prof J) and second-year masters degree group I. Month 15.
E	Conversation between supervisor (Ben) and second-year masters degree group J. Month 15.
F	Conversation with clients, two months after completion of their pastoral therapeutic process. Month 16.
G	Conversation between supervisor (Ben) and Prof J about Prof J's conversation with second-year masters degree group B. Month 18.

Having had the opportunity to listen several times to the same conversations, the *multiple listening* (Bruner 1986) enabled the researcher to construct multiple realities. In this way the supervisor/researcher explores the 'not-yet-said' (Anderson & Goolishian 1992:37) in order to incorporate it into the narrative of pastoral therapy. Multiple listening was also used for self-reflexivity, "reflecting on the stances taken, the language used, as well as the structuring, accommodating and co-creating" (Kotzé 1994:138) of the pastoral

therapy narrative.

4.2 Position of the supervisor

It was and is the intention of the supervisor to try and escape what Gergen and Gergen (1991:86) call the *principle investigator's* role of traditional scientific enterprises, where the theoretical meaning of events is almost wholly controlled by the former. In such an endeavour subjects serve as reactive pawns for manipulation, control and observation and are simply used as vehicles to enhance the power of the investigator's voice.

In its stead a reflexive dialogic approach to research is taken in which the sharing of power between researchers and subjects is the foremost feature in order to co-construct meaning. "Subjects' become 'participants', and the number of interpretations (or theoretical possibilities) generated by the research is expanded rather than frozen (Gergen & Gergen 1991:86). This social constructionist approach means that the supervisor has the position of participant-facilitator, but also becomes a participant-observer (learner) in the co-constructing process of pastoral therapy. In this position the supervisor takes a *not-knowing* stance. In not knowing he "adopts an interpretive stance that relies on the continuing analysis of experience as it is occurring in context" (Anderson & Goolishian 1992: 29). He will definitely bring a preset curriculum to the training situation, however, not from an expert position that merely conveys knowledge. The preset curriculum, which is greatly internalised (White & Epston 1990) by the supervisor, will form his part of the co-constructing process and will be open for negotiation, changes and addition (Kotzé 1994:12). The position of the supervisor is therefore more egalitarian and strives

to be open and receptive to the meanings and interpretations of all other participants in the co-constructing process of pastoral therapy.

5 Discussion of reflexive conversations

In the next part of this chapter the reflexive conversations as in appendices A-G will be discussed. The reflexive conversations as in appendices A-G were conducted in Afrikaans, transcribed and then translated into English. The inner language of the researcher will be given in the parallel column. As in the previous chapters first read the content of the discussion and the corresponding inner dialogue of the researcher, but only after the corresponding conversation in the respective appendices has been read.

5.1 Conversations A and B: Between supervisors Conversation A and B

(Arthur and Ben) and continuing education
groups L and K respectively

Context of conversations

When mentioning someone's name the corresponding conversation's letter (A) or (B) will be next to the name. The same applies for the corresponding group.

Although I was not present at Arthur's conversations with his group (E), by listening to, looking at and transcribing it, I came under the impression that the same kind of group cohesion, that I had experienced with several groups, had already developed within this group. I understood their groping in the dark, because of the challenging effect of new worlds (cf. comments of Leo (B), where he

5.1.1 Context of conversations

These conversations were between the supervisors of

the two continuing education groups L, and K (Arthur and Ben) and their respective continuing education groups. The conversations were aimed at assisting student-participants to formulate their own understanding of theory. They were also aimed at challenging their own set ways of helping people and internalising the use of new understandings. We also hoped to integrate theory and practice.

The theory was read by the participants and presented in a facilitative manner by the supervisor. Group D consisted of four student-participants and group E of seven. The groups also had an opportunity to enhance theory in practice with role play situations.

Within role play they were asked only to use real cases that occurred in their congregations.

The student-participants were specifically invited to feel free to converse with one another and were encouraged by the supervisors to ask questions to each other and the supervisor.

During the first of their two conversations the student-participants of group L were only four

mentioned that the theory meant a paradigm shift because all the concepts were new), for the experience was similar to mine when I was confronted with this reading material for the first time.

As supervisors we adopted a non-lectural facilitative conversational style in presenting theory, because we believed that it is consistent with the social constructionist approach to teaching. Being aware of the necessity to integrate theory and practice, every session was complemented by role play.

We tried to adopt a more egalitarian relationship with student-participants, without taking liberties. To me it could not be otherwise, because the student-participants were fellow ministers and also serving in congregations as we were. We did, however, respect each other in every way.

The conversations were lively and everyone participated. It was completely different from the class

months into their continuing education course, and, at the second, six months. Group K was at the end of their course after month eight. It being a continuing education course the range of theory was not so extensive, although it was still new to them. However, the reflecting conversation, shaped their understanding and meaning of it further.

situations in which the lecturer had to contend with thirty or more students, and the disposition and motivation of the undergraduate students is not the same as that of post-graduate students (cf. Conversation G).

Conversation A and B: Turning points

5.1.2 Conversation A and B: Turning points

It seems as if there were quite a lot of turning points (Pittman 1987) in the student-participants' understanding of how pastoral therapy can be done.

The turning points described here do not have much to do with social constructionist ways of doing therapy and yet have everything to do with social constructionism. The themes for conversations were about systems theory, genograms, loss and divorce, the therapist as a person and different approaches to therapy. I know that it was "knowledge" about specific kinds of therapy, but in allowing theory to "talk back" to student-participants through reflexive conversations, new understandings of their perception of pastoral therapy were co-constructed and given meaning to - hence social constructionism.

5.1.2.1 Turning point one: contract and process

Gus (A): I think what I have learned is that one can come to an agreement with the clients. One does not have to finish in one session and one can plan the whole process.

Chris (B): I learnt a lot from realising that counselling is a process and not only a single event.

A significant misconception, not only of members of a congregation, but also of clergy, is that they presume that a problem can be addressed by speaking only once to clients - and then from the superior position of minister - and that the problem should then be solved. Gus and Chris realised that counselling (pastoral therapy) involves a process that can and should be planned and discussed with the clients.

5.1.2.2 Turning point two: responsibility

Something that is closely related to the problem of single session therapy is what Sam (cf. the same point of view from Chris (B)) experienced as the responsibility confusion:

Sam(A): I found new value in the fact that people with whom one is working also carry a great deal of responsibility in the solution of their problems.

One of the myths of pastoral therapy is that the minister/pastor should be the one with all the

Turning point one: contract and process

The modernist, positivist view concerning expertise and power, in my mind, has to do with the single-session-person-of-authority therapy that I believe is quite general in the regular counselling of ministers. The notion sometimes is: "I have spoken. Now go and do as I have said, for I have no time (i.e. I don't know how) to address the same problem again".

Turning point two: responsibility

The responsibility to heal the situation, therefore, lies firmly with the minister. Members of a congregation will even blame their minister, for he knew something was wrong and never did anything about it! It is the responsibility of the client not only to collaborate in the therapeutic process, but to seek help in the first place.

It is a heavy burden to carry if one must always be the expert. It was liberating to realise that people bear

answers. He knows the difference between right and wrong and he has the responsibility to provide clients with that knowledge. Clients therefore expect the minister to say who is right or wrong and to provide a quick solution for the problem. If the problem is not solved it is because the minister did not give the right advice or guidance. Sam (A) and Chris (B) "discovered" that the client bears as much of the responsibility for the success of the pastoral therapy as they do.

In the narrative tradition *collaboration* is the concept that constitutes responsibility. There is an interactivity through a collaborative process between clients and therapists in narrative conversations, which implicates mutual responsibility to the outcome of the therapeutical process. Morgan (2000:3) says it is important that the persons consulting the therapist should play "a significant part in mapping the direction of the journey". The ethical responsibility of the therapist is to incorporate the insights of clients as to the direction of the therapeutical process. In a conversation between White, Hoyt & Zimmerman (2000:97-98), White

responsibility for their own decisions. By responsibility I am referring to the choice clients have to use the latent "power" of the historical unique outcomes in their own life stories, of which they themselves have "expert" knowledge. To acknowledge people's responsibilities is to acknowledge that they themselves have knowledge too. In my own story I recognised my own responsibility only after my own voice about my own unique accounts was heard and acknowledged. Only then I realised that my own knowledge about my own historical, but forgotten, events has power too. It enabled me, as the client, to think differently of myself in such a way that the therapy process was not only from the outside in, but also from inside out, as it were (Aldridge et al. 1994:361). In other words, therapy was not something done to me by a therapist, but a process within which I actively partook. The therapeutic process is much more productive when this is realised and much less stressful to the pastoral therapist.

calls for a balance between direction and discovery. The therapist does not give direction nor discover solutions alone, but is guided by the unique descriptions of clients about their lives. Through these unique descriptions other knowledges of life and skills of living, previously invisible to the clients, will only be highlighted, not radically constructed, by the therapist: "So, it is the case that we will be playing a part in the identification and in the rich description of these other knowledges and skills of living, but we don't radically construct these".

5.1.2.3 Turning point three: generalisation?

Ken (A): If I can say something else about what I have realised again today...

Ken saw something that I view as another turning point, and that was to realise that one cannot generalise all problems as problems of faith. The basic point of departure for ministers is to ask, as did Oscar (A): "Shouldn't one say that if his relationship with God is healed then everything else will come right as well?" The aim is merely to get one's

It was clear to me that the discussions we had did not only co-construct knowledge with student-participants, but also enabled them to take responsibility for their own meanings and understanding. Their old convictions were opened to new understanding, and even if the old ones were confirmed it was with new perspectives.

Turning point three: generalisation?

Generalisations are, to me, part of viewing oneself as an expert who is supposed to make his own deductions regarding a situation and view this as the truth. One should even go further than the suggestion of Brent and ask the client what he thinks is true in his case and not handle it as a question in the minister's mind only.

I myself experienced how I, quite naively, "arrived" by gaining knowledge that seemed to explain clients' problems so clearly. It helped me to realise how easily power/knowledge can be misapplied to

spiritual life in order and problems will solve themselves. Brent's answer to Oscar suggested that one should at least try to differentiate and not to generalise: "I think the question in the minister's mind must be: have these things robbed him of his relationship with God or did these things happen because he did not have a proper relationship with God in the first place?"

5.1.2.4 Turning point four: reflexive talk about theory and live therapy sessions

To speak with one another about theory and to apply it to genuine cases makes theory more real, therefore Gus remarked (A): "To me it meant a lot to discuss this theory with other colleagues... Especially because we used genuine practical cases as we have experienced them in our congregations" (cf. the same point of view from John (B)). It also allows one to formulate and test one's own convictions which legitimise one's own voice and not only the voices of others who may be significant (supervisor), especially those regarding theory. As Paul (A) has put it: "I am not totally convinced that..."

let gullible students believe exactly what I want them to. In this conversational situation, however, students can challenge each other's convictions or what is said in theory.

Turning point four: reflexive talk about theory and live therapy sessions

Brent's remark about the cherry on top indicated that the supervisor's way of doing pastoral therapy was an example of how everyone should do it, almost as if it was a template to look at and to follow.

The social constructionist point of departure is, however, to recognise everyone's abilities and to add that to our picture of pastoral therapy. The turning point therefore would be to realise that whatever other people do can be used by me, but that I must mould it into my own style. This reminded me of what White, in his conversation with Hoyt & Zimmerman (2000:107), has said about an intriguing question about copying with a reassuring answer. The question is:

In the discussion of their (group L) experience of the live case that the supervisor dealt with, there was a turning point not yet reached, but pressing for attention. The discussion went as follows:

Arthur (A): If we can return to the family that I saw this morning, how have you experienced the live session?

Brent (A): That to me, was the cherry on top in this course, because up to now we have only used simulations in role-play of genuine cases from home, but this was a real live situation. It was as if reality broke through for me. In my mind I have put myself in Arthur's place and I knew it was not only a course but reality. It scared me and yet it helped me a great deal to see how a pastoral therapist goes about doing therapy.

Oscar (A): What was special to me, as Brent says, was the fact that we could have the opportunity to put ourselves in your position, and, in addition, could discuss the session

'How comes it that we all start out originals and end up copies?', and the answer: 'It is the copying that originates'. He said that in their attempts to reproduce identity in acts of living, people wind up originating - the reproduction of identity encapsulates the copy that went before, but it is more than that. Thus, even if student therapists try to copy their tutor, they end up with their own style!

Oscar reflects something of this when he pointed out that the discussion helped to question the actions of the supervisor and to examine oneself as to what one's own actions would have been.

The one special purpose of positivism is to know, without a doubt. From that the intention of a pastoral therapist should be to explore in such a way as to know exactly what is going on in a particular case so that the expert can then provide a solution. Gus' observation that uncertainty was important is in direct contrast with this notion. I must say that to me it was

afterwards and ask questions about what you did and why, and about what we would have done, so as to test ourselves.

Gus (A): The teamwork was very interesting to me, because I have learnt a lot from it. I have learnt to look at something from various perspectives and to get the big picture. What I have also learnt is not to be too sure of what is going on, because then one's eyes close to other possibilities. To be uncertain is good, because then one's eyes are wide open to notice whatever comes to the fore.

Errol (A): If I may say something... I think the next step should be that we should be able to follow a complete therapeutical process, that is all five or six sessions in live situations. That would really round off the course.

Arthur (A): Enter for the Masters degree course and you will have ample opportunity (everybody laughing).

difficult, at first, not to know precisely, but the "not knowing" position of Anderson and Goolishian (1992) made it much easier for me to remain receptive to other possibilities even if in pursuit of a specific notion. The reflecting team and their various perspectives made that realisation possible to Gus.

To have practical experience of what theory says is what Errol wanted. That to his mind would draw the whole picture. Unfortunately, due to time restrictions it was not incorporated in the continuing education course. In retrospect, maybe it should have been.

I am gratified, however, that some of these students (group K and L) did enter for the masters degree course.

The experience for all concerned was that their opinions (voices) were genuinely listened to, valued and reflected back to them. This was the case regarding all the conversations (A-G), as well as those not taped or transcribed, and which will only be highlighted here.

These conversations, like all the others, can be called 'ceremonies of redefinition' (White ed. 1995:9) for they were part of the process of gaining collective meaning that redefines and shapes one's belief systems, convictions and ways of doing things.

5.2 Conversations C and E: Between supervisor (Ben) and masters degree groups H and J respectively

5.2.1 Context of conversations

These conversations took place at the end of the three week practicum at the beginning of the second year of the masters degree course. Each of the student-participants had completed his own pastoral therapeutical process with clients. At the end of each session a reflecting team discussion was conducted for the benefit of the clients and the therapeutical process as a whole. After each session a reflexive conversation was held to reflect upon the therapy process and to merge theory into practice and practice into theory. Each student-therapist had to reflect upon his experience in the position of therapist. Students were asked about how they had

Conversation C and E

Context of conversations

In the course of this masters degree this was the best time to have this conversation. By this time student-participants were familiar with the language of the different approaches and with the notion of social constructionism. I wondered about the extent of their understanding and ability to express themselves in the newly acquired language. I was quite amazed at the difference between these participants and those of the continuing education group. I wondered if the only reason could be the actual practical cases that they had to do. They did have more theory to read and the intensified time (consecutive days/weeks) that they could use to converse surely would also have had an impact.

I remembered, though, how eager the continuing education groups were to do practical work under supervision. I cannot but think that the actual live therapy sessions played a major part in

viewed their own emotions, thoughts and actions (skills). Each of the student-participants was expected to reflect upon his experience as a "supervisor". Student-participants formed a *listening group* (White ed. 1995:9) for each student-therapist.

The intention was to *re-vision* and to co-write each of the student-participants' stories as pastoral therapists (Parry and Doan 1994). The overall intention of the supervisor/researcher was to co-write with everyone the story of pastoral therapy.

The intention of both conversations was to reflect upon certain aspects of pastoral therapy and the training of pastoral therapy. Aspects such as the

relation between theory and practice, the voice of the client, the position of the supervisor, the meaning of the *pastoral* qualification of pastoral therapy and the form of supervision and examination in pastoral therapy, were reflected upon.

Most aspects in conversation E correspond with those in conversation C, even the contexts were quite similar, therefore I shall deal with the opinions of that group (J) with this one (H).

the difference between these two groups, and I realised the absolute importance of supervised case studies. I was curious about their perceptions and eager to listen to their accounts of pastoral therapy.

Working through these conversations made me wish I had scheduled more conversations between peer groups of the same course. However, due to distance and the different time slots of the practicums, this was not possible.

Even if I had them scheduled only between single participants of each group it would have helped.

5.2.2 Specific themes in conversations C and E

5.2.2.1 Theory and practice

This theme relates to the discussion in Chapter 3 (2.5) about the relation between theory and praxis. Theory and practice are intrinsically and intricately related. As I read through this conversation Maddox's (1991:165) perception about the relationship theory/practice came into mind. There are two extremes concerning the relationship between theory and practice. The extremes: (1) merely deriving practice from theory, and (2) seeing theory as a mere reflection of practice, are rejected in favour of a negotiated understanding. These negotiations are seen as "authentic human actions", which are, "both meaning-discerning and meaning-laden". There is therefore a "dialectical relationship between action and reflection". Müller (1996:1) speaks of a circular model within which there is a to and throw movement between theory and practice. Müller's choice is not to distinguish between *theoria* and *techné* but rather to use the concept of *phronesis*. This means that one do not apply abstract principles to concrete situations (Browning 1991:39), but rather

Specific themes in conversations C and E

Theory and practice

At first, in the initial stages of each of the courses, I experienced most of the student-participants derive practice from theory. It was as if theory was applied to certain therapeutic situations without taking the specific situations of the therapy properly into account. Through reflective discussions about a specific therapy process theory and practice were integrated. Student-participants reacted well to these reflections and participated eagerly in the co-construction of meaning in order to enhance their abilities to let the theory become part of themselves. I also experienced the gradual growth of student-participants as pastoral therapists through this dialectical relationship between their actions and their reflections.

Throughout this course it was never expected of students to remember theory by rote in order to apply it to

have a value-oriented reflexive discourse between what is experienced in practice and what is said in theory. This provides for a praxis-theory-praxis movement (Heitink 1993:151; Müller 1996:2).

In the words of Tom (C): "My feeling is that in this course theory and practice are not separated, distinguishable, yes, but not at all separated. Theory is processed in such a way that you are able to apply it in practice, because practical cases are used to integrate theory. As you proceed you are being shaped as a pastoral therapist. In our discussions we discuss theory, but as it is used in practice". Jean (C) responds: "What I enjoyed about this course... our memories were never tested, rather we discussed a specific part of the theory and as the discussion proceeded we responded with our own perceptions of how we understood what we found in theory. The discussions served to trigger one's own ideas about that part of theory and one did not have to remember anything by rote. In this way we built up a general picture of the work. We moved from this general picture to practice and from practice to the general picture".

practice. Rather they were enabled to interact with fellow student-participants to integrate theory with what they already knew and experienced, and then again to allow it to inform both practice and theory as hermeneutic circles (Andersen 1995:12-13).

The integration process would have been almost impossible without actually experiencing theory processed into practice by observing and participation in multiple therapy sessions and reflexive conversations about the sessions. Family-of-origin work was one of the experiences that particularly helped me in the integration process.

The vast chasm between theology (theory) and practice (pastoral therapy) that one experiences, is there because theologians and practitioners separate theory and practice. The result is desperate confusion amongst ordinary members of congregations and ministers alike, because what is experienced in practice is rejected in

The experiences of student-participants in live therapeutical cases helped to make theory part of their make-up (Vernon (C)). So too did theory as lived experience - as the student participants have experienced through their own processes of family-of-origin work, or as Will (C) calls it, the personal development of the therapist. The multiple voices that expressed the different perspectives of the student-participants' view of a particular matter enlarged each one's own perspective (Tom (C)).

Theory is not used as a tool, but becomes internalised theory - part of oneself, says Vernon (C). Theory and practice informs each other. There is a reciprocity between the two - or as Andrew (E) states: "It is not only the practical observation of the therapy that is important to me. The more one comprehends theory the more the practical sessions make sense and vice versa. One has to practise and practise and practise; the more practice the more the skills, but practice will be very difficult without theory".

theory and vice versa.

In its stead theory, through a dialectical process in the reflecting conversations, should become part of the essence of one's being, thus enabling one to experience meaningful congruence between theory and practice.

Student participants' voicing of the clients

In the social construction of pastoral therapy the voice of the client co-constructs with those of the student-participants, supervisor, theory, culture, et cetera. It is therefore natural to reflect on their voices as well. The perspective of their voices, however, will be through the eyes of the student-participants. As such it was a conversation about the conversations with clients (Andersen ed. 1991).

I could see how student-participants integrated theory into their presumed answers. Jean talked about stories (White & Epston 1990) clients were

5.2.2.2 Student participants' voicing of the clients

In order to enable the clients' voices to be heard I asked the following question:

Ben (C): If I could ask some of the clients of the past three weeks to consider their therapeutical process and try and tell me what had happened here, what do you think they would answer? If I ask them to examine the process and tell me what pastoral therapy is, what would they say?

Jean (C): They would begin by saying it was an opportunity they had to tell their stories.

Charl (C): Or they would say that it was an opportunity within which they could have viewed their own situations differently.

Vernon (C): Maybe they will say that they realised for the first time where the problem originated, that they themselves *were* not the problem, but that they *had* a problem,

enabled to tell. Charl brought the re-visioning of their stories (Parry & Doan 1994) into consideration and Vernon highlighted the externalising (O'Hanlon 1994) of the client's problem. Charl points out that the creation of the problem in language shows the integration of social constructionism.

This integration of theory, as I have perceived it, made me wonder if this is what the clients would have said or was it in the minds of the student-participants only? I like to think that at this stage it became part of them (student-participants) in such a manner that the clients would have experienced it as such and would also be able to put it into the same language as those of their therapists. We did experience the clients reacting quickly and expressing themselves in the same language as that of their therapists and of the reflecting team.

Pastoral therapy, as we have experienced it, definitely liberated the clients from their fear of being judged

because it originated from certain circumstances. For the first time I can oppose the problem and not my spouse or other people.

Charl (C): They would most probably also say that they did not know what the problem was until they *created* it here, so to speak. I had a chance to talk about things and in so doing realised and described the problem and then began to deal with it.

Vernon (C): Pastoral therapy enables the client to feel safe, in the sense that he can say, "for once I am not told that I am the problem and I am not told what is wrong with me. I have a problem, and not I *am* the problem."

Will (C): Maybe they will say that the problem received "handles" and now they are able to handle the problem.

Ray (C): What they would also say is that they have received an opportunity to choose.

by the ministers "in front of whom they are appearing" as one client puts it. They did not feel labelled or marginalised, but felt as if their accounts of experiences were appreciated by the therapists, even though the latter might not have always agreed with them.

The way in which pastoral therapy is conducted would enable clients to realise that God is an active Participant in the therapeutical process. This, however, would not deprive clients nor therapists of their responsibility in the therapeutical process; it would only make them humble and dependent upon God for the decisions they have to make.

These remarks of the student-participants relates to those of the clients in conversation (F). Allowing the voices of the clients to be heard and validated helped in liberating pastoral therapy from labelling and totalising practices (White ed. 1995). I also remembered the words of Heshusius (1994:19) in this regard:

Tom (C): I do think that the clients will say that they have been helped although we did not provide solutions. "I have been helped to help myself", so to speak.

Ben (C): If they look at it from a religious perspective would they then also say that they have been helped to help themselves?

Will (C): No, I think they will say that God is the one that is helping them, but He is doing it by giving them space to make some choices, and He is using us as pastoral therapists to widen their perspectives so that they can make better choices.

Ray (C): Some of them even said that it can only be God who helped them, even if we were His instruments. They believed that everything happens by the grace of God.

5.2.2.3 Position of the supervisor

The student-participants were asked directly about

"...participatory consciousness is the recognition of kinship and therefore of ethics". In recognising the voices of clients, I like to think of pastoral therapy, in the social coinomial construction sense of the concept pastoral therapy, as a highly ethical endeavour. I believe pastoral therapy to be a process in which God is helping people through pastoral therapists to be able to help themselves.

Position of the supervisor

I remember the difference between a lecturer and a Masters-student that helped with teaching (as a student-lecturer) in our undergraduate and even post-graduate classes at University. Conscious of the hierarchical structure students hardly ever took liberties with a lecturer. A student-lecturer, however was taken liberties with more easily even though we knew that the student-lecturer was in the same hierarchical position as the lecturer. The distance between students and a student-lecturer was not

their experience of the position of the supervisor.

The person of the supervisor was not the focus, rather his *position* in relation to the student-participants.

Some of the responses were:

Jean (C): Traditionally it was expected of the supervisor to work through a lot of theory (cf. Prof J (G)), and he was expected to be the expert, and that created a remoteness between supervisor and students. This method, however is a method in which we work together, think together, talk together, mould together and together arrive at an objective. The remoteness between supervisor and students has disappeared and now we are all participants in the same struggle.

Ray (C): One of the reasons why I enrolled for this course was the position of the supervisor relative to us. He participated in the learning process as one of us and it has given me the confidence to speak out and to participate as well, much more than I ever allowed myself to do at University. I must say that I have

as great as between the students and the lecturer. I wonder, if the position was negotiated beforehand and not accepted as a certain position because of the cultural belief system, whether it would not have made a difference in the attitude of both the student-lecturer and the students.

By negotiating the position of the lecturer I meant negotiating it in the direction of heterarchy (Andersen 1995). In a position of heterarchy the students and the lecturer are viewed in the relationship as equally important contributors to the learning/teaching process. This, I presume will enhance the responsibility of students tremendously, both in eliciting information from theory and in confident participation in class.

I know that in any situation lecturers learn from their students, however the perception from the perspective of the students is not always as such. The lecturer will even mask the experience of learning something from the students. In the heterarchical position

grown tremendously since last I was at University, but still I think I was much more at ease. I can almost say that I have seen and experienced pastoral therapy as it happens. I did not only hear about it and that made a huge difference to my learning experience.

Tom (C): I would describe the role of the supervisor in this study as a facilitator that initiates the conversations and participates in the discussions and also co-creates the meaning of concepts... even wants to learn from us as students.

In this position the supervisor not only moulds the student-participants, but himself as well, for he allows the responses of the students to react upon himself. If the supervisor does not receive, or expect to receive or even acknowledge any decisive feedback from students he would merely be busy with monologue and therefore would be deaf to the responses of others (Shotter 1993:62).

the lecturer will not only say it, but will actively seek new perspectives from the interaction with students and reflect these to them to enhance understanding.

To my mind, monologue is a danger that is brought about by the modernist conviction that reality can be known as it is. If that is true, and one has arrived at 'the truth', no further interest will be taken of alternative possibilities or accounts of the same 'truth'. From this stance a supervisor will be deaf to the contributions of students and will be inclined to persuade them of "the truth". This to me is the way in which metanarratives are formed and to my discomfort I have experienced this kind of intolerance of different perceptions of the same thing in the Dutch Reformed Church as well as in other denominations. Most probably this is also one of the reasons why members of congregations feel that their minister will not be able to learn anything from them, for he knows much more than they do. I think it is

5.2.2.4 Pastoral therapy

A legitimate question to ask is what the relation is between *pastoral work* and *pastoral therapy*? Pastoral work may be distinguished as *mutual care*, *pastoral care* and *pastoral counselling* (De Jong van Arkel 1988). Pastoral work according to his construction is counselling (without the necessity of the specific theory of secular forms of counselling) of a member of a congregation or an ordained minister to one of the members of a congregation, or another person, when they (the latter) experience some kind of difficulty. It is only at the level of pastoral counselling that social scientific forms of counselling (psychology, psychotherapy et cetera) become important so as to develop our own (pastoral) ways of counselling. Pastoral therapy, as it was constructed in the courses used in this research, also incorporates theory from the social sciences, but focusses much more upon family therapy and social constructionist approaches to counselling. Pastoral work up till now has used mostly modernist assumptions as points of departure. On the other hand pastoral therapy and the training of pastoral

also one of the reasons why people in dire straits think that the minister will not hear their story, but will condemn them for not living according to 'the truth' of the Bible.

Pastoral therapy

Psychology is not a foe to pastoral therapy and pastoral work. Wherever this debate occurred I felt some kind of hostility between the two points of view. I really do not think that it is necessary. Rather, I think that the two perspectives should enhance each other and grow towards each other. Foster (1988) describes the relationship between theology and psychology as Carroll Wise taught it in a seminary. The insight of Carroll Wise, not to oppose theology and psychology, but to openly explore the ways in which the two disciplines become "friends or foes", is what I had in mind concerning theology and social constructionism, and for that matter also modernist and postmodernist approaches to pastoral therapy. I think it is well worth the

therapy, as it was co-constructed in this research programme, incorporates postmodernist perspectives and assumptions, for example those of social constructionism.

The concept of being *pastoral*, however, needs to be explained and described. In the discussion the student-participants gave their understanding of the concept *pastoral* and how it influenced the counselling of the pastoral therapist.

The point of departure for pastoral therapy, like that of pastoral work, is: hope and healing lies in the transcendental power of God (Jean and Ray (C)), therefore everything is possible in Christ (Philippians 4:13).

A problem with pastoral work and pastoral therapy arises because of the lack of theory from the social sciences concerning counselling and a lack of practical experience in the students' frames of reference. Theory, although it might have been given, had no practical experience to be integrated with. The result is that pastors apply "theology"

effort to enhance the intelligibility between these disciplines, for I have experienced a positive difference in my counselling within the congregation brought about by these new insights from the social sciences. I hope this endeavour will make the psychological and theological presuppositions explicit and coherent.

Pastoral work, or at least mutual care and pastoral care, as far as I am concerned, were something that we had to learn from books and from lectures. The practical work that I did in my graduate studies was not sufficient at all. The sensitivity and confidentiality with which pastoral cases were handled by ministers in congregations robbed students in practical training of the opportunity to experience pastoral sessions with members of congregations in live situations. Pastoral work was therefore never modelled, nor seen by myself until I had to do it myself in ministering to a congregation. As for pastoral counselling we only had one textbook (De Klerk 1978) which

when pastoral therapy is needed. This has a direct implication for the use of Scripture and prayer in pastoral therapy.

a) Use of Scripture and prayer

In the words of one of the student-participants:

Jean (C): Well, to apply a little bit of Christian "seasoning", within my frame of reference, would mean to read the Bible and to pray for someone and then send him off hoping everything will get better... to even give someone a sermon on tape or a tract with a message on it or something like that. In the end what you do give from the Bible has little or no relevance to the person's problem and is meant to be merely a comforting and an encouraging gesture. This will usually occur within a couple of minutes or at most an hour. Pastoral therapy, on the contrary, would involve guidance through a whole process of one to six or more sessions - depending on the case - within which the

summarised the different approaches as found in the poimenic literature. I believe that is why such a high percentage of respondents in Potgieter's (1988) study indicated that they need practical courses on pastoral work.

Use of Scripture and prayer

That is also why so many ministers use the Bible as a little bit of Christian seasoning and use prayer as some kind of leverage to urge people with (for example) marriage problems, in the "right" direction. I know this is true, because, I am sorry to say, I did it myself. This is the reason why I began with studies in pastoral therapy in the first place. When I look back at those days now, I realise how incredible the grace of God is; that even with such a poor effort He can heal peoples' lives.

There are different ways of using Scripture and prayer in counselling. Adams (1979) claims that the Bible is the Christian's only counselling textbook. That means that Scripture

person can be enabled, through the grace of God, but with the help and guidance of the pastoral therapist, to understand and to deal with the problems that he encounters.

To this Ray (C) added that the encouragement might have an immediate effect, but that it would not last long, because it probably would not change anything about the problem.

Another point of view about the concept *pastoral* emerges in the opinion of:

Tom (C): Yes, I see it that I, as a Christian, and as a minister am busy with the therapy. It does not mean that I have to use Scripture or prayer in any specific session. I might, and it can work very well too, but the person who comes to me, knows from which frame of reference I operate as a minister, and my thinking and the way in which I work with these people is derived from that framework.

Ray (C) describes one of the dangers of pastoral work

and nothing else can and must be used in every counselling situation for it to be Christian. I cannot accept that because if the principle is to be applied in every sphere of life the Bible should also be the only textbook for healing physical illness. God is not only God for our spiritual and psychological wellbeing, but also for our physical health. If He can give people (medical doctors) the knowledge to heal us physiologically through medical science He can also heal people's minds and souls through knowledge gained in the humanities. Clinebell (1984) suggests that there are different forms of prayer and one (contemplative prayer) should be used in counselling. This to me is to change prayer into a tool. I believe that the prayer, prayed in all earnestness when the situation calls for it will help the client to be dependent upon God for the healing that He enables through ordinary people in the pastoral therapeutic process.

De Klerk (1978) states that the Holy Spirit does not work without the Word

as the expert position of the minister. "He knows how to use the Bible and he knows how to pray". Unfortunately the counsellor may let these crucial aspects of counselling become mere tools instead of letting them (Bible and prayer) be part of himself. "It must be something suitable and which comes from the heart of the minister". I do agree with Jean's statement that when one has a thorough perspective of theory the use of Scripture and prayer will be appropriate.

A perspective of group J (conversation E) is that prayer should be used in preparation for therapy sessions. It should form part of the minister's intercession for the people he works with. The use of Scripture and prayer should not be an appendage to legitimise *pastoral* therapy; the pastoral part of therapy should be the essence of pastoral therapy, according to Bob (E). The therapist is indeed an instrument in the hands of God.

For Henry (E) spirituality is important. Not only should the pastoral therapist be true to his own spirituality, he should also consider the spirituality of

of God, but does that mean literally or can it also mean that the minister will be guided by the Spirit according to the Word of God? My contention is that one has to live the Word of God and that makes one a pastoral therapist in essence.

I am afraid that we pastors are not sensitive enough for the spirituality of members of our congregations. More so if a married couple are not both from the same denomination, not to say non-Christian. I think we might sometimes be experienced by clients as Pharisees who know the laws of God all too well, but know nothing of the love of God.

Maybe the pendulum swung markedly to the negative side of what I perceived to be pastoral work - it was not meant to be all that negative, for I learnt a lot of positive things as well - but, the negativity that did arise was the challenge that initiated this search for answers. I found it in a coherent system of thought about both disciplines; insights from social

his clients.

A good summary of what we experience as *pastoral therapy* would be:

Charl (C): In doing pastoral therapy these past three weeks the Word of God was echoed in virtually all the cases, but I think what came through to the clients was that God was echoed as the Person active in their crises and that He is the Healer and that we as pastoral therapists as well as they as clients with our co-creation of meaning from theory, et cetera, are instruments in God's hands by which He effects healing.

5.2.2.5 Supervision

Supervision was never intended to coerce student-participants into a specific "correct" way to do pastoral therapy; into the "ideal therapist" (Bob (E)). Basic principles (theological or otherwise), technique, style and approaches to pastoral therapy are explored and, through supervision, integrated into

scientific disciplines and insights from theological ones, thus an empirical-confessional stance (Van Wyk 1995:90-91).

Supervision

In my mind there is no absolutely correct way of doing pastoral therapy. Pastoral therapy should, like one's own life, be an ever-evolving, growing endeavour that can never be fully described or defined. It can and should have as many facets as there are pastoral therapists.

Empowering, rather than demeaning reflections are used to build the therapeutic-self of the student-participant. It is amazing to me how effective these descriptions of self can be and how the specific style of each participant is enhanced by it.

I found the multiple supervisory team that forms an editorial committee (Parry and Doan 1994) quite useful for their statements are neither correct nor erroneous. This allows the student-

one's own way of doing pastoral therapy. There is ample room in this course for the development and incorporation of personal stories into one's own story as a pastoral therapist. As Jean (C) remarks: "...I was guided by supervision to improve my own way of doing pastoral therapy".

The supervision also made use of co-participants as listeners (White ed. 1995) so as to reflect the story of one's own pastoral therapeutical self (Andersen 1995). Tom (C) was glad for so many voices to participate in writing his story as pastoral therapist and voiced it by saying: "Apart from my supervisor I felt I had five other supervisors because of the participation of fellow students" (cf. Esther (E)). It also enhances one's picture of the therapy itself for not only one pair of eyes observes the process. That helps to develop a sensitivity for different ways of looking at the same thing (Vernon and Will (C)).

The different subject positions of the student-participants not only helped them to experience the chair of the supervisor, but helped them to almost gain a meta-position (Charl (C)). The different

participant to decide which statements are most useful. In my experience descriptions of my own way of doing therapy were much more enlightening than prescriptions as to how I should have done it. In this form of supervision, position rather than hierarchy is emphasised and the integrity of everyone's position is respected.

To look at oneself through the eyes of another is revealing, but it also enables one to see blind spots (Egan 1990) that cannot be seen from within. Contrary to the modern position of an individual self, the position of multiple selves allows for a clean slate on which persons may inscribe, erase, and rewrite their identities as the ever-shifting ever-expanding, and incoherent network of relationships invites or permits (Gergen 1991). This reminded me of what Paul has said in 1 Corinthians 9:19-23, living like a Jew while working with Jews and living like a Gentile while working with Gentiles, becoming all things to all men.

subject positions also developed multiple selves (Gergen 1991) to assist one to mould oneself to a specific situation.

The experience of group J was somewhat different because they had alternate supervisors. The supervisors were from different schools, one from a largely diagnostic model of psychology and the other with a more social constructionist, narrative orientation. For Andrew (E) this meant an opportunity to develop discernment and integration of different models into an own approach to pastoral therapy. Different opinions opened growth possibilities.

The general experience of student-participants concerning supervision in this course is described by Bob (E) as: "I also appreciated the honesty of supervision. There was no 'soft-soaping' only true validation or honest, empathic criticism".

5.2.2.6 Examination format

Concerning the way examination was conducted, the

To work with someone in another frame of reference is sometimes quite confusing for one continually wonders who is right and what is best. To me it was wonderful to have space and to give space, not to be suspicious of the other way of doing, but to integrate and to find the mutually useful aspects of our different approaches. I think it was stimulating for all concerned to climb out of the old exclusive dichotomy of either/or into the inclusive perspective of both/and. To me it was particularly worthwhile not to scrutinise every manner of doing to see whether it was theologically sound or not. To use it in fact opened up new possibilities and in the end I realised that theology was a part of it, because theology is a part of me.

Examination format

I often wondered what the actual influence of examination anxiety was on the performance of students. We were used to the saying: "I struck a blank". Was it because we did not study enough or was it because of

voices of the student-participants were unanimous: their way of doing took the sting out of examination. As Ray (C) puts it: "The element of anxiety is largely removed and you can reflect upon so much of the prescribed work". The reactivity towards the written and even oral way of examination meant that students used short term memory to pass the examinations, but afterwards forgot all that they had learned. One's responsibility to have a thorough knowledge of theory seems to grow for you and your partner form a team that has to explain your understanding and integration of the work (Will (C)). An overview of the method of examination was given as follows:

Tom (C): My experience of our B. Th. (theology) degree examinations was that they were oral examinations and that already made a huge difference. It felt as if I knew more after the examination than before it. Even so it was more of a reproduction of memory than of what I understood of the work. Now, however, the learn-by-rote part is eliminated and you are consequently free to converse

anxiety? Most people will say probably a bit of both. The question to me was whether one could diminish anxiety quite considerably. I am convinced that the kind of examining of this pastoral therapy course succeeded in doing just that. Not once did the phenomenon of striking a blank occur to one of the students and the examination procedure further enhanced the goals of training. The examination becomes yet another opportunity to revise the story of one's own ability as pastoral therapist, of one's progress in integrating theory into practice as well as a revision of the story of pastoral therapy as a whole. Every examination was a new experience because student-participants were enabled, through a draft outline of their own integration of theory, to explain their own perception of the work. Even the examination was a learning experience to me as supervisor.

about what you perceive to be the answer.

You are given a mark on your integration and application of the work and not your memorisation of it.

5.3 Conversation D: Between a Theology colleague Prof J and group I.

The intention of the conversation was to place the student-participants in a position to express themselves about what they perceived pastoral therapy to be. It was also to have the colleague from the theology department question certain aspects of pastoral therapy as to their theological relevance. Those areas which were "under suspicion" would hopefully come to the fore spontaneously. An hour was scheduled for the conversation.

5.3.1 Context of conversation

The conversation was scheduled to take place after the three week practicum of the masters degree group I. A colleague in practical theology, Prof J, was asked to discuss a few topics with the student-

Conversation D

Context of conversation

I could sense some nervousness in the student-participants when I looked at the video. I was under the impression that they were in a situation within which they not only had to defend their points of view, but also had to make them acceptable to Prof J.

I wondered whether they would be able to articulate what they believe pastoral therapy to be. I was once again amazed at their insights, however young and inexperienced some might have been. I appreciated the professional way in which Prof J conducted the conversation. He did indeed scrutinise some of the areas, although some of the situations depicted were highly hypothetical, but possible, and far from the everyday situations in an ordinary congregational setting. I wondered if "suspicions" were able to enable one to "find" what one was looking for, making the "fault" an interpretation in the eye of the beholder. The hour, as

participants and their supervisor, Arthur. Prof J is a professor in the department of Diaconiology of the University of the Free State. He has a diaconiological approach to pastoral work and he

was asked to discuss a few topics concerning pastoral therapy with some of the student participants, from his point of view. A few questions concerning the topics were suggested. The conversation was videotaped.

5.3.2 Major themes from conversation D

Some of the themes discussed in the other reflexive conversations did surface in these conversations as well. I shall only highlight those aspects that have not yet been discussed. The themes that Prof J was asked to concentrate on were the following: *Education/training in pastoral therapy, How are you part of the training process?, How do you gather knowledge about therapy?, What is the correlation between the knowledge gained and the therapy that you will be doing in congregations?, Theology and the use of Scripture in therapy.* One theme that emerged spontaneously from the conversation was concerned with the particular *paradigm* of pastoral therapy.

in most conversations, passed within a couple of minutes, so to speak. Some of the suggested themes could therefore not be covered properly at all.

Major themes from conversation D

I could have decided to ask only one thing of Prof J, and that is to pretend to be curious about pastoral therapy, but because of the time barrier I suggested a few questions. The student-participants, however, were quite enthusiastic and ran on ahead of some of the questions. Some of the questions were interpreted as if they had already been answered, but I was after the finer nuances of gathering knowledge about pastoral therapy for instance. I realised how easily meanings can differ when they are in written form and not spelled out in conversation.

5.3.2.1 Education/training in pastoral therapy

Education/training in pastoral therapy

Basically there were three parts in the education/training process: theory, practice and personal development. These three parts were integrated throughout the whole course and not dealt with consecutively one after the other. The students realised that all three these parts played a role in their development as pastoral therapists even before they began this course. As some of them mentioned:

No one can enter any study course tabula rasa - as a clean slate. The "slates" of our knowledge have all been written on. The "knowledge" do not comprise theory alone, but also comprise what we did with that theory - how we have used it in our lifeworld. Furthermore, the actions and reactions of other people in our lifeworld have written much on our slates.

Eric (D): We have to put together a framework for therapy that will include all the theory that we have done the past two years. As a matter of fact I think that all the theory we have done in the past will have an influence on our particular frameworks.

These actions and reactions are in turn influenced by cultural values, like morals, customs and belief systems. I agree with Parry and Doan (1994:35) that these are merely "maps" with which our reality are shaped. I realise that none of these "maps" can be excluded from our co-construction of pastoral therapy and the training thereof. These "maps", however, form the consciousness through which pastoral therapy and pastoral therapy training is neither created nor caused, but constituted.

Brent (D): The fact that we have all been in the ministry for a couple of years makes the course so much more valuable. One who has just completed his studies would not have found it as worth while. Because experience brought us to our knees and made us

The contention was that all theory

humble...

Personal development contended with the influences of one's family of origin (Brent (D)), and one's ability to consider this in one's approach to pastoral therapy. Through these three parts of the course as much as possible of the student-participants' lifeworld is taken into account in the construction of what pastoral therapy will mean to them.

Most of the course was done in collaboration with others. Some parts, however, had to be done alone (Brent and Gert (D)). The parts of theory done alone were meant for each student-participant to integrate theory into his own particular approach to pastoral therapy. The practical cases done under supervision by each participant in his own congregation were meant to integrate their own personal styles with practice.

5.3.2.2 Participation in the training process

In the training course the student-participants moved from one position to another. Prof J (D) commented

previously gained would form part of the social coinomial construction of pastoral therapy and not only the prescribed theory for this particular course. Concerning the practical part of the course it is accepted that the practical experience of the student-participants, prior to the course, forms an important part of their framework for understanding and integration of theory. That is why practice in a congregational setting was a prerequisite for entering the course.

Corporateness and individuality as manifested in this research, are two sides of one coin. It seems as if it is not possible to constitute pastoral therapy on one's own. It becomes constituted in relation to and with others. On the other hand, it is not possible for all the others to be a carbon copy of a particular therapist. That the pastoral therapist must develop and constitute himself (Gert (D)).

Participation in the training process

on this aspect: "It seems to me that it is part of the nature of training that one moves from a position of lecturing to a position of learning and vice versa". In the discussion some of the student-participants reflected their experiences as:

Sam (D): Quite valuable to me is the fact that in every practicum we participated in during the training... we never got stuck with lecture upon lecture upon lecture...because the theory was worked through prior to the practicums and in these practical sessions we all shared our understanding of the work....we sort of trained one another with our particular perspectives.

Pete (D): The relationship between us and Arthur (supervisor) was one in which we were allowed to feel as if we were on the same level...

Sam (D): All of us had the liberty to express ourselves... I learnt a lot from that.

Viewing the lecturer as a learner in the activity of teaching (Steffe and D'Ambrosio 1995) is essential to constructionist teaching. My contention is that this statement can also be inverted to say: viewing the learner as a lecturer in the activity of learning is essential to constructionist learning.

This experience in learning made a huge difference to my own conception of meanings and ideas. It helped me to gain insight into how the student-participants think about theory in contrast to their mere reproduction of it. At the same time the student-participants make sense of my thinking and that of their peers by exchanging multiple views and understandings of the same concepts and reflecting upon them continually.

In this form of participation it is only natural that the distinct borders between student-participants and supervisor will fade, and this had a profound positive influence on the learning experience of all participants.

5.3.2.3 Constructing knowledge and the correlation between gained knowledge and actual therapy

The gathering of knowledge is by social coinomial construction because people from a specific community of faith co-construct knowledge through conversational sharing of meanings (Steier 1991). These constructions are, however, more than the sum of theoretical knowledge and experience. As the supervisor in this conversation perceived:

Arthur (D): ...a large part of what we eventually walk out with has come about in our discussions. There are certain things that we did not read specifically in theory, but which emerged as we spoke about therapeutic situations and hypothesised about them...

Because of this, the correlation between gained knowledge and actual therapy means that the actual therapy in the end also informs the already gained knowledge of the therapist. Thus a never-ending reflexive co-construction process will always be part

To me it felt as if I did not need to encourage student-participants to partake in the discussions

Constructing knowledge and the correlation between gained knowledge and actual therapy

Personally the gaining of knowledge became an exciting adventure, once I perceived it to be construction rather than memorisation. It became a challenge to express myself to others and to integrate their opinions. It opened the way to provide space for otherness, which enlarged my lifeworld tremendously. I experienced it as an antidote to totalisation and a liberation from the blinkers of prejudice. In this way localised meanings are acknowledged and tested against others.

To me it is like a cybernetic circle that not only keeps on informing and forming (Andersen 1995), but also provides balances and counter balances as a form of criticism. Meaning can only be useful in relation

of pastoral therapy (Burr 1995:180-182). Within this “dialogical perspective, the problem of linguistic relativity takes on a quite different, nonvicious character” (Shotter 1993:116-117).

5.3.2.4 Theology and the use of Scripture and prayer in pastoral therapy

For Adams (1970) it is essential to use Scripture in every intervention and then in an authoritative nouthetical way. De Klerk (1978:44) criticises this view by saying that the Bible cannot be used as a counselling textbook. In contrast to this Biblicist use of the Bible one has to consider the message of Scripture as a whole. He does, however, stress the priority of Scripture, without which the church cannot work.

Some of the student-participants commented on the use of Scripture in pastoral therapy. They drew on the notion that one’s way of life as a Christian is most important in one’s way of doing pastoral therapy.

to other people and therefore knowledge is something that has to enable one to be relevant and useful in one’s own community. The dilemma I encounter is that it happens too often that a minister is not relevant and useful concerning counselling given to members of his congregation.

Theology and the use of Scripture and prayer in pastoral therapy

Adams’ view is a kind of a tunnel vision as if no Christian way of doing exists outside the use of Scripture per se. This, as far as I am concerned, can appear to ordinary members of congregations to be exactly the same as the actions of the Pharisees. When choosing Scripture as priority I also do not think that it necessitates the use of Scripture per se. What it does necessitate is a life lived according to Scriptural guidelines. I find an example in 1 Peter 3:1-2 where it says that wives can win their husbands for Christ by the chastity of their lives, without even uttering a word.

To me, therefore, being in service of

Sam (D): Most important to me is that we cannot detach or disconnect ourselves from what we believe. We have a definite point of departure...because we believe in the Trinity, we believe in the Bible as reliable and authoritative, we believe that it is the Word of God that is speaking to us. We also believe that God is using us as people in a process to reach other people... and that we definitely have a guiding role to play.

Another part of that conversation spoke of a danger that, in a congregational setting, a minister could end up doing therapy excluding the pastoral dimension of pastoral therapy:

Prof J (D): I want to ask if you do not see a danger here. Isn't there a danger that a person can get so caught up in the *therapy* part that he might find himself, in his congregational setting, more of a therapist than a minister?

Gert (D): I think the danger is there yes, but it is

the Word, means to be eager to live like Christ and that is to love God above all and to love others as He loves us. However, loving others does not mean never admonishing them, but when one admonishes it should be in meekness and lowliness of heart. That excludes an attitude of superiority such as that of the Pharisees.

I find it difficult to compartmentalise my life as if it is possible to live as a Christian now and then later not. People that are heathens can pretend to be Christians, but once one is a Christian one cannot pretend not to be one.

The pastoral therapist will do therapy as a Christian - he cannot do otherwise. To my mind the knowledge of therapy will only enhance his ability to do what the Lord wants him to do, and it will still be God who does the healing through His Spirit. If one makes a radical distinction here it seems to me as if God is divided into the same categories. God is not only God of our bodies, but of our whole

precisely because you are going to work as a minister... knowing that you are called by God and that it is God who is working through you, that you must always bear in mind that you are a messenger of God... and from that perspective you are busy with therapy. We are not merely social workers and therefore our intention is also to help the person in Christ.

Eric (D): We do not feel that the session was wasted if in that session we did not attend to the religious aspect of the client's life, because the whole therapeutical process takes place within the framework of Gods covenant with people...therefore every session to us, with or without Scripture reading or prayer, has a pastoral dimension.

Brent (D): The person must discover (i.e. realise) - by himself - the truths of God's Word... How God acts in his life... how God is present in his life. We want to facilitate this process in his life.

being. Why then go to a medical doctor, not expecting him to read from the Bible or to pray, and yet believe that God will heal through him and not expect the same in the case of a pastoral therapist? However, a pastoral therapist will use Scripture and prayer if need be.

The pastor should not use Scripture merely because there might be a rude awakening on the part of the client. That, to me, would be to use the Scriptures for a false reason, making it forced and therefore probably a platitudinous experience for both minister and member of his congregation.

Entering into the lifeworld of the client by enabling him to tell his story, about which he alone is the expert, will project an attitude of understanding on the part of the pastoral therapist and simultaneously dispose the client to be receptive of suggestions from the minister. In this way the pastoral therapist can facilitate another conversation, that between the client

The danger can also be on the other side as Patrick (D) mentioned: "...there is a danger that the minister can become a mere therapist, but also that a minister can become a mere citer of Bible verses and not understand or be able to solve any problem that the client might have. I think that being a minister will help me not to become a mere therapist and having the theory will prevent the minister from becoming a mere Bible-thumper with little or no effect".

Prayer is part of a minister's everyday life. Prayer can be used in unique innovative ways, for instance, by asking the client to write a letter to God:

Eric (D): Conversation with God can also be established through a particular therapeutical assignment that you would give the client to enhance the process. For instance, one can ask the client to write a letter to God in which he talks to God about the problem. Many aspects can be realised through this...in one of the letters in these sessions the person wrote: "Dear Jesus, I have disappointed you..." If we had told her she is guilty of this

and God.

If there is no rapport between the minister and the needs of the client the minister will become nothing other than a citer of Bible verses, which can be quite abusive, not only for the client, but also of the Bible itself. Unfortunately, before I began with further study in pastoral therapy, that was what my pastoral work consisted of, not because of slackness, but because of ignorance.

Creativity is fostered through theory and practice. There are many ways in which the pastoral therapist can acknowledge God's eternal presence and His participation in the therapeutical process, without ever reading from the Bible or praying in a particular session. One of those is writing letters (Epston 1994). The letters are conversations that co-construct one's new story and are therefore constitutive of one's new decisions (White and Epston 1990).

or that we most probably would have failed...
 but in her own struggle with God she realised
 her mistakes and confessed...the resulting
 prayer (written as a letter to God) was strange
 but creative...

5.3.2.5 Directive/non-directive

Another point of debate was the directive/non-directive aspect of the pastoral therapy process. A lengthy discussion boils down to what someone terms:

Sam (D): ...and, Arthur, we do listen differently now. I do not listen with the purpose of showing them where they went wrong and then try to rectify the problem with a verse from the Bible; now I am listening to determine what is behind everything... I am more able to bring God's story and our human story together... and you yourself grow together with them in this process. You begin to see things differently, but you still have the Christian principles in which you

Directive/non-directive

The above mentioned abuse especially culminated into a rude directivity from Scripture. It is not, however, the Scriptures that speaks, but rather the superiority of the minister as a person. The latter only uses Scripture to add authority. On the other hand, in my mind, there can be no situation of non-directivity. Even if one presumes to take a position of non-directivity every conversation has a co-constructing side to it, which makes it directive in itself. Directive or non-directive depends on one's understanding of the concept of directivity. In pastoral therapy we came to distinguish between the two as follows: Instead of being harsh, rigid and prescriptive in one's thinking and use of Scripture (i.e. directive) one should assume a guiding posture in which the client is guided to "discover" what the Word of God says about a particular case (i.e. non-directive) (cf. the discussion between researcher and Prof J in conversation G).

believe and our stories are being harmonised with God's story. It is not a *directive* way of doing, but a *guiding* way of doing in which the person, in the end, is able to "discover" for himself the right decision to make.

5.3.2.6 Paradigm and pastoral therapy

The question concerning paradigm is a legitimate one, for pastoral therapy, as it is constructed in this course, needs to express its frame of reference. Part of the discussion went thus:

Prof J (D): Would you accept the social constructionist notion that there are no wrong answers? Let's mention a specific case... Somebody comes to you and says that she has struggled with the Lord and the Lord has specifically indicate that she should have an abortion. It is her construction of the truth between her and the Lord. Would you be able to say that her construction of the truth is just as reliable and acceptable as yours which states that you are not allowed to commit

Paradigm and pastoral therapy

To change one's paradigm is a difficult endeavour. One's way of thinking is deeply rooted in one's culture, belief systems and community of faith. To change one's world view (Becvar and Becvar 1996) is an even more radical process. It is a process in which one is continually moving backward and forward between one's previous stance and the new one. I do not know whether I have made that transition completely yet and neither do the student-participants. However, I do think that we have made significant progress towards postmodernist thinking.

Social constructionist assumptions opened my eyes to what faith is. When one can in no (scientific) way prove what one says in religion one has to believe it. It also opened my eyes to responsibility. Almost as in the song of Boyzone: "No matter what", where the words are: "No matter what they tell you.. No matter what they do... No matter what they teach you... What you

murder?

Eric (D): Most probably just as worthy as an option, even as reliable, but not acceptable at all within our set of principles within our community of faith. It is the same as our construction of baptism. A member of the Apostolic Faith Mission could say, "The Holy Spirit convinced me that I must be baptised again." I can answer that the Holy Spirit has led our church to believe something completely different from that belief. Who is to say which one is right and which one is wrong? However, his conviction is not acceptable within the community of faith that I belong to, therefore he has to relate to another community of faith.

A description of the paradigm used in the narrative of pastoral therapy is defined by Brent (D) as: "If we want to give names to our way of thinking - to our paradigm... it would be within a postmodernist framework; social constructionism with the narrative

believe is true... I can't deny what I believe...". I cannot deny what I believe, therefore I have to take responsibility for it. That means that I have to take responsibility for my own interpretations as well as for the "truth" they constitute.

In addition, what someone else believes, when put next to one's own belief, is of equal worth and reliability although not necessarily as acceptable as one's own. In pastoral therapy one should therefore state one's position - as did Jesus with the ruler in Luke 18:18-24 -but then leave that person to decide whether it is acceptable or not.

In this research it was the intention, from a postmodernist point of departure, to use the assumptions of social constructionism as they precipitate in the narrative approach.

Recognising our theological background is assumed to be part and parcel of the narrative of pastoral therapy as it is co-constructed by all participants within this community of faith. The report on the research

approach as part of it"

narrative will, however, be the responsibility of the researcher alone.

5.4 Conversation G: Between Prof J and supervisor/researcher

Conversation G

5.4.1 Context of conversation

Context of conversation

This was the last of the scheduled conversations and it took place eighteen months after the start of that particular group's (I) training. The conversation took place in the office of Prof J, was scheduled for an hour and was audiotaped. It was a discussion between the supervisor/researcher and the colleague from theology about his (Prof J's) conversation with the masters degree group I. This was again dialogue about dialogue (Andersen 1991). The discussion took place about four months after Prof J's conversation with group I.

The conversation (G) took place quite some time after the first one (D). The delay could have been shorter, but helped us in the sense that only the most relevant issues remained in our thoughts.

It was a discussion within which I also felt that I must be apologetic about some of the stances I took as a pastoral therapist, in the same way that I experienced Prof J to be apologetic about some of his. It was, however, an enriching opportunity that should take place much more often if one is to eliminate misunderstandings and foster intelligibility.

5.4.2 Major themes from conversation G

Major themes from conversation G

Themes that surfaced in conversation G were: *effects of the training, epistemology and paradigm, social construction theory and diaconiology, gains of social*

Effects of the training

I can remember what this course did

construction theory, directive/non-directive, method of training. The theme of directivity was discussed previously and will not be discussed here.

5.4.2.1 Effects of the training

Prof J was asked about his impression of the group (I). His answer culminated in a reflection of the effects of this training course. The student-participants' experience of the course was that they had found solutions to their problem of counselling in their congregations and they were quite enthusiastic about it. The bonding of the group, on the one hand, had the effect of giving them a strong commitment towards one another, but on the other they felt inclined to exclude others to the extent that they, as Prof J (G) says, "largely, become superior".

Another effect of the training, according to Prof J, is that it exposed them to social construction theory in such a way that although they thought they were operating completely from a postmodernist, social constructionist paradigm, they were still firmly within a modernist epistemology. "... some of their

for my pastoral work in the congregation. I cannot actually put it into words, but it has changed the way I approach the ministry. I remember too what one of the student-participants said about the continuing education course as well as the masters degree course - that it was one of the things that had the greatest impact on his life (Eric (D)). The enthusiasm was something that I experienced with virtually all students enrolling for the masters degree course. It was something that kept on growing as the course went on.

I agree that the group cohesion can exclude others, but I wondered if it was the group cohesion or the possibility that they experienced the conversation as an attack (even though it was never meant to be) on what they believed was working so well.

I have mentioned earlier that to change from one world view to another is a process and does not happen overnight. I believe that the process of modifying world views has been

utterances and pronouncements completely contradicted a social constructionist epistemology". This brought the discussion into the realm of epistemology and paradigm.

5.4.2.2 Epistemology and paradigm

Prof J wanted mainly to stress that the gains the student-participants contribute to social construction theory can also be accredited to the poimenic literature. The researcher reflected his opinion as...:

Ben (G): Almost as if they did not realise that they still have one foot in the paradigm in which they were schooled theologically and that they have only just come into contact with a complete new paradigm, they now have the illusion that they are absolutely conversant with the new way of thinking and that they are doing everything accordingly.

...and was replied to:

Prof J (G): Yes, indeed. The whole philosophy

started by this course and I am sure it will not end, but rather continue progressing in future.

Epistemology and paradigm

It is not surprising if the student-participants still use the terms of previous frameworks when they try to express themselves - it is part of growing into something new. At first someone cannot, but have a foot in each of the two world views and as growth commences one will be able to comprehend and describe, to discern and nuance one's new position.

Relativism, subjectivism and the like all mean something to somebody. The reality that exists for us and the reality that we can observe is relative to the theory we use as a metaphor for that reality. The social constructionist paradigm views reality as a dynamic, evolving, changing entity (Becvar and Becvar 1996:336). For the structuralist, however, reality is rigid because it can be known as it is. Every response of man to describe it

of postmodernism and then social construction theory as an aspect of post modernism presupposes very much... if you look at the philosophy thereof you are talking about relativism, subjectivism and the like, and when all these aspects are taken into consideration it would hardly be possible to take a theological, diaconiological point of departure and merge this into a postmodernist paradigm that is the exact opposite of the diaconiological one.

completes the puzzle of reality as it is. Therefore anything measured will be measured in relation to that knowable reality. If something described does not have a firm connection to that reality it becomes relativism in their view. The same with subjectivism. If the unit of analysis is not elementary parts (i.e. outside of oneself) but relationships (i.e. within each participant) it is viewed as subjectivism. To my mind the point of departure (modernist, positivist,

structuralist) then creates the impression that everything described is described objectively (i.e. as something outside of the subject describing it) and therefore gains the status of a universal truth, when actually, from a social constructionist point of view, nothing can be described without it being from within somebody which means that the person describing must take personal responsibility for what is said (Steier 1991) and cannot give his own "conclusions" meta-narrative status. Therefore to create a social coinonial construction of pastoral therapy is to acknowledge that it will assume the characteristics of the theory and/or the model that was used to guide and systematise the observations. From this point of view two things that appear to be exact opposites of each other can be tolerated together. It is as if someone sweeps the concept (Scripture is the only firm, secure point of departure - a fact which from outside of oneself coercing you to bow before it - i.e. an I-must-position, an I-cannot-help, I-cannot-be-blamed-for-it position) off the table and then puts the exact same thing back on the table, but with a difference (Scripture is the only firm, secure point of departure - that is my construction - I have chosen it - an I-want-to position, an I-take-responsibility-for-it position).

5.4.2.3 Social construction theory and diaconiology Social construction theory and diaconiology

Diaconiology, a word, coined from two Greek words and meaning *service to the Word*, states that its point of departure is the firmness and secureness of the Bible. This, according to Prof J, is in direct contrast to the social constructionist notion that there is no such point as an absolutely correct one. Therefore if social construction theory is taken through to its logical consequences, it is impossible to opt for a diaconiological point of departure.

In response to this the researcher posits *faith* as a tangent plane between social construction theory and diaconiology.

Ben (G): It seems to me, considering the training of pastoral therapy, that some tangent plane or planes are being sought between social construction theory and diaconiology. The one tangent plane that I think is possible... I have thought about it often in my own mind, and I wonder if *faith* is not that

The diaconiological point of departure, once it is swept off the table, is put back on (deconstructed - Burr 1995:164-183) by faith. I understand what Prof J says about faith which becomes a certainty. However, when it becomes a certainty for me, it is something that comes from within and therefore something I do take responsibility for.

Speaking of tangent planes, I believe that the very occurrence of the same or more or less the same concepts between poimonic literature and social constructionist notions concerning counselling of others is an indication of relatedness. The intentions and destination are all the same - to help other people to develop a better life - the maps used to arrive differ, but the responsibility (able to respond positively) towards Scripture remains the same. All metanarratives are viewed by social constructionists as abusive because of their totalisation faculties. The Bible, however, as the

something that does make a radical difference. I admit that I accept the claim of social construction theory that we cannot know whether we are correct or not - that is scientifically and ontologically speaking - but if my point of departure is diaconological then I can say "I know" because I *believe*. It seems to me that from a social constructionist approach there would not be a problem if I state that I am opting for a specific construction (point of departure) while I do not claim that this construction is closer to an ontological truth out there, than for instance the Buddhist claims. Now I do believe that in this course we say that we cannot prove scientifically what we say is the truth, but that we *believe* what we say is the truth, and therefore we take responsibility for what we believe. It does seem that we cannot but make choices and once we have made a choice we must take responsibility for it. It is almost as if social construction theory taught me what faith really is. Because, if from a modernist point of view the truth can be

normative, canonical, founding Christian story, works ultimately against totalisation. The Bible can be viewed as the only legitimate metanarrative available because it narrates the historical rootedness of the immanent, liberating interventions of God in human existence, thus making it a narrative eminently consonant with our postmodern times, which tend to be suspicious of ahistorical absolute claims (Middleton & Walsh 1995:87-88). If that is what God wants according to Scripture - that we help other people towards a better life - why then cannot both ways of doing so responsibly, be called service to the Word of God?

I also experience that, from a diaconological point of view social construction theory is viewed as a Trojan horse, whose intention it is to reduce God to a mere construction of human minds, but in that process empties the baby with the bath water. In my mind our interpretation of the truth of Scripture is never at stake in the social coinonial construction of

known as it really is, no faith is necessary - I know the truth and something that is known already does not need to be taken for the truth by faith. However, if I understand that the truths from Scripture and those which I believe from Scripture are truths in faith, and that there is no way in which I can prove scientifically that the Bible is the Word of God more so, for instance, than is the Koran, then I know that I have to make a choice and that choice is a choice taken in faith only. It is then that I say, *faith* makes it possible to have a diaconiological point of departure. In that sense I would say that once you have made a choice - by faith - you would not be able to apply social construction theory to its final consequences.

Prof J (G): I have a problem when someone says that it is merely a choice of faith one makes... this, naturally is true, because we have known, for a long time, that proof of God is no proof at all and that you cannot prove that the Bible is exclusively the Word of God,

pastoral therapy. It is not true to say, even if I take social construction theory through to its logical consequences, that it compels me to abandon my particular construction of The Scriptures as a valid metanarrative or as the truth. So, it being a coinomial construction, that is a construction within a certain community of faith, it enables one to accept the claims as to the truth of that particular coinomia (community of faith).

To empty the baby with the bath water is to deny the insights, better descriptions or finer nuances that social construction theory has to offer to the pastoral therapeutic field. In the pastoral therapeutic field one works with the stories of peoples' lives. The different stories of the same lived experiences show that one has to do with different constructions of this "reality" in peoples' lives. To me, social construction theory brought invaluable insights and finer nuances which the literature in poimenic could not at first produce. Looking back now I realise that it is not the literature that

except if the Holy Spirit convinces you of it. But if the Holy Spirit convinces you of that fact (2Tim.3:16) it becomes more than faith, it becomes a certainty, it becomes knowledge.

A knowledge that enables you to say, as Job did (Job 19:25), "I know my redeemer liveth." Yes, it is faith, but it is also knowledge.

5.4.2.4 New insights of social construction theory

Prof J was reluctant to admit any new insights to pastoral therapy from social construction theory. He would go as far as to say that social construction theory might have confirmed certain things or merely emphasised them. As he states:

Prof J (G): It may be that they brought another approach for some ministers in their pastoral work, but the fact is that those changes have been - for a long time already - inherently, latently or explicitly present in the literature about pastoral work. That was my contention... and although I do respect the

could not provide the insights, but my particular world view at that stage and my lack of practical experience did not enable me to comprehend it.

New insights of social construction theory

The gains of social construction theory does not only lie in its perspective on the particular use of Scripture and prayer within pastoral therapeutic sessions, but also in its perspectives on insights of other disciplines and the use thereof in pastoral therapy. I agree that poimenic literature also reflects some of these, but my experience is that the claims of social construction theory in general opened those perspectives to me in a more comprehensive way. Perhaps my experience is so, because of the overemphasis of theoretical, theological concepts as to the underemphasis of the practical uses of pastoral models and the lack of theory about counselling in the humanities during undergraduate theological training. With hindsight, this is most probably also the reason why, in the

opinions of the students or anyone that is connected with pastoral therapy, my personal feeling is that you cannot linearly find answers in the Bible for every problem and that you cannot nouthetically prescriptively tell somebody that he/she cannot divorce because the Bible says so... the insight that it is a totally wrong approach, that it is a fruitless and potentially disasterous approach also appears in poimenic literature. It is therefore difficult to ascribe it to social construction theory. If you were not exposed to the poimenic literature and you had read this in social constructionist literature, yes, then you can say that social construction theory taught it to you. But if you read the poimenic literature you will find that, in the late seventies already, Clinebell for instance, mentioned the growth formula by which Scripture and prayer is used in counselling. He gives directives for supportive and comforting pastoral work where you will use the Bible frequently, but when psychopathology is involved you would

training of pastoral therapy, the pendulum effect underemphasised the theological aspects (theoretical that is) of pastoral therapy, because of the assumption that the theological underpinnings of each participant were already well developed.

The specific gains for pastoral therapy from social construction theory lie in the basic assumptions it proposes generally, and in the narrative approach to therapy in particular.

Some of the assumptions are:

The map is not the territory. *When people do not have a conscious awareness that the framework or map relative to which they experience meaning is only one possible explanation or guide to the territory known as reality, they become single-theory people, with alternatives limited by their frameworks in the same way that our clients are limited by their frameworks of family life, for instance (Becvar & Becvar 1996:355).*

sometimes even choose not to use the Bible at all. Social construction theory is so much more than the new insights they have mentioned, which, in any case can also be found in the literature of pastoral work.

Ben (G): As I see it, a new insight of social construction theory, is not to have a firm, rigid, prescriptive and systematic plan according to which you do all your therapy. You would rather first listen to the construction of the client about his own story and then, together with him, you will co-construct a new story. The co-construction implies that the therapist, with his own frame of reference and with his own choices in faith, co-writes the client's new story in such a way that the client is enabled to make the same choices as the therapist would within his community of faith.

The rest of the conversation about the new insights of social construction theory led to an agreement that further nuancing through description is what is

Emphasising the relativity of reality and the importance of "context" in shaping constructions of reality (Hardy 1993:14). *When observing a specific pastoral therapeutic session several observers will have several accounts of the same session, which means that even seeing a session - that is being in direct contact with objective observable "reality" as it happens - does not necessitate the same response, results, reality for everybody - emphasising the relativity of reality. The context of the client is an essential element in co-constructing and interpreting reality. I agree with Hardy (1993) when he postulates that when attempting to interpret a situation, it is crucial that the interpreter possesses an understanding of the rules, norms, and values that are relevant within the context of the situation being interpreted. That is also why the title of this study contains the word "coinonial", to take into consideration the cultural and theological context of the participants.*

The client is the expert (Anderson & Goolishian 1992). *Instead of*

needed to have a better perspective of it:

Prof J (G): However, I do have a need for a finer nuance in the formulation of these things, because when it is implied that social construction theory brought about the dawning of this perception, then I still have a problem with that. If I say they place things into a different context for me, it would be a subjective experience and then it fits in with what social construction theory says. Then my construction of this situation is of such a nature that it is better formulated... Social construction theory's formulation is better, but then we should not pretend as if poimenic literature has never said anything about these insights.

approaching peoples' problems as an expert who can diagnose from outside what one's problem is and then recommend a remedy, the pastoral therapist will allow the clients as experts in respect of their own stories, to tell their stories and then co-construct the problem and the solution. This stance will also be taken to enable clients to explain their present understanding of Scriptures and then to co-construct with them new meanings in keeping with the community of faith.

Reconsidering power and hierarchy.

Moving the locus of situational control from the "therapist's turf" to the "client's turf" (Hardy 1993) through the notion of "the client is the expert", is a manifestation of reducing

hierarchical distance and power differentials between clients and therapists. Throughout all the different courses and therapies this stance ensured a comfortable and bold relationship between supervisor and student-participants as well as between therapists and clients.

These, I consider to be some of the major benefits for pastoral therapy from the social constructionist approach. However, this is not given in direct opposition to what I have learnt in pastoral work, rather as enhancing insights that complemented my earlier convictions and perspectives.

5.4.2.5

Method of training

Prof J was asked to compare the conversational, practical method of training to giving lectures. The first part of Prof J's comment was a distinction between undergraduates and post-graduates. The differences between these two groups would have a significant influence on their ability to follow any kind of a training method. It seems as if the undergraduate student has plenty of subjects to cope with and gives priority to tests at the cost of reading work for a particular class discussion.

There is, however, a tendency to move towards a conversational (i.e. co-constructional) form of educating:

Ben (G): If I understand you correctly, you say that the University would encourage lecturers instead of only lecturing also to engage in conversations about the work with students in class?

Prof J (G): Correct, yes, in conversation with

Method of training

A major concern in the method of training within these training courses (Masters degree and continuing education course) was not to focus on the memorisation of content at all, but to concentrate on the meaning of concepts in theory and practice. It seems, however, that undergraduate students have to enter into the language and milieus of particular subjects and therefore cannot avoid memory tests.

The social constructionist notion of training will promote ways in which indoctrination (Young 1990:89), coercing students to identify and reproduce their master's voice (Solas 1994:87), will be avoided in favour of processes of co-evolving and co-creating meaning and understanding (Heshusius 1994). That is to say, both supervisor and student-participant will not consider anything ordained, natural, unalterable or monumental, but rather open to criticism and transformation.

students, discussion groups, students that can form a group and work out a paper and then present it in class and so forth. I don't know if that is specifically postmodern or if it is something that's been with us for a while already. I am not so well acquainted with educational processes that I can identify this as postmodern, but this approach is the policy of the University and it is being used with great success.

Ben (G): Would you say that, within the method of lecturing, students can easily misinterpret learning when they think that the lecturer is an expert who must drum expert knowledge into them and that they can only receive the knowledge as it is and that they must reproduce it as such? It seems to me that students, accept their lecturer as brilliant, knowing virtually everything about this or that, but few of them will challenge him with their understanding or opinion about something. They will accept what he says as gospel.

The form of participation, through discussions by which students must defend their way of understanding, that is encouraged by the University, has postmodern, social constructionist possibilities built into it, for students become active and self-regulated learners. It purports that reality is not simply processed but actively invented or constructed (Fosnot 1984:199).

Numerous books have been written on education, instruction and learning since the start of the nineties: Pasch et al. (1991); Mitchell (1992); Russell and Munby eds. (1992); Harris and Bell (1994); Johnson, Johnson and Holubec (1994), to name but a few. In almost all of them conversation and methods of cooperative learning do get higher priority, but that is not what makes a training method a social constructionist one. One of the differences is the way in which knowledge is viewed: as an accomplished fact outside of oneself or as a co-construction in language within oneself. Another is the difference in power between students

Prof J: I don't think that is the position.

and lecturer.

Prof J goes on to say that there are one or two students who do challenge the lecturer, but he thinks that most of the students are academically inclined enough not to just accept what the lecturer is saying in class.

The problem of lack of practical experience is also a major obstacle for undergraduate students.

Ben (G): Yes, I remembered that in your discussion with the M's, one of them said that they might have heard all this from poimenic, but that, then, they did not understand it as they do now. It sounds to me as if people have memorised a lot of facts without understanding what they have memorised.

Prof J: No, not necessarily Ben... I think there are too many variables. You must just remember that these M's have gained a couple of years of experience in ministry...

What is needed is the mutual participation of all students. I agree that in a setting with large numbers of students in one classroom, there is not enough time for it nor are the students confident enough. The small group method of these post-graduate courses lends itself perfectly to a participatory mode of consciousness in which supervisor and student-participants are virtually equal partners in research and learning.

My contention is that exactly because of a lack of experience and development undergraduate students do not comprehend much of what they are memorising. If the practical experience of post-graduate students has helped that much in their understanding of theory then introducing practical experience much earlier in the education process will prove valuable. As for myself, the specific poimenic literature was on the table and despite the major effort of lecturers and my efforts as a student,

that they have developed skills, their thinking structures have developed. You cannot, therefore, compare what they now experience with their experiences as undergraduates. One cannot expect students to have the ability to show the same insight as someone who has been exposed to the ministry and has developed academically. That is a variable.... a second variable is for example the question if, in the lecturing of poimenic literature then, these things were actually placed on the table or not. In my case, definitely not. So was it because poimenic literature didn't say it or was it a shortcoming in the specific method of training? These are variables that make it difficult to say that it was a flaw of only a specific method of training.

5.5 Conversation F: With clients two months after completion of their pastoral therapeutic process

5.5.1 Context of conversation

The conversation was held at the location of therapy.

memorisation took precedence in studying the material, without me understanding much of it. I suppose it would have been the same for any kind of theory. I think that the importance of participation in constructing meaning and understanding through practice and the discussion thereof in reflexive conversations, made the difference. However, it is time-consuming and I acknowledge that all the other factors that Prof J has mentioned also played a role.

Conversation F

Context of conversation

I thought it would be best to converse in a familiar setting so as to set the clients at ease. I experienced the conversation as remarkably natural. There was no uneasiness in anyone. I presume the emphasis of the reflection on the process and not on the therapist as a person or on the clients as persons enhanced caused a spontaneity amongst everyone.

The therapy was conducted in one room in front of a video camera, while the reflecting team (supervisor included) was in another room viewing the sessions on a monitor. The sessions were videotaped for purposes of reflection by the student-participants. The videotapes were also made available to clients for reflection or for the purposes of information when one of a married couple was not present at a particular session. Both these pastoral therapeutic processes spanned a period of more or less three months and were conducted on a fortnightly basis. The conversation was held together with all the relevant pastoral therapists, all three clients, and with the supervisor/researcher. It was held two months after completion of their pastoral therapy. The clients were briefed about the purpose of the conversation and did not mind participating with other clients in the same conversation. The purpose of the conversation was to reflect on the pastoral therapy that they had experienced. The conversation was audiotaped and later transcribed so that it could be read and re-read, thereby enhancing reflexivity.

I was pleasantly surprised by the cheerful demeanour of the clients and by their enthusiasm to participate in the conversation. While Beth was a housewife, Sarah was a social worker and Jack a personnel manager with some knowledge of psychology. I was glad to have someone who was more or less acquainted with some of the jargon that we used, or at least in a counselling capacity, as well as some who were completely foreign to it. I told them about the research and they were quite willing and honoured to be a part of it. I was honoured as well because of their willingness to participate. I was glad that I had asked them not to butter us up, but to feel free to say precisely what their perceptions of the pastoral therapeutic process were.

Major themes of conversation (F)

It was both a revealing and rewarding experience to speak to clients about their experiences of pastoral therapy. At first I was anxious about what these conversations would reveal - most

5.5.2 Major themes of this conversation (F)

Themes extracted from this conversation add the perspective of clients to the story of pastoral therapy and pastoral therapy training. Although this conversation documented the reflections of only three clients from two different pastoral therapy processes, these and similar responses were repeated in other conversations with clients about their experience of pastoral therapy as well as the training thereof. The themes were:

Clients' experiences of pastoral therapy, the effect of pastoral therapy on them, clients' experiences of the 'pastoral' part of pastoral therapy and clients' experiences of the reflecting team in pastoral therapy were reflected upon.

5.5.2.1 Clients' experiences of pastoral therapy

Clients experience pastoral therapy as something that helps one to talk about one's own story in such a way that one's own story is reflected back to oneself. This reflection creates an inner language within

probably because I still thought in 'right/wrong'-terms instead of in terms of meaning and understanding. Eventually the talks with clients about pastoral therapy helped me to experience a re-storying of clients' biases against the counselling of ministers in general. Things that I was afraid of being accused of - like being judgemental or not being able to understand the lifeworld of clients because we are clergymen, et cetera - did not happen.

Clients' experiences of pastoral therapy

To me it is absolutely vital that pastoral therapy should enable clients to tell their story. It was quite a problem when, in my first years of ministry, members of my congregation came for help and expected me to do all the talking. They expected me to have all the answers and mostly verbalised this as well by saying: "Just tell us what to do and we will do it". The dialogical process where clients could speak about their experiences of their problem and then have the

which clients can think about what they themselves say and think and do.

opportunity of non-reactive reflection brings to my mind another kind of inner talk within clients.

Jack (F): I basically found out how I myself was thinking and naturally, in our case, I could also hear what my wife was saying. I heard things that she never told me directly... or I was never able to hear... now she could speak or I could hear through a third party. I think the whole process is aimed at effective communication... absolute open communication.

One kind of (pathologising) inner talk occurs when clients measure themselves against the judgments of ministers, however politely, and conclude that they are bad and not able to do anything about it, other than repent and be saved. Another kind occurs when they are enabled through (generative) inner talk to produce more and more alternatives for solutions of problems experienced and conclude that they are able to change what is wrong.

I responded to that statement as indicated below and everyone agreed with it by nodding their heads.

Ben (F): You feel that the process made it possible for you to hear each other? Without the process it was difficult to hear what the other had to say?

Part of what we as ministers experience is that members of our congregations do not want to come to us as ministers with their problems for fear of being censured. To me it was therefore crucial to rewrite that experience with every client that I came into contact with. In all the conversations that we had with clients about pastoral therapy we never had one that experienced judgemental

Initially we found several clients appearing very nervous in the presence of a group of ministers. One of the clients voiced this feeling (cf. Jack (F)):

Beth (F): I just want to say that I was scared to come to you as ministers because I thought that you would reject me or censure me because of the fact that I am divorced. I must thank you that I never felt that I was being censured. It was enough of a struggle. I did struggle with God a lot. I know He does not approve of divorce and yet my situation became unbearable. Thank you that I got the impression from you that my feelings were normal, that it is normal to go through all these stages - I can talk about myself now - I am normal, I am not a freak. That to me was very special and I think it made a big difference in the healing process.

Her pastoral therapist (also her local minister) commented:

Kevin: I remember that when Beth initially came to me, I realised that she often expected me to say how bad she was. I think it was quite liberating for her to realise that I was not about to condemn her, but to work

feelings at all. When they were asked about their experience of pastoral therapy most reflected, without being specifically asked about it, a fear of judgment, but declared that the fear was misplaced. Their spontaneous remarks about fear of censure, because we are ministers told me that most members of a congregation felt that censure would be applied rather than counselling.

It is as if clients expect to be censured and ordered to do the right thing. Maybe that is why most of the student participants' views of directivity was that it means to become domineering and instructive. It is like a negative circle where the actions of ministers and clients influence each other resulting in clients, as I have mentioned above, asking the minister to be directive.

The aim in training was therefore to sensitise student-participants to value-judgements made in the course of therapy. Such judgements were highlighted during the reflexive

together with her on her problem.

Jack (F) referred to the counselling as "they reflected only our feelings or opinions and never made value-laden judgements about us as humans". Later on Beth (F) said that she experienced the reflections as positive and that she never felt threatened or dominated.

5.5.2.2 The effect of pastoral therapy on clients

Many of the fears of clients for pastoral help are eliminated through the social constructionist approaches to therapy. The clients experienced no censure from the pastoral therapists, and had the opportunity to talk about pastoral therapy and the training thereof, thereby deconstructing their fears.

Narrative theory such as: the client is the expert (Anderson & Goolishian 1992), the reflecting team and the reflecting process (Andersen 1991, 1995), the externalising of the problem (Epston & White 1989-1991; White 1995), and extending the conversation by writing letters (Epston 1994), are specifically designed to enable therapists not to be abusive,

conversations about particular therapy sessions and deconstructed in order to generate alternative skills in responding to information given by clients. By internalising (making it part of themselves) relevant theory, these skills were enhanced. By speaking about theory, applying theory in practice and discussing the same theory again after application in therapy, student-participants were enabled to form an own understanding of theory and develop an own non-judgemental, non-abusive way to apply theory in practice. The negative effect of pastoral therapy on clients could thus be minimised.

The effect of pastoral therapy on clients

What I have experienced is that clients change from within. They are enabled to, from within, make responsible choices, that is to take responsibility for problems they have experienced. I remember that in the conversation (D) between Prof J and the masters degree group (I), Prof J asked the student-participants if pastoral therapy is the

judgemental or totalising.

The process helped clients to limit reactivity as Sarah (F), said that in her problem solving attempts before pastoral therapy:

Sarah (F): It was as if aggression was present before I made my point. This process helped me tremendously to release all those bottled up feelings that I kept inside for so long.

Writing letters also enabled the unspoken to be said and to realise the negative effects thereof on one's life (cf. Sarah (F) and Beth (F)). The negative effects are not only realised, but are traced and documented and this gave clients the edge to get a grip on their problems and even solve them:

Sarah (F): Even more than did the sessions, I think that the letters that I had to write helped me to say things that have never been said, but in a controlled manner because a letter cannot react and become angry. Writing the letters helped me to realise how I felt inside,

same as the Educative Therapy of Hiltner - to help people to help themselves? They answered negatively, and I agree, and yet I must say pastoral therapy utilises most of the positive things Hiltner says. I also cannot agree with some of the criticism of Hiltner's work, for instance by De Klerk (1978). I think, for example, there are other interpretations of a concept such as "help people to help themselves" not only humanistic ones. To me there is only one thing that God did vicariously, in our place, without us moving a finger, and that is to die on the cross for our sins - so as to pay for our sins. For the rest of our needs on earth He is using other people, like doctors, pastoral therapists, et cetera, but He is also using our own abilities and therefore our own responsibilities to heal us. To say that you help people to help themselves is not to deny that God is at work in and through us. I don't think that this is a denial of proclamation either, because then Beth would not have been able to come to the conclusion that she is now able to face her problem and yet realise that

to see what these things did to me and to counter them. It gave me wonderful deliverance.

Beth (F) felt that there was no one that could help her anymore, and that she needed to be challenged about her own way of looking at things. Pastoral therapy helped her to see "deliverance where I thought none was possible" and made her realise that she is able "to do the right thing".

Beth (F): You actually "tricked" me into experiencing that I am able, with the help of God, to face my problem and now I do believe that is true.

5.5.2.3 Clients' experiences of the 'pastoral' dimension of pastoral therapy

On my question about the use of the Bible or prayer in pastoral therapy the response was as follows:

Beth (F): I am a very religious person. I know we cannot do anything without God's help.

she is doing so with the help of God.

Pastoral therapy initiates a process that enables clients to resolve life's problems, while acknowledging the hand of God in the process, whether He uses other people as His instruments, or the abilities of the clients themselves.

Student-participants were encouraged to enable clients to extend the therapeutic conversations by writing letters to clients summarising the positive turning points in the therapy process (Epston 1994). They were also trained to give assignments to clients within which they had to write letters as a means of documenting their history. In this way clients could see their problem saturated stories and re-write them. In this way they became knowledgemakers and knowledgemakers are knowledgeable (Epston & White 1989-1991:24). Thus clients become empowered and reshape their landscape of identity.

I knew that you were all ministers and accepted that you would have a religious approach to helping people. I expected that you would link my mistakes to the Bible and that I would then have to confess them before being helped... I was surprised that you did not use the Bible in that way... Thank you that you prayed for me... (Tears). I know now that God really loves me and does not hold my divorce against me... If you did not... (more tears)... then surely He will not either.

Jack (F): I never even expected you to read or pray. When Kevin did use the Bible.... it fitted our situation... it was... sort of easier to understand... and to accept what God was saying to us. We also appreciated the prayers, but even more valuable to us was when Kevin said that he would pray for us even when we were not present.

Sarah (F): To me the Bible and the prayers just came naturally... it felt right at the time. We

Clients' experiences of the 'pastoral' dimension of pastoral therapy

The contention of pastoral therapy is that the relationship between the pastoral therapist and God directs the minister's relationship with clients in the pastoral therapeutical process, as well as his conduct of that process.

It is my experience that the relationship between clients and God improves during the pastoral therapy process even though their relationship to God never, explicitly, became an issue. This was apparent in both of the processes reflected upon in conversation F. In Beth's case I felt a strong identification of the minister as the representative of God; everything he does is therefore pastoral.

Pastoral therapy is therefore inclined to a quite natural use of Scripture and prayer in the therapeutical process and I do not believe that it takes away anything from the proclamational character or that it compromises the beliefs of the community of faith in any way. Rather it guides clients to gain

could never have felt that you were overwhelming us with the Bible, because you have not used it much... as I said... only at the right time.

insights that enable them to "find" values for themselves and implement them. The reflecting team, being members of the community of faith, might as well be called a coinomial team.

5.5.2.4 Clients' experiences of the reflecting team in pastoral therapy

Clients' experiences of the reflecting team in pastoral therapy

In general, clients' experiences of the reflecting team were strange initially, but they got used to it in no time. Jack (F) said that the reflecting team opened his eyes to the fact that the same words can mean different things to different people. The challenges from the team were experienced as "open and beneficial", and their reflections were free from any value judgements. He appreciated that the team never told them where their problem lay, but rather allowed them to realise that for themselves. "That made the difference", he said.

If ever there was a method that sustained the social constructionist notion then the reflecting team concept (Andersen 1991) is just that. In pastoral therapy, which works with the lifeworld of clients, one has to do with different constructions of the same events in peoples' lives. The reflecting team offers an array of different constructions of certain accounts of events in clients' stories. The way in which they are offered though, is not as if they are rigid representations of reality that can be quite manipulative and totalising, but rather as possibilities from which clients can choose. The more the difference and variety of reflections the higher the value for clients. This enables clients

Beth expressed her opinion about the reflecting team in the same fashion:

Beth (F): I also experienced finding my own

answers... always in dependence upon God, but still you supported me so that I could see things differently for myself and then respond differently... not in a problematic way. You never told me: "You have to do this", or: "You are not allowed to do that". You actually "tricked" me into experiencing that I am able, with the help of God, to face my problem and now I do believe that is true. Your validation also meant so much to me. I felt I could trust you at a time when it felt as if the whole world just wanted to abuse me.

In working with Sarah (F) about her letters, she pointed to the benefit of reading one's letter to people one knows will not condemn one. She goes on to say: "Your reflection opened so many perspectives that it is hard to put them into words. All I know is that it started something in me that enabled me to look differently to the problems of the past... and it helps"!

When she was challenged by the supervisor about the possible soft-soaping of the team, the conversation

to develop an ability to create for themselves different ways of looking at the same event, which provides room for different opinions in a particular relationship and therefore for different reactions towards each other. This form of reflecting what the clients had to say is a way in which the voices of clients can be made to be heard. They are able to hear what the other spouse has to say and they gain the experience of being heard (Andersen 1993).

The reflecting team gives ample opportunity for safe challenging, which means that one can say something as a possibility in conversations with others about the therapeutic content, which is not threatening at all when compared to saying the same thing outright to the client. The verbal observations of team members initiates processes in the inner language of clients and in the interaction between clients that will be part of their resources for ever.

The reflecting team does not function as an indoctrination squad that is supposed to brainwash clients with

went thus:

Ben (F): I wonder... if somebody tells you:

"Wait a bit, those people only told you a lot of positive stuff, they never focused on the things that you did wrong. How can you believe them? What would you say?

Sarah (F): It is not as if you never focused on negative patterns... I think you just never censured us and accepted our view of things, even if you disagreed. I don't know... it seems as if you just reflected our views and that was what made it possible for us to see them from the outside and make our own judgement about them, and maybe change our views. I was challenged about how I reacted towards my first husband by writing about my own actions in one of the letters, and even when you reflected upon negative things it was done in such a positive way that it was acceptable to me... and effective.

their smooth talking positive remarks as if the reflecting team is the active instrument of remedy itself. If they wanted to do that, they would have had to agree on everything and hammered it home, not leaving the client any other option. This kind of treatment would have been controlling and directive resulting in clients feeling crushed, devastated and submissive (White 1995). Instead it offers the real meanings of people that are earnest in their intentions to help and are quite prepared to differ from one another so as to give clients the opportunity to sift through the reflections for those constructions that are most valid to their specific circumstances.

By accepting these people as they were, by giving them a wider perspective through multiple reflections and by allowing them the responsibility to choose, I believe that they were properly guided - consistent with both the social constructionist notion and the Scriptures as a basis of the community of faith.

6 Summary

Chapter five was a bird's eye view of the empirical part of the study, commenting on the different training courses. Both the Masters degree course and the continuing education course on pastoral therapy were explained in terms of duration, form and participants. Several of the reflexive conversations that were recorded were discussed in accordance with the various topics that arose from them. In this way many comments were made, concerning pastoral therapy, as to its nature, epistemology, paradigm, and theoretical underpinnings. All of these form part of the narrative of pastoral therapy.

In the last chapter a report on the narrative of pastoral therapy will be delivered.

CHAPTER SIX

REFLECTING ON THE SOCIAL COINONIAL CONSTRUCTION OF PASTORAL THERAPY IN CLERGY TRAINING

1 Introduction

To be consistent with the chosen epistemology and paradigm of social construction theory this last chapter will not be a conclusion within which the results or the findings of research are presented. In stead it will be a research report (Kotzé 1994), summarising the different aspects of pastoral therapy and pastoral therapy training as described and discussed in the previous chapters. It could thus be seen as a further training and research dialogue or reflection (Steier 1991). The intention is therefore that the research report will serve as a last extended inner dialogue of the researcher on this specific research programme: *the social coinonial construction of pastoral therapy in clergy training*. This research project can be perceived as but one small dialogue within the ongoing (Becker 1991) pastoral therapy and pastoral therapy training discourse. The process of conversations and reflections will accordingly continue as long as the researcher is involved in pastoral therapy training (Kotzé 1994).

Using a methodology that was in accordance with and part of the social construction discourse, the research report will also be recursive inner language on the research process or methodology in itself (Longino 1990; Steier 1991b; Becvar & Becvar 1996).

Pastoral therapy and pastoral therapy training have their roots in three different worlds.

These three worlds were discussed in the first part of the study in dialogue with theory and the researcher's own frames of references. The three worlds are that of Social Construction Theory, Practical Theology, and Pedagogy. In the second part of the study the empirical endeavour was described through dialogue between various groups and persons. The reflection in this chapter will therefore be concerned with aspects of the different discourses that form part of the social coinomial construction of pastoral therapy and the training thereof: discourses such as the social construction discourse (chapter 2), the practical theology and the pastoral work discourse (chapter 3), the discourse in pedagogy (chapter 4) and how all these were reflected in the conversations of the different training courses (chapter 5).

2 Pastoral therapy and social construction discourse

2.1 Suppositions

Language, meaning and knowledge are some of the main concepts of the epistemology and paradigm within which the research project, the pastoral therapy training courses and pastoral therapy itself were co-constructed. The suppositions of the social construction discourse as it figures in this research project are summarised as follows:

- Major conceptual eras were constitutive of how people perceived, interpreted and described reality.
- Human systems generate meaning through language.

- The 'Self' of a person is constituted by major conceptual eras.
- Reality is socially constructed through discourses that act as social systems of meaning.
- Knowledge and learning come about within a social and conversational process.
- Power and knowledge are two sides of the same coin in social constructionist epistemology.
- Narrative deconstruction enables change.
- Ethics and responsibility are two sides of the same coin as viewed from a social constructionist perspective.
- Research is a collaborative event with reflexivity between culture, community, theory and all participants.
- Discourse is the vehicle that enables stories and language to constitute peoples' lives.

2.2 Aspects of the social constructionist discourse

The co-construction of pastoral therapy and pastoral therapy training came about through

a conversational process. Some aspects discussed were language, meaning and understanding, power/knowledge, objectivity/subjectivity and inter-subjectivity, sensitivity in respect of the marginalised, discourses of self, and cultural sensitivity.

2.2.1 Language, meaning and understanding

Everything that we know is derived from negotiated meaning. It is when people are interacting in language, through everyday discourses and institutionalised discourses, that meanings are shared and understanding occurs. Likewise in this research project meaning and understanding co-constructed through dialogue' narrated pastoral therapy and pastoral therapy training.

The co-creation of meaning and understanding was established through dialogue within which all the participants accepted responsibility to take part. Within this multitude of conversations theory was discussed. Although both modernist theories and postmodern discourses were included in the range of reading material for student-participants, they were deconstructed within a social construction discourse. The meanings of these theories were discussed in dialogue between all participants as social constructions and not as ontological truths about peoples' lives. However, this did not completely prevent student-participants from being influenced by modernism for they still sometimes use postmodern ideas and concepts in a modern way.

Social constructionist theories and models, the Linguistic approach, the Narrative approach and a Reflecting Team approach, formed the centre of the pastoral therapeutic narrative,

while theories and models from the modernist stance were included in a marginal way. Modernist theories and models form part of the heritage of pastoral therapy and are therefore respected, interpreted and incorporated, albeit through a social constructionist lens.

2.2.2 Power/knowledge

The roles of the student leader and the student-participants were deconstructed as a mutual relationship that is more egalitarian than that usually existing between lecturer and student. The student-leader becomes a conversational artist who not only facilitates conversations, but participates in them so as to become a learner himself. The student-participants' contributions are viewed as equally valid and sometimes place the student-participant in the position of student-leader. In this way power/knowledge is shared and all are viewed as experts and not only the teachers.

This increased the creativity more than a one-way flow of "correct" information would have and therefore diversity and multiplicity were enhanced. The individual pastoral therapeutic styles of student-participants were validated and developed without negating cooperation with others. A both/and position rather than a purely individualistic stance was promoted that created space for both individual thoughts as well as theory and inputs from others.

2.2.3 Objectivity/subjectivity and inter-subjectivity

The knowledge gained through the co-construction of pastoral therapy is viewed as

constructed knowledge that is inter-subjective and therefore meaningful to specific people in a specific time and place. It also means that knowledge itself, and therefore pastoral therapy, is never an accomplished fact as if it is some objective ontological entity outside of oneself, which can be fully known, but rather it is an ever evolving narrative that will evolve according to the needs, understanding and meanings of people. In this social constructionist discourse, the observer is understood to be part of that which is observed, and thus may only describe observing systems.

2.2.4 Sensitivity in respect of the marginalised

One of the more destructive effects of modernism is the unwritten belief that the majority are right and that their views determine the dominant values of society. These beliefs carry with them the danger of totalisation which results in the devaluation and suppression of other stories. This was deconstructed to prevent pastoral therapy from becoming a totalising practice.

2.2.5 Discourse of 'Self'

The 'Self' was constructed as a multiplicity of selves within one person as that person moved from one subject stance to another. Relationships, conversations and language within the co-construction of pastoral therapy constituted not only pastoral therapy but eventually also the therapeutic-self of each student-participant. Student-participants were helped to construct these selves within family-of-origin work as well as through the different subject stances they all encountered in discussions of theory, therapy situations and

supervision.

2.2.6 Cultural sensitivity

The concept of cultural sensitivity was internalised because of exposure to people from other cultural groups. It provided concepts of otherness against which our constituted order of things could be reflected so as to add new meaning. Cultural sensitivity also meant that the localised ideas of one's own culture should be thoroughly acknowledged and accounted for in conversations with other people and with one another. This was enhanced through family-of-origin work with each student-participant throughout the duration of the courses.

2.3 Connecting reflections

In this reflection I will tend to the following research problem questions: What would be the influence of postmodernist paradigms on pastoral therapy? If one departs from social construction theory as a postmodern epistemology how will pastoral therapy be co-constructed?

I acknowledge the cultural and conceptional influences of major conceptual eras (Cahoone 1996) in the story of pastoral therapy. The influences of the postmodern era, particularly through the paradigm of social construction theory (Gergen 1985; 1994), moved the perception of pastoral therapy as something "out there" (Campbell 1987; Semin and Gergen 1990) to the realisation of pastoral therapy as generated through human systems (Anderson & Goolishian 1988; Becker 1991; Shotter 1993). This means that we cannot come closer

to a perfect way of doing pastoral therapy or to a description of the components of a perfect pastoral therapy which will be universally accepted as the "truth", everywhere and at any time. Contrary to the general notion of accepting theorists' ideas as "truths" this research programme encouraged student participants to develop their own ideas and their own knowledge. Pastoral therapy, therefore, relates to a "multiverse" (many viewpoints) rather than a "univers" (a single objective reality) (Becvar & Becvar 1996). Pastoral therapy, thus, has a distinctive locality (Söderqvist 1991) as it is socially constructed by specific people in a specific location, within a specific culture at a specific time. This also means that the knowledge and learning, as well as the teaching/training of pastoral therapy, remains open ended to be instructed reflexively (Kvale 1992) by everybody who is influenced by it. This open-endedness and reflexivity makes pastoral therapy an ethical and responsible endeavour within which power/knowledge (Foucault 1980; Steedman 1991) is replaced by cooperation and reflexivity in conversational (Shotter 1993) processes. It also encourages a sensitivity (Hare-Mustin & Marecek 1988) towards marginalised people. In doing pastoral therapy one would therefore not accept problems as "out there" but rather co-construct "problems" in language (O'Hanlon 1994) within the therapeutical process and then in the same way co-construct solutions to those "problems". Once problems are conceived of as constructions in language (i.e. as narratives) it seems to lose its power over clients and this enables clients to take control of their situations and allow their new stories to constitute their lives (White & Epston 1990; Morgan 2000).

Pastoral therapy was therefore co-constructed in language, by all participants, including theory, culture, belief systems, family, education, and our specific community of believers, through multiple conversations.

An influence of postmodernist paradigms on pastoral therapy, therefore, is that pastoral therapy is open to multiple descriptions (Gergen 1991) of the same "problem". It is also open to a plurality of outcomes, therefore, pastoral therapy as it is socially constructed tends to complement and expand the one-and-only-solution concept of the modernist perspective. I conclude that this one-and-only-solution concept is consistent with the modernist stance that there is a one-to-one correspondence between what is "in our heads" and "what is out there" (Becvar & Becvar 1996:335), creating a tendency to reify our concepts or constructs. This reification can then become abusive and totalising (Middleton & Walsh 1995). Rather pastoral therapy, through social construction theory, is inclined to respect the constructions of people about their lives, for they are the "experts" of their own being, by giving legitimacy to their voices through reflecting discussions - influences of the reflecting team approach (Andersen 1987; 1991; 1992; 1996; Becvar & Becvar 1996).

2.4 Critical reflection

All the participants did not succeed in maintaining a social constructionist stance all the time. I experienced how we can still be dragged along by the power/knowledge of logical positivism. At times this also caused me to be caught in a double bind: while traditional quantitative, empirical research is still being recognised on so many fronts as the primary way to make valid knowledge claims by objectively proving or falsifying something, it felt as if traditional practical theology would not recognise the research with which I am busy, because I am not proving or falsifying anything. By allowing this, I feel that I have sometimes allowed possible meanings or understandings and perceptions to be obstructed by a single "truth". It also happens that concepts from the social construction discourse can

become absolute "truths" for example, the stance to have more equality between therapist and client can become equal to: social constructionist pastoral therapists cannot abuse power. Therefore another fear is the potential use of theory from the social construction discourse to rationalise or obscure the introduction of a disingenuous or misguided form of therapist powerlessness into practice. As Golann (1988:56) states: "Power obscured eventually emerges - a therapeutic wolf clad as a second order sheep".

3 Pastoral therapy and practical theology discourses

Since pastoral therapy is linked to theology, its place in the theological spectrum was plotted by allowing theory and experience to co-narrate pastoral therapy in respect of theology. Several of the discourses within the field of practical theology were discussed so as to map the route of pastoral therapy's story. This was done by a discussion of practical theology's history, by the different approaches to practical theology, by referring to the subject field of practical theology and by determining the relationship between theory and praxis in practical theology.

The discourses about the philosophical contributions of Gadamer, Ricoeur and Habermas shows the philosophical connection of pastoral therapy as it was co-constructed in this research. The Family Therapy Movement with its transition from the modernist approaches to general systems theory to postmodernist approaches of family therapy, paved part of the way for the emergence of the same transition within the circles of pastoral therapy, especially pastoral therapy as it was co-constructed in this research.

3.1 History

History tells the tale of practical theology's fluctuation between incorporating empirical insights and incorporating theological theoretical insights: From Bavinck with his openness to human experience to Kuyper and Barth with their exclusive emphasis on the Holy Scriptures. To my mind, Barth's dialectical theology, together with the positivist world view, formed a firm foundation upon which reformed theology was built and developed a barrier through which the empirical and the social sciences could hardly break. Pastoral therapy as it was co-constructed through the lens of social construction theory in this research, seems as if it falls back on the initiating work of Bavinck and yet does not depart from Scripture as the norm.

3.2 Different approaches to practical theology

The correlative approach with its openness towards operational science has many tangent planes with pastoral therapy especially in the realm of religious communicative operations. Within the correlative approach several other approaches appeared with a finer nuance in the relationship between theory and praxis so as to have a firm base for criticism to back up the normative aspect of empirical research. The hermeneutical approach, because it has to do with understanding is also particularly close to pastoral therapy with its use of conversations to constitute meaning and understanding. The social constructionist epistemological approach resembles pastoral therapy because it departs from the same assumptions regarding reality, knowledge, self-reference and dialectic processes.

3.3 Subject field and theory/praxis

Pastoral therapy concerns itself with communicative acts and therefore is able to breach the traditional divisions within the subject area. Pastoral therapy sometimes concerns itself with people outside the church and an endeavour that intervenes the faith outside the church is still a valid object of study within practical theology. The relationship between theory and praxis is of importance to pastoral therapy, and student-participants had to incorporate both with every single communicative action during the whole of their respective courses. The best description for the balance between the two is that of the poles of an ellipse. The one cannot be stronger than the other for then an ellipse is not possible. Pastoral therapy aims at not disturbing the balance between the two and leaves room for both practitioners and theorists alike.

3.4 Discourse about the representatives from the social sciences

Pastoral therapy has to do with the interactions between ourselves and others as well as our tradition. Gadamer contributed to research of this kind of endeavour by giving a communicative character to our interactions with one another and with tradition. Habermas succeeded in producing a form of critique through validity claims to enhance Gadamer's hermeneutical phenomenology. Habermas' critical theory of communicative action formed a basis for dialogue in the research of pastoral therapy and pastoral therapy training. Ricoeur with his method in interpretation has enhanced our understanding of discourse and the way discourse was used in the social coinomial construction of pastoral therapy.

3.5 Family therapy

Family therapy took two directions of developing, one consistent with the notion of empiricism or objective reality and the other consistent with second-order cybernetics and social construction theory. The latter viewed reality as constructed and rather than discovering it, behaviour creates it. In pastoral therapy, as in this second-order cybernetics direction of family therapy, the observers become part of the observed and co-construct the realities of relationships through language.

3.6 Pastoral work discourses

There is an ongoing debate in pastoral work about the relationship between theology and psychology. Two extremes should be avoided: that there is no place at all for psychology within pastoral work and that pastoral work becomes mere psychology. Pastoral action is usually termed in correlation with the specific model that it used, for example: the *kerygmatic* model of Thurneysen which focused on the proclamation of Scripture and the *eductive* model of Hiltner that makes eductive use of psychology.

De Jongh van Arkel (1988; 1999) distinguishes between different modes of pastoral work: *mutual care* - spontaneous care amongst believers; *pastoral care* - administered by church officials and pastoral co-workers in a congregation; *pastoral counselling* - tertiary level of pastoral work done by the professional minister, and *pastoral therapy* - relating to psychotherapy and differing in depth and length to pastoral counselling.

The *epistemology of communal dialogue* of Dill (1996) forms an alternative epistemology to that of the standard scientific method (logical positivism and empiricism) for pastoral therapy. The epistemology of communal dialogue resides knowledge in relationships or communal interaction. Pastoral therapy, therefore, exists in dialogue and is not normatively oriented, but departs from a 'not-knowing' position. It paves the way for discourse with other theories through an intertextual relation.

3.7 Connecting reflections

In this reflection I will tend to the following research problem question: Will one be able to build a bridge between modernist theology and postmodernist pastoral therapy through social construction theory?

The elucidation of the social sciences liberated practical theology from speaking about the church only in rigid, inflexible, infallible theological terms and concepts (Heitink 1993). Social construction theory (Gergen 1985; 1991) paved the way for interaction between different disciplines and allowed for their voices to be heard by one another. Also, within a specific discipline, different approaches were able to be integrated or allowed to exist parallel to one another. The correlative approach to practical theology favours an operational science concept (Pieterse 1993; Van Wyk 1995). Pastoral therapy as it was co-constructed in this research relates to an approach based on dialectics and the criticism of ideology (Van Wyk 1995), for it supposes a dialectical relation between theory and praxis and strives to obliterate totalising practices. However, the closest resemblance of pastoral therapy to a practical theological approach is found in the social constructionist

epistemological approach (Dill 1996). In this approach, as in pastoral therapy, recursiveness of processes (Kotzé 1994), self reference (Von Foerster 1984) of the therapist, and dialectic processes (Sluzki 1985) are of importance.

Pastoral therapy wants to maintain a perfect balance between theory and praxis for it identifies with the task of practical theology as the correlation of critically-appraised theological theory with critically-investigated praxis (Maddox 1991; Pieterse 1993). Pastoral therapy, also finds itself comfortable with a praxis-theory-praxis movement (Müller 1996), because this allows for reciprocal instruction.

Influences from the social sciences through Gadamer (Pieterse 1993) gave pastoral therapy a broadened rationality by focussing on its communicative character. Gadamer does not want to test knowledge from the lifeworld, but rather asks how one can learn from tradition (How 1995). This relates to the narrative nature of pastoral therapy, which is not as such concerned about the facts of one's history, but rather how one can create meaning and understanding to learn from it. Influences from Ricoeur (Thompson 1981b) co-constructed pastoral therapy as meaningful actions that have significance beyond the moment (Capps 1984). Ricoeur's interpretation of meaningful action as written texts (Thompson 1981b) relates to the narrative approach (White & Epston 1990) to pastoral therapy for the meaningful actions of people finds its way to written letters which creates a world that exceeds originally intended meanings and is always open to new interpretation. Habermas influenced the narrative of pastoral therapy with his theory about communicative action that is guided by the idea of reaching a consensus through mutual understanding and dialogue (Thompson 1981a; How 1995). His contribution also provided a form of critique through

inter-subjectivity (Pieterse 1993) whereby in pastoral therapy people can co-construct solutions through inter-subjective agreement about what is to count as right, proper, fair and so forth.

Developments in family therapy such as the move from modernism to postmodernism is significant to a social constructionist approach to pastoral therapy. It provided postmodernist assumptions (reciprocal causality, holistic perspective, dialectical process, freedom of choice/proactive, patterns, here-and-now focus et cetera) that underpin the narrative approach to pastoral therapy (Becvar & Becvar 1996). It also assumes that human systems are language-generating and meaning-generating systems and the therapeutic system is a problem-organising, problem-dis-solving system in which the therapist and the family members are equal participants in the constructing process (Anderson & Goolishian 1992).

The epistemology of communal dialogue (Dill & Kotzé 1997) as it connects to the social construction theory of Gergen (1991) promotes a social basis from where an intertextual relation to other theories becomes possible. Because knowledge resides in relationships or communal interaction and because of this intertextual relation to other theories, these approaches have built a bridge between modernist theology and postmodernist pastoral therapy.

3.8 Critical reflection

Although I have attempted the construction of an intertextual relation between discourse

in practical theology and discourse in social construction theory through multiple conversations between all the participants in this research programme, it only constitutes the beginning of such a relationship and much remains to be done to promote intelligibility and adaptability between a postmodern social construction discourse and a modernistic theological framework.

4 Pastoral therapy and discourse in pedagogy

4.1 Teaching/learning through conversations

Pastoral therapy training blends in with social constructionist modes of teaching/learning. Because knowledge is constructed through language, conversations are necessary for teaching/learning. Multiple conversations were used in the training of pastoral therapy. These conversations included conversations among student-participants, student-participants and study leader, student-participants and clients, student-participants and their family-of-origin, culture, community of faith, other colleagues in education, et cetera. In these conversations reflexivity and reflection were inevitable and formed an inter-subjective basis for validity and critique.

4.2 Position of study leader, student-participants and clients

The position of the study leader was deconstructed so as to make him a participant in the co-constructing of pastoral therapy and the selves of student-participants were co-created in the different positions they had to fill. Supervision and evaluation were done

cooperatively and more egalitarian relationships between study leader and student-participants and between student-participants and clients were established by giving everyone the opportunity to hear her/his own voice and have it positively validated and reflected upon.

4.3 Social constructionist assumptions for teaching/learning/training

The assumptions, as are listed here, are also used in pastoral therapy training: asks what?; reciprocal causality; wholistic; dialectical; subjective perceptual; freedom of choice/proactive; patterns; here-and-now-focus; relational; contextual and relativistic.

4.4 Supervision and evaluation

Different forms of supervision were done. These forms include, individual/group supervision, live supervision and documented supervision. Supervision was done, not to impose a certain expert way of doing pastoral therapy, but to guide (other than direct) student-participants to an own style of and approach to pastoral therapy.

Evaluation is done from start to finish on a continual basis. Student-participants were enabled to participate in the evaluation of one another and could even ask each other's opinion on questions in the eventual final examination. Even evaluation is geared to develop the student-participant's understanding of pastoral therapy for she/he was given yet another opportunity to change her/his position. Evaluation, therefore, is allowed to act back upon pastoral therapy and the training thereof so as to form part of the construction process

of pastoral therapy and pastoral therapy training.

4.5 Connecting reflections

In this reflection I will tend to the following research problem questions: If one applies postmodernist assumptions and principles to training how will this change the way in which pastoral therapists are trained? What will the influence on the training of pastoral therapy be if there is a movement from praxis to theory to praxis? How will social constructionist objectives and assumptions influence supervision in pastoral therapy training?

In the training courses I was concerned with the thinking processes (Von Glasersfeld 1991) of students and not so much with their ability to recall memory (Poplin 1988). In this process the current knowledge of students was taken seriously (Steffe et al. 1995) and new learning experiences were constantly connected to their current knowledge (Poplin 1988) through multiple conversations (Kotzé 1994). Instead of only transferring knowledge students were developed as learners who will be able to construct their own conceptual structures (Keiny 1994). This was done by giving students as much opportunity as possible within training conversations to verbalise their conceptual structures, however vague, to one another and to validate their voices. Throughout this continuous communicative activity (Shotter 1993) our point of departure was a focus on *meaning* (Burr 1995) instead of a focus on ontological knowledge. Assessment was done by both teachers and participants on a continual basis throughout the various study courses and not only at the certain stages and at the end (Brown et al. 1992; Harris and Bell 1994). This was done by creating an open relationship within each of the different groups towards their respective co-participants.

Within this open relationship participants were encouraged, at the end of each roll play situation and after each pastoral therapy session, to reflect critically on the student-therapist's actions and opinions. This was also done to conversations concerning theory. These assessment outcomes were allowed to inform instruction as well as the actions of participants creating a reflexivity in the instruction-assessment process (Baird 1992; Burr 1995). This praxis-theory-praxis movement (Müller 1996) had a dynamic influence on the choice of reading material (curriculum) according to the needs of students in praxis. Practical experience, on the one hand, had a dynamic influence on the understanding of theoretical concepts. The reading of specific literature (for instance material about loss) before a pastoral therapeutic session with people who had experience loss, on the other hand, generated ideas and informed the direction of those sessions.

Social construction theory also made me as an instructor/supervisor sensitive towards differences of gender, race, culture, position of power, denomination, belief systems and language (Becvar & Becvar 1996). A student is not merely a student, but becomes somebody with a particular history that was seriously taken into consideration in the training process of pastoral therapy. This obviously generated a similar sensitivity among the students towards their clients.

In the social construction of pastoral therapy and pastoral therapy training all participants cooperated in supervision through the concept of reflexivity (Steier 1991a; Lax 1992). Through reflexive conversations students reflected on one another's pastoral therapy skills and integration of theory. Being observed changed to being participant observer (Shotter 1993) enhancing the responsibility and accountability of students. It also created a narrative

of self-reflexivity, through which a self-definition was constructed (Steier 1991), thereby constituting the student's life as pastoral therapist (Kotzé 1994). In this process the student-participants' story about pastoral therapy and the training thereof is re-authored, and each student-participant's 'life as therapist' (own personal style) is continually transformed and enhanced (White 1992).

4.6 Critical reflection

In the praxis-theory-praxis movement, I think that I did not succeed all that well in allowing the students to express their own needs so as to inform and change their curriculum. Although this has been done the students could have been more encouraged to criticise their own reading material. Maybe the traditional, one way traffic of teachers to develop a curriculum on their own, because they know what is right and proper, still has a strong influence on us all and certainly made the students reluctant to express their thoughts on curriculum. They only criticise the amount of reading work and hardly ever the content. Also the thoughts of clients on their view of what the curriculum should look like for a therapist to be able to help them was almost left unexplored.

In the training courses too little was done to enable the students to see and experience live therapy sessions with either their study-leader or other established pastoral therapists as the therapist. I think I was too afraid of the totalising power of the "expert"-concept without realising that in the copying process something new will be created which can be quite innovative.

5 Multiple reflexive conversations

Virtually all of the different discourses, concepts and aspects of pastoral therapy and pastoral therapy training that were covered in chapter two to chapter four were talked about in the multiple reflexive conversations filling old concepts either with new understanding or confirming the previous understanding, albeit from a new perspective of responsibility. Through this endeavour intelligibility between theology and secular forms of counselling was improved. The ethics of counselling were defined more accurately so as to lessen totalisation. It was not as much where concepts come from that mattered, but rather what their effect in everyday life and in counselling people with problems on faith and life would be. Individual styles of pastoral therapy were developed, without losing cohesion with others. Every other voice, be it traditional, theological, cultural, secular or marginalised, was adhered to with respect and considered in the co-constructing of what is perceived as pastoral therapy and pastoral therapy training.

The researcher, however, acknowledges that his perspectives were in the end written down and takes responsibility for them, but he cannot take responsibility for what the reader will eventually read, for the reader should take responsibility for his own constructions. I do hope though that this research will stimulate the pastoral therapy discourse, that it would not be too different, but definitely different enough to make a difference, however minute.

The questions, that arose from my own experience and as asked in chapter one, are dealt with in this research and their answers lie in the construction of meaning among the

participants. This reminded me of a young man who wanted to impress a wise old man. He had a little bird in his hands. He would prove the wise old man wrong with one question. The question was: "Is this little bird in my hands dead or alive?". If the wise man answered "dead" the young man would release the bird, and if the answer was "alive" he would kill it, proving the wise old man wrong. However, the wise old man replied: "The answer to that question, my young friend, is in your hands". Likewise the answers to the questions in chapter one lie in one's decision to find positive answers or not. I found it in the social coinonial construction of pastoral therapy in clergy training.

6 What have I learned from this research?

In this reflection I will tend to the following research problem question: What will the central issues be if intelligibility and adaptability between a postmodern social construction discourse and a modernist theological framework is to be achieved through multiple conversations in small groups?

6.1 Theory and praxis

Interaction between theory and praxis is crucial in the forming of understanding. In the social constructionist epistemology one refrains from only transferring theory via the supervisor to receiving students, but rather allows for the various perspectives of all participants to co-create meaning and understanding. This social construction process internalises theory in such a way that it becomes part of oneself, therefore it has an effect on the way in which student-participants will do pastoral therapy. For example, they will

co-create meaning with clients in a pastoral therapeutic process in such a way that the meaning becomes part of the clients.

6.2 Training

6.2.1 Generation of own knowledge

The social constructionist training process allows students to develop applications of theory outside the focus of training. For example, the genogram was used in training to collect information on clients and to see some of the processes in their lives. Students proceed to use the genogram to do pre-marital counselling as well.

6.2.2 Knowledge

It seems to me as if knowledge gained through the social constructionist process of training is of a different kind to that imposed from outside. Knowledge imposed from the outside tends to be used as a tool, but when knowledge is integrated with self through the social coinomial construction process knowledge comes from within, it becomes a way of life because it makes sense to oneself.

6.2.3 Method of training

To me the most valuable aspect of the social constructionist method of training was that it allowed for progression in the acquisition of knowledge. This progression in training meant

an interaction between theory and practice, and practice and theory allowing for a reciprocity in informing between theory and practice. This created a reciprocal understanding to some extent between a postmodern social construction discourse and a modernist theological framework. In other words intelligibility between theological concepts in theory and the doing of pastoral therapy in praxis from a social constructionist viewpoint, were enhanced. The progression in training was accomplished by moving from discussions in role-play situations, where student-participants could integrate theory, to practice by restructuring actual therapy cases that they had had in ministry. This experience was informing the theory acquired through the reading of prescribed work. Thereafter student-participants had reflexive conversations about their role-play situations and the appropriate theory was again allowed to instruct their practice. The same process repeated itself in the next step of progression when the student-participants had the opportunity to see the supervisor performing live pastoral therapy while they were behind the one-way mirror. Finally the process again repeated itself when student-participants had the opportunity to do live pastoral therapy under supervision with the other student-participants acting as a coinomial reflecting team. This social coinomial construction process enabled the student-participants to have a much larger perspective and understanding of theory and of pastoral therapy and the training thereof rather than learning from a book and trying to apply what the book prescribes.

6.2.4 Position of the supervisor

The active choice of a more egalitarian position for the supervisor opened the door for me as a supervisor to learn willingly and actively from students. It is a position within which

I actively seek the instruction of my own understanding through the opinions and perspectives of student-participants. It paved the way for receptiveness towards student-participants and the realisation of a rich source of information and co-constructed knowledge (new knowledge) that did not come from theory and isolated experience alone.

6.2.5 The method of examining

The method of examination is a continuation of interaction between examiner/supervisor theory, praxis, and student-participants through reflexive conversation and discussion. This way of examining is completely different from the written examinations where almost only memorisation of the acquired theory was tested. It is also an improvement on the oral examinations of the B.Th. degree, where I experienced a testing of memory much more than a testing of insight and integration of theory, although the latter two were tested as well. In the oral examinations the examiners asked the questions and the students delivered the answers to the questions. In this social coinonial construction training course the examination was much more focussed on the integration of theory into the self of the student-participant. It certainly did not focus on memory. That is why student-participants expressed their appreciation for the method of examining that was followed in the Masters course (see chapter 5 point 5.2.2.6). For the purpose of remembering students were instructed to construct or co-construct their integration of all the theory with another student-participant on a visual basis. They were asked to map out on an A-3 size sheet their personal approach to pastoral therapy as co-constructed and internalised by themselves throughout the course of study. These approaches of student-participants were also demonstrated in a case-study completed and documented, by themselves, of a live pastoral

therapy process they had had in their respective congregations. They were invited to ask each other questions and to converse about the cases as well as the theory. They had to explain their views on theory as laid out on their maps and they had to have been able to express their personal approaches to pastoral therapy.

6.2.6 Personal development

Theory confronts one with one's own belief systems and ways of doing things. The focus on personal development within this social coinonial construction course had the purpose of creating an awareness of one's history. All the factors, culture, coinonia (community of faith), and family of origin that had an impact on the story of one's life were taken into consideration so as to enable student-participants to see and experience the influence of these factors on themselves and their way of doing pastoral therapy. This enabled students to differentiate influences of the past and to take responsibility for their own choices.

6.2.7 Use of Scripture and prayer in pastoral therapy

Through the discussions about the use of Scripture and prayer the following aspects are noteworthy: The pastoral therapist is as a Christian busy with therapy. It does not mean that therapists are compelled to use Scripture or prayer in any specific session. They might, and it can work very well too, but the person who comes to the pastoral therapist, knows from which frame of reference he/she operates as a minister.

One of the dangers of pastoral work is the expert position of the minister. He knows how

to use the Bible and he knows how to pray. Unfortunately the counsellor may let these crucial aspects of counselling become mere tools instead of letting them (Bible and prayer) be part of himself. "It must be something suitable and which comes from the heart of the minister" as one of the students has said. It also became clear that when one has a thorough perspective of theory the use of Scripture and prayer will be appropriate.

Prayer could also be used in preparation for therapy sessions. It could form part of the minister's intercession for the people he works with. The use of Scripture and prayer should not be an appendage to legitimise *pastoral* therapy; the pastoral qualification of therapy should be the essence of pastoral therapy. The therapist is indeed an instrument in the hands of God, therefore, not only should the pastoral therapist be true to his own spirituality, he should also consider the spirituality of his clients.

A good summary of what we experienced *pastoral therapy* to be is: In doing pastoral therapy the Word of God will be echoed spontaneously, in such a way that God will be echoed as the Person active in the client's crises and that He is the Healer and that pastoral therapists as well as their clients with their co-creation of meaning from theory, et cetera, are instruments in God's hands through which He effects healing.

6.3 Important contributions of research

Apart from the above-mentioned I think that an important contribution of this research lies in the ample opportunity student-participants had to co-construct pastoral therapy and to learn from experience. This is a departure from the didactic method within which the aim

is too much on the transference of 'truths' as happens all too often in theological training. It is also a departure from the all too sterile confessional model within which 'truths' are engraved on stone as it were and one is compelled only to apply these 'truths' as such.

I think another important contribution was the actual application of a research project in practical theology within the *epistemology of communal dialogue*. This paradigm for pastoral therapy and pastoral therapy training is posed in theory, but rarely applied in practice, especially in the practice of training pastoral therapists. It is within the epistemology of communal dialogue that student-participants are encouraged to develop their own ideas and their own knowledge.

I intend to establish intelligibility and compatibility between pastoral therapy and practical theology and between a modernist, structuralist approach to pastoral work and a social constructionist approach to pastoral work. How successful that will be remains to be seen and, as I am indicating hereunder, there still needs to be much more interaction and research towards that end.

7 What still needs to be done?

A flurry of ideas comes to mind when thinking about what still remains to be done. Some of these I would like to pose as questions and others as needs: What are the tangent planes between poimenic literature and social constructionism? There needs to be more empirical research within practical theology from a social constructionist epistemology and methodology. There needs to be many more reflexive conversations within practical

theology between supporters of a modernist and supporters of a postmodernist perception of pastoral work; between supporters who depart from structuralist and those who depart from social constructionist assumptions. Perhaps a forum to this effect, where persons from the various groups can come together once or twice a year and have reflexive discussions about these topics would be quite productive. In practical theology, what is the relationship between theology and social constructionism? More training courses in which there is ample interaction and counter instruction of theory to practice and vice versa needs to be launched in order to establish a procedure where praxis can be introduced much earlier. Then there will be a healthy reciprocity between theory and practice so as to enhance further theorising and training practices.

8 Closing remark

Reporting on the narrative of the social coinonial construction of pastoral therapy in clergy training reminds me of the following:

Every story one chooses to tell is a kind of censorship: it prevents the telling of other tales.

Salmon Rushdie

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Appendix A**CONVERSATIONS BETWEEN SUPERVISOR (ARTHUR) AND CONTINUING EDUCATION GROUP E, AT THE END OF SESSIONS FOUR AND SIX****At the end of session four concerning systems theory and genograms**

Arthur (supervisor): If you have to comment on this session what would you say?

Gus: I think what I have learned is that one can come to an agreement with the clients. One does not have to finish in one session and one can plan the whole process.

Errol: The important thing to me was that one should not only look at the individual, but at systems and structures. It seems that when one listens one must not be like an unidirectional microphone that picks up sounds only from one direction only, but a multidirectional microphone, and when one looks one should as if through a wide angled lens.

Sam: I found new value in the fact that people with whom one is working also carry a great deal of responsibility in the solution of their problems.

Oscar: I want to join in here. To me it is important that one must convey to the client that he has to accept responsibility. One can try everything, but if he does not *want* to be helped all will be in vain.

Ken: Quite interesting to me is that the identified patient only reflects the symptoms and is not the problem. His symptoms become a metaphor for what is really going on in the family.

Paul: I am not totally convinced that the system always generates the problem. The problem can also come from outside the family system, such as rape for instance. The question is then which system are you going to use in your process? If a woman was raped, do you necessarily involve the family system?

Arthur: Does anyone want to suggest an answer from what has been heard today?

Sam: It does not only affect the woman but the whole system. Therefore the whole system can be involved in the solution although the system did not generate the problem. Everyone in the system must adapt to the changes caused by the incident.

Gus: Yes, the principle in systems theory, if I understand it correctly, is that change in the system affects all the subsystems, and change in any of subsystems also affects the whole system. It always relates to a part of the system, like the extended family system or even the larger social systems of society.

Brent: What about something like a personality disorder, Arthur?

Arthur: I think an ongoing dysfunctional pattern in a family can result in personality disorders.

Errol: What about a problem with faith? If five members of a family believe in Christ and there is one who refuses to believe, although there is no obvious problem in that family, how can you relate such a problem to the system? Must the solution necessarily be found within the system? My question is, when one comes to problems of faith can one always fit them into this framework?

Oscar: Yes, if, for instance, a system from outside the family influenced in on that child...

Errol: But, how does one proceed when one faces such large systems as society?

Arthur: I suppose that the family system would eventually have a greater impact or that, if used properly, would have a greater impact than outside systems. They can heal what was damaged in society within the family system. Because of the direct influence of the family system on its subsystems one would definitely be able to use the family system to good effect.

Concerning problems of faith, I do not know if one can easily say that the person really has a problem of faith. It could be that he has another problem that is perceived to concern faith and then he believes he has a problem of faith. The young man that I saw this morning did say that his relationship with God is definitely troubled, but I have a suspicion that if he can sort out his problems in life he will say that his relationship towards God is much better as well. One cannot say that it will always be the case, but it does happen quite often.

Oscar: Shouldn't one tell him that if his relationship with God is restored then everything else

will come right as well?

Brent: I think the question in the minister's mind must be: have these things robbed him of his relationship with God or did these things happen because he did not have a proper relationship with God in the first place? If the answer to the first question is yes, I think one should start with those things, and if the answer to the second question is yes, I think one should perhaps start with his relationship with God.

Gus: I also think that a problem can arise like a bolt from the blue, an accident for instance, and then the system's reaction to that can ultimately become problematic. A problem does not have to originate from within the system for the system to be dysfunctional because of it.

Arthur: Yes, I think if the family system can adapt properly to a situation like that it can become the very thing that provides the answers to the problem or at least serve as a support system to solve the problem.

Ken: If I can say something else about what I have realised again today... when we talked about open and closed systems... the fact that we as ministers, to shield ourselves, and to keep our pose, can become so aloof, is a danger because then we are missing one of the best support systems that a minister can have and that is the help and insight of colleagues.

Gus: Yes. To me it meant a lot to discuss this theory with other colleagues that are in the same situation I am in. I have learnt a lot through what everyone has said, apart from the

huge input from Arthur, especially because we used genuine practical cases as we have experienced them in our congregations.

Sam: The genograms of our own families of origin that we have worked through with each other meant a tremendous amount to me. For the first time I experienced the influence that my extended family system had on me and how it affected my pastoral work with others. I also think that I will be much more sure of myself in using the genogram as an instrument to gain information and insight into other people's lives now that I have experienced it in my own.

Oscar: The genogram was a whole new perspective that opened up for me. I was inclined to focus on the individual only, and one perspective that opened up for me was that one should widen one's observation perception quite considerably. The genogram gives a universal picture. A second thing that was quite interesting was the fact that one must also analyse oneself, because one also have a background that does play a role in how one adjudicates one's clients' problem.

Sam: I appreciated the role that the genogram plays in getting the process going and not only providing information. The second is the utility value of the genogram. I am definitely, for instance, going to use it in marriage counselling before a couple get married so that they can see all the vertical stressors that come from their families of origin. It can probably forestall a lot of reactivity and problems.

Brent: It was significant to me that one can write on a flipchart within the session without the

client being disturbed by it, in fact he would be interested by it and one can use the written information in front of him. As Oscar has said this morning, it is indeed a revelation to the clients as well, because they have never seen their extended family like that before.

Errol: I think we must just remember that the genogram is an instrument that one uses in therapy, but it does not explain everything, therefore it should not be the alpha and omega of the therapeutical process.

Brent: Because I have experienced the genogram myself, I think I would be much more sensitive towards the clients, for I have felt what it was like to be exposed and to reveal myself.

Ken: Without any of you telling me to go and work on this or that, I have identified some things myself in my genogram that I think I will attend to. I think the clients will also see a couple of things that one doesn't even know about and the process will continue to work after the session as well.

Gus: Instead of me adjudicating the whole time, the genogram helped me to allow the client to tell his story. I also think it was counter-productive when I drew a conclusion that is way off track, but now the client can see for himself things that have meaning for him and that is always acceptable to him, not necessarily positive or even challenging, but always acceptable because no one else has forced him or censured him... he does that himself.

Oscar: It is quite liberating too, to realise that one does not have to be bound by what

happened earlier in one's life, or by what one's father did, or by the way he operated. One can choose for oneself and that I think also liberates us from the fact that we usually put the blame on someone else. I have to take responsibility now, for my own choices and for my own way of doing. It is like Arthur has said: Do you live in reaction to your past or do you live with responsibility and choices that are your own?

Arthur: Thank you very much for your contributions.

At the end of session six concerning loss and divorce

Arthur: What are you commenting on today?

Gus: The enormous network of people involved in a situation of loss opened my eyes to persons usually forgotten in the bereavement process. Children are omitted easily but should be drawn into the process of planning the funeral, et cetera.

Oscar: I would say that the whole question about the "why" of loss and terminal illness cannot really be answered. It is important to be absolutely honest with these people. One must acknowledge the fact that one also doesn't know why God allows things like that, and that one must trust the Lord although one does not know. A second important thing is that illness is not only a crisis but also an opportunity. If one can help that person to see something positive in his illness, where he, for instance, can mean something to someone else, one would have turned something negative into a positive witness action.

Sam: I saw great opportunities in the writing of the funeral letter. To help people to write their own instead of using a pro forma from the undertakers gives meaning and helps with the bereavement process. Also to facilitate conversation, for example, at the sickbed of a loved one, so that things unsaid can be said, even if the patient lives for another ten years, their relationship with their loved ones will be better in the end.

Errol: Tempo was something that I usually ignored. We must realise that everybody's tempo differs. We cannot decide for someone else when he or she must stop crying or when to start living again. The question could be asked as to what is normal but I do not think that there is a norm here.

Brent: Yes, that is true, but there are certain general occurrences that one can look for, like denial, aggression and so forth, until one gets to acceptance. But it was also significant to take note of the different family life-cycle stages that also influence how people deal with something like chronic illness or loss.

Sam: Again I have experienced the value of practical cases that one can mention so as to integrate theory with practice, especially the live session that Arthur has done this morning.

Arthur: Maybe we can reflect on the discussion about divorce now and then we will come to the live session later.

Oscar: I must say again that if someone does not want to cooperate there is very little that one can do to help. Another point that I want to stress is that if there is no reconciliation with

God, one cannot really accomplish reconciliation between husband and wife. Reconciliation with God and then reconciliation with each other.

Errol: What is important to me is that one should impress on the couple the hope there is, in God, that their marriage can succeed. If both of them are willing to work at it, joy and happiness can return to their marriage.

Brent: What was significant to me was divorce counselling. That when people eventually decide to get divorced, one as therapist, does not have to think that nothing can be done anymore. We have said that the marriage has ended, but that parenthood continues, and one can make a considerable difference if a proper plan can be worked out about how the children are going to be handled. People can thus be helped to divorce in an orderly fashion, as it were.

Errol: Yes, if that is not done it can occur, as we have seen in one of the cases, that somebody can be divorced for five years and yet not be divorced at all. He is divorced on paper alone. His bereavement does not end and he cannot cut himself loose from that marriage, therefore he cannot go on with his life.

Arthur: If we can go back to the family that I saw this morning, how have you experienced the live session?

Brent: That to me, was the cherry on top in this course, because up to now we have only used simulations in role-play of genuine cases from home, but this was a real live situation. It

was as if reality broke through for me. In my mind I have put myself in Arthur's place and I knew it was not only a course but reality. It scared me and yet it helped me a great deal to see how a pastoral therapist goes about doing therapy.

Oscar: What was special to me, as Brent says, was the fact that we could have the opportunity to put ourselves in your position, and, in addition, could discuss the session afterwards and ask questions about what you did and why, and about what we would have done, so as to test ourselves.

Gus: The teamwork was very interesting to me, because I have learnt a lot from it. I have learnt to look at something from various perspectives and to get the big picture. What I have also learnt is not to be too sure of what is going on, because then one's eyes close to other possibilities. To be uncertain is good, because then one's eyes are wide open to notice whatever comes to the fore.

Sam: Yes, there are so many things that come to you. Because it is a family, there are four people that you have to listen to and yet four perspectives form a much fuller picture, but I have realised that the therapist must concentrate very hard or else he cannot be present to listen to what the family members are saying and simultaneously form a picture of his own.

Errol: If I may say something... I think the next step should be that we should be able to follow a complete therapeutical process, that is all five or six sessions in live situations. That would really round off the course.

Arthur: Enrol for the Masters degree course and you will have ample opportunity
(everybody laughing). Thank you very much. I do appreciate your comments.

Appendix B**CONVERSATION BETWEEN SUPERVISOR (BEN) AND CONTINUING EDUCATION
GROUP D, AT THE END OF THE EIGHTH SESSION**

John: Ben, I want to thank you personally... for me it was a new experience. I have done the Masters degree course... we have had to do with theory and practice, but I think the aspect that has been added was that we have moved into another context with the continuing education course. The context is that of the ministers who, at grassroots-level, have to do with pastoral work. I have had the opportunity here to sensibly integrate theory and practice. It was also a beneficial experience to see how you introduce the paradigm shift from a modernist way of doing pastoral work to a postmodernist way of doing pastoral therapy. The whole field of systems theory as well as the constructionist approaches to therapy were integrated into what we already understood as pastoral work.

Ben (supervisor): In this evaluation I need you to say how theory and practice were integrated so that you are able to apply theory to practice. I would also like to hear your comments on the course as well as suggestions that you would like to make.

Peter: I would like to say that the curriculum was well compiled. I was properly introduced into this field of counselling. However, I would have liked it if the frequency of sessions was higher so that we could have discussed practical cases from our own congregations. We did touch on that, but not enough and there is not really time when one is home in one's congregation to go back to the theory and re-read it. To talk about the theory helped me a

lot to form my own understanding of it and to be able to apply that to my everyday counselling... but I would have liked to experience it in practice.

Ben: Peter, if I understand you correctly, you would like to have practical sessions with real cases so that you can apply theory to praxis as you proceed?

Peter: Yes, exactly.

Chris: To me the sessions we experienced as if they were true cases helped tremendously... When I did not know what to do others in the group could help me out and vice versa. Some of the theory I did not relate to too well, but other portions provided tremendous insights. The work on genograms helped me to gain information and that on the narrative approach helped me to realise that there can be a story behind the story. It was helpful to see myself as a facilitator rather than an expert who knows all the answers. I learnt a lot from realising that counselling is a process and not only a single event.

Ben: What do you think about responsibility after taking this course?

Chris: Before this course it was a heavy burden upon my shoulders to provide answers to members of my congregation. I always felt responsible to reach out to them... I felt guilty if I heard about someone's problem especially if I did not even realise that he or she had a problem... it felt as if I was not sensitive enough to the problems of my congregation's members. Now I realise that they themselves have a responsibility of their own to seek help. Now I realise that finding to a solution is as much their responsibility as it is mine.

Leo: I would also like to say that the sessions could have been more frequent with less theory so that one could have discussed the theory more and have had more time to practice the application of what was learnt. All of this work meant some or other paradigm shift because most of us never had contact with any of these concepts. That is why I felt the practical simulated sessions helped me to understand the theory and I also would like to have faced real people with real problems so that we could help them as a team. To me that kind of practical work would mean a great deal.

Kevin: I think that earlier in this course it would not have meant much at all if we had seen real people because of the fact that we still had to make these paradigm shifts. We still had to grasp the terminology and understand the concepts... the discussions helped me considerably with that, but I also think that real practical cases would be the right way to go now. The practical simulated sessions improved my conversational skills considerably. To do pastoral therapy with a co-therapist would greatly enhance what we have already done... and the reflecting team that we have read about and discussed, I think, will improve one's perspective markedly. To me, personally, the course meant so much and I definitely want to... I developed a need, a hunger you might say, to improve my knowledge by continuing to be involved with theory and practice. I really am looking forward to practical work with real cases in cooperation with the group. Pastoral work in my congregation has changed quite a lot. I am looking forward to working with people and applying what we have learnt here and things are going well. It meant a lot to my family as well... maybe because I have developed. Thank you for that.

Chris: Yes, I must say that the family of origin work made a difference to me. I have learnt

a lot about myself... it was good to talk with family members about our family. Things were mentioned that helped me to see myself and others in my family from another angle... gaps were filled and it helped me in my work with my congregation members... certain presuppositions were brought into perspective... it helps me to know about them.

Ben: Thank you very much for your comments. To me it was a pleasure sharing the work with you. I will let you know as soon as the preparations have been made so that we can go on to do real practical sessions as a team.

Appendix C**CONVERSATION BETWEEN SUPERVISOR (BEN) AND MASTERS GROUP AT THE BEGINNING OF THEIR SECOND YEAR****Theme: Earlier practice of pastoral work**

Ben (supervisor): Maybe I must start off by asking you what your opinion of pastoral therapy was before you started with this course? How did you view pastoral therapy then?

Jean: In my case, Ben, it was largely handling of crises. People came, you stamped out the fires, applied the fire extinguisher so to speak, and then they left again, because I did not really have the tools and the know-how to guide these people.

Ben: What do the rest of you understand by the words "tools" and "know-how"?

Vernon: The practical skills to help someone with specific problems and a proper theoretical framework from which you would work.

Ray: I always loved pastoral work, but my problem was that I could not really think past one session and that was why I wanted to do the course. It always was a single-session kind of counselling within which I listened to the person and then just encouraged him. I thought counselling consisted largely of listening to someone's problems. I also found myself in a theoretical labyrinth. One only had this superficial knowledge about a lot of

approaches without knowing what their theoretical bases were.

Jean: This "listening" could easily have taken up three to four hours as well.

Ben: What else could have been at the root of this kind of counselling?

Vernon: I think, if I look back, that the counselling offered was very superficial at best. One thought that all that one could fall back on was the Bible, why else did the person come to you as the minister? We first came into contact with these concepts in our last year at University, but with no practical experience to sort of attach it to, we did not really understand what was said.

Jean: You see, everything is expected of the minister. It is expected of the minister to do counselling without him really knowing how to do it. We all had our education at University, some at Bloemfontein, others at Pretoria and others at Stellenbosch, but this was such an insignificant part of our whole curriculum and yet this is exactly what keeps you busy in your ministry - pastoral work.

Will: We are talking of how we viewed the work of the minister concerning counselling and I thought that it was something for which one is equipped with tools with which one has to do something for someone else.

Ben: In these circumstances what were the expectations of your congregation?

Will: I think it would be that the minister or the pastoral therapist as the expert would have the responsibility to offer some solutions from which the member could choose.

Tom: I want to agree, the congregation expects that every minister must be able to give pastoral guidance to a member. I felt the need for further training because I did not know what to do for them. Here is someone with a problem and you can give him advice, but you actually don't know where to go with this problem. I came here with the expectation to gain skills so that I could "the expert" so to speak.

Jean: So you actually just came to receive some kind of a recipe for handling problems.

Will: I want to agree with what is said about the skills, but I think something precedes that, because skills eventually flow from the approach that one follows. The practical work therefore is very important because one can test one's approach only in practice. I don't want to say that the approach is more important than the skills, but once you have established your approach, skills will be much easier to use.

Ray: My experience was that I was in distress because I had seven years of education and I did not know a thing about the practice of pastoral work. After seven years of training I still did not have the ability to help people. I could pray for them and I could explain the Bible and yet within the first couple of months in ministry I was in dire straits. I felt I should rather leave the ministry for some other career. I felt inferior... for instance to a doctor.

Vernon: I wanted to say something else about of the pastoral therapist as a person. Looking back upon it, this course shaped me as a minister, because it made the knowledge I gained part of myself and not only a tool to be taken from the shelf.

Charl: I sometimes felt that with the little knowledge I had I was aggravating the problem instead of solving it. I did not even know how to apply the superficial knowledge that I had.

Theme: Theory and practice

Ben: If I talk about theory and practice and you keep in mind the course in pastoral therapy what would be your reflection upon it?

Tom: My feeling is that in this course theory and practice are not separated, distinguishable, yes, but not at all separated. Theory is processed in such a way that you are able to apply it in practice, because practical cases are used to integrate theory. As you proceed you are being shaped as a pastoral therapist. In our discussions we discuss theory, but as it is used in practice.

Jean: You see, we had a perception that theory is knowledge in your head. It is something that one can read in a book to see how well one can reproduce it. What I enjoyed about this course... our memories were never tested, rather we discussed a specific part of the theory and as the discussion proceeded we responded with our own perceptions of how we understood what we found in theory. The discussions served to trigger one's own ideas about that part of theory and one did not have to remember anything by rote. In this way

we built up a universal picture of the work. We moved from this universal picture to practice and from practice to the universal picture.

Ben: If you are speaking of a universal picture, what does it consist of?

Vernon: I want to disagree. I don't think one must merely take the theory and apply it in practice. I would say the theory enables me to have a wider perspective of the therapeutical process and enables me to identify things in the therapeutical process.

Ben: If you only had the theory to read and you had to write an examination to reproduce what you have read... how would that have helped you in bringing theory to practice? What is the difference with practical experience added to theory?

Vernon: If I did not have the practical experience as we have had it here the theory would most probably not have been such a part of me.

Ben: What made the theory a part of you?

Vernon: Well, the fact that I could experience it in the therapeutical processes of specific cases.

Ben: And what, if anything, enlarged your general picture of the theory... only the practical cases?

Will: I think the development of the therapist as a person.

Ben: Yes, what else?

Tom: More than that... I think of the different conversations that we had. I, for instance, had a certain perception of something and then Charl would comment on it saying that he views it from a different angle, and so does Ray, and so on. In the end you go away with a much larger picture than your own.

Jean: It is as I said to Vernon at lunch time, if one could take the six papers that we have prepared for the second preliminary examination and integrate them completely, you would have a brilliant picture of the work.

Ben: More than that, instead of integrating those six papers in writing only, if the same six people can come together and discuss what they have found in theory and what the meaning of it was, I think the picture would have been even more complete.

Vernon: It seems to me that it is one thing to use theory as a tool and it is something completely different to make the theory part of oneself, to give some meaning to it that makes sense to one.

Will: I want to put what Vernon says somewhat differently. If you come to the compilation of a specific course I think that practice should shape the curriculum and not vice versa. I also experienced our discussions as... that which we talk about... the crises that we have experienced... as a reflection of our practice.

(Silence)

Theme: Client's contribution

Ben: I would like to ask how you thought clients contributed to your understanding of pastoral therapy?

Tom: I think they helped us to internalise the theory, the things that we talked about in our discussions.

Ben: If I could ask some of the clients of the past three weeks to consider their therapeutical process and try and tell me what had happened here, what do you think they would answer? If I ask them to examine the process and tell me what pastoral therapy is, what would they say?

Jean: They would begin by saying it was an opportunity they had to tell their stories.

Charl: Or they would say that it was an opportunity within which they could have viewed their own situations differently.

Vernon: Maybe they will say that they realised for the first time where the problem originated, that they themselves *were* not the problem, but that they *had* a problem, because it originated from certain circumstances. For the first time I can oppose the problem and not my spouse or other people.

Charl: They would most probably also say that they did not know what the problem was until they *created* it here, so to speak. I had a chance to talk about things and in so doing realised and described the problem and then began to deal with it.

Vernon: Pastoral therapy enables the client to feel safe, in the sense that he can say, "for once I am not told that I am the problem and I am not told what is wrong with me. I have a problem, and not I *am* the problem."

Will: Maybe they will say that the problem received "handles" and now they are able to handle the problem.

Ray: What they would also say is that they have received an opportunity to choose.

Tom: I do think that the clients will say that they have been helped although we did not provide solutions. "I have been helped to help myself", as it were.

Ben: If they look at it from a religious perspective would they then also say that they have been helped to help themselves?

Will: No, I think they will say that God is the one that is helping them, but He is doing it by giving them space to make some choices, and He is using us as pastoral therapists to widen their perspectives so that they can make better choices.

Ray: Some of them even said that it can only be God who helped them, even if we were His

instruments. They believed that everything happens by the grace of God.

(Silence)

Theme: Position of the supervisor

Ben: Something else that I want to talk to you about concerns the position of the supervisor.

From your other study experiences, what would the difference be between those and your latest experience regarding the position of the supervisor? I would also like you to say whether it influenced your learning experience.

Charl: I think the general position of the supervisor is that he just transfers knowledge... unilaterally from a higher position to a lower one, as it were. In this case it is more a shaping activity in the sense that there is some kind of identification with the way in which the supervisor guides you. There is more of an egalitarian position between student and supervisor and I think more internalisation can take place because of it. It is as if you live according to what you see and experience.

Ray: The position of the supervisor has changed over a long period of time. I think about twenty years ago the position of the supervisor was determined by his academic qualifications and not necessarily by his skills. He was quite capable to enunciate theory academically but he never showed how it should be put into practice. In our University days for instance, we had a lot of people telling us how to do home visits and how to preach but they never showed us percisely how to do this.

Jean: Traditionally it was expected of the supervisor to work through a lot of theory, and he was expected to be the expert, and that created a remoteness between supervisor and students. This method, however is a method in which we work together, think together, talk together, mould together and together arrive at an objective. The remoteness between supervisor and students has disappeared and now we are all participants in the same struggle.

Will: I think that academics can do two things. They can feel the knowledge is already there and it must only be transferred to the students, and the students in their turn have to transfer the same knowledge to the clients, or they can choose to allow all the perspectives about theory of all the students in the group as well as those of the supervisor to be integrated so as to co-create meaning to knowledge, and then the students will, in practice, follow the same approach. They will co-create meaning with their clients.

Ray: One of the reasons why I enrolled for this course was the position of the supervisor relative to us. He participated in the learning process as one of us and it has given me the confidence to speak out and to participate as well, much more than I ever allowed myself to do at University. I must say that I have grown tremendously since last I was at University, but still I think I was much more at ease. I can almost say that I have seen and experienced pastoral therapy as it happens. I did not only hear about it and that made a huge difference to my learning experience.

Tom: I would describe the role of the supervisor in this study as a facilitator that initiates the conversations and participates in the discussions and also co-creates the meaning of

concepts... even wants to learn from us as students.

Vernon: If I can say something else about giving meaning... if I think of a specific case. One of the clients complained about depression and when asked what other names she could give for the word depression she mentioned her feelings about the death of her child, problems with her husband and her worries about finances. If we had to take the theoretical knowledge about something called depression and transfer it, so to speak, to this case, we most probably would have handled it completely differently and I think she would have responded completely differently.

(Silence)

Theme: *Pastoral therapy*

Ben: I would now like to talk to you about the fact that we are speaking here of pastoral therapy, not family therapy or some other kind of therapy, but *pastoral* therapy and I want you to tell me what do you understand by it.

Jean: To me, pastoral therapy is... to - on behalf of Christ - bring help and hope to people who have become helpless and without hope.

Ray: It means to me that we are working from a totally different framework. A framework that says with God anything is possible.

Charl: A minister that is also a shepherd to guide people to... as Psalm 23 says, to a place of green pastures... something of in the footsteps of the Great Shepherd.

Ben: Speaking of pastoral therapy, how do you see the difference between applying a little bit of Christian "seasoning" and truly doing pastoral therapy?

Jean: Well, to apply a little bit of Christian "seasoning", within my frame of reference, would mean to read the Bible and to pray for someone and then send him off hoping everything will get better... to even give someone a sermon on tape or a tract with a message on it or something like that. In the end what you do give from the Bible has little or no relevance to the person's problem and is meant to be merely a comforting and an encouraging gesture. This will usually occur within a couple of minutes or at most an hour. Pastoral therapy, on the contrary, would involve guidance through a whole process of one to six or more sessions - depending on the case - within which the person can be enabled, through the grace of God, but with the help and guidance of the pastoral therapist, to understand and to deal with the problems that he encounters.

Ray: Encouragement and comfort to people do have an immediate effect, but don't last at all, and most probably do not really address the problem. Pastoral therapy, on the other hand, uncovers the problem so that people can make certain choices about it.

Tom: Yes, I see it that I, as a Christian, and as a minister am busy with the therapy. It does not mean that I have to use Scripture or prayer in any specific session. I might, and it can work very well too, but the person who comes to me, knows from which frame of reference

I operate as a minister, and my thinking and the way in which I work with these people is derived from that framework.

Ray: To read and pray puts the minister in the position of an expert. He knows how to use the Bible and he knows how to pray, but this can also easily become tools that he is using instead of letting the Bible and prayer be a part of himself. It must be something suitable and comes from the heart of the minister. If one misuses the Bible and prayer the problem will be aggravated because the person can be thrust into a crisis of faith. Why does God not help me? We have prayed, we did follow what Scripture says, et cetera.

Jean: If one wants to do pastoral therapy one will have to have a thorough perspective of theory and then I think that the pastoral therapist will use Scripture and prayer appropriately and they will not be used as pieces of body putty" when the minister does not know where to turn to next.

Charl: In doing pastoral therapy these past three weeks the Word of God was echoed in virtually all the cases, but I think what came through to the clients was that God was echoed as the Person active in their crises and that He is the Healer and that we as pastoral therapists as well as they as clients with our co-creation of meaning from theory, et cetera, are instruments in God's hands by which He effects healing.

Ray: If one is counselling by censoring people one becomes a judge and then one ceases being a pastoral therapist. One must try to find out what the client's experience is.

Will: The position of the pastoral therapist relative to that of the member of his congregation is actually that he does not know anything about the experiences and feelings of the member while the member knows everything about his own experiences and his own feelings. In the case of misuse, however, the minister thinks that he knows everything and makes judgements and comes to conclusions on the basis of what *he* thinks is wrong... even according to the way *he* interprets the Bible.

Theme: Supervision/Examination

Ben: I would like to cover two further themes with you in this conversation. The two themes both concern evaluation and the first thing that I want to know about is how you have experienced the supervision throughout the course. The other thing that I would like you to reflect upon is the way in which you are examined.

Jean: The advantage of supervision to me was that I as learner had room to make mistakes without the fear of doing harm, and that I was guided by supervision to improve my own way of doing pastoral therapy.

Tom: To me it was that I had the opportunity to start off with therapy even though I had much to learn. I knew help was available behind the mirror. Apart from the supervisor I felt I had five other "supervisors" because of the participation of fellow students.

Vernon: Without supervision I would have had a one-eyed view of to the situation, but my perspectives were enhanced in such a way that I shall always be looking at the same thing

from different angles, because of the supervisors' insights.

Ray: The supervision in this course immediately made pastoral therapy a team effort.

Charl: One does not only learn to be a pastoral therapist but also at the same time a supervisor. One learns to view things from a different perspective while someone else is busy with the therapeutical process. One does not only come to see the symptoms of the client, but also begin to see patterns of interaction. You do not become fixated on a specific session but start to see the whole process.

Will: The reflecting team makes it impossible for the client to view his own situation from one direction only, because of all the different points of view that emanate from the reflecting team. Tthe pastoral therapist is also forced to look at the process from various angles.

Tom: The reflecting team also reflects to the client, as well as to the pastoral therapist, that there is not only one way to go, there is more than one option on the table... it informs not only the clients, but also the therapist. You have a team of listeners that can reflect all the voices that were heard.

Ben: From a religious point of view again, is there more than one option in finding solutions? Are there ways other than those found in the Bible?

Tom: I would say no. Concerning faith, there is only one option, Jesus Christ and the Bible,

but within one's choice of faith, within one's community of faith there can and should be different options that one can follow.

Jean: I want to say again, I think the clients that visit us well aware of this.

Ben: Okay, if you can make a couple of comments about examination.

Ray: To me it is a wonderful way of giving an account of yourself. The element of anxiety is largely removed and you can reflect upon so much of the prescribed work.

Vernon: You get a chance to reflect on how the theory is integrated into your own way of doing pastoral therapy by describing verbally how you have handled a specific therapeutic process, which is also handed in in writing beforehand.

Ben: If you can think of previous examinations that you have done and your feelings at that time and you compare this with how you will be examined in this course, how would you describe the difference?

Charl: I felt afraid, I always had a lot of anxiety in anticipation of the papers and usually forgot two thirds of what I had tried to memorise, but now I think it will be much better.

Tom: My experience of our B. Th. (theology) degree examinations was that they were oral examinations and that already made a huge difference. It felt as if I knew more after the examination than before it. Even so it was more of a reproduction of memory than of what

I understood of the work. Now, however, the learn-by-rote part is eliminated and you are consequently free to converse about what you perceive to be the answer. You are given a mark on your integration and application of the work and not your memorisation of it.

Ray: I think there is also a kind of reactivity towards the previous way of examination because you only had to remember what you have studied for three hours and after that you did your best to forget everything. I never made it, creatively, a part of my life. Maybe it was intended to, but it seldom happened that way.

Jean: Yes, previously I studied just to pass the examination. I did not focus on anything else, the aim was to pass the examination and nothing else.

Will: It felt to me previously as if the lecturer in front of me was there with only one purpose and that was to find out where the gaps in my knowledge were and then to concentrate on them, to find out whether I had studied everything. Here, on the contrary, I don't know what happened to me, but it feels as if I have more responsibility for what I am to present in the examination. Therefore I work harder, also because the examination takes place within a team situation. I feel responsible, not only for myself, but also for my partner.

Ben: Thank you very much for your participation.

Appendix D**CONVERSATION BETWEEN COLLEAGUE IN THEOLOGY (PROF J) AND SECOND YEAR MASTERS DEGREE GROUP B**

Theme: **Education/training in pastoral therapy**

Prof J: You are receiving education in pastoral therapy. You are being trained as pastoral therapists. How does this training take place? What does it comprise? How is it structured? Which aspects of this course are viewed as important?

Brent: The way I see it is that we have received a lot of literature that we had to read by ourselves. In our first year we had two one-week sessions within which we discussed the work thoroughly. We also did family-of-origin work in those weeks. To me that was important in developing of the therapist as a person so that the he would be acquainted with processes in his own life that could influence his therapy. Then there was the article that we had to write based on another series of books and articles that was prescribed.

Prof J: Did everyone contribute the one article...?

Brent: No, each of us had to write his own article.

Prof J: Was it the same title?

Gert: Yes, but it was a title that stimulated creativity towards developing an own

approach to therapy. You had to describe, theoretically, your method of doing therapy in your own congregation, based on the theory that was prescribed.

Pete: In the second year we have a three week session in which we do practical work under supervision. The whole group acts as a reflecting team from behind a two-way mirror.

Patrick: For the three-week session we also had a lot of theoretical work to read and we had discussions about it. It was interlaced with discussions on the different therapy sessions. Sometimes the discussions on theory were on their own, but we always tried to link them with practical situations.

Sam: The last leg of the course is about doing therapy with people in your own congregation. Our supervisor did supervision by telephone. We had to do two cases under supervision and one case without supervision. The last case had to be written down for the purposes of examination at the end of the year.

Eric: We have to put together a framework for therapy that will include all the theory that we have done the past two years. As a matter of fact I think that all the theory we have done in the past will have an influence on our particular frameworks. We will be examined in pairs. Each two of us can work together in creating the framework on which we will be examined.

Prof J: Almost a pastoral model that you have to decide upon...?

Eric (and others): Yes.

Patrick: To me the content was focused on the family - pastoral therapy to the family... and on living beyond loss... Yes, that was not all... (looking at the others) ... What else? The techniques... way of questioning and so on...

Brent: Yes. Everything we had to deal with in our congregations, came out... We said this time and time again. The fact that we have all been in the ministry for a couple of years makes the course so much more valuable. Someone who has just completed his studies would not have found it as worthwhile. Because experience brought us to our knees and made us humble (general laughter) we are busy "discovering" a "tool" that is immensely valuable (everyone responding with, "yes, yes", and "that's true, that's true"...).

Patrick: About the content I just want to say... There was a wide range of subjects like... for example depression, faith development,... divorce...

Brent: Development of the person...

Patrick: Yes, of the therapist as a person... and the pastor and his relationship with his congregation and all those kinds of things... a lot of different aspects were looked at. It was a massive body of reading. A lot of theory, but also aimed at practising pastoral therapy.

Eric: If I can make a contribution... Brent and I did the continuing education course in pastoral therapy before we enrolled for the masters degree... That course was the course that had the greatest impact on my life because theory and practice were integrated. Also in this degree course... it is the same... theory is discussed whenever we have time for it during the practical work and in between practical sessions with clients... only now can I see how things fall together! I don't think it would have meant the same if I did the course ten years ago... the practical experience of the past ten years really helped me to be able to understand theory. This process enabled me to help my congregation with any kind of problem, not only those of bereavement.

Pete: The course helped me in various facets of my own life. It made a difference in my marriage as well as in my relationship with my church council. I just hope that the course will go on in future because I think there is a tremendous need amongst ministers to gain theory and practical skills in therapy.

Eric: Because I think it is a never-ending process we would like to return every year to keep abreast of the latest theory... and to learn from each other... to improve our skills...it would be fantastic... a kind of ongoing training...

Brent: Yes, we as a group developed a unique rapport with each other... it would be fine because we accepted criticism from one another.

Sam: Quite valuable to me is the fact that in every practicum we participated in during the training... we never got stuck with lecture upon lecture upon lecture...because the

theory was worked through prior to the practicums and in these practical sessions we all shared our understanding of the work....we sort of trained one another with our particular perspectives.

Pete: The relationship between us and Arthur (supervisor) was one in which we were allowed to feel as if we were on the same level... it's not the same as in a normal lecture where the lecturer is superior... it was a situation in which I felt free to say how I feel and what I think... I was not afraid of being wrong...

Sam: All of us had the liberty to express ourselves... we could do our thing as therapists knowing that the team behind the glass are there for support... we all grew with every therapy session... that was our need... to apply theory to practice and have the help of a reflecting team so that you can see yourself through their eyes... I learnt a lot from that.

Pete: Yes, theory alone won't help that much at all... we know that we must carry on alone in our congregations, but this practical work helped me to gain confidence... to see myself as a therapist... yes... the practical part of the course is... how shall I put it... you cannot do without it.

Brent: Yes, the theory comes into perspective in the discussion thereof...

Eric: The important thing to me is that, although there was a great deal of reading, we were able to develop a paradigm to use the theory in our pastoral work. In the past we did not have that... we stumbled about between the theories of Adams and Clinebell and

others that we studied while we were at university, but because of the remoteness between theory and practice we ended up reading a Bible verse and that's all. Now we have something with which we can help people... and it works! We never had a paradigm, now we have one.

Prof J: You have used the term "paradigm" a few times now. Think about the term, all of you... how would you describe it? What would be a good definition? In the meantime, just to give further impetus to our discussion, I would like to ask a few more questions given to me... some of them have already been touched on in what you have said up to now... but the questions are: *How are you part of the training process?* Now, it is very clear to me... from what you have said already, how actively you have become a part of the training process. It seems to me that it is part of the nature of training that one moves from a position of lecturing to a position of learning and vice versa. *How do you gather knowledge about therapy?* I am not sure what is meant by this question, but it seems as if you have answered it already by saying that you discuss theory and share perspectives about theory and how you use it in practice...

Brent (jokingly): If he does not know we can send him a copy of the extensive reading work... (everyone laughs).

Arthur (supervisor): I just want to say ...uh... a large part of what we eventually walk out with has come about in our discussions. There are certain things that we did not read specifically in theory, but which emerged as we spoke about therapeutic situations and hypothesised about them... I myself have learnt a couple of new things that will benefit

me in future. I want to say that it is unique that the person in the position of guiding students finds himself being guided... it is something particular to this process.

Prof J: ...quite a healthy process then... (everybody responding "yes, yes"...)

Pete: I found the course specifically relevant in my circumstances - also to the community especially where I come from... in this so-called post-apartheid era where one has to do with things like the Truth and Reconciliation Commission... people want to tell their stories and basically these studies concern listening to other people's stories. The question is: "What do you do with these stories"? I feel we are prepared by this course so as to be able to do something with their stories. Having had this training we will be able to serve in community forums and be able to help our communities.

Prof J: A sort of empowerment for community service as well?

Pete: That's right.

Gert: What's important to us as a group is Pete's contribution as a person of colour because his experience - being from another world than that of white South Africans - has meant a lot to us. He opened a world to us that we did not really know... we are grateful to him.

Prof J: Wonderful.

Brent: I hope he has learnt from us as well...

Pete: I almost became reformed...(everybody laughs).

Prof J: Thank you very much. It seems as if we have covered this first section. He also asks what the correlation is between the knowledge gained and the therapy that you will be doing in your own congregations? I think that was clear from what you have already said. Let us go on to the next section which will probably turn out to be a very important aspect, namely that of Theology and the use of Scripture in therapy.

Theme: Theology and the use of Scripture in therapy

Prof J: The first focus point here concerns pastoral therapy and the first question is: "What do you understand under *pastoral* therapy?" It concerns the word "*pastoral*"... how important is the word? How does it relate to the therapy part of the concept "pastoral therapy"? What would the difference be between *pastoral counselling* and pastoral therapy? Should we continue to speak of pastoral counselling alone or should we speak of pastoral therapy?

Sam: Most important to me is that we cannot detach or disconnect ourselves from what we believe. We have a definite point of departure...because we believe in the Trinity, we believe in the Bible as reliable and authoritative, we believe that it is the Word of God that is speaking to us. We also believe that God is using us as people in a process to reach other people... and that we definitely have a guiding role to play. Contrary to my

own way of thinking earlier, with pastoral therapy now I don't have to diagnose every problem and have an answer ready to deliver...I am now liberated from that... and yet that is what the Bible teaches us... we believe absolutely that the Holy Spirit works in very unique ways through this pastoral therapeutic model that we use.

Eric: I think we must remember that the compilation of this course has definite presuppositions and presupposes that we are already qualified ministers... that we already have had undergraduate training in pastoral work... presupposes that we already have a particular view of Scripture and so on... therefore we do not go into the theological basis of pastoral work in this course. My experience therefore is that theology does not receive the major emphasis in pastoral therapy training.

Prof J: I want to ask if you do not see a danger here. Isn't there a danger that a person can get so caught up in the *therapy* part that he might find himself, in his congregational setting, more of a therapist than a minister?

Gert: I think the danger is there yes, but it is precisely because you are going to work as a minister... knowing that you are called by God and that it is God who is working through you, that you must always bear in mind that you are a messenger of God... and from that perspective you are busy with therapy. We are not merely social workers and therefore our intention is also to help the person in Christ.

Eric: That is what we want to do... However, we are not forced to use Scripture or to pray in every session. For example, we had a woman in therapy who lost her husband

recently. The presented problem was that her small boy wets his bed after his father's death... that problem was dealt with and only at about the third or fourth session, did she reveal that she also is struggling with God. Her struggle was also dealt with from there on... but I think the important thing is that the client put the subject on the table. When the client is ready the client will put the issue of religion and faith on the table. We do not feel that the session was wasted if in that session we did not attend to the religious aspect of the client's life, because the whole therapeutical process takes place within the framework of Gods covenant with people...therefore every session to us, with or without Scripture reading or prayer, has a pastoral dimension.

Gert: This is different from our earlier training where we were told that somebody who has a problem must be given a "what does the Bible teache about that problem?" answer. Immediately the Bible must give the answer... but here we enter into a conversation with the person about his perception of his problem. The Bible is drawn in later - sometimes even from the beginning - but it definitely is not: this is the problem; this is the answer from the Bible anymore...

Eric: We want to guide the people to self-discovery.

Prof J: Yes?...

Eric: That is the important thing... more than our prescriptively telling them what the Bible says they must explore themselves...they must find for themselves... it is the Word of God speaking to me now... telling me...

Prof J: Self discovery? Not in the sense of Hiltner's educative approach... self help... the potential that a person has to help himself... to develop that so that the client can help himself. Is that part of your approach?

Brent: No. The person must discover (i.e. realise) - by himself - the truths of God's Word... How God acts in his life... how God is present in his life. We want to facilitate this process in his life.

Prof J: Would you say it is a directive or a non-directive approach?

Brent: Non-directive (everyone agrees).

Prof J: Do all say non-directive?...

Gert: It can also be directive sometimes... it is not compulsory to be non-directive.

Brent: In one of my sessions I was at times quite directive...

Arthur: It depends on the person and on the process...

Prof J: One of the questions is: What role do Christian principles play? Immediately you face the dilemma of directive/non-directive therapy... For example: you are working with a husband and wife who have an childless marriage and yet have a very strong obsession to have a child. They eventually produce their answer to the problem, which is that the

woman should be inseminated by the husband's brother's donor semen so as to maintain in the family bloodline. They say that they have prayed together and are convinced that this is the right solution to their problem... directive or non-directive?

Eric: We would most probably ask the question as to why they are so obsessed with having a child. We would go into family of origin work with them...and not merely give a yes or no answer to the insemination question... we would most probably leave them to decide on it...

Brent: In the end it boils down to the fact that we cannot accept the responsibility to say yes or no. In the whole process of handling the case these people themselves will have to take the responsibility of making a decision.

Sam: Yet we have said that we have Christian principles... but if you should say "no" the Bible says you cannot... it is like with a child, if you say don't do that, they will end up doing it anyway... and to guide these people so that they would know, but that is not how God would want it done... we would use family of origin work so that in the end they would realise why they have such an obsession... in the end they would hopefully realise for themselves... that is not what God wants... they would have seen their actual problem and would be able to handle that. We would therefore de-focus the presentational problem, form a larger picture and put them in a position to make a better choice. As with many problems I had in the past... I tend to get stuck with the presentational problem and miss the actual dilemma. It is like a hungry child. If I want to share the gospel with him, he would not be able to accept this, as I see it, because he

is too hungry. He needs food first and then when he has had his fill he would more likely listen.

Pete: I think we usually (in the past) came to a point where we had to give a single answer, but now we have learnt to put as many alternatives as possible on the table and then leave the responsibility of choosing one to himself.

Eric: Yet, I want to say, we work within a specific community of faith. Within this community of faith people agree on certain principles, certain points of departure are accepted because we are part of this specific Christ-community with the Scripture as point of departure... and then we expect people that belong to this community to adhere to its principles - principles they view as revelatory truths. They are therefore expected to make their choices accordingly.

Prof J: Does this apply to the complete spectrum of Christian ethics? Divorce, abortion... that the approach of pastoral therapy would be that I cannot decide for you, you have to decide for yourself?

Eric: That is, I can almost say, a simplification of our standpoint...

Arthur: I just want to say that even if I tell people that it is not right... it is no guarantee that they won't do what they want to...their decision remains their responsibility. The difference is that I now say...Let us assume you are going to get divorced - I do say what we believe about divorce, but what I believe must first be

worked out by them to see if they want to accept that - let's see what the implications would be, let's try to find out where your need for a divorce comes from, let's see how everything is going to work out and then I think they will be in a better position to make a responsible decision.

Sam: What Arthur says is important because you do have your Christian convictions, you recognise them... you cannot distance yourself from them, but in the past I myself wrongly told people that they were not allowed to divorce and if they did get divorced they disappeared from the congregation. Now I have the opportunity to guide these people to come to a solution... they get to focus on the fact that the marriage ends but parenthood not... they work things out so that parenthood can continue and in the end decide not to get divorced because they have discovered that they could work together. If they do get divorced, however, their relationship will be much better - for them and their children - than without the therapeutical process.

Arthur: If you just say, "No, you cannot get divorced", they feel that you do not understand their story, but if we have thoroughly discuss the problem and they feel that you do understand their story they will also more readily accept your advice.

Sam: ...and, Arthur, we do listen differently now. I do not listen with the purpose of showing them where they went wrong and then try to rectify the problem with a verse from the Bible; now I am listening to determine what is behind everything... I am more able to bring God's story and our human story together... and you yourself grow together with them in this process. You begin to see things differently, but you still have the

Christian principles in which you believe and our stories are being harmonised with God's story. It is not a *directive* way of doing, but a *guiding* way of doing in which the person, in the end, is able to "discover" for himself the right decision to make.

Patrick: What I have learnt has given me peace. I do not have to give an answer immediately, but through a process of working together with people we develop answers as we go along. I know, if somebody comes to me, what my answer will be, because I am a believer... but because I know that he does not have the answer and often does not understand my yes or no, and mostly does not understand my Biblical answer... the challenge is to walk the troubled road with this person so that he would be able to discover something... because our aim is to enable people to discover their position in Christ - as mature and as perfect as He is.

Pete: This course also puts us in a position to work pro-actively. When you are busy with home visits as a minister in your congregation, through the genogram and family-of-origin work, you can see problems before they actually appear and then you can take proactive steps so that people do not even come to a situation in which divorce is considered.

Gert: This is important. Which members of your congregation come to you as the minister with their problem and when do they come?... When it is almost too late! But when do they go to a psychologist? They go to a psychologist with more of an open mind because this is not the minister who is going to censure them and have all the perfect answers ready and not understand them. I think this is going to help me so that my congregation will feel that I do listen to their stories... that I am not caught up in my own

ideas without giving them the chance to tell their stories so that I can understand them and provide in-depth help. This training has given me a greater openness towards people so that they can come to me with confidence and share their problems without fear that I am merely going to condemn them for sinning.

Prof J: The last two aspects of this section were briefly touched on: The role of Scripture in pastoral therapy and the role of prayer in pastoral therapy. Do you want to add to that?

Brent: I think that in the recent training I have felt some release concerning this aspect...that you are not a doctor that must diagnose and then give a certain prescription from Scripture so as to resolve the problem. I believe that I am called by God to be a minister of His Word, but I find that I am now a much more responsible user of His Word than ever before. The use of Scripture and prayer is therefore much more natural, adequate and appropriate, and not forced.

Eric: Concerning prayer it is my experience that of prayer, primarily, does not take place within the session but in the week before that specific session when you do intercessory prayer for the therapeutic process. I realised my own dependence, my own inadequacy... I realised how dependent we are upon the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the right selection of words, to set the right atmosphere for a pastoral conversation. In my pastoral cases in my congregation I know that God alone can make the difference, therefore I pray that He should intervene. Prayer means much more to me now, but even so three or four sessions can pass without a single prayer within one of the sessions itself.

Gert: It depends on the person with whom you are working and the therapeutical process within that particular session if you are going to use Scripture and/or prayer within that session.

Eric: Conversation with God can also be established through a particular therapeutical assignment that you would give the client to enhance the process. For instance, one can ask the client to write a letter to God in which he talks to God about the problem. Many aspects can be realised through this...in one of the letters in these sessions the person wrote: "Dear Jesus, I have disappointed you..." If we had told her she is guilty of this or that we most probably would have failed... but in her own struggle with God she realised her mistakes and confessed...the resulting prayer (written as a letter to God) was strange but creative...

Sam: Eric, that is important. Just last Thursday, I spoke to a woman who has not been able to read her Bible or pray for two years since her daughter has died. She is struggling with the thought as to whether she may tell God how she really feels inside. With a process like this she will be given the opportunity to put her feelings in writing and begin to speak to God in the same way as, for instance, the Psalmist in Psalm 13.

Eric: What we believe is that there must be a spontaneity... there is no constraint to use either the Word or prayer because we know that we are working within the framework of God's grace.

Patrick: Yes, Scripture and prayer are definitely very important, but then in the form as

Eric has explained it. The nature of the minister plays a big part. People know that you are a minister, they know within which framework you operate. As we have said earlier - about the relationship between the therapy part and pastoral part of pastoral therapy - there is a danger that the minister can become a mere therapist, but also that minister can become a mere citer of Bible verses and not understand or be able to solve any problem that the client might have. I think that being a minister will help me not to become a mere therapist and having the theory will prevent the minister from becoming a mere Bible-thumper with little or no effect.

Prof J: Yes, I want to say this about the person who comes to you as a minister and chooses not to go to the psychologist or psychiatrist... is there not a possibility that he has a particular expectation about something of a spiritual experience which he himself cannot produce and that he then might have the expectation that at least by the end of the session we would be together in the presence of the Lord?... that there might be a rude awakening on the part of the client because we have met three times already and not once have we spoken to the Lord?

Pete: Precisely in the telling of his story would this expectation become apparent and upon that the pastoral therapist would react. I don't think that would be something that you would miss completely, because usually you do an in-depth study of what the person is saying to you and what is in the person's heart will be coming to the fore

Prof J: Thank You very much. Our time is almost up and I quickly want to put the paradigm problem on the table. Would you want to explain what a paradigm is and then

apply it to pastoral therapy?

Theme: Paradigm and pastoral therapy

Eric: Paradigm, as I understand it, is a pattern of thought; a certain point of departure or set of presuppositions.

Brent: If we want to give names to our patterns of thinking - to our paradigms... it would be within a postmodernist framework; social constructionism with the narrative approach as part of it.

Prof J: Would you accept the constructivist notion that there are no wrong answers? Let's mention a specific case... Somebody comes to you and says that she has struggled with the Lord and the Lord has specifically indicate that she should have an abortion. It is her construction of the truth between her and the Lord. Would you be able to say that her construction of the truth is just as reliable and acceptable as yours which states that you are not allowed to commit murder?

Eric: Most probably just as worthy as an option, even as reliable, but not acceptable at all within our set of principles within our community of faith. It is the same as our construction of baptism. A member of the Apostolic Faith Mission could say, "The Holy Spirit convinced me that I must be baptised again." I can answer that the Holy Spirit has led our church to believe something completely different from that belief. Who is to say which one is right and which one is wrong? However, his conviction is not acceptable

within the community of faith that I belong to, therefore he has to relate to another community of faith.

Prof J: Our time has expired. Thank you for your spontaneous participation. I myself have experienced it as something very interesting. You would be surprised to see how many of the things that you have said occur in pastoral literature in any case. Think of Danie Louw, for example, in his "*Pastoraat as Ontmoeting*" and some of the aspects that occur in "*Herderkunde*" by Mias de Klerk. There is the tendency to think that there is a tension between pastoral counselling and pastoral therapy. It does not have to be and possibly more of these conversations are necessary to put some of these misconceptions into proper perspective.

Appendix E**CONVERSATION BETWEEN SUPERVISOR (BEN) AND SECOND YEAR MASTERS
DEGREE GROUP C**

Ben (Supervisor of Masters degree group A): Thank you all for having this discussion with me. Feel free to express your own feelings and thoughts in reply to the questions.

Let me start off by asking about your expectations for this course before commencing with it. Did your expectations change during the course and how were they met?

Harold: I started the course because I felt that there was a huge gap in my ministry concerning pastoral therapy. Up till now my expectations have been met virtually completely and I am looking forward to the rest of the course... the paper that I have to write and also the practical cases under supervision that I still have to do.

Henry: I want to add to that by saying that my expectations were also met, but even more than that... especially if one considers the personal development aspect of the course. That gave me even more than I expected... it made me stronger... I appreciate that in the course.

Ben: Speaking about the personal development aspect, what was the impact on you of the family-of-origin work that has been done with each of you?

Andrew: I have learned that this course is not only about counselling clients, but also about

knowing yourself. My expectations were exceeded because it helped me to grow not only in my counselling of others but also in other aspects of my ministry... relationships with church council members, my general approach to and handling of meetings, and so on...

Ben: It sounds as if you are saying that the course has changed Andrew himself, therefore he will act differently in every situation from now on?

Andrew: Yes, I believe so...

Ben: How do you feel about this change?

Andrew: I think it has made me more aware of the person I choose to be, and it has also made me sensitive towards others. It has taught me a specific pastoral sensitivity and the reason why I enrolled for the course was to enhance my pastoral therapeutic ability.

Ben: What about you Esther?

Esther: I have experienced it quite positively. There is something of a release in family-of-origin work... especially because you share so much of yourself with others in the group and then have the opportunity to listen to their stories. I realised that I as a therapist had to deal with certain hang-ups... it was liberating to experience that other people like oneself, other therapists, also have their hang-ups to contend with. It helped me to start building a bridge between myself as a person and myself as a therapist. I do realise though that I am still at the beginning of doing so.

Ben: Does it make sense to build a bridge like that?

Esther: Yes, I think so. For instance, if you as a therapist have been molested as a young girl and a client comes to see you about molestation... then you should have sorted out your own feelings and emotions in order to be able to help properly. Also when you have a "down" day you ought to know how to restrain yourself to be able to help others. That self-knowledge will build the bridge between you as person and you as therapist.

Ben: Do you think it is possible to restrain oneself when you are "down"?

Esther: It is very difficult for me, but I suppose because we are believers we can ask the Lord to give us strength and temperance and self-control.

Ben: Speaking of our relationship with God, how would one go about using Scripture and prayer in pastoral therapy... what we want to do is called *pastoral* therapy - how will you use Scripture and prayer?

Andrew: I think that already in one's preparation one's relationship with God is important. I must realise that I am merely an instrument in the hands of God... that I am in the first place a minister... that I must be dependent on the Lord. I must ask Him to help me to guide these people in front of me. Yes, I think preparation is quite important.

Ben: What do you understand by preparation?

Andrew: To me it is to seek the Lord's face and to pray every day and to read from the Bible, seeking His guidance for that day. In that way you can attune to things such as therapy for instance, because you know that when you work with people you yourself have got problems, you are not above them in that respect and you need the Lord's assistance in every aspect.

Bob: I think there is a danger that the use of Scripture and prayer can easily be done as an addendum... you only include Scripture and prayer in your therapy to legitimise it as *pastoral* therapy. The pastoral part of therapy must be the essence of pastoral therapy...

Ben: The essence of ...?

Bob: The fact that I am there as instrument of God; the fact that the person in front of me is loved by God - even if we say nothing about God or Scripture - makes it the essence of pastoral therapy and therefore it is the point of departure for all concerned. The fact that prayer precedes the session or even follows thereafter - and I mean prayer outside of the session itself - has everything to do with the essence of pastoral therapy... that is to *live* Jesus. The Scripture can obviously be used in any session... one just has to make sure one doesn't do the work for the clients... rather make them curious about what Scripture has to say to them.

Henry: You have to be honest with yourself. You must establish your own spirituality and be true to it. You also have to establish the spirituality of the people in front of you... if they have a strong spirituality you will have to act accordingly. If they do not have

such a strong spirituality the therapist can actually drive them away by using Scripture too often. Your proclamation will have to take place in another way. Proclamation, however, is necessary for therapy to be pastoral therapy.

Ben: Would one's loving care for one's clients in itself be proclamation?

Henry: I think so yes. God's love must be visible through you as therapist.

Ben: When someone acts directly contrary to the community of faith's belief system how would you as pastoral therapist handle it?

Harold: I would try and handle it lovingly and with care... try to understand the client's circumstances and to work with him through his problem, but I will also clearly state the position of the community of faith. I would not force anything on the client, but he will know what my position is about that specific matter.

Bob: I would like to use my experience with our family-of-origin work as an example to add to what Harold has said. I don't think I would have accepted the family-of-origin work as effective if it was only theory that I had to learn... but now that I have experienced it I can appreciate the worth of it. From now on I'll definitely use it in my own therapy processes with other people. In the same way... if I tell a person... theoretically, so to speak, what the Bible tells us it will not have the same impact as when the person discovers what the Bible says for himself. In this process of discovery I shall only be a guide.

(Silence)

Ben: If you have the opportunity to change any part of this masters degree course, what would you do?

Harold: To do role play was particularly significant for me. I would like a bit more of that earlier in the course and I would also like to begin sooner with real therapy sessions with real clients. It would have been quite productive, from our point of view, if the supervisor could do actual therapy and we as students could observe and learn from that.

Ben: Yes, then the students can even appraise the therapy of the supervisor.

All the students: Yes. Yes. Yes. (Laughing).

Ben: Maybe it is not such a bad idea. It will definitely help you to a different perspective of therapy - to evaluate the therapy of the supervisor ... if you change position you will most probably have a change in interpretation and meaning.

Bob: To be able to learn from a meta-position is a huge benefit. One does learn quite a lot from what one thinks about (positive or negative) while looking at the session.

Andrew: It is not only the practical observation of the therapy that is important to me. The more one comprehends theory the more the practical sessions make sense and vice versa. One has to practise and practise and practise; the more practice the more the skills, but

practice will be very difficult without theory.

Ben: Is that one of the ways in which theory and praxis become integrated?

Everyone: Yes.

Ben: Is there anything else you can think of that will enhance the integration of theory and praxis?

Henry: I think that if one can prepare a videotape on which a particular approach, for instance the Narrative approach, is used by the developer(s) of that approach in a complete therapeutical process, viewing this while reading the theory would also enhance the integration, especially if we can discuss our various opinions about the therapy on the videotaped session and how it relates to theory.

(Silence)

Ben: How would you describe your experience regarding supervision?

Andrew: We were in the situation that we had two supervisors with somewhat different approaches. I think we could learn from both of them and although I myself was sometimes confused it meant that I had to go and make sure for myself... of my own position, learn some kind of discernment. It also taught me a great deal about integrating different models for I have developed a tolerance for divergent thinking and how to use

the best of this.

Bob: I appreciated the fact that the supervisors did not try to shape us all into the ideal therapist, but that they guided us to be ourselves and to develop our own styles as we go along. We are only at the beginning of this process, but it meant a lot to me not to be forced to be a particular kind of expert. Maybe it is because one of my own problems, from my family-of-origin work as I perceived it, was to accept others' responsibility. As an expert I think I still would be compelled to do that, but now I can enable everyone to accept his/her own responsibility. I also appreciated the honesty of supervision. There was no "soft-soaping" only true validation or honest, empathic criticism.

Esther: It was good to hear other voices commenting on you as a therapist, some of them positive, others not so positive, but always sincere. It was like a mirror to me. I wished that I could always have that with me.

Harold: To me it meant exposure to others, which I was afraid of at first, because the picture I had of myself at the outset of this training was that I am not a good therapist... And this produced tension within me. As we went along, though, I was able to experience growth within myself and it was reflected by the team - and that meant a lot to me.

Henry: The fact that the team challenged me to evolve a specific technique encouraged me, because it convinced me that I would be able to do it eventually, otherwise they would never have challenged me in the first place.

Ben: I think that goes for everyone. I don't want you to even think otherwise. Growth means life. Growth in your abilities as pastoral therapist means that you have a living story that must continue to grow - that to me is true of each of you. Thank you for what you have shared with me.

Appendix F**CONVERSATION WITH CLIENTS, TWO MONTHS AFTER COMPLETION OF THEIR PASTORAL THERAPEUTICAL PROCESS**

Ben: Thank you very much for being part of this conversation in which we would like to find out how you experienced the help that you have received from us. If someone else asks you what happens where you are counselled or how you are counselled, what would you say to explain?

Jack: If I can begin, I want to say that you get an opportunity to talk and then basically to hear yourself. You get your own feelings back... they are reflected to you and that makes you think. You normally say things that you never think about again, but here you are in the position to think about what you say and feel and think and do. I basically found out how I myself was thinking and naturally, in our case, I could also hear what my wife was saying. I heard things that she never told me directly... or I was never able to hear... now she could speak or I could hear through a third party. I think the whole process is aimed at effective communication... absolute open communication.

Ben: You feel that the process made it possible for you to listen to each other? Without the process it was difficult to hear what the other had to say?

Jack: Ben, I think, because of the third party (pastoral therapist)... if Sarah and I, before the process, tried to communicate with each other... before I could finish what I wanted

to say - that also happened the other way around - she would interrupt me or cut me short because she felt she already knew what I wanted. That caused a lot of aggression because you don't like someone to telling you what you are thinking. However, in the pastoral therapeutical process, one could finish what one wanted to say and only then would the other one react.

Ben: Thank you Jack. Sarah, if you want to describe the process to a friend what would you say?

Sarah: At first it was difficult to expose myself. Maybe it felt difficult because of my work - you know I am a social worker at the hospital. I am supposed to be able to give advice and to help and now I must seek help for myself. But I saw the necessity of it because I am always sitting on the opposite side of the table. Here I had to sit at the "wrong" side of the table, but it has given me the opportunity to release, to unburden myself. The problems of the past, in my first marriage, caused tension within me and made me unhappy. To talk to Jack... about that was a difficult process... the way in which I put it... well Jack thought I was attacking him. It was as if aggression was present before I made my point. This process helped me tremendously to release all those bottled up feelings that I kept inside for so long. Even more than did the sessions, I think that the letters that I had to write helped me to say things that have never been said, but in a controlled manner because a letter cannot react and become angry. Writing the letters helped me to realise how I felt inside, to see what these things did to me and to counter them. It gave me wonderful deliverance. I also use this method now with my patients because writing letters definitely enables one to release one's feelings.

Ben: Thank you Sarah. I wonder what actually happens when you write the letter?

Sarah: In writing the letter you are communicating with the person with whom you have unfinished business - even if that person is dead - so that you can disburden yourself and so that you can see what things you still allow to influence you today. It is not only writing the letter that helped, but also the opportunity to read it to people you know will not condemn you... but will reflect what they see and hear. Your reflection opened so many perspectives that it is hard to put them into words. All I know is that it started something in me that enabled me to look differently to the problems of the past... and it helps!

Ben: Thank you Sarah. I would like to give Beth a chance to reflect on her experience of her process. How would you describe the pastoral therapy process?

Beth: I think the first thing I want to say is that it was so reassuring that there were people who thought that I could be helped. I thought that there was nothing that anyone could do to help me. Because you are ministers I knew from the start that if there is anybody that would be able to help then it would be you. I have prayed a lot about the case and the fact that Kevin (my pastoral therapist) and I could speak with each other while you were looking on via the monitor, opened my eyes to different meanings. I said things that you interpreted in different ways and this helped me to think about my problem differently. I saw deliverance where I thought none was possible. I also needed you to challenge me on my way of looking at things because I realised that I was bluffing myself to some extent. I could always ask my husband's advice, but now without him,

what was very reassuring to me was that I could use you as my husbands... Your reflection helped me to realise that I myself am capable of doing the right thing.

Ben: How did you experience your "homework"?

Sarah: The homework helped me to continue to work with the problem. Not to put it away in the closet and then to see it as so big that no one could do anything about it. The letters that I had to write helped me to maintain enough contact with the problem to realise that it was no problem. In the end the letters changed to other subjects, not because I wanted to hide the problem, but because it was not relevant anymore. I felt free at last. The different feelings of sadness and aggression and anger and... I don't know what else... have all left me. Even now, two months later... a new world has opened up for me. At that stage I never thought it possible... it is a feeling of liberation.

Ben: If you have to tell someone about the reflecting team, how would you describe it?

Jack: The reflecting team opened my eyes to see how the same words can mean different things to different people. I saw them as not actually part of my circumstances at home and therefore they could only reflect what I said. The part of the story that you are telling is all they can reflect upon. I think if it was a team of psychologists or a team of doctors they would have interpreted our story in their own terms, but the difference to me was that the team was spiritually inclined. Sometimes you don't even know that you are manipulating others... you can manipulate one person easily, but it is not possible to manipulate so many people simultaneously. The challenges that came from the team

were also experienced as open and beneficial and not hostile to me or against Sarah. What was particularly appreciated was that the team reflected only our feelings or opinions and never made value judgements about us as humans. It was wonderful not to be labelled. I have never felt here that Sarah or I was the problem, but that, together, we had a problem.

Leo: In other words the team was a kind of meta-vision for the pastoral therapist, some kind of a check against for any misunderstandings by the therapist or even against any sidetracking of the clients.

Jack: Exactly. That made me think twice before I say something. I was compelled to carefully consider my own thoughts because I knew they would come back to me and then I would have to explain what my thoughts were. I even find that when I speak to Sarah at home I am making sure what my own feelings or opinions are before I say anything. They were a sort of sounding-board, but not in the sense of experts... they never diagnosed but only reflected upon our actions and feelings and opinions... we still had to work through their reflections and we had to make something of them. They never told us where our problem lay, we had to realise that ourselves. That made the difference.

Ben: What is your opinion Beth?

Beth: I also experienced finding my own answers... always in dependence upon God, but still you supported me so that I could see things differently for myself and then respond differently... not in a problematic way. You never told me: "You have to do

this", or: "You are not allowed to do that". You actually "tricked" me into experiencing that I am able, with the help of God, to face my problem and now I do believe that is true. Your validation also meant so much to me. I felt I could trust you at a time when it felt as if the whole world just wanted to abuse me.

Kevin: I really think that this is a small group of people together with the aim of sincerely and honestly helping one another... I take an interest in helping you Ben, and you certainly helped us as your students and we all genuinely want to help the people we work with. It really is a special relationship of trust and appreciation.

Leo: Yes, it is not a case of one person sitting there with all the knowledge and actually forcing his knowledge unto others, it is a circle of people who are sincerely interested in one another and in the whole process everybody is busy growing, especially those who came to seek help.

Beth: The reflection was so positive I never felt threatened or ordered about from left to right...

Ben: I wonder... if somebody tells you: "Wait a minute, those people only told you a lot of positive things, they never focused on the things that you did wrong. How can you believe them? What would you say?

Sarah: It is not as if you never focused on negative patterns... I think you just never censured us and accepted our view of things, even if you disagreed. I don't know... it

seems as if you just reflected our views and that was what made it possible for us to see them from a distance and make our own judgement about them, and maybe change our views. I was challenged about how I reacted towards my first husband by writing about my own actions in one of the letters, and even when you reflected upon negative things it was done in such a positive way that it was acceptable to me... and effective.

Jack: Yes, I think you succeeded in being positive all the time because you never attacked the person but reflected upon actions. Things that we could not see...

Ben: Blind spots?

Jack: Yes. That's it. Blind spots. You made it possible to see them and I must say sometimes it was quite challenging... but a relief to have a new meaning about things.

Ben: In your opinion, did the reflecting team always agree with one another?

Jack: No. This was something that struck me. On several occasions the team had two or even three different points of view. That, to me, was actually a positive sign. People do not always agree. I realised then that you can have a hundred people all seeing something in their own way. It didn't matter that the team did not agree but it helped me to sort out what it is that **I** believe... it helped me make up **my** mind. Nobody can shift you from your opinion, even if they hit you with a horsewhip, but if they let you think for yourself... what it is that **you** feel... **that** makes the difference. If everybody agreed all the time I would have thought that these men had read their answers in a book and were

now giving me their answers. Then they might as well have given me the book to read myself. But this was a real human process tailored to meet our needs.

Ben: What is the difference between sessions in which you were alone and those in which you were together?

Sarah: The sessions in which I was alone helped me to sort out some things from my past. I was afraid that Jack would not understand my feelings about these things... so, to me, those first sessions alone meant a lot.

Jack: Maybe it was good for her, and I am glad for her, but I think it would have been better if I had been there as well. It was good to look at the video, but there were some things that I would have liked to challenge her about in the session which, I think, could also have made a difference. In some of the sessions in which we were together I responded to what she said and at home she appreciated what I had said then. The same happened to me. I think what was very helpful was that when we were together in sessions it established a way of communication between us that we did not have previously... and we can build on that at home.

Leo: So a problem in marriage is never only one person's problem, but both in the marital couple's problem...

Sarah: Yes, it is our problem and we find or create a solution together. A marriage is two people bound together, so both must take responsibility to work at it. Openness is also

important. If Jack does not know what is going on in the sessions he might become suspicious of them and that would be counter-productive.

Jack: They can only be half productive if only one person attends because then you only get half the perspective, and if only one person is present you can only hear one side of the story. The person in therapy can easily fool the pastoral therapist, but if both are there this serves as a control method.

Sarah: I think there is a need, sometimes, to have the opportunity to be alone in a session. Then you have no restriction to say what you feel. The other spouse can always look at the video later. It was helpful to me to say what I felt without having Jack present... although when we were together that barrier was removed. Barrier... to be scared to say something to him. I am now able to say things to him that I was unable to say before we came for therapy.

Ben: If I may ask a strange question... Was there something that you feel that you have missed during the process? Is there something that you want to add or take away to enhance this therapeutical process that you have been through?

Jack: If I look back maybe I, myself, would have liked more sessions to find out if there is something still lurking in the dark. Maybe it would be fine if you have a control session after a couple of months to check... I don't know what for... or maybe it is just something that would mean more security to me.

Sarah: I think that this process enabled us to do something about new problems if we encounter them, but it would be nice to have a backup.

Beth: I don't think that I have missed anything. Your invitation to phone any time of the day or night was enough backup to me. No I did not miss anything. To me it was a perfect process. Thank you very much.

Ben: It is there any thing else that anyone wants to say?

Beth: I just want to say that I was scared to come to you as ministers because I thought that you would reject me or censure me because of the fact that I am divorced. I must thank you that I never felt that I was being censured. It was enough of a struggle. I did struggle with God a lot. I know He does not approve of divorce and yet my situation became unbearable. Thank you that I got the impression from you that my feelings were normal, that it is normal to go through all these stages - I can talk about myself now - I am normal, I am not a freak. That to me was very special and I think it made a big difference in the healing process.

Kevin: I remember that when Beth initially came to me, I realised that she often expected me to say how bad she was. I think it was quite liberating for her to realise that I was not about to condemn her, but to work together with her on her problem.

Jack: It was the same with us. We never experienced that either Sarah or I was the problem but that, together, we have a problem. Instead of fighting each other we can now

fight the problem.

Ben: What about using the Bible or prayer in therapy?

Beth: I am a very religious person. I know we cannot do anything without God's help. I knew that you were all ministers and accepted that you would have a religious approach to helping people. I expected that you would link my mistakes to the Bible and that I would then have to confess them before being helped... I was surprised that you did not use the Bible in that way... Thank you that you prayed for me... (Tears). I know now that God really loves me and does not hold my divorce against me... If you did not... (more tears)... then surely He will not either.

Jack: I never even expected you to read or pray. When Kevin did use the Bible.... it fitted our situation... it was... sort of easier to understand... and to accept what God was saying to us. We also appreciated the prayers, but even more valuable to us was when Kevin said that he would pray for us even when we were not present.

Sarah: To me the Bible and the prayers just came naturally... it felt right at the time. We could never have felt that you were overwhelming us with the Bible, because you have not used it much... as I said... only at the right time.

Ben: Anything else?... Thank you very much for your time and your willingness to speak to us about your experiences of the processes that you have been through. We do appreciate it. Thank you.

Appendix G**CONVERSATION BETWEEN SUPERVISOR (BEN) AND PROF J ABOUT PROF J'S
CONVERSATION WITH THE SECOND-YEAR MASTERS DEGREE GROUP B**

Ben: Thank you very much, Prof. for the time and trouble spent on my behalf. Thank you for the conversation with the second-year master students and also for your time in this conversation. I do appreciate it a lot. It was my intention to hear from them, through your mouth, as it were, what their experience of the training was and how training as such takes place, and then also in the second part... about theology and the use of Scripture within pastoral therapy. Perhaps to start off with, I would like to ask what your experience of that conversation was?

Theme: Effects of training in pastoral therapy

Prof J: My first impression was that the group was quite enthusiastic. Their answers have convinced me that they believe that they have found a model that - in a very practical manner - works for them. That they have said quite strongly, "It works"! That is something, I think, is a big discovery to them. My second impression was that they had a strong commitment towards one another. There was strong bonding of the group. To me this is a positive force on the one hand, but on the other it can also embody some danger. There is a danger that we, who battled through this, we, who walked this road, we who know from where we are, in a certain sense... could, become superior because of our superior knowledge as a group. We know more and understand more of the dynamics of

the group than someone who enters as an outsider.

Ben: Almost as if it contradicts what they themselves are saying, that they do not know... they are working from a position of not knowing. It sounds as if your perception was that they are starting to know.

Prof J: Yes, definitely so. At one stage, if you will remember, one of them said that they would want me to read the literature that they have worked through. That I have welcomed, and I have already taken steps to obtain the literature to work through it and I have no problem with that. My answer was that I would want them to read some of the literature from pastoral work that I would want to give them.

Ben: Yes...

Prof J: I did, however, experience that their perception of me was that I do not understand properly, I am not part of the group. And then, my third observation was, that while the group openly claimed social construction theory was their epistemology, some of their utterances and pronouncements completely contradicted a social constructionist epistemology. I also tried, at the end of the conversation, to reflect something of that to them. I wanted them to understand something of the necessity of giving proper expressions to your claims if you have to do with such an immense, rapidly growing, extensive, worldly philosophic paradigm. You have to be careful how you formulate it and how you are giving structure to it, so that one does not later give credit to such a movement for new insights that actually do not belong to that movement.

I felt very positive about some things that they said, about most of the things that they said, and I can identify myself completely with the approach that they followed in their model. My problem was that their approach and especially the new insights thereof are linked to social construction theory as if it is only social construction theory that agrees with what they say.

Theme: Social construction theory/diaconiology

Ben: Almost as if they did not realise that they still have one foot in the paradigm in which they were schooled theologically and that they have only just come into contact with a complete new paradigm, they now have the illusion that they are absolutely conversant with the new way of thinking and that they are doing everything accordingly.

Prof J: Yes, indeed. The whole philosophy of postmodernism and then social construction theory as an aspect of postmodernism presupposes very much... if you look at the philosophy thereof you are talking about relativism, subjectivism and the like, and when all these aspects are taken into consideration it would hardly be possible to take a theological, diaconiological point of departure and merge this into a postmodernist paradigm that is the exact opposite of the diaconiological one.

Ben: Yes...

Prof J: Because the diaconiological point of departure, unlike the practical theological one in fact wants to link to the firmness and security and the point of departure of Scripture.

Service to the Word. Diaconiology. The postmodernist and specifically the social constructionist approaches do not want to uphold such a point as the correct one. They want to be open to other possibilities and when social construction theory is taken to its consequences - and interestingly enough not one of the group does this... when it is taken to its consequences, then it is impossible to opt for a diaconiological point of departure because social construction theory does not wish to depart from a definite fixed and correct point, because it states that no such a point exists.

Ben: It seems to me, considering the training of pastoral therapy, that some tangent plane or planes are being sought between social construction theory and diaconiology. The one tangent plane that I think is possible... I have thought about it often in my own mind, and I wonder if *faith* is not that something that does make a radical difference. I admit that I accept the claim of social construction theory that we cannot know whether we are correct or not - that is scientifically and ontologically speaking - but if my point of departure is diaconiological then I can say "I know" because I *believe*. It seems to me that from a social constructionist approach there would not be a problem if I state that I am opting for a specific construction (point of departure) while I do not claim that this construction is closer to an ontological truth out there, than for instance the Buddhist claims. Now I do believe that in this course we say that we cannot prove scientifically what we say is the truth, but that we *believe* what we say *is* the truth, and therefore we take responsibility for what we believe. It does seem that we cannot but make choices and once we have made a choice we must take responsibility for it. It is almost as if social construction theory taught me what faith really is. Because, if from a modernist point of view the truth can be known as it really is, no faith is necessary - I know the truth and something that is known already does

not need to be taken for the truth by faith. However, if I understand that the truths from Scripture and those which I believe from Scripture are truths in faith, and that there is no way in which I can prove scientifically that the Bible is the Word of God more so, for instance, than is the Koran, then I know that I have to make a choice and that choice is a choice taken in faith only. It is then that I say, *faith* makes it possible to have a diaconiological point of departure. In that sense I would say that once you have made a choice - by faith - you would not be able to apply social construction theory to its final consequences.

Theme: New insights of social construction theory

Ben: But we do implement some of the new insights of social construction theory in this training course. I want to ask you whether you might have regarded some of these new insights from social construction theory in your conversation with the students as insights of social construction theory and not also insights from other literature dealing with pastoral work.

Prof J: That is a comprehensive question. I want to start by reflecting on those things that are viewed as new insights of social construction theory which I think cannot necessarily be viewed as such. It may be that social construction theory confirmed them, or emphasised them. It may be that they brought another approach for some ministers in their pastoral work, but the fact is that those changes have been - for a long time already - inherently, latently or explicitly present in the literature about pastoral work. That was my contention... and although I do respect the opinions of the students or anyone that is connected with

pastoral therapy, my personal feeling is that you cannot linearly find answers in the Bible for every problem and that you cannot nouthetically prescriptively tell somebody that he/she cannot divorce because the Bible says so... the insight that it is a totally wrong approach, that it is a fruitless and potentially disasterous approach also appears in poimenic literature. It is therefore difficult to ascribe it to social construction theory. If you were not exposed to the poimenic literature and you had read this in social constructionist literature, yes, then you can say that social construction theory taught it to you. But if you read the poimenic literature you will find that, in the late seventies already, Clinebell for instance, mentioned the growth formula by which Scripture and prayer is used in counselling. He gives directives for supportive and comforting pastoral work where you will use the Bible frequently, but when psychopathology is involved you would sometimes even choose not to use the Bible at all. Social construction theory is so much more than the new insights they have mentioned, which, in any case can also be found in the literature of pastoral work.

I have a problem when someone says that it is merely a choice of faith one makes... this, naturally is true, because we have known, for a long time, that proof of God is no proof at all and that you cannot prove that the Bible is exclusively the Word of God, except if the Holy Spirit convinces you of it. But if the Holy Spirit convinces you of that fact (2Tim.3:16) it becomes more than faith, it becomes a certainty, it becomes knowledge. A knowledge that enables you to say, as Job did (Job 19:25), "I know my redeemer liveth." Yes, it is faith, but it is also knowledge. That immediately puts you, concerning pastoral work, within the directive/ non-directive field. To be very practical, if there is a case of someone wanting to commit suicide, it would be absurd to tell him not to do it because it is a sin. You will have to follow a complete process... yes, with all that they have said

about pastoral therapy - this is all very well - but if at some stage that person asks you whether suicide is right or wrong it would be absurd, from a diaconological point of view, to say that *you* cannot say whether it is right or wrong, but that person's own construction of reality must tell him whether it is right or wrong. Sometimes you will have to say, "I do want to help you, I do want to guide you, I do accept you, I do love you, I want to do everything that I can, but if you ask me whether it is right I must tell you what the Word of God says." That is directive.

Ben: I don't think that one must be under the impression that if you take the longer path then you are not busy directionally... (Prof J commenting: "Precisely, precisely"...), because you are moving in a certain direction.

Prof J: If I may interrupt. In my discussion with the students, to my question as to whether they are directive or non-directive, their unanimous joyful answer was; non-directive.

Ben: Yes, my own opinion about that is that one's construction of what it means to be directive or non-directive is not always the same. One would be able to say that to be non-directive would mean not to say immediately: "You are not allowed to do this or that, but you must do it my way instead". You will first go through a process, so my students tell me, that the client himself eventually realises which direction he must choose according to the principles of Scripture. Then I say, you have only walked a longer path of directivity. (Prof J agrees). You have moved in a certain direction, and as a therapist you do ask questions to guide the client in a specific direction so that he himself can come to a conclusion. If that is seen as non-directive in contrast to... telling someone almost

paternalistically what to do and what not to do, then in that sense it may be non-directive. However, in the true sense of the word it is not non-directive, because you do guide the person in a certain direction. But to be non-directive in the true sense of the word would be to say that you are willing to be a sounding-board, but at the end of the day if one wishes to commit suicide it is in order, it is right.

Prof J: Precisely.

Ben: As I see it, a new insight of social construction theory, is not to have a firm, rigid, prescriptive and systematic plan according to which you do all your therapy. You would rather first listen to the construction of the client about his own story and then, together with him, you will co-construct a new story. The co-construction implies that the therapist, with his own frame of reference and with his own choices in faith, co-writes the client's new story in such a way that the client is enabled to make the same choices as the therapist would within his community of faith.

Prof J: You see, my contention is that the very same thing is said by poimenic literature long before we heard the words social construction theory...

Ben: Yes, but I don't think that, back then, they understood it in exactly the same way as it is understood from the social constructionist point of view. I think that a further, wider perspective was given by the social constructionists to genuinely understand what is meant by constructions of reality so that you are not totally committed to the construction of reality that you already have. I don't think that from the viewpoint of poimenic we really

understood what was meant by going the distance with your clients in the same way as the social constructionists understood it to be. We did not understand that we are actually busy constructing an alternative that is as legitimate as the one that you just had. If we talk about the truths of Scripture we understand that we have made a choice in faith about them and that they become truths, because of our choice in faith, but in terms of people's stories concerning themselves it is much more true that there can be a number of life stories placed next to each other which are equally legitimate. Out of these the client can now make a choice as to how he must construct reality for himself, so that if he selects a couple of other constructions from his past and chooses to elucidate and strengthen them instead of the negative ones that have been elucidated and strengthened, he will come to a construction that will enable him to move closer to the kind of life, I believe, the Creator wanted him to have. In this way I say it is possible to look at something from a social constructionist perspective and to say there are several possibilities that are equally legitimate.

Prof J: However, I do have a need for a finer nuance in the formulation of these things, because when it is implied that social construction theory brought about the dawning of this perception, then I still have a problem with that. If I say they place things into a different context for me, it would be a subjective experience and then it fits in with what social construction theory says. Then my construction of this situation is of such a nature that it is better formulated.

Long before I heard the words social construction theory, for instance ten or more years ago, there was a woman, who came to my study and inveighed against her husband. I allowed her to speak of his negative attributes for more than three quarters of an hour and then I have

asked her this question: "Is your husband nothing but bad? Is that the only construction you have of your husband - is that how we would formulate it today?" Immediately she was defensive and gave another construction of her husband. It was then possible to guide her pastorally to see that this construction, that she had of her husband, upon which she was reacting, was not the only one. Pastorally, this is an example, through poimenic directives, of what the social constructionist approaches now say. You see, that is why I say we need more refinement in description. If I say social construction theory also emphasised the new insights, and expressed them to me in a different manner, even formulated them better, I agree. But if we pretend that this is a social constructionist panacea that poimenic could not provide then it is a problem to me. There is a whole range of thought structures from poimenic that move in the same direction, while only the formulation is different. Social construction theory's formulation is better, but then we should not pretend as if poimenic never said anything about these insights.

Theme: Method of training

Ben: Prof J, I would like to focus in these last minutes on the method of training in pastoral therapy which specifically deals with ways of gaining knowledge. It feels to me as if in the past, if I look at it modernistically, it feels that from a knowledge point of view, information was transferred to the students and students were expected to reproduce that information in terms of their memory of it. My contention is that you can take a person with a highly developed memory, for example a Chinese who does not know a thing about English; you can give him a lot of work in English, let him memorise it and reproduce it in the exams on the basis of association... he would be able to get 90% and still not have a clue about the

content. This method of training, however, enables the students to process and to assimilate the information gained by reading the prescribed literature and to use it in practice. Therefore I would want to exchange a few thoughts on this and hear what your impression is on the "how" of the training process. The students get the prescribed literature more or less two months before the practicum and then, instead of writing an examination on the work - to test their memory of it - we engage in small group discussions in order to allow everyone, with his or her particular meaning of something, to socially co-construct everyone's, including the trainer's, eventual understanding thereof... and then implement this in practice, and then, based on the implementation, have another discussion about the theory as it presented itself in practice and totally assimilate it in this manner. I would like you to compare this to your experience of lecturing and indicate how you would see the difference between the two.

Prof J: Okay, Ben, I would like to begin by saying that one will have to make sure whether one is speaking of a postmodern approach to education concerning post-graduate study or undergraduate study... because if you know students you would know that, with the best ambitions in the world, you can follow an approach to education which can be modern, correct, even postmodern, but in practice just doesn't work. It is interesting that the University's policy has shifted from a lecture oriented learning process to a learning, experiencing, participation oriented learning process.

Ben: If I understand you correctly, you say that the University would encourage lecturers instead of only lecturing also to engage in conversations about the work with students in class?

Prof J: Correct, yes, in conversation with students, discussion groups, students that can form a group and work out a paper and then present it in class and so forth. I don't know if that is specifically postmodern or if it is something that's been with us for a while already. I am not so well acquainted with educational processes that I can identify this as postmodern, but this approach is the policy of the University and it is being used with great success. However, it also depends on the group with whom you are working. It depends on whether the students are undergraduates or post-graduates. With a group of master degree students it works very well. I tested it last year with a group of first-year students. Some of them were frustrated with lectures and wanted to have discussions, but as you have to cover a certain curriculum and you only have fifty minutes at your disposal... you cannot completely suspend the lecture situation, you do want to facilitate opportunities for discussions, but before you have covered half of your lecture the time has passed. However, we did agree that they would study the lecture beforehand and then we would have a discussion in class. The next week I tested it in class and there were no students who could discuss the assignment.

Ben: What would be the reason for that? Would it be the slackness of students or are there other reasons?

Prof J: Well, I think slackness plays a role, but the academic pressure - they write tests and concentrate on the tests rather than on the other work - has a lot to do with it, because then they never get the chance even to read the work and therefore they cannot discuss it. They just don't have the ability to work under pressure and undertake still more work to study or to read. There is no motivation, or there is no desire or one must accept that they are

students and that they also have pressures in their social life. Yes, I am one hundred percent for a method of study, as a matter of fact I have told my students about a television program that was made about fifteen years ago about a group of students who studied law - if you can remember (yes) - and I have told them to form study groups, talk with one another; everyone gets a piece of work to study and then talk about it. I just want to say, that that television program, although it might be in line with postmodernist principles, was made long before the words postmodernism was mentioned in South-Africa. Practice, however, shows that this way of studying only works well amongst advanced, motivated, smaller groups of students who have a desire to study further in their fields.

Ben: Would you say that, within the method of lecturing, students can easily misinterpret learning when they think that the lecturer is an expert who must drum expert knowledge into them and that they can only receive the knowledge as it is and that they must reproduce it as such? It seems to me that students, accept their lecturer as brilliant, knowing virtually everything about this or that, but few of them will challenge him with their understanding or opinion about something. They will accept what he says as gospel.

Prof J: I don't think that is the position. I can remember from my own experience as a student, as well as from my experience now as a lecturer, that first-year students do not always agree with me in class and then I do give them the opportunity to express their views. I can remember one fellow who is now a third-year student, told me without hesitation that he disagrees with me and I allowed him to give his reasons and then answered him. I think that most students, are academically inclined enough, not to just accept what you are saying in class, but you must also remember, that within a certain

subject - and it will also depend upon which subject you are lecturing - you do have a theoretical, - if you would - basic theoretical aspect as well as a practical-theoretical, practice-directed aspect. You must then remember to train students in such a way that the theoretical principles would be applied to practice. However, you must also remember that in a subject like diaconiology the students have never actually had practical experience, they were never actually part of a ministry, they had frequently never even had contact with the terminology nor had they read the literature of this particular subject. For them it is necessary to be exposed to specific structures, specific models... like the different pastoral models. They must know about Adams, what Hiltner's suggestions are, et cetera.

Ben: Yes, I remembered that in your discussion with the M's, one of them said that they might have heard all this from poimenic, but that, then, they did not understand it as they do now. It sounds to me as if people have memorised a lot of facts without understanding what they have memorised.

Prof J: No, not necessarily Ben... I think there are too many variables. You must just remember that these M's have gained a couple of years of experience in ministry... that they have developed skills, their thinking structures have developed. You cannot, therefore, compare what they now experience with their experiences as undergraduates. One cannot expect students to have the ability to show the same insight as someone who has been exposed to the ministry and has developed academically. That is a variable.... a second variable is for example the question if, in the lecturing of poimenic then, these things were actually placed on the table or not. In my case, definitely not. So was it because the poimenic didn't say it or was it a shortcoming in the specific method of training? These are

variables that make it difficult to say that it was a flaw of only a specific method of training.

I am of the opinion that a specified knowledge, ready knowledge is necessary in any discipline. Secondly, that there must be an exposure to practice... I am thankful that we now have a longer practical period for students than only the three weeks in the second year of study. It is now a nine-month period in the third year. Thus the correlation between basic theory and practical-theory must be there. The students have, on their part, voiced the need to come back after the practical period to pick up the threads on specific points in theory as well as to deal with things that they experienced in practice that they have not yet encountered in theory.

Ben: I believe that in the training method of this Masters degree in pastoral therapy the aim is precisely to integrate theory and practice in such a way that you go from theory to practice and then back to theory to co-construct with others and with the supervisor that which we are busy with and its application. In this method which I see as a postmodernist method, I must perhaps say that it only has certain new insights and I now try to apply them to a method already in use and that it is in the process of refinement.

Prof J: As long as it is not presented as an exclusively social constructionist method. There is ample proof... I am not only thinking of us here, but also in Stellenbosch and in Pretoria where there is tremendous interaction between basic theory and exposure to practice and report- back, without it being from a social constructionist or even a postmodernist point of departure.

Ben: Yes, to me personally, from the social constructionist paradigm it is as if I get a better grasp of what is actually taking place.

Prof J: Yes, that is acceptable. That is why I have said in the beginning, if one says that one's exposure to the literature of social construction theory has given one insights which one did not find anywhere else, then it is a subjective confession, an admission of how one experienced and processed it, and it would be in line with social construction theory, because it is one's construction of reality. But I have a problem when it is formulated, and I do not say that you formulate it as such, as if what social construction theory taught us was that we could not find it at all in poimenic literature or elsewhere for that matter. Then social construction theory is made out to be something absolutely exclusive as if it gave an absolutely new dimension to something like pastoral work. As I have said, poimenic facilitates it, maybe formulated differently, obviously structured differently, and has done so for the past two decades already. In poimenic literature those things are present, either latently or explicitly.

Ben: Prof J, thank you very much for your time and insights.

Prof J: It was a pleasure.

ABSTRACT**TITLE: THE SOCIAL COINONIAL CONSTRUCTION OF PASTORAL THERAPY
IN CLERGY TRAINING**

by

BUNYAN FOUCHÉ JOUBERT**Promotor:** Prof Dr D J Kotzé**Department:** Diaconiology**Degree for which this thesis has been submitted:**

Ph D in Pastoral Therapy

This thesis participated in the negotiation of a shift from modernism to postmodernism concerning pastoral therapy and the training of pastoral therapy. This shift, as it is reflected in social construction theory, poses new challenges to the idea of pastoral therapy, what it is, and especially to training in pastoral therapy. Pastoral therapy is co-constructed in training according to a postmodern social construction discourse so that it remains intelligible and adaptable within a modernist theological framework.

Multiple reflexive conversations were used as a basis of research, resulting in reflexivity and self-reflexivity, engaging trainer, trainees and clients in the social coinoinial (within a specific community) construction of pastoral therapy and pastoral therapy training. Simultaneously they participate in reflecting on the constructing process. As researcher I did not enter the research as a clean slate. Discourses that have shaped me such as culture, theology, family of origin and previous training are considered and presented in an alternative column next to the main discussion as an inner dialogue or autobiographical reflection.

Various "worlds" are brought together in this study, namely that of social construction, practical theology, social sciences, family therapy, pastoral work, and pedagogy. Through a social coinoinial construction process pastoral therapy is positioned within practical theology. Tangent planes with discourses in social sciences, family therapy, pastoral work and pedagogy are discussed. Multiple reflexive conversations within a two year Masters programme as well as a two year continuing education programme were used to construct pastoral therapy and pastoral therapy training during the research process. Reading material on the different "worlds" and discourses, interviews, discussions, pastoral therapy processes, as well as family-of-origin work are described as core training practices.