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Human dignity at home and in public – introduction

A genuine concern for human dignity fosters a public culture of human rights. A concern for dignity contributes to equality, justice and respect in civil life.

But how about dignity at home? The life people live privately in their intimate relationships, within their families, is mostly withheld from public debate. Though the relationships between men and women, parents and children are evidently unequal in power and vulnerability, and thereby susceptible for abuse, they are hardly subject of public evaluation. What about dignity at home? Families are thought to be places where human dignity feels 'at home'. The image of home as a 'safe haven' however, is heavily disputed by the facts. Domestic violence is widespread. Home is a paradoxical environment: it is the place where new generations are nurtured and educated in human values, and where respect and love is practised. At the same time it is the place where the dignity of especially women and children is often contested and violated. There is no other place where people are living together so intimately, and so vulnerable.

This hidden side of dignity was the theme of the conference "Dignity at home and in public" that the Protestant Theological University organised together with the Faculty of Theology of the Stellenbosch University, October 25- 26, 2010 at Kampen University, the Netherlands. A selection of the contributions are gathered in this volume. By engaging in intense, personal North-South and South-North dialogues around themes as the family in the Reformed tradition, vulnerability and autonomy, domestic violence, cultural shifts in the relationships between generations, and end of life decisions, the conference continued a five-year long partnership between the two theological faculties around the theme of human dignity. This volume explores from a variety of vantage points the way in which violence threatens people's human dignity in our respective contexts of South Africa and the Netherlands. We have come to realise that violence is never just private but is public as well; violence threatens the home, but as evident in the case of South Africa, and increasingly also in the Netherlands, also impacts the society at large.

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'Where I become you'
A practical theological reading of Antjie Krog's concept of interconnectedness

ABSTRACT

An exposé on Antjie Krog's *Begging to be Black* might be a contribution to this conference on 'Covert violence and human dignity'. What I present today, is a reading of this book, a practical theological reading. The book itself presents a hermeneutical key to the practices of life, and maybe also the practices of faith. Krog's hermeneutics is familiar to the four dimensions within a cyclical process of discerning: description, interpretation, normativity, strategy. These hermeneutical dimensions could be found in *Begging to be Black,* and we might even read them in all of Krog's prose. I start with how Krog describes reality, followed by how she interprets this reality and how she reflects on the interpretation with a normative edge to it, completed with some practical, strategic suggestions. Krog shows that interconnectedness is the only way to survive violence and to preserve human dignity.

maar daar waar ek jy is
jy geword het
sing ek buite myself[1]

INTRODUCTION

One of the books I bought and read, when I visited South Africa in January 2010, was Antjie Krog's *Begging to be Black,*[2] published at the end of 2009. With this book Krog completed a trilogy, that further consists of *Country of my Skull* (1998)[3] and *A Change of Tongue* (2003)[4].

1 Antjie Krog, Waar ik jou word. Translated by Robert Dorsman and Jan van der Haar. Rotterdam-Amsterdam, Poetry International, Podium 2009, 9.

2 Some have called the title of the book 'provocative' or 'the worst title since decades' (Max DuPreez). In fact, it is inspired by Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses.* Mimi, a character in the book, says 'Don't teach me about exploitation … Try being Jewish, female and ugly sometime. You'll beg to be black.'

3 Antjie Krog, *Country of my Skull. Guilt, Sorrow, and the Limits of Forgiveness in the New South Africa,* There Rivers: New York 2000. The first time I visited South Africa, 2007, I bought a second hand copy of *Country of my Skull,* Krog's 'extraordinary reportage' (Nadine Gordimer) and 'deeply moving account' (Desmond Tutu) of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC for short). She covered the work of the TRC as a radio journalist, working for the South African Broadcasting Company. The book is devastating, filled with both horror and hope, written in a style that grabs one by the throat and doesn't let go. The atrocities revealed in the testimonies are shocking. But the examples of humanity are astonishing as well. As a writer, Krog the uncanny ability to disturb and upset the reader. Reality is more complex and ambiguous than we tend to think. But Krog perceives and describes this reality with such an honesty and compassion, that I am often moved by her observations in a strangely comforting way.

4 I only read the Afrikaner translation – *'n Ander Tongval,* Tafelberg: Kaapstad 2005 – and the Dutch translation – *Een andere tongval.* Vertaald door Robert Dorsman, Contact: Amsterdam 2009 4th edition –. After my first visit to South Africa I bought the Dutch translation of *A Change of Tongue.* This book

'A gunshot cracks.' That is the opening sentence of the book.[5] From that moment on, the author became part of the messy business that surrounded a killing in 1992 in Kroonstad, South Africa, the village where she lived. Some ANC friends asked her to give them a lift. She didn't know that one of them just killed a man. They also asked her to get rid of some piece of clothing that was related to the crime scene. Furthermore, they buried the murder weapon in her backyard. When eventually things became clear, she felt misled and used by her allies. It confronted her with an ethical dilemma: was there a political motive to the killing, or was it just personal revenge? Should I report to the police and betray my friends, or should I be loyal to the political struggle of the ANC against the white regime? How can one make a moral decision in an immoral context like the Apartheid system?

I am not interested in the ethical dilemma. The incident of the killing showed that violence is always 'domestic', even when it is 'only' public. Let me explain this. Krog supported the ANC in the armed struggle against apartheid. For that she was exposed to harassments by the police. But the killing not only affected her, but her entire family. The violence penetrated the safety of her private property, and with that, the lives of her loved ones. When her husband tells the children about the killing, she writes how his words 'fall like small unexploded hand grenades in the friendly space among us, finally part of our family's reality. Everybody is quiet.'[6] In the aftermath of the killing, she became engulfed in the violence between the students at the school where she taught.[7] She remembers a demonstration where the students defied the police with their loaded guns, which raises the question 'what to teach children who are not scared of death?'[8] After the court case, where she testified against one of the accomplices of the killing, she and her husband made the decision to leave Kroonstad.

In one of the final chapters of the book she connects the story of the killing with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, especially with its amnesty hearings.[9] From the TRC hearings she learns about the situation in the years surrounding the killing in 1992. Between 1990, the release of Mandela, and 1994, the first democratic elections, more black people were killed than in the

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reflects the changes in South Africa in the post-apartheid era. Krog tries to understand the meaning of 'becoming'. What does it mean to change the political system, to give way to different cultures with different norms and values, to overcome racial division, to bridge the differences in a comprehensive transformation that is a healing for all people? She describes her own becoming a writer in a intensive dialogue with her mother, also an author. Furthermore, she describes how her own family deals with and is affected by the changing situation after the 1994 elections. While the nation desperately searches for its political and cultural identity, at the same time it has to deal with whites, blacks and coloured people who are bruised, battered, disappointed, ashamed, guilty, angry, indifferent. The chapter called 'A Journey' seems to be a key to understanding *A Change of Tongue.* It's a travel story of a group of African poets who find their way to Timbuktu in Mali, 'la Caravane de la Poésie'. The indigenous griots speak different languages and express themselves in a variety of ways, not only through poetry, but also through music, dance, performance, colors, light, sounds. Krog is overwhelmed by the experience, and by the African conditions at the different staging points where the journey takes them. In the beginning she realizes she still has to learn this 'other tongue'. At the end of the journey, in Timbuktu, however, she recites poetry from the San people and performs her own Afrikaner poems. She packs her bags feeling light-footed and loose-bodied, harmonized and rooted. She has no other soul than the one that breathes in the enormous shadow of the African continent. In *Begging to be Black,* Krog elaborates on this feeling she experienced in the heart of African poetry. She uses the concept of 'interconnectedness' to express what is specifically African, what constitutes an African identity.

5 Cf. Antjie Krog, *Relaas van een moord.* Novelle, Podium: Amsterdam 2003.

6 Krog 2009, 43.

7 Krog 2009, 66.

8 Krog 2009, 68.

9 Krog 2009, 254-272.

previous twenty years of Apartheid. While F.W. de Klerk and his Nationalist Party negotiated the transformation to a multiracial political constitution, the security police, secretly, instigated black against black violence by supporting and protecting the forces against the ANC. The TRC brought this scheme to light in her final report. Reading this report, Krog realizes that, no matter what, the killing was a political act, because of the covert violence by state institutions. She also writes at the end of her book about meeting, some years later, the men who were involved in the killing. We see lives ruined by the choices the men made. But, when we read between the lines, we can only come to the conclusion that the lives of these men were shattered by the omnipresence of violence.[10]

The characters in the book are exposed to violence in many different ways. Covert violence is one of them. Not in the sense of physical or mental abuse by relatives in the supposedly safe home environment, but as a permanent shadow over one's life, as a second nature one learns to live with. Violence in South Africa was, or is, such an integral part of society that it can't be surgical removed without cutting away vital organs.

Everyone is morally an accomplice. Everyone is guilty. Violence is like poisoned ivy, it holds the walls together by sucking the water out of it. Violence always has a domestic and covert dimension.

PRACTICAL THEOLOGICAL READING

Hopefully, this introduction suffices as an explanation why I think that an exposé on Antjie Krog's *Begging to be Black* might be a contribution to this conference on 'Covert violence and human dignity'. What I present today, is a reading of this book, a practical theological reading. I read the book as a practical theologian, and by doing this in the form of a lecture I hope you might get an idea of how practical theologians read public texts. At least how I read this book.

Originally, I intended to show you a sort of practical theological modus operandi. However, when I started to read the book again, I noticed that the author herself offers a view on how to read situations and practices. Interestingly, this view, or logic, resembles the way practical theology works. So, in stead of reading the book from a practical theological perspective, the book itself presents a hermeneutical key to the practices of life, and maybe also the practices of faith. Krog's hermeneutics is familiar to the four dimensions within a cyclical process of discerning: description, interpretation, normativity, strategy.[11] These hermeneutical dimensions could be found in *Begging to be Black,* and we might even read them in all of Krog's prose. I start with how Krog describes reality, followed by how she interprets this reality and how she reflects on the interpretation with a normative edge to it, completed with some practical, strategic suggestions. Krog shows that interconnectedness is the only way to survive violence and to preserve human dignity.

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10 The simple and straight manner in which Krog portraits these black men trying to cope with life in the giving circumstances, hurts. The description of the men contrasts with the life of the former police man who was on the case of the Kroonstad-killing and who is now head of security in a big shopping centre. Krog writes: 'He is an Afrikaner; he is as close to me as a population group in South Africa could be. But out of his distasteful past there is nothing that makes him feel that he could have a conversation (mind the use of the word 'conversation'-RB) with me about what happened in the town where we grew up. He has moved from an ethnic position to a class one: where he protected Afrikaner power and interest in the past, he now protects class and money.'(Krog 2009, 266)

11 Richard R. Osmer, *Practical Theology. An Introduction,* Wm. B. Eerdmans: Grand Rapids 2008.

DESCRIPTION

Begging to be Black consists of several narratives, staged at different settings and locations, and it is written in a diversity of genres.[12] But somehow these genres and narratives intertwine. The book not only tells us about the 1992 Kroonstad murder, but we also read about the nineteenth century Basotho king Moshoeshoe, and his first contact with European missionaries. We learn about Krog's stay in Berlin, 2007-2008, at the 'Wissenschaftkolleg', the Institute for Advanced Studies, and the 'conversations' there on African identity and interconnectedness. But she also wrote letters from Berlin to her mother about the city, the culture, the music. And she lets us share in her Berlin diary.[13] Furthermore, the book contains a journal of her visit to Lesotho, 2008, where she did research on Moshoeshoe, and wrote parts of the book. So, the book is a composition of a dialogue between different narratives. Or better, it is a long conversation, or the construction of a long conversation, aimed at understanding the contexts of cultures that produce the historical and cultural texts we read and live. Understanding differences is a first step to recognizing our fundamental interconnectedness.[14]

Krog's description of the complexity of reality is quiet confusing, intentionally, because perplexity is beneficial, salutary. An example. In her search for the inherent strength of African identity she brings two worlds together. On the one hand, she pictures the intriguing story of the Mandela-like king Moshoeshoe, and writes about her visit to his country Lesotho. She mirrors the world of Moshoeshoe and Lesotho with, on the other hand, her diary and the letters to her mother she wrote during her stay in Berlin. There is no other reason for putting these two worlds next to each other in a book, other than the realization that life is utterly complex. But still, why is she so determined to hear the African voice, to put into words an African philosophy of interconnectedness, while, at the same time, she pictures Berlin like a kid in a candy store? She adores Berlin, it is heaven on earth. It is clean, tidy, organized, punctual, coherent, so different from South Africa. 'The cold bites, yet inside it is warm. I'm sheltered. Unreachable. Safe. Inconspicuous. Looked after. Words I have not used for a long time.'[15] The shops sell stuff that is 'authentisch und ordentlich'. Furthermore, Berlin breaths science, art and 'Bildung'. The street names and advertisement refer to poets and writers. The museums are impressive, offering interesting programs and exhibitions. The Humboldt university has the largest department of Northern Sotho in the world. And then, the music. 'Merely entering the Berliner Staatsoper

12 Krog's rhetorical style is 'novelization', a term derived from Mikhail Bakhtin. 'Krog's book is a vital polyphonic response to discursive rigidity – a reminder that in order to maintain dialogic complexity, it is necessary to make space for a multiplicity of voices.'(Ryan Solomon, 'Antjie Krog's Country of my Skull: Resisting the Rhetoric of Incompatibility in South Africa'. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the NCA 94th Annual Convention 2008, TBA, San Diego; http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p257081_index.html).

13 The material seems fairly autobiographical. Nevertheless, everything is filtered through Krog's own memory and subjective interpretation. She often uses fictitious names and places (Krog 2009, vii). From the Freestate storytellers she learned that stories can lie the truth. The 'I' is rarely Krog her self, and the 'mother' not necessarily her own mother (*Een andere tongval.* Translated by Rober Dorsman, Amsterdam 2009 5th edition, 425).

14 'While engaging in these honest, transformative conversations, Antjie Krog does not only write about "interconnectedness", which is the central concept of her book, but also *embodies* it. She shows us that in a complex society like South Africa we have a long conversation ahead of us: a long multi-dimensional conversation.'(Klippies Kritzinger, 'Tracing the practice of Antjie Krog in Begging to be Black. A short conversation'. Paper presented at a seminar on "Begging to be black? In dialogue with Antjie Krog", organized by the Centre for Public Theology at the University of Pretoria on 4 May 2010)

15 Krog 2009, 89.

metamorphoses one.'[16] Krog is lyrical about Berlin. 'Es gibt sie noch, die guten Dinge', says her shopping bag. While she is absorbing Berlin, lustfully, all the time she is thinking, talking and writing about the uniqueness of African identity. The effect might be the sure knowledge that she is not naive about some sort of African or black essentialism, as some critics suggest. She tries to balance both worlds in practicing a multiple partiality, the only way to do justice to the complexity of reality. It comes with a non-dichotomous approach to life, and with the intention not to compartmentalize the material and spiritual, and to be more inclusive and more fluid to mankind as a community. She phrases this as 'interconnectedness towards something more spiritual, more whole, more towards the potential power of everything'.[17] Different worlds connect in the mind and the work of the author. Krog is like a chess player playing at different boards simultaneously. Reality is complex, but we need this confusion and disarray to be attentive to the people involved. There is more than one perspective, also with regard to lived faith. There are multiple constructions of reality possible, depending on our social position. Rendering justice to the complexity of life, and faith as it is lived, implores us to be multipartial, multilingual, and multicultural.[18]

INTERPRETATION

How do we understand the complexity once we described it in all its branching? The second dimension is interpretation.

In her Winternights-lecture, the Hague, January 2010, Antjie Krog said 'do not readily interpret from your own world view, do not identify, nor differ, just listen how things you think you know, are being formulated'.[19] I give two more quotations from this beautiful text, because in its brevity it captivates the heart of her thinking and also the tenor of *Begging to be Black.* 'In order to have a safe nurturing society we have to transform the borders dividing us, into seams. We have to suture these different pieces of material together through stitching enduring seams. Therefore we have to know intimately that this piece is satin, that piece is flannel and this is part of a crumbling plastic bag – carefully we have to weave this together.'[20] And: 'We always have to question the standard. If we are not constantly refiguring the standard we will die. We constantly need to invent new forms of life and different modes of existence in order to survive. Even if it's piecemeal – questioning the standard will make space for positive change.'[21]

In her journey to become 'blacker'[22], to become like the majority, Krog suggests that we

16 Krog 2009, 240.

17 Krog 2009, 184.

18 During her 'Winternachten'-lecture in the Hague 2010 (see note 17), Krog cautioned her Dutch audience to be sensitive about dominating the multicultural debate and setting the rules unilaterally. A couple years earlier, in her Van der Leeuw-lecture she told/asked the Dutch: 'You have always been known for your irony. But it seems that you have moved from being romantic ironists to traditional irony. Traditional ironists harbour a slightly supercilious sense of moral and intellectual superiority. But romantic irony is an irony of uncertainty, bent primarily on the perplexities of searching for answers. Alert to the plurality of all meaning and the relativity of all positions, the romantic ironist probes the open-ended series of contradictions. Romantic irony is an instrument for registering and accepting the stubborn contradictions of a universe in flux. Can't you become that again?'(See note 24).

19 Antjie Krog, *(Universal) Declaration of Interconnectedness OR (Universal) Suggestions for Tolerance,* 'Winternachten'-lecture, January 14 2010, The Hague, http://www.luxmagazine.nl/generalinfo.aspx?IIntStr=36&IIntEntityId=576.

20 Idem.

21 Idem.

22 Max DuPreez called the book 'identity suicide'. He ventilated his surprise 'oor Antjie se oordrewe handegewringery oor haar wit vel; oor haar oorontwikkelde skuldgevoelens oor apartheid en

weave and stitch, in stead of building walls and fences that dictate the border between us and them. Interpretation means bringing together different material that could interface and become something new. For that, we need to practice deep listening, bringing the other to speech, listening and speaking conjunctively, 'interconnectedness-towards-wholeness'. This resonates with the way practical theologians interpret practices. What people do and what it means to them is a primary source for theological reflection. One could even say that practical theologians engage with the contexts people live in, and with the actions they make. Particular experience, meaning, perception are accesses to lived religion, to lived faith. Universal standards for religion and faith are no longer viable.

Leaving behind universal standards, there is still an interpretative framework. The critics give Krog credit for the efforts she makes to engage in 'the long conversation' between black, coloured and white people. She enriches this conversation with the knowledge and perspectives of a few theologians, like Gabriel Setiloane with his research on the Sotho-Tswana, or Gerrit Brand with his book on *Speaking of a Fabulous Ghost.*[23] More important, however, are the references to the work of the ethnographers Jean and John Comaroff. Krog's search for a perspective that grasps the essence of African identity, is highly influenced by their analysis of the symbolic struggle in South Africa.

The Comaroffs argue that Christian missionary activity colonized the consciousness of Africans. It not only brought religious conversion, but it also reshaped sociality, personhood, and everyday practices fundamentally. Even if the missionaries themselves were not aware of this culturally modernizing process, nevertheless, the African people became drawn into a 'conversation', the concepts and arguments of which were set by the Europeans. The colonizers gained control over the material and semantic practices through which their subjects produce and reproduce their existence.[24] This theory, that Christian conversion implied the modern reconstruction of the everyday worlds of the 'heathens', is behind Krog's emphatic argument for a uniquely African worldview. The dominant framework should not be Western, but African.[25] 'What I am trying to describe has NOT been grasped by the West, and if you think what I am saying is the same what these other (European, e.g. Levinas-RB) philosophers are saying, then it simply means we from Africa have not yet properly managed to articulate it succinctly. And it is hard: We have to use Western tools. It is as if we have to help you eat braaivleis with chopsticks, or dhal with a knyptang – the equipment makes you miss what makes the food the food it is.'[26]

NORMATIVITY

The description and interpretation of situations and practices raises normative questions about the adequacy and truthfulness of life and the way faith is lived. That brings me to the third task of practical theology, normative reflection. To decide what is good, true, and beautiful in a specific situation and context, we need the input from theological concepts and the tradition of the church. In the same way, Antjie Krog looks for a fresh input from African history and tradition into the long conversation. She explores trustworthy and healing words that can help the

kolonialisme; oor haar oorromantisering van Afrika en van swart mense; oor haar naïwiteit oor die politiek van ons streek.'(http://www.rapport.co.za/Weekliks/Nuus/Identiteitselfmoord-is-beslis-nie-nodig-20091128)

23 Brands book was defended with credit as a doctoral thesis at Utrecht University. Cf. http://gerritbrand.blogspot.com/.

24 Cf. John and Jean Comaroff, 'The Colonization of Consciousness' in: Michale Lambek (ed.), *A Reader in the Anthropology of Religion,* Blackwell Publishing: Malden 2002, 492-510.

25 Krog 2009, 238.

26 Krog 2009, 156.

Afrikaners to be a part of a country that was ruptured by white colonialism and by the National Party politics. In order to find a discourse to express African identity, she defines the concept of 'interconnectedness'[27], in close proximity to the African concept of 'ubuntu'[28], defined by bishop Tutu as the indissoluble connection between my humanity and yours. Interconnectedness is not a theological concept per se, but it definitely has the theological undertones of the notion of 'koinonia'[29]. It is beyond the scope of this paper to show the similarities in meaning between koinonia and interconnectedness. I just pass on the perception of Antjie Krog on interconnectedness, in the hope that it will resonate with koinonia in our heads and hearts.

Krog opposes an individualized Christian ethic with a communal ethic, in which the norm is what benefits the community.[30] Already the Khoi-San people practised interconnectedness, and somehow this worldview survived and is still visible. Mandela for instance, regards white South Africans as part of his interconnectedness. And Tutu's Christianity is embedded in this world view. Tutu redefines Christian community in terms of interconnectedness. Also the work of Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela on the act of forgiveness by victims is about interconnectedness. This is different from a white, Western worldview. Community is 'more fluid and more inclusive' in African terms.[31] One becomes human as part of the community and by welcoming the stranger. Central to Krog's experience of interconnectedness is the story of Cynthia Ngewu[32], an example of superior humaneness. In her testimony to the TRC about the death of her son, she said: 'This thing called reconciliation ... if I understand it correctly ... if it means this perpetrator, this man who has killed my son, if it means he becomes human again, this man, so that I, so that all of us, get our humanity back ... then I agree, then I support it all.'[33] To Krog this is an amazing formulation. Killing, or violence in general, is related to losing one's humanity. Forgiving opens up the possibility of regaining humanity. Experiencing violence also affects one's humanity. So, when the perpetrator regains his humanity through forgiveness, we could all hope for the restoration of our full humanity.

I like to think that despite Krog's criticism on Christianity, somehow, the concept of koinonia resonates in this notion of interconnectedness.[34] Maybe not the reality of koinonia in Christian practices and in faith communities in the past, but still, there is an eschatological potential in

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27 Defining interconnectednes is not so much an intellectual exercise as well a reflection on her own biography. From cultivating individualism, she is now 'trying to become others, plural, interconnected-towards-caringness.'(Krog 2009, 200) Being with black people made her feel more human: 'something remarkable originated in blackness or a black world view' (206). Interconnectedness is a way of escaping the cycles of violence.

28 The ubuntu worldview is based on the phrase 'umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu': your are someone through other people.

29 Rein Brouwer, *Geloven in gemeenchap. Het verhaal van een protestantse geloofsgemeenschap,* Kok: Kampen 2009, 33-71.

30 Krog remembers research that showed that 'a kind of ant that existed as a nest of individuals came from an earlier, more 'primitive' time than ants that function as part of a collective whole'.(Krog 2009, 218)

31 The final scene of the book gives a description and interpretation of a statue of a sphinx in Berlin, that one can read as an image of 'being black'. It is not a hybrid creature, but a harmony of guarding and giving milk. 'She is what she is. Not split, not guarding dichotomies, but presenting beingness as multiple intactnesses, not with the singular self, but with the bodily akin-ness to the vulnerability of being in and beyond this world'.(Krog 2009, 274-275)

32 Cf. Antjie Krog, '"I speak, holding up your heart …" Cosmopolitanism, Forgiveness and leaning towards Africa', 24th Van der Leeuw-lecture, Groningen November 3 2006. (http://www.vanderleeuwlezing.nl/2006/2006-krog.htm)

33 Krog 2009, 211.

34 Koinonia is qualified by gratuity, reciprocity, solidarity, and universality (Ulrich Kuhnke, *Koinonia. Zur theologischen Rekonstruktion der Identität christlicher Gemeinde,* Patmos: Düsseldorf 1992).

koinonia that could be resurrected by the unique contribution of the African interconnectedness to humanity.

STRATEGY

The epigraph of this paper, *maar daar waar ek jy is/jy geword het/sing ek buite myself,* lines from a poem by Krog, sounds in English like this: 'where I am you, become you, I sing out of my self'. Antjie Krog sings out of her self in this book. She brings us closer to the source of humanity, the cradle of mankind, with the intention to transform us towards interconnectedness. She offers us transforming practices of interconnectedness to help us understand what this interconnectedness means. For instance, she writes vividly about eating and preparing meals. Practical theologian Mary McClintock Fulkerson would call these practices 'homemaking practices'[35]. Homemaking practices are 'traditions that do not have a name'. They are mostly performed by women and people with a lower status within the church. They differ from 'inscribed' practices, practices that are prescribed by tradition, like worship, religious education, leadership.

Nevertheless, these homemaking practices communicate the essence of community. They help the congregation to incorporate the practices of faith. According to McClintock Fulkerson, they do deserve to be recognized as habituating, transforming practices, as normative practices, because they express care and responsibility, and contribute to a more wholesome dealing with differences and being different.

Antjie Krog gives us a couple of wonderful examples of such homemaking practices that make us understand and experience the meaning of interconnectedness. There is a wonderful story about Krog herself baking boerbeskuit from the family 'plant', with a recipe from her mother. The tradition originates from the time that a boer-commando needed to have something to eat that could be carried along in a saddlebag. Krog writes: 'After half an hour the smell starts to fill the kitchen. It drifts into the neighbourhood. It teaches people the word 'reeling'. It enables them to spell 'salivary glands'. My children, who are home for the weekend, appear from their rooms and games and books and homework to stand in the doorway.'[36] Obviously, food communicates and connects.

Another example of such a homemaking practice that habituates interconnectedness is the modest meal offered by the mother of the young woman who assists Krog with her research in Lesotho. The meal consists of pap, some sort of green plant, and a glass of water. The water comes from a bucket, which as Krog observes, has been carried from somewhere. 'How do I do justice to such a gentle and beneficent gesture? Everything on the plate or in this glass has been gathered and processed with great trouble, plus the knowledge of how bodyness will pick and shred and stir and taste and give itself. The perfect texture of the pap, the amount of salt in it, the sharp taste of the maroho that pierces my mind with memories of sitting long-legged with black women under a tree eating from the same pot, the cool water in the scratched but surviving glass. At the same time, it feels as if the gesture is not about the food, also not about giving at all, but about sharing a physical generosity. It is as if the skin containing my body has become porous, as if I am dissolving into a delicate balance with this woman and her daughter,

35 Mary McClintock Fulkerson, *Places of Redemption. Theology for a Worldly Church,* Oxford University Press: Oxford 2007, 131-133. Faith is habituated and incorporated in practices as a form of social inculturation. These incorporated practices are bodily proprieties, reflecting the bodily, habitual response to God's relation with men. We could see this as the domain of practical theology. Practical theology is the 'habitus' to read, theologically, situations and practices, and to react on them and transform them in a creative and improvisational way, for the sake of human dignity.

36 Krog 2009, 48-49.

their offered food and all the places it comes from. Maybe it's also even more than that: in this house where a rural mother sits with her university-qualified daughter, unable even to begin to guess the complications of her life, the meal is shared within the context of a deep trust that whatever is shared, now, with me, is not only worth sharing, but confirms what has always been known here: being part of. Not of some thought-out or yet-to-come imagined space, but part of something that is, calibrating heartbeats.'[37] Practices of breaking, sharing and eating are part of the long conversation that we have to engage with to live our interconnectedness and to confine the violence; the public violence and the domestic or covert violence.

Interconnectedness within a context of faith, however, is not only about practicing conversation, but also about practicing worship, prayer and praise.[38] That is why I like to finish with two examples of going to church. In Lesotho Krog sits down in the old missionary church at Morija, and wonders 'why God made sense to me only within these kinds of surroundings? When the church selflessly cares, when it doesn't mind being poor, when it creates a sanctuary of tranquillity, when it tells its message simple, when it indefatigably serves the lives of the marginalised.'[39] We are reminded of the church she attended in the coloured township of Kroonstad (Brentpark). She describes how she, when the tensions around the killing became unbearable, drove to church and slipped in through the back door. She listened to the sermon, she sang, standing, eyes closed, till she felt someone beside her, someone she knew very well, and who also was hurt by the killing-incident. They embraced, standing as if drowning. After a while, Krog became aware that they were surrounded by the singing congregation. 'They have their arms on us, embracing us, swaying, all of us singing in Sesotho, "It is spring – the blossoms are on the small branches". And in a way this congregation has over the years become my and my family's only community, the people we feel ourselves closest to, the place where our lives and the world make sense.'[40]

The author leads us into a transforming process of discerning, that starts with describing complexity, followed by an interpretation within the parameters of a conversation, setting the stage for an excavation of truthful and healing words of wisdom, in order to share, to eat, and to praise God, connected with every living being. The prudent reading of practices might be a fruitful theological method, with the potential to analyze and transform, and hopefully to survive the all-pervasive violence. Tasting and testing interconnectedness, as a testimony to God's redemptive reality. Where I become you, we might sing out of our selves, hopefully.

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37 Krog 2009, 181.
38 Cf. Kritzinger 2010.
39 Krog 2009, 233.
40 Krog 2009, 76.

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'Where I become you.' (A response to Rein Brouwer)

I hereby wish to express my appreciation for the topic of your presentation for this symposium on Covert Violence and Human Dignity. Your topic *'Where I become you' – A practical theological reading of Antjie Krog's concept of interconnectedness*[1] has really challenged me at a deep existential and moral level with regard to matters of citizenship, building a post-colonial society, gender, nation-building and human dignity.

Let me sketch to you at the outset three scenes which might explain my disposition and situatedness in the multiplexed reality of my context:

1. The slave on the colonial estate of whom Darwin[2] reports , who, when Darwin tried to demonstrate something because of language differences, could not understand what Darwin was trying to explain to him. Darwin then tried by gestures moving up to the slave to explain his intentions. The slave, interpreting Darwin's gestures as aggressive and that he was about to be hurt, dropped his guard and backed off. In Darwin's words the slave was nothing more than a 'vulnerable hurt animal.' This was the result of colonialism that has reduced the man to this pitiful state – raped him of his human dignity.
2. The second is the scène and position of black women who were discriminated against in terms of gender, politically and culturally in comparison with white women. How can white women equate themselves with black women in post-apartheid South Africa (The context of my irritation is the fact that white women in the post-apartheid democratic South African society take in their place along-side previously disadvantaged black women in the process of restitution, while in the colonial and apartheid dispensation they were always very comfortably the 'missies and noi,' who enjoyed all the privileges and advantages of the system).
3. The third scenario is the pathetic white Afrikaner beggar at the traffic lights in Cape Town, stripped of his superiority and baasskap. He is being looked upon by his own kind as despicable and a shame.

The first scene fills me with the deepest sadness, disgust and intense hatred at all colonizers; the second image with resentment and anger and the third with mixed feelings of empathy and retribution; I am normally shocked at my deep resentment. I ask with the words of Cynthia Ngewu in her testimony to the TRC as quoted by Krog[3]; 'This thing called reconciliation ... if I understand it correctly ... if it means this perpetrator, this man who has killed my son, if it means he becomes human again. This man. So that I, so that all of us, get our humanity back, … then I agree, then I support it all.'

Krog is a respected and acknowledged white Afrikaner academic woman in her quest for a dignified life in a post- colonial South African society. Was it not Krog that said towards the end of the year in 2009 that the biggest stumbling block in the process of reconciliation and peace/ nation-building in South Africa is the white man's arrogance?! And from that position I worked my way back to your description of Krog's personal experience of violence in Kroonstad – having to make moral decisions in an immoral context like the apartheid system at the cost of her sense

1 Krog, Antjie 2009 *Begging to be black.* Cape Town: Rondom House Struik
2 Darwin, Charles 1872 *The Expressions of the Emotions in Man and Animals.* Londen: John Murray.
3 Krog, Antjie 2000 *Country of my Skull.* Cape Town: RandomHouse

of fairness and her comfort. I also went to read her life history, Kritzinger's review and Max Du Preez's[4] criticism of her after *Begging to be Black.*

By the way colleague, I see you write apartheid with a capitol 'A', which I will never do even though linguistically it may be correct, that would be giving too much credit to a draconic, evil system that systematically stripped the indigenous people of their dignity and possessions.

To come back to the topic of violence and the covert nature of it – I cannot agree more that violence in South Africa was and is such an integral part of society that, to use your metaphor, '... it can not be removed surgically without cutting away vital organs ...' Everyone is morally an accomplice. Albert Nolan [5]speaks of apartheid and its social and generational impact as of original sin. Having read your practical theological explanation I understand why you are convinced that Krog's *Begging to be Black* might be a contribution to this conference for two reasons:

One, because of her analysis of the violence the characters in the book are exposed too and Krog's attempt to find a construct in our violent society to assist to build community by means of interconnectedness despite the many differences, which hit on the theme of this conference of Covert (concealed) Violence and Human Dignity.

Two, because you consider Krog's exposition strategy as familiar with the hermeneutical process of Practical Theology according to Osmer, the four dimensions within a cyclical process of discerning: description, interpretation, normativity, strategy of that situation and context which she so ably analyses.

In this way you demonstrated how Krog describes reality, followed by how she interprets it and how she reflects on the interpretation with a normative edge to it, with a final note on some practical, strategic suggestions is convincing with regard to the Practical Theological approach to assist us in understanding covert violence and dignity.

It is of paramount interest that you point out that the book is a dialogue between different narratives, or what is called a 'long conversation' aimed at understanding the contexts of cultures that produce the historical and cultural texts we read and live in, especially in South Africa. This laid the basic premise for her book: *Understanding differences is the first step to recognizing our fundamental interconnectedness.* Krog is determined to put into words an African philosophy of interconnectedness. And yet she is not naïve about some sort of African or black essentialism. In practicing a multiple partiality she finds it the only way to do justice to the complexity of reality – by bringing two worlds together: through her concept of interconnectedness. I am not surprised at her naivety in glorifying the world of Berlin (she reflects her primordial longing for her European centre: her identity crisis) so much by contrasting the 'coherence' and efficiency of everything in Berlin with the 'incoherency' of South Africa. While lamenting the context in South Africa she *reflects on South African society in all its complexity:* we cannot pronounce each other's names, and our public events exclude more than include: 'No part of our history is without its exclusion and destruction of some part of the population' (:125); 'On our national holidays … we realize that we have nothing in common – not what we read, not what we speak, not what we write, not what we sing, nor whom we honour. Nothing binds us' (:125). In her view it is particularly Afrikaners, who 'so easily appropriated the land and the continent' whose lives are disrupted or 'splintered' (:126) by a gradually self-asserting black majority, now that the 'coherency' created for whites by three centuries of colonialism and fifty years of apartheid has been undone.

At times I found her assessment of South Africa unnecessarily negative – 'We have nothing in

4 Max Du Preez, *Rapport* 18 November 2009 in his main argument about the theme, "Begging to be Black" characterizes Krog's conviction as "identity suicide."

5 Nolan, Albert 1988 *God in South Africa Cape.* Town: David Phillips

common' (:125); 'every single thing in our country already portrays injustice' (:159) – but *she is keenly aware of the brokenness of our society. Perhaps this negativity flows from a deep-seated feature of many Afrikaners of her generation:* a South African nationalism that shows itself in the desire to be proud of your country, and therefore *a sharp disappointment when things go wrong.* Afrikaners like her who had identified with the struggle for justice and democracy long before the release of Nelson Mandela in 1991, feel particularly disappointed that our 'miraculous' transition to democracy in 1994 is going awry.

When you mention the two quotations from Krog of transforming the borders dividing us into seams, by metaphorically stitching together enduring seams from different South African societal material in order to have a safe nurturing society; and that we always have to question the standard of our 'reconstructing and nation-building work' I realize how vital these transforming acts are to make life possible in South Africa. Krog is right: We constantly need to invent new forms of life and different modes of existence in order to survive as a democratic nation. Even though she contrasts the realities, she intentionally demonstrates that her approach to life is non-dichotomous, not to compartmentalize the material and spiritual and to be more fluid to mankind as a community. Interconnectedness points to something more spiritual, more whole, more towards the potential power of everything. It is a sobering argument that the complexity of reality contributes to our confusion and disarray, but that we need it to be attentive to the people involved. It is true that amidst this complexity multiple constructions of life are possible depending on our social positions. Rendering justice to the complexity of life and faith as it is lived, implores us to be multipartial, multilingual, and multicultural.

It is interesting and sobering to learn that Krog's search for a perspective that grasps the essence of African identity is highly influenced by the Comaroff's analysis of the symbolic struggle in South Africa[6]. According to this interpretive framework the colonizers, including the missionaries, gained control over the material and semantic practices through which their subjects produce and reproduce their existence. Against this background Krog argues emphatically for a uniquely African worldview, because she is convinced that 'we from Africa have not yet properly managed to articulate it succinctly.'

One may differ with her choice of interlocutors, and the nature of her encounters with them, but we are going to have to do this kind of thing – all of us – if we want to make sense of our existence in South Africa. Not a single one of our 'inherited' identities has remained intact through the transformations that have taken place since 1994. We need to continuously renegotiate who we are, through intense dialogue with one another, if we do not want to break apart into mutually recriminating factions that create more and more destructive incoherence in ourselves and our society. I wonder about the possibility of the destructive incoherence that these recriminating factions might create with respect to claiming our ethnic heritage. It does appear as if Boesak[7] does not agree with or wants to make room for the first people's movement

6 Comaroff, Jean and Caomaroff, John L 2006 *Law and Disorder in the Postcolony.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press

7 Allen Boesak in various writings and discussion is cautious of promoting the First Nation Movement in South Africa for understandable reasons. Within the context of nation-building it might seem that the ethnic emphasis goes against the rainbow-nation idea. But this is far from the truth, people in the RSA after years of colonization and oppression need to rediscover their own African identity that is intrinsically bound up with the land between L'Agulas and the great Garieb for the sake of human dignity; and to proudly experience that to be first and foremost Khoi or San is their (our) cultural heritage. This necessary cultural transformation and anthropological revolution will enhance nation-building and will provide the constitutive cultural undergirding that is mystically connected with this soil for thousand s of years BCE. The lie of the RSA is still that the true and original people of the land are not politically and constitutionally acknowledged as such.

in South Africa which is gaining prominence in our society.

You are of course right when you in addressing the Normative reflective aspect of the interpretative schema of Practical Theology point out that description and interpretation of situations and practices raise normative questions about the adequacy and truthfulness of life and the way faith is lived. Krog, in her search for a fresh input from African history and tradition into the long conversation, defines the concept of interconnectedness as a normative reflection on white colonialism and National Party politics. Her acknowledgement that through her experience of being with black people, she feels more human is very courageous and honest. From cultivating individualism, she is now trying to become other, plural, interconnected-towards-caringness.

The fact that you find this concept of interconnectedness in the hermeneutics of Krog key for a Practical theological contribution to this academic interdisciplinary conversation on the topic of covert violence and human dignity 'in the hope that it will resonate with koinonia ...' is of special importance for our discussion.

This is made clear in the way Krog engages in these honest, transformative conversations. And as I read Klippies Kritzinger[8] on this aspect I discover that Antjie Krog does not only *write about* 'interconnectedness', which is the central concept of her book, but also *embodies* it. She shows us that in a complex society like South Africa we have a long conversation ahead of us: a long multi-dimensional conversation. Her commitment to interconnectedness does not allow her to let go of her mother, of the French missionaries, of Moshoeshoe, or any of her other interlocutors. One could call this the spirituality that permeates her book: a commitment to inclusion and embrace. It is also a spirituality of becoming: She writes about 'becoming-black' (:93): 'I need to know whether it is possible for somebody like me to become like the majority, to become 'blacker?' and live as a full and at-ease component of the South African society. This long conversation, proceeding from her interconnectedness with this wide (and in a way unlikely) variety of interlocutors, leads her to embody a hybrid identity: a post-colonial personhood-in-community.

What she models to us in this book is the way into a possible future for South Africa: engaging in deep-level conversations with one another, with our past, and with ourselves. She listens, explores, experiments and argues, with a disarming honesty and (at times) vulnerability.

It might surprise you that I want to turn to an issue like ethnicity in Krog's understanding of blackness. For me as a South African it is an existentially human dignity issue. During the middle years (60s-80s) we had to employ the construct of blackness under the leadership of Biko to find a positive element in ourselves. We refused to refer to ourselves as a non- entity or to define ourselves by white colonial frameworks. We became political and social rebels and we demonstrated our résistance against the enforced socio-political order. We grew our hair into afros as signs of our pride and bulging our fists, raised our arm in the black power sign. We would wear 'Black is beautiful t-shirts' in defiance of the establishment of baasskap …

A surprising aspect of her context analysis (and choice of interlocutors) is her use of the term 'black'. No single term describing identity is innocent or uncontested in South Africa, but I have two remarks about her use of 'black': One cannot reflect on blackness in South Africa without engaging the thought of Steve Biko and other Black Consciousness thinkers. One cannot use black and African simply as synonyms, as she seems to do. Perhaps I am still too much influenced by the Black Consciousness and Black Theology of the 1970s and 1980s, but 'becoming black' cannot anymore do the same for me today as part of my political jargon. The ANC government has persisted in continuing with the ethnic classification of black, coloured and white in the post-apartheid era with the declared purpose of transformation and restitution in mind. Do you

8 Kritzinger 2010 "Begging to be Black? In dialoque with Antjie Krog."

realize how degrading it is to be regarded, first not as white enough and now not black enough? Must I as a descended from the first people named Khoi-Khoi regard this as a new Verwoerdian kind of attempt at social engineering? This classification or categorization for whatever purpose I regard as covert violence. Therefore, for the sake of human dignity I would opt for Africanness and African – in Afrikaans I applaud the humane and sensitive attempt to name the inhabitants with the term Afrikaanses.

In this I take the queue from Kritzinger[9] that I should work honestly and creatively with 'colouredness' and not this 'baas-designed bruin mense' , i.e., the way in which my identity was structurally and culturally racialised in South Africa, (without my consent and against my will). In the case of the whites, the system granted them nevertheless huge privileges. I am challenged to work on ways to overcome that oppressive racialisation by becoming more credibly and recognizably African, together with black (and other) Africans. For me blackness and whiteness are dialectical concepts that need to be transcended in a synthesis of a shared Africanness. Instead of 'becoming black' would whites therefore work for acknowledging whiteness and the privilege it gave/gives them, and to work in an anti-racist way to gradually de-racialise their personal identity, as well as the structures of society, in order to become more African, by developing a consciously hybrid identity that I would call Euro-African should they want to retain their link with Europe?

Then there is the question of the relationship between the African and Christian dimensions of African Christianity. On p.212 she says that African interconnectedness 'forms the interpretive foundation of southern African Christianity'.

Perhaps Krog romanticises and essentialises African 'interconnectedness' to some extent, in her legitimate concern to present the unique contribution that Africa can make to the world. Her frustration at the standard response of 'Westerners' to her view on African interconnectedness is understandable: 'You don't hear us through our own voice. You keep on hearing us only through *your* voice' (:156).

What we need is indeed a long conversation, but also a long *celebration* and a long *collaboration.* I agree with Kritzinger[10] that this is where the role of Christianity (and other religious communities) is particularly important: rational discussion alone will not get us there; we need to worship together, sing each other's songs, participate in each other's rituals (on this ritual-loving continent), and work together for the good of society if we want to build sufficient trust to become genuinely interconnected.

You would agree with me that for our search for human dignity amidst covert violence Krog's 'Speaking with' provides us with alternatives to violence as Postcolonial strategies and actions. What are the kinds of actions Krog undertakes (and proposes) in this book? Towards the end of the book, when she discredits imagination as 'overrated', she says: 'I stay with non-fiction, listening, engaging, observing, translating,' (:268). This is exemplary, and we will do well to follow her lead here. The postcolonial theorist, Gayatri Spivak (1999)[11], has identified three ways in which former colonizers interact with formerly colonized people: a) speaking for; b) listening to (selectively and patronisingly); and c) speaking *with.* For most of the book, Krog succeeds in 'speaking with', but unfortunately there are times when she slips into 'speaking for' black South Africans (for example, her explanations of xenophobia on pp.235f).

In a sense the whole book struggles with an ethical dilemma: How can a white democrat, who is committed to justice and reconciliation in South Africa, come to terms with the fact that black (or African) communities seem to have an ethic according to which evil is understood primarily

9 Kritzinger, 2009 "Begging to be Black? In Dialogue with Antjie Krog."
10 Kritzinger, 2009 "Begging to be Black? In Dialogue with Antjie Krog."
11 Spivak, 1999 *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason.*

as what harms community and good as what builds or fosters community. To mention only three examples, this is the central issue in her description of the Kroonstad murder at the beginning of the book, in her assessment of the misunderstandings and tensions between Moshoeshoe and the French missionaries, and in her reflection on the experience of the character of Petrus in the Coetzee's novel *Disgrace*[12]. In this respect she has put her finger on a raw nerve in South African public life: We have a 'progressive' human rights constitution and legal system, but many South Africans seem not to have adopted the 'logic' of this ethical and legal system. The kind of 'un-hearing' that happened between the French missionaries and Moshoeshoe seem to be playing itself out again around us in the relationship between democracy/human-rights/rule of law and an African communal ethic. For political morality and the 'moral fabric' of South African society this is an extremely serious issue to explore. We need to thank Antjie Krog for raising it in this pertinent way. What does this mean for human dignity?

Another aspect of her strategy has to do with language. I want to point out that language, the dominance of English and even Afrikaans in the apartheid years also reveals a tendency to language domination as covert violence to all other Africans which impact negatively on human dignity. On the one hand I fully agree that the various African languages (including Afrikaans) must be affirmed as mediums in which we should tell our stories, not in opposition to, but alongside of English as a dominant international language. We are not going to redefine the terms of our engagement with each other unless we change the nature of the playing field. The kind of interaction – 'Don't call me baas'; 'Thank you, baas, I understand, baas' – can only be overcome if we begin to greet and interact in African languages. We will not effectively decolonize our relationships if 'they' must always 'become like us'. In spite of all our protestations to the contrary, most of the Afrikaners embody a 'settler colonial' mindset, since we cannot speak an African language – and do not seem to regard that as an anomaly or a problem – 200 or 300 years after arriving on these shores. On the other hand I do not agree that the 'relentless interpretive gaze' and the 'prison bars' that hold Petrus captive (:102) are *inherently* 'Christian-based'. It is the individualist Christianity of the North, which got married to modernist rationalism, racism and scientism, which aids and abets that relentless colonial gaze, not the communal, liberating message of the man of Nazareth.

It is important for me to understand the 'Begging' in the title, *Begging to be black.*

Two features reveal interesting aspects of the personal 'agency' of its author.

In the light of the content of the book itself, 'Begging' can be seen as a pathetic act, since it expresses poverty and dependence. It is certainly not an exercise of power, unless the beggar manipulates passers-by through showing off her/his wounds in order to get sympathy. In this book, Antjie Krog does not manipulate or look for sympathy. I experience her as a seeker, exploring and discovering – through interacting with her interlocutors. Perhaps her 'begging' is more like that of Buddhist monks, who go around with begging bowls to express the fact that they are radically dependent on – and interdependent with – the rest of humankind. It doesn't seem that she is *begging someone* to 'make' or 'declare' her black. She seems to mean that she has adopted a subversive strategy of begging *in order to become black:* she has taken the posture of a beggar (as in Russian folklore), going around from one interlocutor to another, asking for advice, wisdom and guidance and listening carefully to every conversation. This is like Raskolnikov's wilful impoverishment as a test of his strength, a probe to determine just how much he can endure in preparation for the feat (accomplishment) of freeing the oppressed from the likes of a vicious pawnbroker.[13] Another interpretation is also possible: While at the conscious level, Raskolnikov rejects the image of himself as beggar, his option for destruction

12 Coetzee JM, 1999 *Disgrace*.

13 This is the main character in the Russian author, Dostoyevsky's novel, *Crime and Punishment.*

like his attraction to social outcasts, may signal subconscious identification with the suffering of those who are beggars for alms. In Krog's case, this is a startling reversal of roles: a white person admitting poverty in public and going around like a beggar to find help! This is a provocative and challenging image that deliberately shatters racial stereotypes and that many white South Africans clearly experience as demeaning, perhaps even as expressing white self-hatred. It is certainly light years removed from a macho or militarist approach to 'solving the problems' of South Africa (cf. Die Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging). Interpreting 'begging' in this way, I regard this as an attempt to embody Spivak's post-colonial approach of 'speaking with' – and therefore see her basic approach as one that the rest of South Africa population would do well to emulate.

Finally I find the fact that Antjie Krog dedicates her book to Petrus[14] a liberating and empowering act. Perhaps this is also where the fact that Antjie Krog is a woman plays an explicit role in the book. As a white woman, asking herself: What do I need to do in order to 'stay on' in South Africa, in a society where irresponsible young black men rape women? Where do I find a 'Petrus' to protect me and bring me into the safety net of a local African community? If this is what Krog meant by dedicating her book to Petrus, it reveals once more her 'poverty' and vulnerability in relation to her African interlocutors, 'begging' to find wisdom and guidance for the future. However, it may be that she doesn't identify herself so closely with the Lucy-figure, and if this is what Krog meant by the dedication to Petrus is a general act of respect for the communal ethic that he is trying to assert over against the 'individual and Christian-based' ethic by which he is 'being held captive' (:102).

Throughout this book Antjie Krog tries to hear the story of 'Petrus', without 'framing' or interpreting it from within the terms laid down by the English language, which 'imposes a particular framework in which what Petrus is saying about himself cannot be heard' (:101).

Krog's search for a framework of understanding within which a deeper connectedness can begin to take place is highly commendable. So is her search for an ethical framework for this postcolonial situation in which we find ourselves, for a morality beyond a narrow individualist ethic informed by evangelical Christianity as propagated by 19th century missionaries and many 20th century churches. In one heated conversation with her husband she perhaps says most clearly what she tries to do in her life (and in this book): 'I am trying to live a grounded life on this continent and the Africanness I understand encompasses … *alles,* seen and unseen, known and unknown, that is breathing upon me' (:260).

Whether we agree with her conclusions or not, I am convinced that we should be engaged in this 'long conversation' for the rest of our lives, so that all of us may live grounded lives in human dignity on this continent and in our world amidst the violence, covert or otherwise.

Maybe my colleague if we listen more closely, the North in a global interconnectedness of the local could also take up her normative begging cry and embodiment of the beggar. We for the sake of South Africa and Africa; you for the sake of the developing world and the world at large: Where I can become You!

In connectedness for the sake of human dignity.

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14 Krog refers here to the character in Coetzee's book *Disgrace*.

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Substance abuse and domestic violence within families: a pastoral hermeneutical response

ABSTRACT

Substance abuse among young people is an ever increasing reality and one of the most significant contributing factors to domestic violence within families. The essential question is how practical theology and, to be more exact, pastoral interpretive guides (within the local church) can contribute to assist individuals, families and communities in dealing with this traumatic reality in a responsible way. This article argues for a theologically responsible pastoral hermeneutic as it engages with the challenges of the presented case study, within a transdisciplinary approach.

1. INTRODUCTION

Adolescent chemical addiction is a serious and growing worldwide epidemic in almost all social environments. It is estimated that some twenty percent of adolescents who experiment with chemical substances become addicts. Some of the reasons behind adolescent chemical addiction are grounded in seeking excitement, economic reasons, negative peer pressure, family problems, a poor self-image, lack of knowledge regarding the impact of chemical substances, negative environmental factors, and a way to deal with problems (Gouws et al., 2000:182; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2002:22).

Methamphetamine or speed (*tik*) is particularly popular among adolescents as it provides them with self-confidence, energy and a sense of power (Caelers, 2005:1; Ganga, 2007). Addiction threatens the wellbeing of adolescents, the ability to complete relevant development tasks, the ability to become independent adults, to find meaning in life and to live a healthy lifestyle. In addition, it places a burden on caregivers such as educators, social workers, religious workers and, last but not least, parents and families.

The fundamental question practical theologians will have to ask is: What will be a responsible way to deal with substance abuse and domestic violence within families and communities? This article will try to grapple with this fundamental question by using a responsible theological pastoral hermeneutic in dealing with drug abuse and domestic violence.[1] Firstly, this article will try to understand the context of substance abuse and domestic violence in our society by means of a case study, Secondly it will indicate the importance of a transdisciplinary approach in dealing with drug abuse and domestic violence and focus on understanding and interpreting the context of a specific case of drug abuse within domestic violence; and finally, it will indicate how a constructive ecclesiology could assist interpretive guides (pastors) in dealing with these complex issues in a responsible and constructive way.

1 For the tasks of practical theology and the questions related to it see Osmer (2008). Osmer (2008) explains that practical theology makes its own constructive contribution to the theological enterprise as a whole and to the ongoing conversation of humankind in its quest for intelligibility. Within this process, he explains that practical theology carries out four mutually related intellectual operations: the descriptive-empirical, interpretive, normative and pragmatic.

2. A CASE STUDY ON SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

The article wants to indicate the context of substance abuse and domestic violence in our society by means of a case study in order to understand the impact it has on individuals, families and the community. This true story of Ellen Pakkies designates the lack of human dignity in our society.[2]

The story of Ellen Pakkies unfolds as follows: She lives in Dover Court in Lavender Hill, near Cape Town. She is married to Odniel and they have three boys. She had a very difficult childhood and an abusive life, but nothing could prepare her for the abuse she would suffer at the hands of her last-born child. It resulted in her killing him. Her youngest son, called Adam or Abie as he is known to family and friends, is addicted to Crystal Methamphetamine, or *tik* as it is popularly known. He started using drugs when he was 14 years of age. He has been fully addicted for some time and therefore has abused his mother by stealing virtually everything that they own.

Because of his violent behaviour, she has kicked him out of the house many times. She had no other choice, because he has verbally abused her by swearing at her and he has also physically abused her for many years and even once threatened to kill her. Neighbours remember Abie Pakkies as a drug-addicted monster, who was horrible to his mother. He threatened both his parents at knife point, set fire to their curtains and stole his mother's underwear in a relentless quest to fund his Methamphetamine habit. He would come home to look for food and out of fear; she served him supper through the bars of the safety door. It was difficult for her, because she hated seeing her child standing outside all the time. She desperately wanted to see him change and to trust him again. She tried so many times to believe that he has changed but was always disappointed. The nearby Steenberg Police Station confirmed that Ellen had laid six complaints against her son in the three years before she killed him — for stealing copper pipes, CDs, clothes and shoes, and for possession of drugs.

One day when he came to look for food again, she felt sorry for him and let him into the house so that he could make himself a sandwich. She thought that if she locked her bedroom door, he would not be able to steal what was left of their valuables. But no sooner had she opened the steel gate when she discovered a bag of stolen goods in his room — again.

A couple of hours later, Abie came back, banging on the door, pleading for money. He did not stop until she threw a R20 note out the kitchen window, just to stop the nagging.

Ellen couldn't sleep that night. Thoughts of her troubled son had kept her awake all night. Her youngest son had upset her and she wanted to talk to Abie that same day; she would tell him she has had enough. This *tik* nonsense had to stop; it was time for him to pull his life together. If the police could not talk sense into him, she would.

She heard him jump over the fence. She did not mind because he had no other way of getting to his room - a *hokkie* in the yard. He was no longer allowed to use the front entrance, because the risk of him entering the house is too high and she wasn't going to make the same mistake again - he's taken too many of their things to sell for *tik* or *buttons.*

When she got to Abie's room, she found him in another drug stupor. He was lying face-down on the floor, next to his bed. The 3m by 2m room had almost nothing left in it. Most of his drawings, music tapes and even his clothes have been sold or discarded. All that

2 Although there are many themes and issues that could be taken from this case study, this paper would want to focus on the themes of drug abuse especially methamphetamine (tik), domestic violence, and the challenge to human dignity.

remained was a bed, a table, four steel walls and an unbearable smell – Abie hasn't washed properly for days. He must have been cold after a long night away from home. Ellen asked him if he wanted tea. "Hmm", he murmured vaguely. He didn't open his eyes.

Ellen went back to the kitchen and made his tea – heaping three sugars and pouring milk into the mug, just the way he liked it. She returned to the *hokkie* and looked down at her sleeping son. She put the tea down and left to say goodbye to her husband. She waved goodbye to him from behind the steel gates of their front door.

Then she walked to Abie's old bedroom – the one that he lived in before *tik* took over his life. The walls were once plastered with inspirational posters. The space was once filled by his double bunk bed, his soccer balls and cricket bats, and tapes of him and his friends rapping. It had been once full of life, but now, as Ellen entered the room, there was only a TV, couches, a broken computer and a rope on a desk. A rope no thicker than an adult's finger, but strong enough to tow a bakkie. She picked up the rope. She didn't know what she was thinking – her mind was a blank. She just stood there, with the rope in her hand. She felt calm.

Ellen than returned to Abie's *hokkie.* He's picked himself off from the floor and was now sleeping on his bed. The tea remained untouched. For the second time that morning, she stood over her boy. She was flooded with thoughts – thoughts of the sweet baby he had once been and the monster he had become. The rope was still in her hands. She tied it into a noose. She slipped it over his neck. Abie woke up. He blinked back his confusion.

"Mommy, what now?" He felt the noose around his neck. Suddenly Abie realized what was happening. He fought back. He grabbed a plank off the floor. He lunged at his mother with the wooden board, but he couldn't reach her. Ellen kept her composure. The rope wasn't tight – she only wanted to talk. But Abie looked scared, and swore at her. He called her a xxx like he had so many times before. She hated it when he swore.

Ellen told her son to put the plank down. He refused. "Abie, why don't you appreciate what I do for you? I will go out of my way to do for you whatever I can." Abie ignored her. He just lay there, his eyes wide open. "Abie, now why don't you listen?" "Mommy, I'm going to," he replied in a feeble voice, but Ellen had heard this too often. "No, I've had enough of that," she said. Then she pulled the rope tight. Her grip was so firm it cut through her skin. Blood trickled from her hands. She wiped off some of the blood with an old T-shirt of Abie's. But she continued to pull. She pulled tighter and tighter. She wasn't angry. She didn't feel anything; she was just calm. It was quick. Abie's body jumped into the air. His hands reached out for support, for anything, for his mother. She kept on pulling the rope. Ten seconds, twenty, thirty seconds. At last Abie's body was still, lifeless. At first she thought he was just acting; he'd always been a good actor, but this time her son didn't stir; and didn't get up. Ellen left the *hokkie* and went into her house where she washed and put on her uniform for her job as caregiver of the elderly – navy-blue pants, a matching scarf and a white blouse. It was only then that she began to realize what she's done.

Ellen stepped into the morning chill and hurried to the train station. The morning had broken, the sun was up, Dover Court was buzzing with schoolchildren and housewives, their voices ringing through the square. Ellen looked at the people who scurried past her, some aimlessly, others with places to go. She took a deep breath. She would force herself to go to work. The cleaning lady would make her coffee, assuring her that everything was okay. Ellen would shake her head. "No, nothing's okay," she will tell her. **"I just killed my son."**

She was sentenced to three years imprisonment, suspended for three years. Her sentence included three years of correctional supervision and 380 hours of community service. (Leila Samodien, http://capeargus.co.za/mapinc.org/media/2939)[3]

3 This case study was compiled from various articles from newspapers.

3. TRANSDISCIPLINARY APPROACH

The above case study evokes many questions as it sinks into the soul of our humanness. The intensity of this case study emphasises the responsibility of practical theologians to deal with substance abuse and domestic violence within families and communities in a responsible way. In the past, practical theologians focused to a large extent on the church environment and were guilty of attempting to deal with these and other complex and challenging issues on its own. It is therefore understandable why Cilliers (2006:625) states that practical theology has to a large extent traditionally operated within a clerical and ecclesiological paradigm. As the complexity of the South African society increases it became clear that practical theology within a clerical and ecclesiological paradigm is too limited to deal with these complex life issues.

This article therefore wants to argue for a transdisciplinary approach to deal with complex life issues. Before arguing for a transcultural approach it is relevant to take note of Osmer's (2008:163) emphasises on cross-disciplinary dialogue. He defines it as follows: 'cross-disciplinary dialogue is a special form of rational communication in which the perspectives of two or more fields are brought into conversation. It can take on different forms**.'**

The key part of this definition is the focus on the 'rational communication in which the perspectives of two or more fields are brought into conversation with one another'. This is indeed a plea for real, constructive cross-disciplinary dialogue. My assumption is that this does not come natural for practical theologians; on the contrary, it is something we need to learn to do. This is rather puzzling, because it is supposed to be a fundamental part of our identity and therefore ought to be a natural component of practical theologians.

In a contribution by Jürgen Mittelstraß, 'Methodische Transdisziplinarität', in *Technikfolgenabschätzung,* he argues for a transdisciplinary approach. The term transdisciplinarity is used instead of interdisciplinary or crossdisciplinary, because 'inter-disciplinary' designs a concrete cooperation of several disciplines working on a particular topic, whereas transdisciplinary goes further to imply a *continuous cooperation* of different disciplines. Those disciplines involved in the research also accept that change can take place in the orientation of their scholars as well as in the boundaries of disciplines in the process of cooperation.

Transdisciplinary dialogue is something practical theologians will need to toil actively towards. Maturity as an academic (person), a well-based and well-formulated theology, knowledge of the field of practical theology, a willingness to learn from and engage with other academic fields, and be open for change in your own approach and academic field are some of the characteristics needed for transdisciplinary dialogue. These characteristics are true to what Osmer (2008:19) calls an interpretive guide. Although Osmer (2008:163) uses the term within his understanding of cross-disciplinary dialogue, I am of the opinion that it is more relevant within a transdisciplinary context. Osmer (2008:19) argues that the congregational leader needs to be a pastoral interpretive guide that can practice and integrate these attributes in order to take the congregants on a journey into new territory. The congregational leader travels along with congregants on their journey towards healing and wholeness.

To guide people through this complex situation the pastoral interpretive guide will need to take ownership of practical theology and comprehend that it is indeed a form of theology. It is not a second- class science. It uses the concepts, methods and sources of theological discourse to develop a constructive theological perspective. Secondly it brings this perspective into dialogue with other fields, including other theological disciplines, as well as the arts and sciences (Osmer, 2008:163). After reflecting on this, I realised that there could be many reasons for this, but the main reason could be that practical theologians are not clear in terms of their identity and how to address the complex issues as indicated in the case study.

Practical theologians need to remember that practical theological interpretation should be deeply contextual and therefore it needs to think in terms of interconnections, relationships and systems (Osmer, 2008:17). With this in mind, it is imperative that practical theologians will need to engage in dialogue with the social sciences and be able to discern the research methods and approaches that are best suited for researching the issues in this case study. In its interpretive work, practical theologians will engage with the social sciences, natural sciences, political and economical sciences and philosophy to place particular episodes, situations and contexts in a broader explanatory framework. In constructing a normative perspective, they will enter into a dialogue with dogmatic theology, theological and philosophical ethics, anthropology and normative social theory. In its pragmatic task, they will engage the action sciences like education, therapy, organisation change theory and communication theory. It is inevitable for practical theology to engage at every point in transdisciplinary thinking, but at no point does it merely take over the methods and frameworks of cognate fields. It engages them critically as part of a trans/cross-disciplinary conversation in which the distinctive theological perspective of practical theology retains its own voice (Osmer, 2008:17).

In terms of the case study, a transdisciplinary approach would lead to the creation of a transdisciplinary professional team which would consist mainly of a social worker, medical practitioner, psychologist, youth worker and a pastoral interpretive guide. The requirements for these role players within the team would be to: be concerned about the addict because they care; have expert knowledge of the phenomenon of drug addiction; have enough objective knowledge, be able to exert and be able to work holistically. It is essential that the role or function of the transdisciplinary professional team be to create a space for healing, to move at the pace of the client, to support, motivate, confront or refer as the need arises, and to assist people to find meaning in their situation.

What can pastoral interpretive guides discover from other disciplines in terms of the case study?[4] From the social sciences interpretive guides can discover that Methamphetamine or speed (*tik*) has a long history and is not something new,[5] and can learn about the characteristics of this drug.[6] The social sciences further link drug abuse to high risk behaviour. High risk behaviour is when a person acts without consideration or awareness of the possible consequences of their actions. It is understandable that young people will experiment with drugs, because they have a desire to be accepted and they are curious. Young people are mostly not aware of the consequences of taking such risks, which could lead to: suicide ideation and attempts; family violence and murders; child abuse and neglect; overdoses and associated effects; prostitution; unsafe sex; raping or being raped; theft, loss of short-term memory; loss of long-term memory, drunken driving; and financial losses.

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4 As this article engages with the case study it needs to be emphasised that this engagement is by no means a detailed analysis of the case study, nor is it a comprehensive psychological or sociological explanation of it. The article merely want to indicate the value of some of the unique contributions from other disciplines in assisting us to understand and interpret in order to be responsibly in assisting the individual, the family and the community in the process of finding meaning within their traumatic contexts.

5 Crystal methamphetamine or speed (*tik*) is nothing new. Already in 1887 it was designed for medical testing and use. In 1932 it was used as a medical cure for asthma and nasal congestion. There is also evidence that Hitler used this drug on his soldiers to enhance their energy and endurance levels. It appeared as a recreational drug in Hawaii in the form of 'crystal methamphetamine' in the 1980's. In 1987 methamphetamine in its powder form was developed and sold on the streets.

6 It is characterised by a mostly white substance. It is mostly in the form of crystals or powder. It can be inhaled, swallowed, snorted or injected. It is a psychoactive stimulant that produces an odourless smoke and is bitter-tasting. The effects last for up to 24 hours. It is relatively cheap and relatively easy to manufacture and easy to obtain.

What would then be the signs, symptoms and stages typical of methamphetamine or speed (*tik*) abuse? According to a methamphetamine expert, Mariechen van der Westhuizen (2010:21) the pastoral interpretive guide should be aware when there are signs of changes in personality, loss of interest in favourite things and a decline in performance and attendance.[7] In terms of the symptoms of the substance abuse van der Westhuizen (2010: 22) indicates that environmental, interpersonal and social factors can contribute to substance abuse[8] and that pastoral interpretive guides should particularly understand the stages of the methamphetamine experience.[9]

Although the pastoral interpretative guide will need to be well aware of the signs, symptoms and stages, it is more significant that they understand and focus on the effects of methamphetamine addiction in more detail. It is helpful to describe the effects of the addiction on a cognitive, medical/physical, psychiatric and long-term level. Firstly, the effects on a **cognitive level** will cause chemical structure and functioning of the brain to change. It will not be metabolised in the body. These results are prolonged stimulative effects. Decreased attention abilities will occur. Learning abilities will become restricted. Damage to long-, medium- and short-term memory will become evident and the individual's motoric ability and speed will become restricted.

Secondly, the effects on a **medical/physical level** will have an impact on the central nervous system, cause decrease in muscle weight, convulsions, and heart problems, strokes, narrowing of blood vessels, Parkinson's disease and serious weight loss/malnutrition. Kidney failure is one of the serious effects and will be linked to liver damage, lung diseases, long-term sexual dysfunction, diarrhoea, skin rashes and jaw clenching.

Thirdly, some of the effects on a **psychiatric level** are conditions such as delirium – confusion; manic – extreme "high"; psychotic – hallucinations, depression, aggression, mood swings; paranoia – persecution mania, schizophrenia and depression.

Melinda Smith and Jeanne Segal (2010:1) emphasise that emotional abuse is often minimised in terms of the focus on psychological or physical harm and injury, yet it can leave deep and lasting scars. Emotionally abusive relationships can destroy a person's self-worth, lead to anxiety and depression, and make you feel helpless and alone. They further explain that emotional abuse includes *verbal abuse* such as yelling, name-calling, blaming, and shaming and that isolation, intimidation, and controlling behaviour also fall under emotional abuse. Additionally, abusers who use emotional or psychological abuse, often throw in threats of physical violence or other repercussions if a person fails to adhere to their needSocial sciences can help pastoral interpretive guides to be aware that substance abuse is closely intertwined with domestic violence. Fisher and Harrison (2009:2) confirm that research has indicated that the relationship between alcohol and other drugs, crime and violence has also been clearly established and that there is a clear link between domestic violence and substance abuse-related offences. Drug addiction is closely intertwined with domestic violence which has a devastating effect on the victims, the abusers, families and the community at large. It is therefore essential to define violence, in relation to domestic violence, in order to understand the extent thereof and the correlation it has with drug dependency. Steven and Lockhat (2003:136-7) choose for a contextual definition of violence by Bulhan (1985) who states that violence is any relation, process, or condition by which an individual or group violates the physical, social and/or psychological integrity of another person or group. On these grounds they state that any situation of oppression could therefore be underwritten by violence. Based on the above definition, one can safely say that violence could be closely related to poverty, oppression, racism, domestic life and xenophobia. In addition to the above, the WHO task force classifies domestic violence under, what they would call interpersonal violence,

7 For more detail on these signs and symptoms see Van der Westhuizen (2010:21)
8 For more detail on these factors see Van der Westhuizen (2010:21)
9 For more detail on the stages see Van der Westhuizen (2010: 22)

because it encompasses violent behaviours which occur between individuals that is not formally planned (Stevens, Seedat & van Niekerk, 2003:356)[10].

Domestic violence and abuse does not discriminate. It happens among heterosexual couples and in same-sex partnerships. It occurs within all age ranges, ethnic backgrounds, and economic levels. And while women are more commonly victimised, men are also abused — especially verbally and emotionally. The bottom line is that abusive behaviour is never acceptable, whether it's coming from a man, a woman, a teenager, or an older adult. You deserve to feel valued, respected, and safe (Smith & Segal, 2010:1).

Co-dependency is one of the key themes that should be pointed out in this case study. According to Beattie (1992) a co-dependent person is someone who allows the behaviour of another person to influence them in such an intense way and then want to control the behaviour in an obsessive way. Co-dependency can be described as an unhealthy and unsatisfied psychological power game between two persons in a relationship where they try to control, manage, manipulate and influence each other to behave in a way they want you to behave (Maartens, 2007:37). This is evident in the fact that the mother was and is a victim of abuse, and so is her son and both was trying to control, manage, manipulate and influence each other to behave in a way they wanted the other to behave.

This dynamic indicates that it is not only the individual that is addicted but the whole family. Family addiction is common where a member or members of the family is addicted to substance abuse. Van der Westhuizen (2010: 115) indicates that pastoral caregivers should understand that there are three phases of family addiction, namely the early, middle and final phase. These phases indicate, for example, how families initially deny the problem, then consider that there might be a problem, and then accept the problem[11]. In terms of the case study it is safe to say that the family was already at the end of the middle phase, where the mother was focused to confront the problem of the abuse in a direct and concrete way. She had to intervene and she did.

Concerning the discussion thus far, the clinical psychologist Martin Yodaiken, who compiled a psychological report for the Wynberg Regional Court on Ellen, indicates in his report that there was no emotion on her face; there were no tears; she told the facts, every detail, without batting an eye. In his report, he calls this a state of 'disassociation' (http://www.mapinc.org/media/2939). She thus 'disassociates' herself from the death of her son. She holds herself at a distance emotionally, he explains, even though she is perfectly capable of expressing emotion. 'It is (my opinion) that this is a defensive reaction against the enormity of her actions in killing her son. This opinion is based on the absence of the typical emotional reaction that Mrs. Pakkies

10 These authors employ the definition of violence from the WHO task force (WHO 1996) that distinguishes between three types of violence in the following way: Interpersonal violence encompasses violent behaviours that occurs between individuals, but are not planned by any social or political groups in which they participate. It occurs in many forms, and can be grouped into three categories according to the victim-perpetrator relationship: family and intimate violence, violence amongst acquaintances, and stranger violence. Violence between acquaintances and strangers also includes: workplace violence (including healthcare institutions and prisons); violence in schools (including bullying); community-based violence (that does not further the aims of a formally defined group or cause); youth violence (that does not further the aims of a formally defined group or cause); sexual violence between strangers or acquaintances; and crime related violence. Self-directed violence involves intentional harmful behaviours directed at oneself. Organised violence is violent behaviour planned to achieve the specific objectives of a social or political group. It includes political violence involving carefully executed efforts to intimidate an opposing political faction violently. Genital mutilation of women and men in the name of religious and cultural rites of passage might also be considered a form of organised violence. As a last example, war is the most highly organised form of violence.

11 See van der Westhuizen (2010:115)for a more detailed explanation of the content.

has to events which are traumatic to her.' That's why he said that Ellen was in this state of disassociation when she murdered Abie (http://www.mapinc.org/media/2939).

When referring to Abie, Yodaiken told the court that Ellen had two distinct sides to her personality – the 'loving mother' and the 'abused woman'. While the loving mother had protected and cared for Abie throughout his *tik* addiction, the 'abused woman' had acted out in killing him (http://www.mapinc.org/media/2939). An example of the workings of these two sides was the day of Abie's funeral, he said. Even though the 'abused woman' had murdered her son, the 'loving mother' was able to stand up in church just days later and pay tribute to him at his funeral after the planned speaker failed to turn up. This loving mother from Lavender Hill also asked a group that gathered to mark the start of the sixteen Days Campaign of Activism for No Violence against Women and Children, for forgiveness for murdering her *tik*-addicted son more than a year ago. She turned herself in. She was even prepared to go to jail for life.

On the other side, Yodaiken said Ellen had endured years of abuse at the hands of Abie – physical and emotional (http://www.mapinc.org/media/2939). His report documents a life of abuse. As a child, Ellen was abused by her parents, she was abused by men she became involved with and then she was abused by her own son. The stress of this lifetime of abuse had slowly mounted until she reached breaking point (http://www.mapinc.org/media/2939). 'There is an accumulation of emotions that eventually exploded,' Yodaiken testified, adding that the murder was spontaneous. All the past perpetrators had suddenly taken the image of her present one: Abie (http://www.mapinc.org/media/2939).

The contributions from other disciplines enable pastoral interpretive guides to understand the complex context of Ellen in a holistic way, and this empowers the pastoral caregiver to participate and contribute in a responsible way.

4. JOURNEYING TOGETHER FOR MEANING AND SIGNIFICANCE

The further question this contribution wants to grapple with is: What is the unique approach and contribution of practical theology within a transdisciplinary dialogue?

Practical theology is in essence hermeneutical, because it has to do with understanding and interpretation. A hermeneutical process is a deeply transformative process. For practical theology to be able to interpret in order to contribute to the process of transforming our society it must be deeply contextual. Hermeneutics is therefore not a quick way to solve the problems of our society in order to transform it. It is rather a process to listen and to explore in order to understand and interpret as we journey together with others into new territory. In terms of this, Osmer (2008:17) states that therefore it needs to think in terms of interconnections, relationships and systems.

Furthermore, it is a process that involves the interpretation of the meaning of the interaction between God and humanity, the edification of the church, and becoming engaged in praxis through communities of faith in order to transform the world or to impact on the meaning of life (Louw, 1998: 97). Therefore, practical theology tries to interpret and translate the praxis of God in terms of human and existential issues through the action of communities of faith. It is a process of guiding the congregation as a community of understanding and interpretation to be able to facilitate families on their journey towards healing and transforming. The local congregation should therefore be able to create a safe space for families to deal with substance abuse and domestic violence in a constructive way.

The goal of pastoral care is to understand the encounter between God and humans from the perspective of the confronting effect of God's grace, presence and identification with human need and suffering. It interprets this confrontation in such a way that God's care reveals a

horizon of meaning, which in turn gives hope and generates faith (Louw 1998:99). Pastoral care is therefore essentially about listening and seeking to understand and interpret in order to find meaning within the hope of the resurrected Christ, the indwelling of his Spirit and the coming of Christ (eschatology).

Pastoral hermeneutics is not only about God's relationship with us and our relations with each other; it is also about restoring the relationship with us and with each other. The hermeneutical challenge is how to move from the Biblical text to a current understanding of human identity within the context of the victim and abuser. Within the hermeneutical paradigm, the victim and abuser both need to be understood within their context as fully human beings, as relational human beings who are seeking healing and wholeness. They are affected and in need of healing, so that the relationships can be restored[12] and they can, in a meaningful way, continue on their life journey. Pastoral interpretive guides thus need to not only restore the dignity of the individual but also the dignity of the family and the community.

Pastoral care within a hermeneutical paradigm is also deeply about a theology of life and the healing of life. It is about the dwelling in the presence of the pathos of the suffering Christ. It is about the question how the perspective of the resurrection in Christ, and the indwelling presence of his Spirit, can contribute to the empowerment of human beings. It is about hope, care and the endeavour how to give meaning to life within the reality of suffering, our human vulnerability, and the ever existing predicament of trauma, illness and sickness (Louw 2008:11). Therefore, the objective of practical theology is to journey with Ellen and her family, but also the community, towards identity, growth, transformation, development in faith and ultimately finding meaning within there own situation. Cilliers (2006:625) rightfully says that practical theology hinges on a hermeneutics of significance, which should not be seen as a new form of clerical or ecclesiological power of control, but rather as a collaborative and reciprocal way of serving and enriching life as it is expressed and experienced in society. The indwelling presence of God's Spirit enables pastoral interpretive guides to make this possible.

Practical theology should therefore develop an ecclesiology to remind the local churches of their vocation and to know how to participate and what their role is when they encounter real life situations as indicated in this case study. An integral part of the vocation of the church is to assist victims and abusers in a dignified way. Therefore the church needs to be reminded that human dignity is conferred by God and God alone. Soulen and Woodhead (2006:6) state that Christians need to remember that human dignity is not a self-grounded possession enjoyed apart from the relationship to the Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier. Dignity consists of reaching out in love and care to others (Soulen & Woodhead 2006:6). It is not something we keep for ourselves or for those who we want to share it with. It is something we own to give away to others irrespective of their class, age, sex or dignity. The role of the church would therefore be to restore the human dignity of all people involved - victim as well as abuser.

In this regard, Soulen and Woodhead (2006:6) argue that human dignity's indispensable context is the church, the gathering of the faithful. Claassens (2010:9) quotes an essay, 'Recovering Human Dignity,' by Christoph Schwöbel, who writes that the church ought to serve as 'the medium and instrument of God's creative and re-creative action in constituting and reconstituting identity and dignity.' He writes:

> '… the church of Christ is committed to sharing the situation of those who have lost their dignity in human eyes and to communicating to them the message that their dignity is re-created by the one who first bestowed it upon them. In communicating this promise in speech and action, the church is called to become the witness of the recovery of human dignity because humans are dignified by God.'

12 See Claassens (2010:9) as she emphasises the importance of restoration.

In this sense, I fully agree with Soulen and Woodhead (2006:17) when they state that the life of the Christian church is the enactment of the relationships in which the human being as relational being is constituted and reconstituted. The church is the space, a community, where everyone should have the experience that their dignity is being enabled. Poling (2010:205) describes the church as a community where all people will experience inclusive love. One could honestly argue that Ellen and her family were and are in dire need of a community where they can experience such caring and acceptance.

Although there is some truth in the argument thus far, there are also some clear red lights that demand our most urgent attention. Questions that indicate these red lights are: Has the church succeeded in restoring the dignity of people? Is it not true that the track record of the church is suspicious? Are we not, in this regard, expecting too much of the church in using strong words like: "Human dignity's indispensable context is the church, the gathering of the faithful" – but with out making it happen? Will the clerical and ecclesiological paradigm not dominate and thereby limit the church in its task as it had done in many ways in the past? Does the church have a theology that assists it to enter into transdisciplinary dialogue in order to change the world we are living in?

It is impossible to even try to answer these questions in this paper. I raised these questions to indicate the complexity of entering into transdisciplinary dialogue as well as to indicate that this does not come naturally for pastoral interpretive guides.

5. CONCLUSION

In this contribution I have argued that the story of Ellen Pakkies is a real life reflection of a society trapped within the cycle of abuse and violence. These real life stories are very complex, extremely difficult to deal with, and the road to recovery is always a challenge, given the legacy of the past in our country and the devastating effects of this harmful cycle. As the complexity of the story of Ellen Pakkies deepens it becomes clear that practical theology within a clerical and ecclesiological paradigm is too limited to deal with these complex life issues. I therefore argued for a transdisciplinary approach as the responsible way to assist people like her, her family and the community on the journey toward healing.

I indicated how various other disciplines can assist and enrich practical theologians and pastoral interpretive guides to be able to understand and interpret the context of Ellen, her family and the community. I further pointed out that practical theologians and pastoral interpretive guides have a vocation to participate in transdisciplinary dialogue. I have argued for a hermeneutical process, because it has to do with understanding and interpreting the context. In a very real sense, it is about a process of understanding and interpreting, listening to others, the ability to be vulnerable in journeying with Ellen, her family and the community in order to discover meaning and significance. Finally it is about the contribution of pastoral interpretive guides in transforming individuals, families and communities.

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When family violence takes subtle forms: A narrative from a Dutch context (A response to CH Thesnaar)

1. INTRODUCTION

Domestic abuse is of all times and all places, and depending on contextual factors, it will take many different forms. Christo Thesnaar's contribution elsewhere in this volume, about human dignity, domestic abuse, and domestic violence provides an impressive insight in the vicious circle of abuse from a South African context.[1] In the case of Ellen Pakkies, this emanates into the utter tragic of a mother killing her son. After a long history of son-mother abuse, Ellen is visited by her son who once again displays his usual state of apathy. This time she decides to make him talk once and for all, so she puts a rope around his neck and tightens it. He swears at her, tries to grab a plank off the floor, but this time *she* is in charge. She will teach him a lesson. And before long, she has killed him.

One of the reasons why the story is so heartbreaking is that it runs counter to everything we, as parents or as children, conceive to be the normal course of events in families. It will not be hard to find similar examples of domestic violence in other developed countries. Substance abuse is widespread in Europe, especially amongst citizens with a low socio-economic status. Still, the extent of violent crimes in South Africa and the gap between the socio-economic classes there justify the conclusion that the story presented by Thesnaar is much more typical for a South African context than it is for a European one. And there is another element in this account which strikes as un-European: the story told, the heuristics used, the analysis made, and the questions asked, illustrate the presence of a living tradition of highly qualified Protestant theology.

In this contribution, we present a story of abuse taken from a radically different context which, on a closer look, is strikingly similar to the one recounted by Thesnaar. It is taken from the context of a euthanasia procedure, i.e., an assisted death of a patient by his doctor, at his request. We will start by shortly explaining the legal and medical-ethical framework surrounding the story. After the narrative is told we conclude by raising three points of discussion.

THE CONTEXT OF THE DUTCH EUTHANASIA PROCEDURE

The Netherlands and Belgium are the two countries in which euthanasia and physician assisted suicide have a legal status. As for The Netherlands, it is still a crime to kill someone even at his or her explicit request but doctors (and only doctors) who have acted under a set of well defined due care criteria will not be prosecuted. The most important criteria are:

(1) the patient and the physician have together reached the conclusion that the suffering is unbearable and that there are no prospects of improvement; (2) there is a lasting and informed request from the patient. This criterion is pivotal in the current euthanasia practice: without an explicit request, the term, 'euthanasia' does not even come into consideration. The criterion includes that the patient has received all the necessary information about his condition and

1 Christo Thesnaar, 'Substance abuse and domestic violence within Families: A pastoral response to the challenge facing Human dignity,' *NGTT* 52 3/4 (2010), ??

about the array of palliative options. It is also presupposed that the patient or the physician do not experience undue pressure from the side of the relatives; (3) a second doctor has seen the patient and can confirm the suffering and the voluntary character of the request; (4) the physician reports a euthanasia case with the necessary documentation to a Regional euthanasia review committee (RERC). There are in total five such committees, each consisting of a lawyer, a physician, and an ethicist. A committee receives a report *after* a euthanasia has taken place and does not condone a euthanasia beforehand. When a case meets the criteria, it is closed; if one or more criteria are not met, a report is sent to the Prosecutor General.[2]

In 2010, 3,200 euthanasia cases were reported, being about 2% of all deaths.[3] 'Are the Dutch moving down a slippery slope?' is a question often asked by critics.[4] Although we see a steady increase of euthanasia cases in recent years, it still is an exceptional death. It occurs almost exclusively within the realm of terminal cancer in patients with no longer than weeks to live. Many, if not most doctors experience euthanasia as unusual and burdensome. The tight review procedure, in combination with the reluctance on the side of doctors to perform euthanasia, prevent euthanasia from becoming a standard medical procedure. But occasionally there are signs pointing to the 'normalization' of euthanasia.

3. CASPER AND HELEEN

Casper de Vries is a 42 year old man who works as a road constructor.[5] He and his wife Heleen, who is a waitress, have been married for twenty years. Together they have three sons aged 10, 8, and 5. They live in a comfortable but small apartment at the outskirts of Utrecht. The marriage has not been especially happy. Casper and his wife have a history of conflicts; shortly after the birth of their second child they were on the brink of a divorce but then agreed to stay married so as to raise the children together.

In June 2005, after some weeks of increasing fatigue and dyspnoea, Casper is diagnosed with lung cancer. The oncologist offers him some palliative treatment, including surgery, and gives him somewhere between 8 and 12 months. After recovering from the first shock, and after the surgery, Casper and Heleen decide to make the best of the remaining time. Casper's condition allowing, they do some travelling and spend time with relatives and friends. The malign process in Casper's body develops slower than expected and after a year Casper is still relatively fit: he is even able to do some light work on a part time basis.

September 2006. In the next year, Casper's condition gradually deteriorates and he is forced to stop working altogether. The couple's feelings are mixed. On the one hand, they see it as a blessing that Casper has outlived even the most optimistic prognosis. They are more a couple than ever before and the children have enjoyed the investments made in their family life. But

2 See http://www.euthanasiecommissie.nl/Images/Jaarverslag%202008%20Engels_tcm52-27032.pdf, last visited July 8, 2011.

3 Regional Review Committees for Euthanasia, *Annual Report 2010.* Den Haag: Ministerie van Volksgezondheid 2011.

4 Cf. Theo A. Boer, 'After the Slippery Slope: Dutch Experiences of on Regulating Active Euthanasia', *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics, 23,2 (2003),* 225-42; Theo A. Boer, 'Recurring Themes in the Debate about Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide', *Journal of Religious Ethics, 35,3* (2007), 529-555; for a more narrative approach to the euthanasia review procedure, cf. Theo A. Boer, 'Between Flourishing and Withering: A Theologian's Impressions from the Dutch Euthanasia Review Procedure', *Reformed World* 59,2 (2009), 197-212.

5 The case presented here is a borderline case, taken from one of the reports of a Review committee. It needs to be stressed here that most cases are much less discomforting. Details have been altered so as to protect the privacy of the case.

with Casper being at home and now becoming bedridden, the couple increasingly resumes their previous quarrels. The family budget shrinks as a consequence of Casper's illness. Heleen has to make up for the loss of income and runs double shifts, but as Casper needs more care they decide that she will stay home and to take care of Caspar in his last months. His life insurance will make up for it after his death.

Again, the illness is not as aggressive as predicted. After a year, in September 2007, Casper suffers from heavy dyspnoea, fatigue, nausea, and pain. The physician now openly discusses the possibility that Casper will die within a couple of weeks. Heleen then brings up the option of euthanasia. The physician, who is neither opposed to euthanasia nor especially in favour of it, calmly explains the palliative options and indicates that euthanasia comes in only as a last resort. 'I have never liked euthanasia, and my reluctance has only grown in recent years,' he writes in his journal. Very professionally, he addresses Casper: 'Casper, what do *you* think?' The answer is crystal-clear. 'I really prefer a natural death doctor,' he says, 'I don't like the idea of a planned death. That's why I never signed an advance directive. I have suffered so much in the past years, so I think I can take those last couple of weeks.' They decide that Casper will be on oxygen during the nights and will have increased dosages of morphine. Whenever there is something wrong, they may call the doctor.

October 2007. Heleen phones the physician with an alarming message: 'Doctor,' she shouts, 'the cancer is destroying our whole family! We want to discuss this euthanasia right away!' The physician comes and listens to the reports of the family members. The youngest child, now seven years old, has resumed peeing in bed; the middle child has serious difficulties containing his number two. The school results of the two oldest children have plummeted. In the presence of the doctor ánd the children Casper and Heleen have a painful dispute. Heleen says that Casper's demands are beyond limits: does he realize the strain he puts on the other family members? Does he know what two and a half years living together with an ailing husband means? Casper accuses Heleen of running away from her responsibilities and of wanting to kill him. The physician's attempts to pacify the problem fail, Heleen leaves the apartment slamming the front door. 'She's been doing that consistently,' Casper tells the physician cryingly, 'running out on me and coming home hours later. What am I to do here in bed, alone, desperate, not able to help myself and wetting myself eventually? How long has it been since I was able to play soccer with the boys in the park? My oldest son hasn't spoken to me for a week and none of the three any longer kisses me goodnight.' 'I don't know what to do,' the doctor writes in his journal, 'the couple is like cat and dog. The family is in disarray, the wife is a bundle of nerves; despite the sedatives I give her she yells and screams and traumatizes the boys. None of the other relatives is willing to assist more than a couple of hours. But when I suggest Casper that a nursing home would be the best option, he heavily protests.'

November 2007. The physician has arranged nursing care two times a day and this brings some relief, but also stress: 'I have seen twenty new faces in just three weeks time now,' Casper complains. During the doctor's weekly visits, the couple continues to quarrel, and Heleen continues to bring up the option of euthanasia. The doctor gets entangled in the quarrels and the despair of the family and is barely able to withstand the wife's pressure. Heleen insists that Casper writes an advance directive. Casper gives in, but in his own special manner: 'I hereby state that I want to die my own death. Signed, Casper de Vries, November 13, 2007.' It is a clear text of protest, but no one seems to notice. 'I want to die my own death, not the one you have in mind for me!' The physician writes in his files: 'November 13, 2007. Euthanasia request made.' Even after that date, Casper goes on saying that euthanasia is not the death of his choice. 'OK, you *give* me that injection if that will make you happy!', the physician witnesses Casper saying to Heleen. But then Casper gives in. 'I have seen my grandmother in my sleep,' he tells his physician

on November 28th, 'and she said it would be right for me to come.' In the final week before the scheduled euthanasia takes place, the stress diminishes. Heleen knows that her suffering will soon come to an end. Casper receives the anointing of the sick from his Roman Catholic pastor and is at peace with his decision to have euthanasia.

Three weeks after the funeral, Heleen introduces her doctor to a handsome middle aged man. 'He has meant so much to me during these difficult months with Casper,' she says, 'if it wouldn't be for him, I couldn't have survived.'

4. COMMENTS

The Committee which reviewed this case concluded that that there was nothing so wrong with it that it would justify a verdict 'incorrect.' Casper was suffering from an incurable illness with no prospects of recovery; like most other people who receive euthanasia, he was in severe pain and suffered from nausea, extreme fatigue, and dyspnoea. His written directive was poor, if not outright useless, but there is no law which prescribes the necessity of a written request, and it suffices that his own physician and the second opinion doctor affirm his verbal request.

It was this story which came to mind when reading the narrative of Ellen Pakkies who kills her dearest son Abie. Both Abie and Casper die in the arms of a loved one. Their deaths are in a certain respect wished and welcomed by their loved ones, in both cases these loved ones are partially responsible for their death. Ellen and Heleen have been caring and patient for years, but they cannot take it much longer. In the case of Casper, nothing illegal was done, but in both cases, there is a situation of moral accountability if not guilt on the side of the loved ones. No doubt Abie's death was more violent and problematic than Casper's, and in no way we should downplay the extreme tragic of this specific narrative. Still, one would rather not be part of *any* of these two stories. In both cases we can have sympathy for the suffering of the loved ones, despite the strong intuition that this is not the way a son, or a spouse, should die.

So let us concentrate on the parallels: family members playing an important role in the premature death of a child and a spouse, not because they do not love them, but precisely because they love and care. Abie's addiction destroys the wellbeing of his family, similar the way Casper's illness has a devastating effect on the wellbeing of his wife and children. Just like Ellen Pakkies is an abused woman and a loving mother, Heleen de Vries is a caring spouse and an overstressed and traumatized mother of three. In the case of Ellen and Abie, there is a history of violence and abuse, in the case of Casper and Heleen, it is one of verbal conflict.[6] Since Euripides' *Medea* we know what tragedies are. Neither story can be described in terms of good guys and bad guys only; rather, all parties are entangled in patterns of conflict, abuse, neglect, violence. The similarity in the stories of Ellen and Abie, and Heleen and Casper, is that none of the key characters stands as a victim only. Tragically, many offenders are victims themselves and victims in turn traumatize others.

This brings us to a first point of discussion. From a Biblical hermeneutical view, Thesnaar suggests that both the victimizer and the victim should be seen as fully human beings, as relational human beings who are seeking healing and wholeness. Few would disagree with

6 I do not think that the definition of violence adopted by Thesnaar is without problems. Thesnaar quotes Bulhan who describes violence as 'any relation, process, or condition by which an individual or group violates the physical, social and/ or psychological integrity of another person or group.' The first problem is that the verb 'violating' is on both sides of the equation, making the definition circular. Moreover, this definition does not make a reference to the intention of the actor. If someone stumbles down a hill and falls on an innocent bystander, few people would call this an act of violence. We normally only use the term, 'violence' if the physical, social, and psychological damage done to a person comes together with an intention on the side of the victimizer to do harm.

this claim; however, some may want to thematize another notion: guilt. To the extent to which someone has played a part in the abuse – the victim to a much lesser degree than the victimizer, if at all –, this guilt needs to be addressed to complete the picture. Some may want to object that that language of guilt may have a dehumanizing, disempowering and retraumatizing effect on human beings. In fact, in the case of a woman being raped, the suggestion that the victim may be partly responsible herself for what happened, must be strongly rejected. But insofar as there is guilt, bringing this up may also have a liberating effect: he who bears responsibility is implicitly acknowledged as being a moral actor, i.e., someone with the freedom to do what is right and to withstand mechanisms and reflexes of abuse. St. Paul's words to the Romans that all humans are sinners (Rom 3,23), no one excepted, is an affirmation that all humans, no one excepted, bear responsibility for their share in the origins of moral evil. Perhaps one of the keys to regaining control over one's life is to acknowledge one's freedom and responsibilities. To some, ascribing guilt may be felt as offensive to the sense of worth and dignity of human beings. But if we assume, as is the case in the good part of the historic Christian community, that 'guilt' exists in a manner comparable to the way in which a terminal disease 'exists', discerning and acknowledging guilt may be indispensible in restoring actorship, autonomy, and a sense of dignity.

Secondly, both narratives illustrate the need for an interdisciplinary approach. In reviewing the narrative of Casper and Heleen, the RERC considered this problematic situation from as many perspectives as possible. Medically, Casper's situation was reasonably sound. Lung cancer without a perspective of healing in a terminal phase. Casper receives the usual forms of palliative care, including morphine, sedatives, anti-emetics, oxygen, and home care. Some mistakes made by care professionals add to the chaos, but in the end, and given Dutch jurisprudence, these are not serious enough to justify legal or disciplinary measures. If the oncologist would have pictured a more realistic life expectancy, the De Vries family might have been better prepared for the years of hardship that were to come. But predictions are hard to make, and the oncologist may have wanted not to arouse false hope. The fact that Casper refuses to be transferred to a nursing home is a symptom of the poor reputation of this sort of care, despite the fact that the Dutch system of palliative care stands out as the number four in Europe.[7] When Casper and Heleen finally accept home care, they complain that they have seen numerous faces in just a few weeks. Undesirable as this may be – but what else is there to expect in a health care system which has adopted market mechanisms? Did the home physician make mistakes? When invited by the RERC for further explanation, he declared that he had been very well aware of Heleen's pressure; in fact, this pressure was the main reason for *postponing* the euthanasia for so long. Others may want to argue that the fact that euthanasia is a legal option in the Netherlands is in itself a systemic flaw: once euthanasia has become a respected option in palliative care, patients and their relatives will no longer be prepared to consider other palliative options. The supply of euthanasia may have stirred the demand in this case. Still, seen within the Dutch context, what is wrong with Heleen reading the papers and bringing up the possibility of euthanasia?

As the theological ethicist of this RERC, it was my task to focus on the question what kind of a family it is, and what kind of a society, in which a situation like this could happen. The family situation is not fully untypical for families in the Netherlands: both partners have a job, three young children need love and attention, the housing situation is agreeable but without much privacy. Moreover, the two partners have a record of conflicts and hurts. Paradoxically, the fatal diagnosis seems to dampen the hardships of narrow housing and marital quarrels, but when Casper's life stretches beyond the pessimistic predictions of the oncologist, the negative

7 European Association for Palliative Care in 2009. See http://www.vptzzuidgelderland.nl/nieuws_detail.php?nieuws_id=2&hfst_id=8, last visited on July 8, 2011.

mechanisms return stronger than before. The small housing, the emotional immaturity of Casper and Heleen, financial problems, all of these would have been bearable for a short period of time, but not for years, and more consistent help from members of the extended family would have helped to master the worst crises.

In the end, not only Casper is a victim, but the whole family. From other cases reported to the Committee, it becomes clear that the suffering of a loved one is *real* suffering on the side of the bystanders. Witnessing a loved one die from cancer causes trauma and stress for years. Many patients refer to previous experiences at the deathbeds of parents, spouses, or siblings as a major reason for a euthanasia request. In this narrative, the decisive reason for this euthanasia is the unbearable suffering of the family. Tragically, it is hard to tell what should have been done to prevent this misery, and by whom. The interdisciplinary approach of the Committee illustrates rather than solves the complexity of the problem. If only there was one single cause, one bad guy, one clear solution, or one official who could step in and help!

Finally: what could the Church have done? Thesnaar's account misses a precise articulation of the relationship between the academy and the church, between Practical Theology and the work of the pastor. No doubt, academic theologians have a mission to serve the Church, and no doubt the Church, in turn, has a mission to serve the people in the name of Christ. What features as utterly saddening, however, is that the Church seems to be absent in both stories. To be sure, in the narrative of Casper and Heleen there is a Roman Catholic pastor, coming in at the very end, unaware of the saddening circumstances which have led to the euthanasia request. Thesnaar may be right in pointing to our calling to restore and mend the divided community, and I agree that it is our mission to journey with Ellen and her family towards identity, growth, transformation, development in faith, and finding meaning in their own situation, just like it is our task here to journey with the Caspers and the Heleens. But how, one would ask, how? Despite a brilliant and well documented plea for an interdisciplinary approach, it remains hard to see what Practical Theology could have done to prevent the misery of the Ellens, Abies, Heleens, and Caspers. Perhaps our conclusion should be that the only way in which Practical Theology can be useful in lingering misery and preventing tragedy, is through active involvement of local Christian communities. If this is true, the two narratives are, more than anything else, an invitation to local communities to be aware of their social and pastoral responsibilities in the sphere of both prevention and intervention.

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Generation Y and the concept of family. An introductory study of the unique characteristics of Generation Y with specific reference to the concept of family within the context of the URCSA[1]

ABSTRACT

In South Africa the identity of the so called Generation Y (Millennials) is discussed and studied frequently in the broader spectrum of the social sciences. Generally these studies indicate that this generation, with its keen tendency towards the family, has a unique understanding of family life, identity(-ies), and the church, amongst others. The effect of the abovementioned comes to particular expression in the context of a residentially orientated university like Stellenbosch University.
This article will explore Generation Y's understanding of family. The author will give attention not only to the specific understanding of family but will also ask the question if this understanding allows for families as safe spaces where human dignity is fostered. The effect of the identity and culture of the Generation Y on South African university campuses will briefly be noted.
In a second instance the role and value ascribed to the family by the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa will be discussed. The church order and regulations of the mentioned church will form the basis for this discussion. With this it will be indicated if indeed churches like the URCSA realises their role in family life and if their understanding of, and ministry towards families correlates with the current realities of Generation Y.

OPSOMMING

In Suid-Afrika word die identiteit van die sogenaamde Generasie Y (Millenniërs) gereeld bespreek binne die weier spektrum van die sosiologiese wetenskappe. Studies hieroor wys in die algemeen daarop dat hierdie generasie, met sy sterk fokus op die familie, 'n baie spesifieke verstaan het van familieskap, identiteit(-e) en die kerk. Die effek hiervan speel op 'n spesifieke manier uit binne die konteks van 'n residensieël georiënteerde universiteit soos Stellenbosch Universiteit.
Hierdie artikel bespreek Generasie Y se verstaan van familie. Die skrywer gee spesifiek aandag aan die konsep familieskap en 'n fokus op die vraag of families gesien kan word as veilige ruimtes waar menswaardigheid gekweek word. Ook hier sal daar kortliks gewys word op die effek van die identiteit en kultuur van Generasie Y op Suid-Afrikaanse universiteitskampusse.
Tweedens sal die rol en waarde toegskryf aan familieskap deur die Verenigende

1 The largest part of this article was presented as a paper at the Human Dignity conference held in Kampen, The Netherlands in October 2010. This conference formed part of a series of conferences with the broader theme of Human Dignity jointly presented by Stellenbosch University and the Protestant University in the Netherland. The theme of the 2010 conference was: *Dignity at home – and in public*.

Gereformeerde Kerk in Suider-Afrika bespreek word. Die kerkorde en reglemente van die vermelde kerk sal hier as basis vir bespreking gebruik word. So sal daar aangetoon word of kerke soos die VGKSA hul rol in die bou van families sowel as hul verstaan van ('n) bediening(s) aan families ooreenstem met die huidige realiteite van Generasie Y.

1. INTRODUCTION

The so called Generation Y grabs the attention of an increasing amount of scholars that deal with the identity and impact of the thinking of this generation on society at large. It is of interest to note that not only does the behavioural patterns of this generation receive attention but also the imbeddedness of their identity within smaller groups and here specifically the family. Sociologists, amongst others, are particularly keen to explore a renewed accent on (core) family life as the basis of and for the development of Generation Y.[2]

This article forms part of a bigger conversation on human dignity and specifically how human dignity comes to expression in the context of the home. The focus of the article is on the so called Generation Y (Millennials) in relation to the mentioned conversation. The author will attempt to explore what the unique qualities are of this generation and, by doing this, certain defining characteristics of this generation as well as its impact on their identities will be discussed.

Specific attention will be given to the context of South Africa and in particular the context of Stellenbosch University (SU). By doing this further attention will be given to the unique challenges and opportunities brought about by Generation Y and how (if?) societal organisations, like a university or a church, respond to these challenges and opportunities.

On a second level the author will look into the particular focus of the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa (URCSA) on the education of the youth. Two youth structures within the URCSA will form the lens for the discussion. This will be complemented by a recent survey done by Reggie Nell on places/spaces of faith formation with a specific focus on young people.[3] By doing this the focus of churches like the URCSA on ministering to this unique generation will be explored.

The article will be concluded with a short discussion on the abovementioned topics.

2. A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE SO CALLED *GENERATION Y* (MILLENNIALS)

In order to note how human dignity finds expression in the lives of the Generation Y it is important to know who this generation is and what the term Generation Y refers to. Through exploring the unique qualities of this generation the author will further explore how family life, identity, and the church/religion are understood and expressed by Generation Y.

The Generation Y, also referred to as the Millennials, is the term used to coin the unique characteristics of a generation born roughly between the period 1982 – 2000.[4] As such they follow on Generation X. Unlike the previous generations it is not as easy to border in this generation and it is therefore no surprise that one of the unique characteristics of Generation

2 *The studies consulted in this article use the terms nucleus family, core family and family interchangeably.*

3 *See in this regard Reggie Nell, Places/spaces of faith formation. Reflecting on where we are as URCSA. Unpublished paper, 2010.*

4 *Although the experts differ on the exact period of birth of the millennials the abovementioned date represents an excepted timeframe. Millennials are referred to as the postmodern generation, busters, the lost generation*, *generation DOTCOM*, and the *net-generation*. See in this regard, Estelle Kruger, 'Die onderrig van millenniërs in die Afrikaans-klaskamer: Humormateriaal as onderrigstrategie'. In *Tydskrif vir Taalonderrig*, 2007, 48.

Y is diversity. Amongst others it can be mentioned that one struggles to box this generation in a specific age or group identity. In this regard Kruger points that one should indeed not try to fully define this generation by their age but by their philosophy of life.[5]

There are however some generically unique characteristics linking Generations Y's outlook on life and their social practices. In terms of their physical appearances and attitude Hestorff states the following: some are clean-cut, others have tattoos and piercings and some are seeking a deeper spiritual meaning to life and still others live lifestyles that would seem outrageous.[6] Kruger helps us to understand this better when she, through her research on Afrikaans school learners in South Africa, notes the following concerning Generation Y:

> 'Hulle het grootgeword in 'n milieu waar die toenemende materialisme en welvaart weerspieël word deur die besit en gebruik van 'n televisie, rekenaarspeletjies en die internet. Dié leerders is dus meestal (kwasi-)inligtingsgeletterd as gevolg van 'n toenemende blootstelling aan elektroniese massakommunikasiemedia. Die leerders is meestal voorstedelike kinders van middelklas- of welgestelde ouers; hulle stapelvoedsel kom uit McDonald's; hulle tydverdryf bestaan uit rekenaarspeletjies en inkopiesentrums, en hulle opvoeder is die televisie'.[7]

Hestroff further reminds us that there are other characteristics unique to this generation. He mentions that they have a strong experience of loneliness; that they are too busy and; at times, stressed out.[8] They further tend to form part of a particular peer cluster/social group that impacts directly on their formation and identity.[9] It is a generation that are driven to be top achievers and it is therefore no surprise that adolescents spend, on average, twelve hours a day and nearly seventy hours a week in school and extra-curricular activities.[10] This impacts directly on this generation's self-understanding and perceived self-value.

Of interest and perhaps a defining difference between Generation Y and Generation X is that adolescents of Generation Y are not interested in being or becoming popular, fitting in, or conforming to a standardized look and attitude. Hestorff notes that they are however keenly interested in finding a safe place to belong.[11] These safe spaces can be found in family life and/or the mentioned peer clusters. These spaces can further be found where adolescents representing of Generation Y find a natural fit.

Regarding the intellectual stimulation of Generation Y Kruger notes that this comes from postmodern philosophers like Derrida and Foucault. She builds her argument on the perception that this generation is extremely critical of anything that is made into an absolute truth.[12] But this, according to Kruger has a direct effect on Generation Y. She notes the following: 'Die gevolg van hierdie verwerping en agterdog is dat hierdie generasie streef daarna om eg en opreg te wees.'[13] In their striving to be genuine and caring individuals this generation is much more involved and focussed on the wellbeing of others on a variety of societal levels.

Graham Allan mentions that with industrialisation, family life became less important in the broader social realm.[14] For him the biggest shift can be found in the development and movement

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5 Kruger, 'Die onderrig van millenniërs'. In *Tydskrif vir Taalonderrig*, 2007, 50.
6 Sam Hestorff, *YM2K. Youth Ministry for the Millennial Generation*, 2006, vii.
7 Kruger, 'Die onderrig van millenniërs'. In *Tydskrif vir Taalonderrig*, 2007, 49.
8 Hestorff, *YM2K. Youth Ministry for the Millennial Generation*. 2006.
9 See in this regard, Hestorff, *YM2K. Youth Ministry for the Millennial Generation*. 2006.
10 Hestorff, *YM2K. Youth Ministry for the Millennial Generation*. 2006, 15.
11 Hestorff, *YM2K. Youth Ministry for the Millennial Generation*. 2006, 39.
12 Kruger, 'Die onderrig van millenniërs'. In *Tydskrif vir Taalonderrig*, 2007, 50.
13 Kruger, 'Die onderrig van millenniërs'. In *Tydskrif vir Taalonderrig*, 2007, 50.
14 Graham Allan, *Family Life. Domestic Roles and Social Organisation*, 1990, 5.

from large extended families to smaller nuclear ones.[15] This change in dimension impacts directly on the role of the family – and here specifically parents – in the development of children. In my view this rings specifically true of Generation Y as parents are much more involved in the social development of children.[16] Both Allan's and Hestorff's arguments are strengthened by Kruger's research as she notes the following:

> 'Verder is hulle (Millenniërs) meestal die middelpunt van hul ouers se belangstelling, verwagtings en ideale, en toon hulle min selfdenke, veral omdat hulle as generasie nie aan baie verliese blootgestel is nie. Daarbenewens is millenniërs groepsgeoriënteerd, rasveelsydig en goed afgerig om te presteer. Om vir die leerbehoeftes van hierdie generasie leerders voorsiening te maak, is dit noodsaaklik om alternatiewe onderrigstrategieë te ondersoek.[17]

Together with the apparent shift in the core function and identity of the family in present day it should be noted that, there is also an alarming increase in the amount of cases of divorce especially over the last 50 years.[18] In a real sense Generation Y are the children of a generation that are intimately aware of the effect of divorce on their lives. This directly impacts not only on their parents, but also on their identity through their upbringing.

Whilst taking the abovementioned into account the question can be asked if this understanding of family allow for families to be safe spaces where human dignity is fostered?

As noted in the previous section(s) parents of Generation Y are much more involved in their lives if compared to previous (a) generation(s). As such family life – and here specifically parents – impacts drastically on their lives. From the literature and research on this topic it is clear that parent's place great emphasis on supporting their children in an attempt to secure their success. As such Generation Y is driven towards achievement and living up to the standards set by their parents. Parents' motivation is coupled with a strong sense that anything is possible and that success is something that can be achieved.

Fearing that it might be the case Julia Fionda however warns that, in an adult centred world, we must not set expectations for the current generation that are too high. She is of the opinion that young people will fail to live up to these impossible expectation and, as this happens, our adult perceptions of them might become negative.[19] She further warns that we must not see children as unfinished adults that we must help to develop into full human beings (adults).[20]

In the context of South Africa one should also take into account that our families cannot always be seen as safe spaces where our children prosper as cases of family-based violence and abuse (of different forms) are extremely high. This should be taken into account in any discussion about the family and specifically a discussion about the function of the family structure in relation to fostering dignity in the household. This being said the questions remains namely if the South African youth can be classified as forming part of what is (loosely) defined as Generation Y. Kruger argues that this is true to a certain degree. She argues that the characteristics of this generation rings true for children born at the beginning of the 21st century and that these characteristics are predominantly prevalent in families in higher income and literacy categories.[21] As such it can be argued that, in the context of South Africa, it cannot be generally assumed that everyone born in the period between 1980 – 2000 can be regarded as being part and parcel of what is known

15 Allan, *Family Life*, 1990. 5.
16 See in this regard, Allan, *Family Life*, 1990. 6.
17 Kruger, 'Die onderrig van millenniërs'. In *Tydskrif vir Taalonderrig*, 2007, 52.
18 Allan, *Family Life*, 1990. 101.
19 Julia Fionda, *Devils and Angels. Youth Policy and Crime*, 2005, 4.
20 Fionda, *Devils and Angels*, 2005, 22-23.
21 This is the category that Kruger's research is focussed on. See in this regard Kruger, 'Die onderrig van millenniërs'. In *Tydskrif vir Taalonderrig*, 2007, 50.

as Generation Y. This is mainly due to the fact that the South African society is characterised by a diversity of social groups with varying economic positions and cultural experiences and exposure.

3. THE EFFECT OF THE IDENTITY AND CULTURE OF THE GENERATION Y ON SOUTH AFRICAN UNIVERSITY CAMPUSES. WITH SPECIFIC FOCUS ON THE CONTEXT OF STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY (SU).

Institutions of Higher Education presuppose that education is a powerful tool for social change.[22] Universities in South Africa currently face the challenge of opening its doors to more students and at the same time diversifying its student population. This ring specifically true for the University of Stellenbosch (SU).[23]

As part of its strategic focus to better learning amongst its students, SU recently undertook a study that focused on the *out-of-classroom* experiences of main campus[24] students. The focus of this study was to see what directly impacts on the lives of students and what students engage with outside the classroom.[25] This study focussed on a number of spheres including issues related to accommodation, time spent between classes, financial support for students, student's involvement in community interaction, religion and spirituality, etc.[26]

1. Some of the significant findings of the report include the following:
2. No less than a 5th of SU students indicated that they feel lonely on campus. Close to the same proportion of students also did not feel a part of the campus culture
3. Many of the students do not perceive academic related activities as one of the three primary activities that they engage with outside the classroom. Most students indicated socialising with their friends as their main out-of-class activity
4. Students indicate that most of their time spent between classes are spent in public university areas
5. About one third of students state that they participate in voluntary work or community service. Almost half of these students reported weekly participation in community service activities
6. 22% of international students felt that fellow Stellenbosch students/residents treat them like foreigners and 17% felt that the international student society was too diverse
7. 80% of the student population subscribe to the Christian faith. Spirituality and religion play a relatively important role in helping students with their studies, as a determinant of relationships with peers, and in determining personal values.[27]

Although some of the findings point to a different reality it is interesting to note that most of the findings in the report correspond with the general characteristics and experiences of Generation Y. Of further importance is the fact that students at SU continuously re-group into smaller

22 This idea is shares by a number of other societal actors representative of different spheres including business and the media.

23 For a strategic overview of Stellenbosch University see *The University of Stellenbosch. A Strategic Framework for the turn of the Century and Beyond*. 200. http://www.sun.ac.za/university/StratPlan/stratdocs.htm See also Amanda Botha, Chris Brink. *Anatomie van 'n omvormer*, Stellenbosch: SUN Press. 2007.

24 SU has 3 campuses. The campus on Stellenbosch is regarded as the main campus.

25 SU is a medium size residentially orientated university with approximately 27 000 students.

26 See in this regard Nelius Boshoff *et al*, 'Survey of the Out-of-Class experiences of Stellenbosch University Students at the main Campus in Stellenbosch'. CREST. 2010.

27 See in this regard the executive summary of the 'Survey of the Out-of-Class experiences of Stellenbosch University Students at the main Campus in Stellenbosch', i-vii, 2010.

communities or clusters (Hestorff). This is clearly visible in student activities at this residentially orientated university.

As indicated in the previous section, Generation Y experience loneliness even though they might be surrounded by a number of people.[28] Of interest to note is the high percentage of students that express a feeling of loneliness on campus. What is perhaps not clearly indicated in the report are the growing amount of parental involvement in student activities and the general engagement of parents in the academic progress of children. Of further importance is the growing amount of curricular and co-curricular activities that students engage with on and off campus. It should be indicted that the SU Centre for Counselling and Student Development expressed its concern regarding the increasing amount of students that experience emotional and physical burnout on campus.[29]

As indicated by the 'Survey of the Out-of-Class experiences of Stellenbosch University Students at the main Campus in Stellenbosch' it is important that SU, in better dealing with the challenges faced and brought about by its student population, do further research in the day to day experiences of its students. As suggested by Kruger research should also indicate what type of teaching methods can best be used in teaching the current SU student population. In my view this should be complemented by a continuous evaluation of the role of this and other universities with the context of South Africa and Africa.

4. THE GENERATION Y AND THE URCSA?

As indicated in the previous section religion and spirituality plays a relatively important role in the lives of students at SU. 53% of SU students belong to traditional churches.[30] These churches include the Reformed branch of the church and thus, amongst others, the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) and the URCSA.

This being said the question can be asked namely how the church understands the apparent gap between generations. And further, how does the church understand the concept of family? In an attempt to answer these questions I will specifically focus on the context of the URCSA. The lens that will be used to interpret this can be found in the URCSA's Youth Brigade regulations as well as the constitution of the Christian Youth Movement as found in the church order of the URCSA.

The two structural focus areas or services that directly links to serving the youth of the URCSA is found in the Youth Brigade (Jeugbrigade) and the Christian Youth Movement (CYM) of the abovementioned church. When reading through the constitutions and regulations of the mentioned ecclesial structures it becomes clear that both these structures are focussed on the (Christian) development of the youth in the church. This is specifically done through Christian orientated, culturally engaged and bodily focussed, ethical education.[31] Or as the mission statement for the CYM declares: 'The CYM as a service organisation of the Christian Education (CE) in the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa aims to form a church youth to become spiritual adult members of the body of Christ, who are competent in the doctrine, active in the mission, service and sacrifice'.[32]

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28 Hestorff, *YM2K. Youth Ministry for the Millenial Generation*. 2006, 1-8.

29 See in this regard the *Annual Report of the Centre for Counselling and Development*, Stellenbosch University, 2009.

30 'Survey of the Out-of-Class experiences of Stellenbosch University Students at the main Campus in Stellenbosch', v, 2010.

31 Stipulation 37, *Church Order and General Stipulations of the Cape Regional Synod of the URCSA*, 206. 2006.

32 Stipulation 38, *Church Order and General Stipulations of the Cape Regional Synod of the URCSA*, 220.

It can thus be said that the URCSA, in her focus on the youth, places great emphasis on Christian education based on the doctrine of the (Reformed) church. This is complemented by practical meetings and engagements with youth members through the mentioned church structures. The question however is if education, and here specifically the method for education, through the mentioned ecclesial structures effectively engage with the need and challenges presented by Generation Y.

A further question that needs to be answered is how the URCSA understand the concept of family. In his research on places/spaces of faith formation Reggie Nel conclude that the best way to prepare young people to live in a world differently than most, as Disciples of Christ is through the structure of the family. This conclusion is based on a survey done amongst the youth of a particular URCSA congregation. The group of young people form a particular coloured community in Johannesburg and form part of a confirmation class of a URCSA congregation of which Nel is the *pastor loci*.[33]

Nel notes that the mentioned youth point out that, amongst others, their school, home and church are considered to be significant living spaces.[34] Of note in his study is the fact that the youth interviewed placed great – and exciting – emphasise on their future wellbeing. Therefore school was an important role player in the lives of the mentioned children. In this regard the children pointed out that the challenges they faced are those that will impair or block their progress.[35]

Nel also points out the following:

> 'Further these young people also named home or being with family as an important place for them. These (sic) we also see in the interviews where the home, parents, especially mothers, are named as important in all interviews. The reasons they presented, relates to the presence and relationships of family, as well as a sense of safety. Home is a critical space in the development of their sense of self; here they are 'grounded' in acceptance, care and love'.[36]

Nel further points out that all of the children interviewed expressed that they felt safe in their homes. The reason for this sense of security experienced by the youth, where because of the presence of family and parents, whom some would describe as 'someone who cares' or 'people I know'.[37] As such it is clear that the family, at least for the mentioned youth, can play a pivotal role as a safe space where they can belong. If it is to be assumed that the youth interviewed by Nel is part of Generation Y the role of their families can be considered to be pivotal in their development.

Nel's findings correlate with remarks made in this article as it points toward unique characteristics and needs of Generation Y. In this regard I specifically note the intense focus on future achievement/success and the perceived role of the family as a safe space/support structure for the mentioned generation. Although the youth interviewed by Nel might not be viewed as typically part of Generation Y because of their social background, it is quite clear that, in relation to the abovementioned, these young people share in some of the characteristics of this generation. However this may be Nel fails to fully indicate how the church should respond and play a role in family life and indeed if the URCSA understand the challenges faced by Generation Y. This thus remains an open question.

2006.

33 Reggie Nel, *Places/spaces of faith formation. Reflecting on where we are as URCSA*, 2, 2010.

34 Nel, *Places/spaces of faith formation,* 3, 2010.

35 Nel, *Places/spaces of faith formation,* 5, 2010.

36 Nel, *Places/spaces of faith formation,* 4, 2010.

37 Nel, *Places/spaces of faith formation,* 7, 2010.

5. CONCLUDING REMARKS

It is of interest to note that the amount of theological based research on Generation Y is not readily found. This not only rings true for the discipline of Theology but also for the academic field of Education in the context of South Africa.[38] In my opinion it is absolutely necessary that research should be done in an attempt to explore the possibilities of better supporting and serving the needs of Generation Y.

The question that remains mostly unanswered is the following: do churches like the URCSA realise their role in family life and do their understanding of the concept *family* correlate with the current realities of the Generation Y? This does not always seem to be the case. As indicated the URCSA's focus on serving the youth is expressed through education. It is not clear how this finds expression in the context of the mentioned two youth movements and if indeed the ways for carrying across knowledge effectively speaks to the youth. In this regard Nel calls for critical dialogue with the young people, as interlocutors themselves.[39] This is a timely process that will, in my view aid the church and other societal structures to better minister and serve Generation Y.

As pointed out in this article the role and place of the family in the lives Generation Y stand central. In this regard the family forms a space for development and support and it can thus be argued that it can also be a place where (human) dignity is fostered. Although it is clear that the family structure plays an immense role in the lives of the mentioned generation it can also be argued that, if this structure is dysfunctional, young people, representative of this generation, will struggle immensely in their social adjustment. No other support structure is as important for this generation as the family. The role that parents play in the lives of this generation is thus vital in their own formation and should indeed not be underestimated.

However this may be Julia Fionda points out that, in the current context, adults have become even more confused regarding their role in relation to children.[40] Fionda further warns that, in an adult-centric world we must be careful not to label young people as it tends to be acted out judgmentally.[41] This rings especially true for Generation Y.

As mentioned by Kruger one must always critically ask if indeed South African youth born between 1980 – 2000 can be classified as part of Generation Y. However this may be, it is clear that churches as well as other societal structures that focus on the education and development of the youth should take into account the real and unique characteristics of this generation.

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38 Kruger, Die onderrig van millenniërs, *Tydskrif vir Taal Onderrig*, 48, 2007.

39 These will be the young people within these schools and within a specific city, coming from a specific local community. See in this regard Nel, *Places/spaces of faith formation,* 3, 2010.

40 Fionda, *Devils and Angels*, 2005, 28.

41 Fionda, *Devils and Angels*, 2005, 3.

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KEY WORDS
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TREFWOORDE
Generasie Y
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Questioning generational labels and their usefulness for church policy (A response to Leslie van Rooi)

First, you quote Hestorff, Kruger and others in order to find ´defining characteristics´ of Generation Y. You state that Generation Y members have a common philosophy of life, are very busy and at times, stressed out and can often feel lonely, the two last points also being confirmed by the Stellenbosch University inquiry. Often they participate in and develop their identity in a particular peer cluster. It is a generation that is highly ambitious and wants to be successful. They are critical with regard to absolutism. What counts is being genuine, original and authentic. Generation Y members are socially concerned and internet savvy. Despite the diversity, which is a feature of this generation too, the commonality is striking: it allows you, Leslie, to speak of an 'apparent gap' with former generations.

Second, you assert that Generation Y members are ´keenly interested in finding a safe place to belong´. The experience with divorces among the previous, baby boomer and X generations may have had, as you suggest, a formative effect upon the core values of the members of the Y generation. You quote Reggie Nel who found that young people highly value their home as a place of care, love and safety. You add that if the family structure does not function or is torn apart young people will have serious difficulties in developing their identity.

Third, for the Stellenbosch students, being representative of generation Y, the church and spirituality play an important role. You question the URCSA focus on ethical and doctrinal education and specifically, you raise criticism as to whether this education responds to the needs of the Generation Y-members. Implicitly you seem to suggest that the church can and should play a more formative role. I think this implicit proposal deserves to become more explicit and developed more fully.

With regard to your first point, there is indeed an overwhelming amount of texts, both in books and articles and on the internet, that support the use of the Generation Y-label. Not only for demographic reasons by the way, but also for marketing purposes. The Gen Y, 'Internet-generation', 'Nintendo-generation' or 'Cut-and-paste generation', has a focus on brands, friends, fun and digital culture; they are educated, achieving, confident, team-oriented, pressured, multitaskers. There is a simultaneous alignment of this generation with The Information Age. It's members are digital natives. They have also been called the 'helicopter kids' because they hover about the family home. So it seems that your observations are corroborated.

Last Thursday however, when I told my daughters of 17 and 13 about one of the few Dutch marketing books on Generation Y , they immediately said, oh that must have been written by two old men. They questioned the generation label, told me about 'gothics', *alto's* ('alternatives') and skaters, emphasized the diversity, and they thought that behaviour and lifestyle (including values and tastes, preferences) form more precise classification factors than calendar. They also questioned the boundaries. What, they asked, does a 1982, 28 year old man, working in the business area have in common with a 10-year old girl at seventh grade? They also mentioned class, cultural diversity and regional differences. What do young people in the eastern part of The Netherlands coming together in their booze sheds and young Antilleans in Rotterdam have

in common, they asked and again, can they be lumped together with the young creative class in Amsterdam? I explained to them what the concept of a generation means and told them, with Karl Mannheim, that the members of a generation share the same historical facts and changes and need not be homogeneous. But have we been confronted by the same music, television programs, norms and values, formative historical events and economic situation, they asked? And the answer came immediately. No, they said. They were also indignant at being lumped. They sensed that ascriptions are not neutral, they tend to be judgmental.

Making further inquiries, I found that discussions like these with my daughters are taking place on the internet too, mainly due to marketers who come up with ever new classifications and labels. Critics assert for example, that the decisive defining feature of Gen Y, its use of the *digital media*, is not as marking as it seems. After filling in an internet test in order to establish one's generation, a 57 year old woman remarked: "Funny! I'm 57 and retired, but I scored 14 points, which puts me in GenY! Funnier still, I can think of a number of friends my age or older who would score similarly on this quiz. Common factors: all of us are use Macs pretty intensively, and all of us have satellite internet setups that give us broadband access wherever we go. Gee, it's fun to break stereotypes!" Others point out that the UK the last ten years has seen the rise of 'Silver Surfers'. Retired people in their 60s, 70s, 80s, 90s and even into their 100s who are seeing their children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren use all this technology and are taking lessons to keep up. Not only are they keeping up but many of them are getting hooked and overtaking their descendants. Are they filling the Gen Y boxes in demographics?

In The Netherlands, the concept of Generation Y is hardly used. On the other hand, although the Gen Y label may be America-centric, and as you put it, in South Africa predominantly adequate for young people who grow up in families with higher income and literacy levels, when the label is applied in research in The Netherlands it is confined to the years 1980-1994, this generation being labelled by research organization Motivaction as the 'boundless generation'.[1] According to Motivaction, young people of this period can be characterized by a focus on looks, brands, networks and kicks. They are not thrifty, not patient, not environment-minded and hardly involved. Critics even use the words 'cynical and indifferent'. Their parents have not given them boundaries and they have not had much time for them, being busy with their own work and leisure. According to marketing experts Boschma and Groen[2] due to the 24/7 commercialized information and communication society the generation that is born in 1988 or later shares typical values. They call this generation the Einstein generation, a positive label, emphasizing the abilities of the members of this generation to adapt to a flexible society. They have a clear insight into how things work, not only technically, but also economically, psychologically and socially. They are the ultimate consumers. They also emphasize authenticity and they value family life and friendship ties. Being happy is the most important value. Other researchers have labelled the 1980-1994 generation as the 'confetti generation', always in whirl, without inner convictions or anchors. "Screenagers we are, the Millenniumgeneration, the Wikipedia-generation, educated by and in front of the screens of computer and television. (...) We have no restrictions, also not in the moral domain." [3]

Now, Leslie, the question is, are these generational labels useful? Marketers love them, but should we use them in church and theology? Or do these characteristics and the positive or negative judgements connected to them say more about the researchers then about the individuals that are lumped together? And, even more critical, don't they lead to or confirm embedded stereotypes, that blur a clear view on each individual? The young people in the Motivaction report for example are portrayed in both pictures and text as a superficial mass, without decency and morals. Yet, statistics about political involvement and membership of organizations indicate: the confetti-generation, that is supposed to be politically un-involved

and not-committed to social values, does not exist. Third, is a label like 'boundless generation' not applicable to any new generation? And every generation has more options than previous generations ... "What do exist are the clichés about our generation."

With regard to your second point, firstly, when it comes to valueing family life, does not every new generation long for a family as a safe haven? In Dutch, does not everyone wants a 'huisje, boompje, beestje'? In fact social psychology underlines that the only effective remedy to both criminal and terrorist activities seems to be a ´huisje, boompje´ and a ´beestje´ or, in other words, a wife, work and a home. People have been longing for a safe and comfortable dwelling place since the first days of creation, the very first generation.

Secondly, in The Netherlands, the Motivaction report underlined that the parents of the 'boundless generation' are not strict and they have little time for their children. In fact it suggests that living without restrictions is *caused* by the parents or, even more generalizing in a one-liner, that Dutch society neglects its youth. My question is whether such generalizations are helpful? Or are they useful only in a performative sense, in that they spark off debate, both in the public and the private domain?

Finally, as to the relationship of the church and Generation Y, Leslie, you take a promising closer look to what the church in this respect means in an empirical sense by focusing on the Youth Brigade and the CYM, on what they offer and on how they address the needs of young individuals. The church, you suggest, could play a more formative role; I like to hear more about that in the South African context. If young people are seeking to shape their identity primarily in relationships with family and friends then I suggest precisely in that domain the performative and catalytic content of the biblical narratives, models and metaphors should be explored and connected to the biographies of young individuals by applying creative methods.

Research on Generation Y in the UK demonstrates that young people do not find religion relevant to their daily lives, but they are likely, however, to turn to "a faded, inherited cultural memory of Christianity" during difficult times and they might be more open than their parents' generation to hearing the Christian story.[4] On the other hand, they are happy to get by on what little they know about the Christian faith. Researchers state that the Gen Y crowd lives in a milieu, a popular culture, that is oozing with spirituality, while churches are practically empty of Gen Y. Again, also according to this research, the central goal in life is happiness and there is a shared belief that happiness is eminently achievable. What counts are relationships with family and close friends, and the creative consumption of the resources of popular culture. 'Consequently, to fail in this goal is to be personally culpable. There is little space to discuss disappointments, sadness and loneliness in the Happy midi-narrative'.[5] Midi-narrative is a collective framework of meaning that is communal on a small scale (me, my friends, and my family). According to the happy narrative, 'there is no need to posit ultimate significance elsewhere beyond the immediate experience of everyday life'. According to the researchers, the only thing a church can do is to engage young people's imagination through a creative retelling of the Christian story. It is about familiarizing people with biblical stories.

In The Netherlands, for most of the young people, the church is simply out of sight. It is not within their horizon. If it means anything at all, the word church is associated with dullness, moralization, hypocrisy and being old-fashioned. In addition, adolescents continue in the direction their parents took, when they became hesitant towards church and Christian faith.[6] Where parents do not chat about the Bible, faith or the church and are not engaged in church related practices, church commitment of their children is very rare. Recent research demonstrates

that a deeply rooted anti-religious attitude' is common.[7] Being free and independent are the highest values. To this generalizing picture I add, that a number of young people is active in a congregation of which they say it offers them a dwelling place. Sociologists speak about enclaves of roman catholic, orthodox-protestant, evangelical, post-evangelical and spiritual young people, that are seriously engaged.[8] In addition, young people show *pick 'n choose* behaviour, but they have done that in the forties, fifties, sixties and seventies too.[9]

So, I do get along with some generalizations, although only to underline the need for a differentiated narrative approach. In Western Europe, for many young people, the contents and significance of the Christian tradition have become strange and unknown. The preferences in our culture for the musical and the visual, as Tom Beaudoin has shown in *Virtual Faith*,[10] reflecting upon the spiritual quest of, not Generation Y, but of Generation X, call for an imaginative retelling of biblical stories about families, about parents and children, brothers and sisters, about conflict and peace, honour and shame, fear and courage, guilt, poverty and charity, happiness and sorrow, culpability and redemption, illnesses and healing, loneliness and companionship, and about life and death and resurrection.

Yet again, as our daughters convinced me, also for the church, behaviour and lifestyle, taste and values, may be more useful classification factors than calendar. Recently embryonic congregations emerged of young Antilleans in Rotterdam, the Thugzchurch[11], of de-churched accountants and bank employees in the Amsterdam business area, of young Surinamese mothers and their children and of low income families in economically deprived areas, and of post-evangelical Jesus freaks. These congregations demonstrate that the basic question, as you rightly put it, is not how churches can make a generation more involved, or how they can socialize them in their doctrinal and ethical convictions, but how they can be meaningful for identity formation of young individuals in their respective families and peer groups. Especially if they experience a culture of being both neglected and spoiled and if parents and peers exercise a strong pressure on them to achieve or you will be a loser.

Finally, taking a hesitant attitude towards binding commitments as a rule among Gen Y, Gen X, the Lost Generation and the Baby-boomers, churches may allocate means (that is: money and professionals) to create short-term preference activities and projects, together with non-church organizations. Research demonstrates that young, not yet de-churched church members are willing to participate. [12]

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Among the unchurched some evidence of lingering affiliation and belief was found and also for what Grace Davie has called 'vicarious religion'. The empirical findings are especially based upon qualitative data.

5 See http://www.prrg.org.

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10 Tom Beaudoin, *Virtual Faith. The Irreverent Spiritual Quest of Generation X.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass 1998.

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Human dignity and ethical treatment: Remarks on family concepts and family life in the era of the Reformation

ABSTRACT

Martin Luther and the Reformation movement placed the household family anew at the centre of Christian life and ethics. In the wider sphere this religious "upgrading" cannot be overestimated in view of its effect on the process of confessionalization *and* modernization in European history. The education of children held a prominent place within the responsibilities of the household family; it was regarded as a divine task. Through this the Reformation movement intensified and specified humanist endeavours, which Erasmus summarized with the words: *Human beings, believe me, are not born, but formed.* Steven Ozment once maintained, that the family of the 16th century was a nurturing institution, characterized by love, respect and mutual dependence among the members of the family.

It is with good reason that Biblical scholars stress the necessity of contextualizing New Testament texts on the family within the framework of Greco-Roman culture. One has principally to consider the variety of attitudes and values attached to family terminology and the metaphorical usage of such descriptions. In particular the inner tension between consistent discipleship and social reality demonstrates that an ethical task had to be accomplished. There are no standard answers to the question of what is meant precisely by human dignity and ethical treatment in this context. In historical studies, and therefore also in Church history, the reconstruction of family concepts and family life still is a challenging endeavour. Biblical exegesis has to be enriched with perspectives derived from historical development within Christian communities through the centuries. The following remarks are an attempt to summarize and reflect on some aspects of family history at the time of the Reformation.[1]

From New Testament contexts we learn, that the basic societal unit was not the private modern nuclear family, but the so-called "Oikos" or household, which may also be called "household family". This organism incorporated a wide range of personal relationships, economic necessities and kinship. With some variations the household family remained the dominant pattern in the social reality of pre-modern Western societies. However, neither the theory nor the reality of the household family were as simplistic, as sometimes suggested. One may, for example, deplore the damage done by the church's endorsement of patriarchal, sexist and marginalizing forms

1 For the following remarks see especially Ozment, SE 1983, *When Fathers Ruled. Family Life in Reformation Europe*, Cambridge Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press; Ozment, SE 2001, *Ancestors. The Loving Family in Old Europe*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press; Forster, MR & Kaplan, BJ (eds) 2005, *Piety and Family in Early Modern Europe. Essays in Honour of Steven Ozment*, Aldershot, Hants: Ashgate; van Dülmen, R 1990, *Kultur und Alltag in der frühen Neuzeit*, München: Beck, vol 1: (4th edn 2005), *Das Haus und seine Menschen. 16. - 18. Jahrhundert*; Duby, G & Perrot, M (eds.) 2006, *Geschichte der Frauen*, vol 3: *Frühe Neuzeit*, ed A. Farge, N.Z. Davis, Frankfurt/Main: Zweitausendeins; Holzem, A & Weber, I (eds) 2008, *Ehe - Familie - Verwandtschaft. Vergesellschaftung in Religion und sozialer Lebenswelt*, Paderborn: Schöningh; Schmidt-Voges, I (ed) 2010, *Ehe - Haus - Familie. Soziale Institutionen im Wandel 1750-1850*, Köln: Böhlau.

of family life over many centuries. But this sort of generalization could also be applied to the New Testament itself. A discussion on the place of dignity and violence in the history of family is at least as complicated as the debate on New Testament texts, and every context ought to be evaluated on its own terms.[2]

Martin Luther and the Reformation movement placed the household family anew at the centre of Christian life and ethics. In the wider sphere this religious "upgrading" cannot be overestimated in view of its effect on the process of confessionalization *and* modernization in European history. For all members of the household family a specific set of ethical commitments was worked out, on the basis of a spiritual equality *coram Deo* (in the presence of God). This was done in the context of catechetical literature, following the Ten Commandments, but also in literature on Christian behaviour, the so-called housefather- and housemother-literature. Naturally the household family was patriarchal and gender-constructed, but in contemporary eyes it was in no way *per se* repressive. Even in pre-modern times theory and practice had engendered their own dynamics: what was intended to stabilize the feudal system, cannot be separated from the ongoing process of rethinking and reorganizing ethical treatment and human dignity "in context". One of the more obvious places to study these dynamics is the history of education. The education of children held a prominent place within the responsibilities of the household family; it was regarded as a divine task. Through this the Reformation movement intensified and specified humanist endeavours, which Erasmus summarized with the words: *Human beings, believe me, are not born, but formed – homines, mihi crede, non nascuntur, sed finguntur*.[3] We may say then that human dignity in *modern* contexts is based on individual rights, but in *pre-modern* contexts it was based on common obligations, specified by different "offices" in a divine order of family, kinship, and political authority, and defined by status, generation, kin affiliation and rank.

In the past pre-modern family life was often interpreted as hostile to the development of emotional relationships among its participants (L. Stone, Ph. Ariès). However, as a closer look on the sources shows us, there was more love, practical equality and mutual respect than might be expected. Had this not been so, the tensions between familial and religious loyalties would be more difficult to explain. Family ties often remained stronger than religious commitments, as we can see in the context of conversion stories and changing confessional identities, where the unity of the family and the right handling of common property was at stake.

Although there was no formal equality, in the daily life of middle-class women there was quite a high degree of team-work and cooperation at all levels of the household. Women were active partners in economic affairs. One famous example is M. Luther's wife Katharina, who was known for brewing a good beer, and who continued with her entrepreneurial activity after the death of her husband. Formal inequality was not the same as submission.

In the realm of political science and social theory the concept of the household family played an important role as an "ideal type" (cf. Max Weber's "Idealtypus"). The Aristotelian "Oikos" had already been adapted in the Middle Ages to the specific necessities of Christian society, by the concept of the *Oeconomia christiana*. In the *Oeconomia christiana* literature, which became well-known in the 16th and 17th centuries, personal relationships and economic management were regulated together in a combination of personal and social ethics.[4] The household

2 For perspectives from New Testament scholarship cf. Barton, SC 1996, 'Towards a Theology of the Family' in *Christian Perspectives on Sexuality and Gender*, eds E.Stuart & A Thatcher, Grand Rapids: Eerdman, 451-462. Barton, SC 2001, *Life Together. Essays on Family, Sexuality and Community in the New Testament and Today*, Edinburgh: T&T Clark.

3 Erasmus, D 1971, 'De pueris instituendis' in *Opera omnia* (= ASD) I-2, Amsterdam: Elsevier, 1-78; 31.21.

4 Cf. Menius, J (1529), *Oeconomia christiana*, Wittenberg: Lufft; Coler, J 1593-1604, *Oeconomia Oder*

functioned as the cradle of responsible citizenship, and was oriented to the common good. The fact that its patriarchal structure was legitimated theologically - God functioned as housefather of the universe - naturally evokes critical evaluation. This, however, should not prevent us from realizing the inherent dynamics, on the basis of which practical behaviour could be negotiated. And it should not prevent us from asking what, for example, Luther's concept of the three "offices" of a Christian or his participation in the three "estates" contributed to the reality of human dignity in his time, and what it probably can contribute to our own understanding of it.

For Luther the individual did not exist apart from state or society. His perspective was directed to everybody's participation in three "estates" or relationships at the same time. Besides priesthood (the priesthood of all believers) and political authority ("weltliche Obrigkeit") came the household family or marriage, as a social institution. It is noteworthy that Luther placed "Christian love" above these three estates.[5] Obviously he felt the need for a superior normative value to secure responsibility and ethical treatment. Here the constant interest in a good education for the children at home and in public institutions had its roots. Parenting was regarded as a rational art and the exercise of authority, in analogy to God's parental role towards mankind. According to Luther, there was no power on earth that was nobler or greater than that of parents. The diligent rearing of children was seen as the greatest service to the world, both in spiritual and temporal affairs. Parents who fell short in the task of rearing their children, according to Luther should be publicly punished or even forced to leave the country.[6] Although this was far from reality, it shows us, that the housefather's authority was in no way regarded as being independent.

Indeed, the main purpose of bringing up children was to educate God-fearing, obedient and virtuous Christians and citizens. This was a joint task for mother *and* father, the latter becoming more important when the child was aged six or seven and regarded as being able to respond to regular discipline. Those who brought up their children according to God's commandments, taught them self-discipline, self-respect and a sense of honour successfully, could be relied upon to have treated them with dignity, and to have educated good citizens. In the "Christian economy" parents were admonished to avoid too harsh a treatment of their children, for example by demanding hard work from them in early childhood, or by intimidating them too much by physical punishment. Moderate corporal punishment was seen as normal, at home and at school. Horror stories about extreme physical punishment (J. Butzbach) surely do not describe reality in general. As in the wisdom literature in Antiquity, in the Bible and Early Church sources a classical middle way between measured threats and parental love was regarded to be the best educational method. Indeed the fear of anarchy and criminality was often greater than the fear of misusing parental power.

In a patriarchal society the education of girls was mostly regarded as less important, but it never was totally neglected. At least since Reformation times girls also had to follow a basic educational programme, partly in public schools, where female teachers also worked.

The high esteem of the household family also was expressed in the definition of the household as a "church". According to Luther parents exercised religious "offices", as an apostle, bishop or pastor. So it is not surprising, although unusual, that Luther in his famous preface to the German Mass (1526) suggested a special way of organizing Christians in house churches. Those, who wanted to intensify their spiritual life alongside public worship ("die mit Ernst Christen sein

Haußbuch […] Darinnen begriffen […] ist, Wie ein jeder Haußwirth […] seine Nahrung, nechst Gott anstellen sol, auch fruchtbarlichen geniessen und gebrauchen, 6 vols, Wittenberg: Helwich; later editions were published under the standard title *Oeconomia ruralis et domestica*.

5 Cf. WA 26, 504.

6 WA 30/2, 61.

wollen") were encouraged to study the Bible, to celebrate the sacraments and to practise acts of Christian love - in the framework of the household family.[7] This idea has stimulated Church reform movements within the Protestant tradition through the centuries.

It is important to see, that the concept of the patriarchal household family was an idealization of the social reality. The main focus was the middle-class family of peasants, craftsmen or inhabitants of the cities (those who owned some property). No separate "Christian economy" was developed for the lower classes, which included many single women, or for the nobility. This may be interpreted as a blind spot in Christian middle-class ethics, but it also may be seen as a common ideal of a society, where extreme poverty and wealth had no place.

Steven Ozment once maintained, that the family of the 16th century was a nurturing institution, characterized by love, respect and mutual dependence among the members of the family. Perhaps this assertion sounds one-sided, given the number of specific legal restrictions and problematic social imbalances within pre-modern society. It is nevertheless remarkable, that a well-known historian could describe the family of the past in terms such as we would be happy to see realized today. This should encourage us to discuss more often themes such as human dignity with respect to their relationship to past reality, both in social and theological contexts.

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7 Cf. WA 19,75.3-8.

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Restoring autonomy. Symmetry and asymmetry in care relationships

ABSTRACT

In this article the complexity of a professional care relationship as a whole of symmetrical and asymmetrical, formal and informal dimensions, is presented. Its ethical simplicity, however, is safeguarded as long as the *telos* of a care relationship is seen as the restoration of the autonomy of the care receiver. Autonomy is interpreted as the capability of persons to develop their uniqueness throughout their life course. The undeniable asymmetry of the care relationship is an essential, but temporary moment in its dynamics. The dynamics of a care relationship corresponds to the heart of the Christian ethos: in the Christian narrative, the asymmetry of humiliation precedes the exaltation, understood as the restoration of human dignity as 'living upright'. The theological concept of exaltation can be interpreted as God's 'care for autonomy' in a ethics of care.

1. INTRODUCTION

The 'work on others', as François Dubet calls a professional care relationship[2], has become a confusing world. Global society develops in large parts of the world from a system of vertical, hierarchical communities toward networks of egalitarian relationships, where citizens according to democratic ideals are treated as equals. One does no longer become a good, healthy citizen by submitting oneself to a disciplinary regime and en insert oneself into a pre-existing, dominant discourse, but by elaborating a reflexive identity within a fast changing dialogical context. The process of socialization no longer takes place by outward collective discipline, but by stimulating an internal locus of control.

The institutional role played by care- and welfare institutions (churches included) has changed in like manner: from aristocratic charity organizations, taking pity on the poor, sick and helpless, they turned into societal enterprises, somewhere in between the private and public sphere. For them, mercy is a matter of offering services to clients. As a care worker, in representing your organization, you are a citizen in contact with a fellow citizen with a 'help-question'.

The care relationship is one among equals. But what kind of equality is implied? Does equality here only stands for a political fiction? Isn't care per definition a relationship of power and dependency, an exclusively asymmetrical relationship of a healthy relatively well-to-do person bending over often literally a victim of bad fate? Any effort to redefine the relationship of

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2 François Dubet, Le declin de l'institution, Paris 2002. I am defining care workers here as broad as possible as everyone who is more or less professionally involved in 'working-on-others', including health care, education, welfare, spiritual care, pastoral care and/or ministry.

care in terms of a service offered to autonomous clients collides with our fundamental intuition of how a care relationship starts: with the spontaneous benevolent action of one person, a one sided act of mercy.

'Workers-on-others' simultaneously move in and between different relational worlds, both symmetric and asymmetric. A professional web of relationships, however, is even more complex. It also has personal and impersonal dimensions, both formally and informally. A care relationship is personal, because it cannot start and be upheld without compassion and friendship. A care relationship without this informal person-to-person dimension would turn it into a facility machinery. But professional care has also formal dimensions, precisely because it is professional. There is authority implied in professional expertise, an acquired set of specialized knowledge and distinguished skills.

So professional care givers move simultaneously in and between the world of (1) their métier (2) their inner, personal world, and (3) the world of their organization and its political and social context. Three worlds which they have to keep together in their professional identity. The more or less coherent integrity they are able to obtain, in holding these worlds together, might be called their 'professionalism.' A heavy task, because conflicts and frictions between these three worlds regularly occur. In the course of a professional career, every worker develops his or her own personal *style*, in order to obtain an optimal integrity. One might even say: one's style *is* one's professionalism.

The care relationship is a complex interplay of different relationships, both formal and informal, and symmetric and asymmetric. I therefore speak of a *pragmatics of care,* as a practice including different kinds of agency.

2. THE ETHICAL DIMENSIONS IN THE RELATIONSHIP OF CARE

I would now like to explore the ethical dimensions of this complex – and often conflict ridden – interlocking of kinds of relationships within the encompassing care relationship a bit further.

First, there is the distinction between *symmetrical* and *asymmetrical* aspect of the relationship. Asymmetrical are those relationships where one outweighs the other. Because he or she owns more knowledge or discernment (the doctor and the patient, the mechanic and the driver, the teacher and the student), more experience (the older and the younger), more power (the king and his subjects), more vigour and mobility (the healthy compared to the ill patient). We may call these *vertical* relationships. Symmetrical are those relationships where both partners are equals in relation to the goal of their relationship. They are equal in function (colleagues), in love (partners), in dignity (human beings)), in rights and obligations (citizens), in opportunity of beating the other (sports). I call them here *horizontal* relationships.

One person bending oneself over to someone in mercy and compassion, without having to expect a quid pro quo in return. This still defines the *informal,* asymmetrical heart of care. There is no equality. The one is *agens,* the other *patiens.* The one is moved by mercy and is spontaneously assisting the other in his or her need. The Good Samaritan still represents the icon story of the care sector, how bureaucratized and rationalized it may seem. Without a care giver moved with inner compassion ('into his intestines', as Luke says literary in Greek) by another's fate, no 'care sector' will survive. However, I will show further on that the Samaritan story is only read half, if its initial asymmetry is not interpreted within its dramatic framework, aiming at the restoration of the victim's autonomy. Moreover, the informal asymmetry only represents one aspect of the professional care relationship. Professionals, managers, and clients also have a formal relationship with each other within an institutional setting. Institutions regulate and control impersonal relationships, in which people meet and work together anonymously.

Paul Ricoeur once distinguished between relationships to the neighbour and relationships with the other as socius.[3] Meeting a neighbour is a momentaneous event, without structure or history. No third persons are involved. Characteristic for socius relationships is, however, that they are mediated. They don't occur in the intimacy of a personal encounter but within societal frameworks. I meet the socius in his or her 'capacity as ….' (patient, physician, nurse, or: client and fellow-citizen). The neighbour is the one who I encounter unmediated, personally, 'face to face'. Characteristic for a modern professional of care is the conflict ridden combination of neighbour and socius dimensions within the one relationship of care. There is no good care without intimacy. At the same time institutional care is heavily directed towards evidence based control and efficiency. While care for one neighbour per definition without limits, care for a socius is limited by the care for a second (and third, fourth....) neighbour.

The care relationship has another formal, though asymmetrical aspect, defined by the craftsmanship of the care giver, and the dependency on it of the care receiver. His highly skilled medical expertise for example, gives the doctor a power position in the relationship. But this also applies for the hermeneutical and rhetorical skills of a pastor. He is a professional listener and interpreter, hearing what someone really said in (and sometimes despite) what he said.

Finally, there is also a informal, asymmetrical dimension in care relationships, visible especially in settings of welfare work or pastoral care. During a care trajectory a kind of intimacy can arise, that has the characteristic of a friendship relationship. Within the so called Dutch 'presentiebenadering' ('presence approach', Andries Baart), it is even claimed that any relationship of care cannot succeed if it is not based on the sustainable trust of a 'buddy' relationship with the client.[4]

The professional care relationship is a complex mixture of asymmetrical and symmetrical, formal and informal relations. My thesis – which I elaborated elsewhere[5] – is that every dimension in the care relationship has its specific moral register, framed in a specific type of discourse. Professionalism presupposes a simultaneous mastery of several moral languages.

3. AUTONOMY AS THE *TELOS* OF CARE RELATIONSHIPS

Does the complexity of the care relationships in the end only leads to a Babylonian confusion of tongues? It is my contention that it will not, as long as the inner telos of the care relationship is kept in view: the autonomy of the care-receiver. But let's be clear in our understanding of autonomy. With Paul Ricoeur I choose not to link the ideal of autonomy historically to European modernity, but anthropologically to the vulnerable vitality of the human condition as such. Autonomy is a quasi-universal shared value for humans, where and whenever they live. So I understand autonomy not as the independent freedom of a rational individual, but as the capability of persons to develop their uniqueness during their life course. Autonomy is the capability to flourish as a human.

What makes us human? The capability *to be able,* to perform something in the world, Ricoeur says. The power to speak, the power of agency, the power to persist in time, the power to be nobody else but me. According to Ricoeur the ontological characteristic par excellence of human beings is that they are *hommes capables,* capable humans.[6] As such they affirm life, and desire to live as vital as possible. With Spinoza one can say that every human being aims to persevere,

3 Paul Ricoeur, « Le Socius et le prochain ». In: idem, Histoire et Vérité. Paris 1955, 99-112.

4 Andries Baart, Een theorie van de presentie. Utrecht 2004. Idem, "Als een vriend… En wat dat mogelijk betekent", in: Tijdschrift voor Humanistiek, 5 (2004), no. 20, 44-62.

5 Cf. my In andermans handen. Over flow en grenzen in de zorg. Zoetermeer 2011.

6 Paul Ricoeur, Parcours de la reconnaissance, Paris 2004, 149-177.

arduously desires to continue to be. In this persistent longing for being able (conatus) humans are vulnerable and dependent on others from their beginnings. Their birth already is precarious, and also do they not have their dying to theirs disposal. Often they lack the power to speak, to act, to build up a personal identity, to estimate and respect themselves, to live on their own account. Either because these powers are denied by others, or by fate. For all these powers they have to rely on others.

Therefore, people *suffer,* as they are assaulted in their capabilities, their vital impetus to endure. They would want to be and do something that they cannot be or do anymore. Suffering includes more than the experience pain. Only people who have the capacity of being able, can suffer, can be hurt.[7] Those who suffer, are thrown back to themselves, whereas they would want to turn their attention to the world. They feel separated of others who do not understand them, who are not able to understand them nor help them, though they ache for community. They are no longer able to express in words and phrases what they feel, but can only resort to crying of screaming. They are condemned to passivity, in their bed or living room, or in a prison cell. Their life narrative is broken, they have lost its authorship. Eventually sufferers may lose their self esteem, and consider their life as sense- and worthless. Their ontological status as *homme capable* is reduced to zero. They are despising themselves. The destructivity of suffering shows how fundamental the 'capability of being able' is for human beings: suffering is the expression of human dignity, being violated.

In a similar manner, Karl Barth elaborates in *Church Dogmatics III, 4* on 'the will to live' as a divine command. 'Life demands, indeed God creates for it, respect even in its form of impulsive life'.[8] The 'will to be healthy' is an intrinsic part of this will to live. Barth defines health as the strength for human life. 'Health means capability, vigour and freedom. It is strength for human life. (…) If man may and should will to live then obviously he may and should also will to be healthy and therefore to be in the possession of this strength too.' Health is not a goal in itself, but allows people the capability ('Fähigkeit') to exercise the psychical and physical functions, required to be human.' Health is the strength to be as man. It serves human existence in the form of capacity, vitality and freedom to exercise the psychical and physical functions, just as these themselves are only functions of human existence.' [9] Who falls ill, is not necessary unhealthy, in the sense that the strength to be human lacks him or her. There has been an assault on the functions that support him or her in this capability, but the strength of being human may remain unbroken. An essential element in both health and spiritual care is to appeal to the patient's own 'will to be healthy'.[10] To someone who has to live permanently with limitations and handicaps, the will to live healthy means exploring ánd exploiting the strength to live fully with his or her limitations.

Autonomy as an ideal in a ethics of care should be connected to this primordial human strength, the will to live healthy, the exercise in daily praxis of the fundamental affirmation of life. Autonomy functions as the ethical horizon in care relationships: people are enabled, within the confinements of their context and situation, to develop their capability to be able to …., and be the person they choose to be, given their limitations. The economist and Nobel prize winner Amartya Sen – whose work Paul Ricoeur feels quite congenial to[11] – speaks of *capabilities,* understood as the ability (the free opportunity) to have capacities ('achieved

7 Paul Ricoeur, « La souffrance n' est pas la douleur ». Psychiatrie française, juni 1992. [http://www.fondsricoeur.fr/photo/la%20souffrance%20n%20est%20pas%20la%20douleur.pdf]

8 Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics, III, 4. The Doctrine of Creation, New York 1961, 346.

9 Idem 356v.

10 Idem, 358. Cf. H.- M. Rieger, "Gesundheit als Kraft zum Menschsein. Karl Barths Ausführungen zur Gesundheit als Anstoß für gesundheitstheoretische und medizinethische Überlegungen", in: Zeitschrift für Evangelische Ethik, 52 (2008), 183-199.

11 Paul Ricoeur, Parcours de la Reconnaissance, Paris 2004, 225vv.

functionings'). 'A person's "capability" refers to the alternative combinations of functionings that are feasible for her to achieve. Capability is thus a kind of freedom: the substantive *freedom to achieve* alternative function combinations (or, less formally put, the freedom to achieve various lifestyles.'[12] The main value in the ethics of care should not be the promotion of well being of happiness of care receivers, or meeting their preferences or wants, but more fundamentally, the *optimal restoration of their capability to lead the sort of life that, and be the person who they have reasons to value.*[13]

Even in those cases, when this autonomy is highly fictional and its horizon far away (for example in the care of severely mentally retarded or people suffering from dementia) autonomy as the capability of persons to develop their uniqueness[14] still functions as a beneficial fiction – or does it belong to the category of hope? – that guarantees the equality of care givers and care receivers and brings them into a permanent dialogue of care.

In Talk to her (*Hable con ella,* 2002) a movie made by the Spanish director Pedro Almodóvar, the lives of the male nurse Benigno and journalist/writer Marco cross when both take care of their partners in a hospital; two women, in a persistent coma after an accident. They get befriended. Whereas Marco in the hours preceding Lydia's accident (as a matador, she was crush by the horns of a bull) talked ceaselessly to her, he now sits silent at her bed, not being able to express a word to her. Benigno at the contrary, talks and talks to Alicia, a dancer in whom he, just before she was hit by a car while crossing the street, got obsessively interested and who he is now allowed to take care of as a nurse. 'Talk to her', Benigno says to Marco. 'Why should I? She can't hear me, her brains are dead and her coma is irreversible', he answers. 'Because you never know', Benigno replies, 'a miracle might happen'. Benigno communicates with Alicia quite naturally and normally – or should I say: humanly - by taking her within his 'fictional' horizon of autonomy. Whereas Marco, footing firmly in medical reality, is unable to approach Lydia as a living human. Between Benigno and Alicia there is still a human relationship, a web spun of hope and disappointment, promises and failure. She can count on him, as long as she cannot live up to her own accountability.

4. LIVING UPRIGHT AS THE *TELOS* OF CHRISTIAN ETHICS

I like to show how the ideal of autonomy understood as the individual capability to live a life on one's own amidst others, receives a powerful support from the inner core of Christian ethics as the power to live upright.

The Christian ethos and the Christian narrative are closely related.[15] The early Christians believed that the religious distance between God and man had been abolished in the way of the historical Jesus. Out of his love for humanity God renounces his divine status and humbles himself by becoming a human being. In Jesus the transcendent God lovingly and in a healing way approaches humanity in its transitoriness, misery, and guilt. But alongside the humiliation there is the exaltation. The actual human being Jesus, in whom God incarnates himself, partakes of the position and the power of God as the risen one.

The ethos follows the narrative in its *double movement of humiliation and exaltation.* Just like the love of God bridges the distance to lost humanity, in the actual behaviour of one person to

12 Amartya Sen, Development as Freedom, New York 1999, 75.

13 Idem, 63.

14 Or, if development is no longer possible, to preserve one's unique identity as long, and as intact as possible. Cf. Hilde Lindemann, "Holding One Another (Well, Wrongly, Clumsily) in a Time of Dementia". In: Metaphilosophy, Vol. 40 (2009), Nos. 3-4, 416-424.

15 For the following: cf. Gerd Theissen, Die Religion der ersten Christen, Gütersloh 2000.

another one's own personal and social boundaries are crossed. Charity is loving one's enemy (Mt 4.43ff.), the alien (Lk 10:25ff.), the sinner (Lk 7:36ff.).

The deepening and radicalization of this tendency to cross boundaries in the ethos of Christian charity can only be understood if the second fundamental early Christian value – humility (*humilitas*) – is included. "… whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. (Mk 10:43, 44 NIV; cf. 9.35, Mt 23:11)". In the ethos a switch of social position is in view which finds its divine example in the narrative. Those in high places are supposed to give up their status, those of lowly status receive authority.

A Christian revolution of values? Not that Christianity introduced new values that were unknown to pagan or Jewish morality. What is new, however, is the mix of values, in which charity is dissociated from its social connection to status and position and is tied to the virtue of humility.

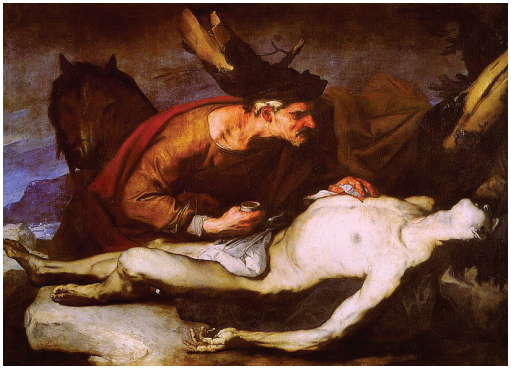
A double transfer of values takes place, in which the ethos follows the narrative. In the first place there is an 'upward transfer' of the simple morality of solidarity. The foundation of Christian charity is the 'natural' popular morality of being forgiving and being a good neighbour which was and is general practice among common folk a form of being 'neighbourly': the horizontal solidarity in which one neighbour helps another along. Already in Israel this morality of the common people was extended and radicalized by including the widow, the orphan, and the alien. Now Christianity is distinctive in that this ethic 'of underneath' is not restricted to the common people but is applied to everybody, regardless of social role or station. The mighty cannot claim exception to practicing 'charity' or 'solidarity' based on their political responsibility. This is the first value transfer: from the bottom up. Ethos follows the narrative: the humble is exalted.

Conversely – and in the second place – there is also a top-down transfer. The East and classical antiquity held to a 'top-down ethics' in which the social elite was supposed to contribute to the well being of its subjects. Aristocracy should have a benefactor's mentality. On their tombstones many Egyptian officials appeal to the fact that they clothed the naked and fed the hungry. What is characteristic for the early Christian ethos is that this aristocratic ethics of beneficence (a form of vertical solidarity, of philanthropy) gets democratized. It merges with horizontal charity, the ethics of reciprocity of the common people. A top-down transfer of values takes place. Here too ethos follows the narrative. After all, Christians believe they will reign with Christ. Even if they are humiliated, in God's eyes they are an aristocracy in heaven, seated at the right and left side of the Lord in his kingdom (cf. Mt. 20: 20; Acts 2:26f.; 3:21; 20:6, *symbasileia*). So one should behave in a manner worthy of royalty even now, even if one is a just an ordinary person. In this way the solidarity values of the upper and lower social strata are merged in early Christianity.

This Christian ethos can be summarized in one word: *mercy,* or compassion. Mercy goes back to the Latin *misericors,* the neologism Augustine introduced to the Christian world. Misericordia: the heart that opens itself to the misery of others.

The parable of the Good Samaritan. (Lk 10:25ff.) informed and shaped the Christian ethics of misericordia (mercy/compassion) throughout the ages in practices of care. The Samaritan is the neighbour, not based on his status and his social prestige, but solely based on his personal humility, by which he spontaneously interrupts his journey and takes care of the victim that has barely survived.

Images sometimes tell more than words. I shall show how in the iconography of the Good Samaritan the dramatic dynamics of the care relationships towards autonomy is illustrated. A moving example of drama is the painting of Giordano Luca Giordano (1685). It emphasizes the first, asymmetrical moment in this relationship of care. Oil and wine have become secondary over against the distraught appearance of the Samaritan's face, looking at the naked, white body



Giordano Luca Giordano

of the victim that dominates the painting right in front, across its full width and in full light. Not the face – invisible, tilted all the way back – but the naked vulnerable torso is turned toward the viewer. Human dignity seems to linger only one-sidedly in the Samaritan's regard of dismay: Does a heart still beat in that chest, or is it too late for help?

The painting that the Renaissance artist Jacopo Bassano (approx. 1570) devoted to the story, doesn't focus on the asymmetrical beginnings of, but on the reciprocity in the drama of dignity. The scene depicted here, however, is about restoring the victim's autonomy. The Samaritan places himself under his body and tries to *raise the victim.* Apparently the bending down in compassion is not an end in itself either, not a servile self-debasement out of subservience, but is aimed at 'resurrection'. Is not the Greek word for human being, *anthropos,* derived from *ana-trepein,* to lift up something, to raise high? The human being is the creature meant to move about with 'aufrechten Gang' (Immanuel Kant), to live upright, in a status erectus.[16]

Cannot we define human dignity in essence as: living upright?

The best known depiction of the good Samaritan is probably the canvas Vincent van Gogh (1853 – 1890) painted in the last year of his life in Saint-Rémy.

The representation is classical in the sense that here too it shows the Levite and the priest moving away. The opened and empty trunk points to the robbery that has taken place. But the representation is special, because any reference to an ethics from above, the philanthropy of the prominent, is absent here. The Samaritan is just a common man from the people, with his sleeves rolled up and wearing plain slippers on his feet. His horse is a mule, far from regally harnessed. This is more a depiction of popular neighbourliness, a horizontal care of one person for another, rather than the ethics of beneficence of the solid middle class citizen and administrator. Van Gogh is painting in a democratic century and clearly expresses his preference for and his proximity to the world of farmers and workers. Yet more can be seen than secular solidarity. Here too the Christian narrative – with which the evangelist Van Gogh was familiar as no other – strains

16 Klaas, Huizing, Der erlesene Mensch. Eine literarische Anthropologie. Freiburg 2000, 214.

the ethos. When one person really comes to the aid of another person, not only aristocracy (the person helping from above), but also democracy (the person that helps as an equal) becomes unbalanced. Just like with Bassano the asymmetry of assistance is turned upside down. Those in high places and the humble trade places. As he tries to help him onto the horse, the traveller having pity is located underneath the victim. The former almost succumbs under the latter's heavy physical weight. The image is teeming with exertion. The emphasis is on the enormous strain that the Samaritan is under in order to lift the wounded man onto the mule. The victim clumsily holds on to him. His stocky and awkward half-naked body doesn't express beauty, or tender vulnerability like in the art of the Renaissance or Baroque, but merely dependence. The Samaritans' only aim is to lift the victim upright again.

Apparently Van Gogh sees an exalted person in the humbled one. Someone, being able and wanting to live upright. However, in his depiction of this Christian change of position he does not – like Bassano – refer to Jesus' crucifixion, but to his entry into Jerusalem (Luc. 19, 29-48). The wounded man is helped unto a mule. An allusion to Jesus' 'triumphal entry' in Jerusalem, sitting upright, like a king on his horse. Jesus, *homme capable,* therefore capable of suffering.

5. CONCLUSION

1. A care relationship is a complex whole of symmetrical and asymmetrical, formal and informal dimensions, each one with a specific ethical discourse.
2. The *telos* of a care relationships is restoring and guaranteeing the autonomy of the care receiver. Autonomy should be interpreted as the capability of persons to develop their uniqueness during their life course.
3. The undeniable asymmetry of the care relationship is an essential, but temporary moment in its dynamics, directed towards the restoration of autonomy.
4. This corresponds to the heart of the Christian ethos: in the Christian narrative, the asymmetry of humiliation precedes the asymmetry of the exaltation, to be understood as the restoration of human dignity as 'living upright'. The theological concept of exaltation can be interpreted as God's 'care for autonomy' in an ethic of care.

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Riglyne vir die persklaarmaak van die NGTT
Guidelines for the preparation of articles for the NGTT

U word vriendelik versoek om artikels aan te bied volgens die volgende riglyne. Artikels wat nie hieraan voldoen nie, sal ongelukkig teruggestuur word.
We cordially request that you submit articles according to the following guidelines. Articles that do not apply to these guidelines, must unfortunately be returned.

1. ALGEMEEN
1. GENERAL

1.1 Alle artikels moet in **drievoud** aangebied word sodat minstens twee kopieë beskikbaar is om aan keurders te stuur. / *All articles must be submitted in triplicate, so that at least two copies are available to be sent to referees.*
1.2 Alle artikels moet van 'n "abstract" in Engels van ongeveer 150 woorde voorsien wees. In die geval van 'n Afrikaanse artikel, moet die "abstract" ook van 'n Engelse titel voorsien word. / *All articles must have an English abstract of approximately 150 words. In the case of an Afrikaans article, the abstract must also have an English title.*
1.3 Die naam van die outeur mag slegs op een van die drie kopieë verskyn. Alle verwysings in voetnotas wat die outeur kan identifiseer, soos die aanduiding van waar die referaat gelewer is, mag slegs op die eerste kopie verskyn. / *The name of the author must appear on only one of the three copies. All references that could identify the author, such as an indication where the paper was read, may also appear only on the first copy.*
1.4 Geen CD moet aanvanklik saamgestuur word nie. / *No CD need to accompany the initial submission of the article.*
1.5 Ná die aanvanklike keuring van 'n artikel sal dit, indien nodig, met kommentaar na die outeur teruggestuur word, wat dan alle verbeteringe moet aanbring en die artikel weer in tweevoud moet aanbied. / *After the initial selection of an article, it will, if necessary, be returned to the author who will then implement all alterations. Thereafter, the article must be submitted in duplicate.*
1.5.1 'n CD van die verbeterde stuk moet nou ook die twee kopieë vergesel. Slegs die volgende rekenaarprogramme is aanvaarbaar: Microsoft WORD. */ A disk or CD of the final product must now be included with the two copies. Only the following computer programs are acceptable:* Microsoft WORD.
Meld asseblief op die plakker van die CD u eie naam, die naam van die artikel, van die legger (naam waaronder die artikel op die CD verskyn) en watter program u gebruik het. */ Please write your own name, the title of the article and that of the document (the code of the article on the CD) and which program was used, on the CD label.*
1.6 Die redaksie behou hulle egter die reg voor om ook die verbeterde kopie weer aan keurders voor te lê indien hulle dit nodig ag, en dit selfs 'n tweede keer terug te stuur na die outeur. / *The editorial staff retain the right to again submit the improved copy to the referees, should they deem this necessary, and even return it once more to the author.*
1.7 Indien die artikel ná die eerste keuring aanvaar word, sal die redaksiesekretaris die outeur versoek om ook die CD aan te stuur./*Should the article be accepted after the first selection, then the editorial secretary will require the author to submit the CD.*
1.8 Daar word van alle outeurs verwag dat alle bydraes taalkundig goed versorg en finaal geredigeer sal wees. Indien daar ooglopende taal-, spel- en tikfoute is, sal dit teruggestuur word vir verbetering. (Weens die hoë drukkoste van die tyskrif kan die redaksie nie administratiewe

hulp hiervoor inkoop nie. As artikels vol foute verskyn, sal die akademiese standaard van die tydskrif verlaag word.) / *All contributions must be linguistically correct and be edited. Should there be conspicuous linguistic, spelling and typing errors, the article will be returned for correction. (As a result of the high printing cost of the journal, the editorial staff cannot afford special administration costs in this respect. And should articles teeming with mistakes be published, the academic standard of the journal will deteriorate.)*

2. DIE OPSKRIF BO DIE ARTIKEL
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Gebruik asseblief 'n eksemplaar van die *NGTT* as voorbeeld en gebruik dieselfde lettertipes. Die skrywer se naam kom boaan, gevolg deur die instansie waaraan hy of sy verbonde is (gewone hoof- en kleinletters). Op 'n volgende reël volg die titel van die artikel (in vetdruk: hoof- en kleinletters). / *Please refer to an edition of the NGTT as an example and use the same font. The author's name appears first, followed by the institution with which he/she is associated (in normal upper and lower case). On the next line the title of the article appears in bold, upper and lower case.*

3. DIE ARTIKEL SELF
3. THE ARTICLE ITSELF

3.1 Artikels moet breë kantlyne hê, in dubbelspasiëring en net aan die een kant van die blad getik wees. Artikels moet verkieslik nie langer as 5 200 woorde wees nie (sien punt 4 oor BLADGELD). Die eerste reël van 'n paragraaf na 'n hofie, tabel of blok (van bv 'n aanhaling van 4 or meer reëls of 'n lys met nommers of "bullets") word nie ingekeep nie, maar wel alle ander gewone paragrawe. Geen reëlspasie tussen paragrawe nie. / *Articles must have broad margins, be typed in double spacing on one side of the page only. Articles should preferably not be longer than 5 200 words (see par 4 on PUBLICATION FEES). The first line of each paragraph after a title, table or block (of eg a quotation of 4 or more lines, or a list with numbes or bullets) is not indented like normal paragraphs. No line spaces between paragraphs.*
3.2 Wanneer van hofies gebruik gemaak word, moet die belangrikste hofie getik word in gewone HOOFLETTERS, die tweede hofie in vetdruk in hoof- en kleinletters, en die derde hofie in kursief in hoof- en kleinletters. Voor alle hofies en slegs na 'n HOOFLETTERHOFIE kom 'n spasie van een reël. / *Main headings of sections of the article must be typed in CAPITAL LETTERS, the second heading in bold (upper and lower case), and the third heading in italics (upper and lower case). Before all headings and only after a heading in CAPITAL LETTERS a space of one line must be inserted.*
3.3 Indien van voetnotas gebruik gemaak word, moet dit korrek genommer wees en verkieslik onderaan die bladsy geplaas word. / *Should footnotes be used, they shouldt be numbered correctly and, preferably, at the foot of the page.*
3.4 Afkortings kan in die voetnotas gebruik word (sonder punte), maar liefs nie in die artikel self nie. Afkortings mag wel in die artikel tussen hakies gebruik word. / *Abbreviations may be used in footnotes and in parentheses, but preferably not in the text of the article.*
3.5 Daar moet van die Harvard-verwysingstelsel gebruik gemaak word. / *The Harvard reference system must be applied.*
3.6 Die bibliografie aan die end moet volledig wees, maar slegs bronne bevat waarna in die artikel verwys word. / *The bibliography at the end of the article must be complete, but must contain only the sources referred to in the article.*

3.7 Alle Hebreeuse en Griekse woorde moet in getranskribeerde vorm weergegee word, behalwe as die outeur self met die uitgewer kan ooreenkom oor 'n "font" wat vir die drukker aanvaarbaar is. / *All Hebrew and Greek words must appear in transcribed form, unless the author has arranged with the publisher on a font acceptable to the printer.*
3.8 Aanhalings uit die Bybel word nie deur die redakteur gekontroleer nie en is die verantwoordelikheid van die outeur self. / *Quotations from the Bible will not be checked by the editor. These are the author's responsibility.*
3.9 Wenk: Skrywers word verwys na Jansie Killian se riglyne (Form and style in theological texts: A guide for the use of the Harvard reference system. Pretoria: University of South Africa) ingeval van probleme met formatering, ensovoorts. / *Suggestion: In case of problems with formatting, etcetera, authors can refer to Jansie Killian's guidelines (Form and style in theological texts: A guide for the use of the Harvard reference system. Pretoria: University of South Africa).*
3.9 Trefwoorde: Elke skrywer moet aan die einde van sy/haar artikel drie tot vyf trefwoorde voorsien. Skrywers moet asseblief kyk na die thesaurus van Religions Index ten opsigte van die standaardlys van trefwoorde. / *Key Words: Authors must provide three to five key words at the end of his/her article. Authors must please look at the thesaurus of Religions Index with regard to the standard list of key words.*

4. BLADGELDE
4. PUBLISHING FEES

4.1 Die huidige (2010) bladgeld vir publikasies in die tydskrif is R150 per bladsy ./ *The current (2004) publishing fees for publications in our journal is R150 per page.*
4.2 Bladgeld word gevra vir die aantal gedrukte bladsye in die tydskrif. / *These publishing fees are charged for the number of printed pages in the journal.*

Riglyne vir keurders
Guidelines for referees

Lewer asseblief u kommentaar aan die hand van die volgende vrae.
Please provide your comments in respect of the following questions:

Opskrif of titel van die artikel (vul dit ook asseblief hier in):
Title of article (kindly repeat it here):

Voldoen die artikel aan die vereistes, ook wat taalkundige versorging betref, wat in die riglyne gestel word? Dui asseblief taal-, spel- en tikfoute aan.
Does the article meet the requirements, also in respect of the linguistics?

Lewer die artikel bewys van deeglike navorsing en bekendheid met die jongste debat en literatuur op die vakgebied?
Do you deem the article to be proof of thorough research and knowledge of the most recent debates and literature in this field of study?

Reflekteer die artikel 'n goeie wetenskaplike standaard van argumentering?
Does the article reflect a good scientific standard of reasoning?

Lewer die artikel 'n wesenlike bydrae tot die spesifieke vakgebied?
Does the article make a fundamental contribution to the specific field of study?

Wat is u mening oor die teologiese gehalte van die artikel?
What is your opinion of the theological quality of the article?

Wat is die wenslikheid van plasing in die NGTT?
What is the desirability of this article being published in the NGTT?

Onveranderd?
Without alterations?

Met die volgende wysigings:
With the following alterations:

Liewer nie:
Preferably not:

Enige ander aanbeveling(s)?
Any other recommendation(s)

Naam en adres van keurder:
Name and address of referee:
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Your name and address will not be divulged to the writer.)

U word vriendelik versoek om u verslag in tweevoud aan die NGTT te stuur. Op die een kopie moet u naam ontbreek sodat dit net so aan die outeur gestuur kan word.
Please send your report in duplicate to the NGTT. On the one copy, which will be sent to the author, your name must not appear.