

**THE ROLE OF AFRICAN THEOLOGY AND SPIRITUALITY IN BEREAVEMENT**

**AMONG XHOSA CHILDREN**

**BY**

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## **DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that this Doctoral thesis is the product of my own work. I further declare that no part of this thesis has previously been submitted to, or is to be submitted to any other University for degree purposes except the one for which I am a candidate (University of Fort hare).

Signed -----

Place -----

Date -----

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH BACKGROUND

#### 1.1 Introduction

This chapter serves as an introduction to all sections in the relevant aspects of this study. It covers the following aspects: research background, preliminary literature review, research problem statement, research questions, aims and objectives of the envisaged research, theoretical framework of the study, research methodology, research design, significance of the study, limitations of the study, ethical considerations, intellectual property, definition of terms and the envisaged structure of the research project. Lastly, this chapter also serves as a preamble to the whole research process. The chapter therefore lays a foundation for this particular study.

#### 1.2 Research background

Commenting on research background Mouton (2005:27) mentions critical aspects in this regard. The author concedes that “A first obvious source of ideas is your own experience and reflections about things around you.” The author further affirms that “People who are more aware of what is going on around them, who are more sensitive to their surroundings, are more likely to come up with interesting topics for research.” (2005:27). The researcher concurs with the author in this regard. This connects well with the researcher’s motivation for this study, as indicated in the following detailed section of the background to the study.

The study has been motivated, first of all, by the researcher’s involvement in the church where he has interacted with both Sunday school children and the church youth in a *Xhosa* environment. The researcher has learned that there is no theological guidance and support for young children during bereavement. Many people are of the opinion that children do not grieve and are immune to suffering. Even though this is not in a theological context, the researcher is not immune to visions of September 11 (2001) in the United States of America. Some children saw their parent leaving for work, but that was the last time they saw them. One cannot but think of the shock and grief that overwhelmed those children. In our own context, HIV and AIDS and many other related diseases add to child grief, besides the impact of many road accidents. Many children are affected by these deaths, and grief becomes part of their lives. There are other two tragic incidents that the author wishes to share that cannot

be overlooked. These are: the collapse of the so-called Church hostel building in Lagos which claimed the lives of eighty (80) South Africans, and the *Marikana* saga which claimed the lives of thirty-four (34) people and left seventy-eight (78) seriously wounded Alexander et al., (2012). There is no doubt that some of the people who died in these tragic incidents were parents. Once again, this challenges us to think about the impact of these incidents and the grief and pain that crippled bereaved young children.

It has been the researcher's observation for some time that the focus is always on the elderly when there is death in the family (in the *Xhosa* context and probably in other contexts as well). The only therapy that is given which includes children is always in the form of sermons and prayers. It must be noted that in most cases, these are conducted by lay preachers who are not even trained therapists, but they provide this assistance out of empathy. Whatever is often communicated during devotions is usually above the children's level of understanding. The type of language used may not be clear and well understood by bereaved children. An example of this is that of expressions such as *tutwini*, *akuhlanga lungehliyo*, *imela igobebe esandleni*, *ibingu Thixo obenikile ikwanguye nothabathileyo*, *sisidla ubomi nje sikwasekufeni*.

There is no doubt these are good and meaningful expressions. However, these need to be explained to young children as priests continue to preach. These expressions mean: death is always in our midst, and we can never avoid it. God gives and takes life. However, these need to be explained to children as it is mostly assumed that children understand these expressions. The researcher believes that something should be done for bereaved children in this regard. Theological support and comfort is needed in the form of African Theology and Spirituality.

The total number of the children involved in this study is seventy (70). These are the children who have been identified in the four congregations of the Free Church in Southern Africa. These congregations form the research context of this project, which is the religious community. Some of the reasons that warrant children to be taken care of during bereavement are highlighted by different scholars in the section below.

Oaklander (1994b, 1997) in Blom (2006:151) concedes that "Children blame themselves for the trauma in their lives despite the amount of support they receive from their therapists or parents." The author goes on to state that "Although the trauma that they are exposed to is not

their fault, it often seems to become an introjection in their life.” The author further emphasizes the fact that “Children younger than eight years are egocentric and, therefore, do not have skills to understand that they are not responsible for the bad things that happened to them.” It is further argued that “The emotions they experience when blaming themselves can contribute to fragmentation of the self.” The writer also takes note of what is expressed by Worden (1996) cited in Jackson (2007:20) that “By age five, most children can understand that death is irreversible and universal...” A comment is also made that “In the absence of an explanation of the facts of death, children may fail to understand what death is and may fantasize about it in the absence of an explanation.” With regard to child self-blame during crises, Sweeney (2001:183) concurs and argues that “Self-blame is a common characteristic for children who have been traumatized.” The author further argues that “When children experience victimizing or traumatizing circumstances, their inherent egocentrism leads them to believe that they are to blame.” It is also conceded that “Young children simply tend to believe that the sun rises and sets because of them, so when trauma occurs, they instinctively think that they are the cause.” The author concludes by asserting that “It becomes crucial, therefore, that children believe that the traumatic event is not their fault.” According to the researcher, this would mean that during bereavement, children need to be taken care of in terms of therapy. This is where theological guidance comes in as a means of support for them. *Xhosa* children are not any exception to this phenomenon.

The area of research for this study is *Idutywa* where the Free Church in Southern Africa has four congregations. These congregations form the *Ngcingwane* district, named after the village in which one of the congregations is situated. The congregations in question fall under the jurisdiction of the Northern Presbytery. The names of these congregations are mentioned under the sampling procedure section. This section discussed the research background of the study; the next section will offer literature survey on the subject.

### **1.3 Preliminary literature review**

Mouton (2005:90) advises the way in which literature review should be approached. The author presents four (4) key aspects in this regard and are listed hereunder:

- Literature review should be exhaustive in its coverage of the main aspects of the study.
- It should be fair in its treatment of the authors.

- A good literature review should be well organised.
- It must not be confined to internet sources.

The researcher deems these aspects as critical in this regard. This section is therefore shaped by these key aspects.

Taking care of young grieving children is an important aspect in the journey of life. Different scholars have taken time to address this critical subject in different cultural contexts. Their writings are explored in this preliminary literature survey section. However, an extensive literature survey section is presented in Chapter two of this research project. Goldman, in the online article *Children and grief* (accessed 18 September 2014), addresses issues pertaining to grief experienced by children. The author emphasizes that “Children can grieve as much as adults do.” Goldman further emphasizes that “Children can be affected deeply by issues such as sudden death and traumatic death.” The researcher believes that the end result is to bring healing and hope to children who are affected by grief. Louw’s work becomes helpful in such a situation, especially when he deals with the theology of life and healing. The author advocates that “Without the necessary equipment and preparation, illness can be experienced as an unbearable burden.” Louw also deals with the application of Pastoral care to hospitalized and dying children and particularly on the importance of applying theological guidance in the African context Louw (2008). One notes the contribution made by Naughton, Hughes and Smith (2007) in exploring the concept of children's rights. In their article, they argue that “Children are rarely regarded as citizens with a right to participate in civic life, let alone in matters of bereavement.” The concern is raised that adults generally develop laws, policies and practices and expect children to conform without considering their rights and needs. The article also reflects on the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989). In this Convention, it is argued that “Children have the right to relax and play and to take part in a wide range of cultural, artistic and other recreational activities.” The researcher strongly believes that children have a right to spiritual support and care when they experience crises such as sickness and bereavement.

Hadley (2007) interacted with hurting children “Children with cancer, children who had lost limbs and children who never had a visit from their parent surrounded the author.” Furthermore, there was a lack of spiritual support for these children. In her use of the theory for Pastoral care for children, the author explores the history, theology and biblical literature that directly speak of children. She examines sources that are primarily written about adults

which might be applied to children. Her point of departure is based on the theology of the wounded; this addresses the healing of children who are wounded and saturated in pain and strife. She concurs with writers who affirm that children are naturally spiritual beings and that they deserve the care of the community of faith, and refers to Witvliet (1999) in Hadley (2007) as one who “Creates a theology of the child as spiritual leader in the church based on biblical foundations.”

Nuckels (2013) concedes that “When grief is not addressed, acknowledged and expressed, it causes one to live in the shadows of the ghosts of grief.” This refers to grief that is “Disenfranchised or condoned.” He also uses the term `carried grief` to describe “Unacknowledged and unmourned grief.” Nuckels believes that when one experiences loss but does not mourn or acknowledge the normal and necessary process, this results in feelings of grief which a person carries forward into his/her future. This means that there is an ongoing hampering of the ability to live life with meaning and purpose on the part of such a person; in this regard, children are also affected. Here, the author also makes the point that “Children are aware of and familiar with the concept of death.” Speaking from his own context, the author is of the view that children from farms have experienced death of farm animals as well as death of members of their extended families. However, referring to his American culture, the author is convinced that “Children tend to be insulated from the pain of the grief process as well as religious activities, privacy, protection and autonomy” (2013).

Lungu (1994) cited in Ngombane (2013) identifies Pastoral therapy as a therapy that “Creates communion with God and fellow believers, including their children.” Lungu (1982) cited in Ngombane (2013) also defines Christians as “People who accept the resurrection of Christ.” The author further emphasizes “The continuity of a relationship between the living and the departed by being in Christ.” The importance of having fellowship with God is encouraged by Ngombane, who is of the view that “God heals even in our lifetime; it is not something of the past.” It is also stressed that “God heals those who believe.” The author also stresses that “Children are also part of the community of God and need to be healed as well” (2013).

The different scholars whose works have been read by the researcher have dealt with the issue of taking care of children from different perspectives. Some have looked into the question of spiritual support for sick and dying children. Others have dealt with the application of theological guidance for grieving children. This whole process indicates to the researcher that there are people who think positively about children and are concerned for

their welfare. Furthermore, it has become clear that the issue of children and grief is of great concern across the cultural spectrum. The researcher also notes that scholars have used different theories, as indicated hereunder.

Hadley (2007) has based her argument on Blessing-based Spiritual Nurture principles to create a Pastoral care theory to be used with children and teens in crisis.

Nuckels (2013) has based his argument and relied heavily on the writings of Carl Savage and William Presnell in Narrative Research Ministry.

Ngombane (2013) has used Van Wyk (1995) in the communicative and operational science theory in equipping people for the gospel ministry.

Louw has always based his discourses in all matters of Pastoral care and theological guidance on hermeneutical theory, as stated in one of his works (2004). The researcher has found these scholarly works highly informative and generally therapeutic in their approach although in the case of Ngombane (2013), the focus is more on general narrative therapy and very little is said about children. Hadley (2007), on the other hand, has a spiritually orientated approach rather than a therapeutic approach towards children in grief.

Having looked into all the scholarly works by different scholars, the researcher identified a gap. Some scholars are writing from the perspective of the Western culture, particularly Hadley (2007) and Nuckels (2013). None of these scholarly works addresses the issue of grieving children based on the concepts of African theology and African spirituality. In this section, the researcher spent time on the preliminary literature review section. In the following section, the focus is on the presentation of the research problem statement of this study. This, as it were, is setting the scene for the study.

#### **1.4 Research problem statement**

In explaining a problem statement, Steinberg (2004:5) cited in Jackson (2007:6) referred to it as “A search for a general area of interest that has a professional meaning.” On the other hand, Vithal and Jansen (2006:13) cited in Jackson (2007:3) concede that “The significance of any study is its contribution to improve practice, informing policy or enriching the knowledge base of the topic being investigated.” Mouton (2005:48) advises as follows with regards to the research problem statement: “The statement of the research problem should be

a clear and unambiguous statement of the object of study (the unit of analysis) and the research objectives.”

According to the researcher, these authors do not contradict each other. The outlined deductions in this context contribute to the importance of the research problem statement. The research problem statement is thus a road map for the research at hand. In this statement, the problem is identified. The aim to address the problem is also made clear; in other words, the research problem statement shows clearly what the researcher intends to research. The research process is thus an academic attempt to resolve the identified problem. In this same process, the researcher also believes that there must be cohesion between the problem statement and the research topic. This means that the research problem statement shows why there is a need to investigate the research topic. Hereunder, the research problem statement for this particular project is presented:

In the grieving process of *Xhosa*-speaking people, there is a tendency to overlook the way children feel during bereavement. This, no doubt, causes them to miss out on theological guidance and reflection. It is usually assumed that they are too young to understand the bereavement process. It is further believed that they are too young to be 'bothered' with in-depth details regarding death. This research sought to explore the impact of bereavement on young *Xhosa* children and the need for theological guidance through African theology and African spirituality. In this section, the researcher presented the research problem statement; in the following section, the researcher will then spend time on presenting research questions of this particular study.

### **1.5 Research questions**

- What is the impact of *Xhosa*/African culture on processes of bereavement for young children in this studied community?
- How does cultural definition affect children in bereavement?
- How can African theology influence interface?

Since the researcher presented research questions in this section, the following section presents research aims and objectives of the study.

## **1.6 Research aims and objectives**

The research aims and objectives are as follows:

- To raise the awareness of the importance of the inclusion of young *Xhosa* children in the process of grieving and mourning.
- To positively impact the lives of young grieving *Xhosa* children by means of theological guidance.
- To introduce specific recommendations for the inclusion of young *Xhosa* children in the grieving and mourning process.
- To make a valuable contribution to the field of theology at large.

Stressing the importance of caring for young children, Randy Stone Hill's poem in Sweeney (2001:5) reads: "As we observe children through our television screens, they seem so distant and unreal, but they bleed like we bleed and feel what we feel." One, therefore, takes it upon oneself, through these research objectives, to aim at saving and healing grieving children. This section presented research aims and objectives of this study; the following section zooms into the theoretical framework of this particular study. This is presentation of the theories that inform this study.

## **1.7 Theoretical framework**

The study was based on the Liberative Theory derived from Clinebell (1984:40-43), where the author proposes five steps: "Healing, Sustaining, Guiding, Reconciling, and Nurturing."

- i. Healing: This focuses on spiritual healing, marriage counselling and therapy;
- ii. Sustaining: Issues such as preserving, consoling and consolidating are dealt with;
- iii. Guiding: This entails giving advice and listening;
- iv. Reconciling: Areas such as confession, forgiveness and disciplining are covered; and

- v. Nurturing: This covers training for new members in the Christian life and religious education.

The researcher is convinced that all five steps presented by the author are applicable to young grieving children. The main aim of applying theological guidance to young children during bereavement is to bring healing to them since they need to be healed from their trauma of bereavement and loss. The author also speaks of sustaining since sustaining covers consoling and is relevant for grieving children. They need to be consoled during the time of their bereavement by applying theological guidance in the form of African theology and African spirituality. The researcher also notes the relevance of guidance as it translates into giving advice and listening. Grieving children need to be advised and listened to during their loss and bereavement. In terms of reconciliation, they need to be reconciled both to themselves and to God the Almighty. Young children easily blame themselves when there is a crisis in their homes; hence they need to be reconciled to themselves first. They also need nurturing so that they can grow out of their crises of bereavement and be able to stand on their own.

The researcher believes that the Five steps of the Liberative Theory can be linked to the Three main dimensions of liberation theology, as advocated by Gustavo (1970:6-22): Firstly, liberation theology involves “Political and social liberation, the elimination of the immediate causes of poverty and injustice”; Secondly, it involves “The emancipation of the poor, the marginalized, the downtrodden and the oppressed from things that limit their capacity to develop themselves freely and in dignity”; Thirdly, liberation theology “Involves liberation from selfishness and sin and endorses re-establishment of a relationship with God and with other people.” In the light of these dimensions, the researcher strongly believes that, first and foremost, young grieving *Xhosa* children must be liberated from their exclusion in the grieving and mourning cultural processes and by the religious community at large. The minds of those who do not believe that young children need theological guidance during bereavement also need to be liberated. The reason for employing liberation theology is that it can also liberate such people in terms of their thinking and further change their approach towards life and see things differently. It is also embedded in the methodological approach of this study, its application is to liberate *Xhosa* children from their exclusion.

Louw (2008:563) advocates for several approaches with regard to theological guidance for people who are grieving. These approaches connect well with the steps mentioned by Clinebell (1984:40-43). These steps are, therefore, presented as follows:

- i. Provide structures by means of rituals and symbols. These structures are for the expression of emotions in the severance of the bonding experience to stimulate the process of parting and detachment. This process implies increasing the reality of the experienced loss;
- ii. Act as an interpreter between the pain of the griever and God`s compassion; the Pastor must be a good listener to the stories of pain and loss;
- iii. Facilitate the process and phases of grief, i.e. help the mourner to deal with both expressed and latent effects;
- iv. Provide support in making of choices for the future. This also includes the process of orientation to the reality of the loss. The mourner is helped to realize that the loss is real. The Pastor, therefore, should support the mourner to overcome various impediments. This should include readjustment after the loss wherein the bereaved is encouraged to take leave of the deceased and feel comfortable about reinvesting in life;
- v. Render support by means of practical tasks of service and assistance and advise people not to make important choices during the phase of confusion and shock. Later on, people must be encouraged to deal with life once again and make choices about readjusting. In the case of the child/children. The remaining parent or guardian must not make choices and changes during the stage of confusion for the child, i.e. changing of schools. These changes will affect the child negatively. Children also need time to adjust in life after they have experienced loss;
- vi. Mediate hope by means of organic use of scripture, i.e. a periscope of scripture which applies to the needs of the griever must be within the context of the griever`s specific phase at the time; and

- vii. Encourage communication with the deceased via a consciousness of the reality of the resurrection. The same quality of life which the deceased believer already shares in Christ belongs to the still living. This can happen when there is corporate fellowship with Christ. (2008:563).

These approaches by Louw are important. They expand and build on the steps presented by Clinebell (1984) as well as the liberation theological approach by Gustavo (1970). The Pastor, or any other person who seeks to apply theological guidance to children during bereavement, should embark on these approaches and contextualize them according to the needs of grieving children during their loss. Commenting on the importance of theological guidance, Louw clearly affirms that:

“The overall goal of theological guidance is to help the survivor to complete the unfinished business with the deceased.” The author further asserts that “The survivor must be able to take leave of the deceased and must readjust to life.” In this regard it is also advised that “The creation of the Pastoral growth groups within which griever can verbalize their grief is one of the most important therapeutic goals.” The author concludes by affirming that “Grief is healed where love displays understanding ... where faith learns to trust” (2008:563).

It is critical to align all these approaches to the imperatives of African theology and Spirituality. This means that this whole discourse must be communicated to grieving children by means of African theology and Spirituality. *Xhosa* children, in particular, must be helped to verbalize their grief in this regard. This must be followed by nurturing and healing of their wounded souls. The caregiver needs to understand the language of the children, which is play therapy. Commenting on the importance of play therapy for children, Sweeney (2001:17) emphasizes that “Children do communicate through play whether or not adults can interpret or understand the play”.

Louw (2004:392-398) concedes that “Intense pain creates the impression that God is absent.” Based on Louw’s comments, one can conclude that theological guidance through African theology and Spirituality Reveals God’s role in suffering. When the child grieves, theological guidance confirms God’s presence with the child. God is the ultimate comforter of the child through theological guidance rendered by the caregiver. In this section, the researcher dealt

with theories that inform this particular study; the following section focuses on the presentation of the research methodology of this study. This discusses the manner in which this study was conducted.

### **1.8 Research methodology**

When defining research methodology, Wisker (2008:4) in *Ncube* (2015:6) advocates that “Methodology can be defined as the rationale and philosophical assumption underlying a particular study, rather than a collection of methods.” The researcher takes note of this definition and acknowledges it, but the only thing that can pose a challenge in this definition is that there is reference to assumptions. The researcher believes that any good and legitimate research should not be based on assumptions. Research, without taking away anything from this definition, should be based on proven facts. The researcher rather concurs with definition of methodology by De Vos et al. (2005:159) in Jackson (2007:6) who concedes that “The term methodology embraces the rules and procedures applicable to a specific research project.” The author further argues that “This justifies the chosen way by demonstrating its validity and reliability.” In this same context, Collins et al. (2000:11) argues as follows: “The selection and implementation of a suitable research method ensures that researchers work independently of external influence or personal position.” The author further affirms that “This is in order to arrive at a conclusion based on demonstrable and measurable evidence.” The researcher believes that this definition is useful for the research at hand. This approach, thus, helped the researcher in arriving at informed and justifiable conclusions and complemented the data collection process through validity and reliability.

The researcher conducted a literature study with regard to concepts pertaining to theological reflection and guidance during bereavement. A critical evaluation of these sources and possible recommendations was formulated. The method was as follows: the researcher quoted each source with regard to theological guidance and reflection in connection with grieving children. The researcher then evaluated each source individually. The researcher further employed both qualitative and quantitative approaches. In a qualitative approach, one sought to establish the essence of making an impact that will contribute constructively. Such contribution is aimed at building the lives of bereaved *Xhosa* children in this study. In a quantitative approach, the researcher sought to measure the size and the extent of the intended contribution in terms of statistics. In other words, quantitative approach stood out as a measuring tool of the research. These two approaches, qualitative and quantitative,

complemented each other in this research project. The following steps were considered and followed:

### **1.8.1 Population**

Information for this research project was obtained from authentic and published sources which provided evidence on the challenge of bereaved children. The process included interviews which were conducted with remaining parents or guardians of children who have experienced bereavement.

### **1.8.2 Process**

The information collected from different sources was processed and populated throughout the study. The chapters that formed a large part of this research projected the means through which information was processed and populated.

### **1.8.3 Research instrument**

A questionnaire was used as a research instrument in order to obtain the necessary information for the research project. The context of the affected children, including their different backgrounds, was taken into consideration in designing a questionnaire. The design of the questionnaire is a parent reported questionnaire (remaining parents or guardians answering questions on behalf of the children) since it is not easy to get information from children in an interview; they can be reasonably shy in most cases. Secondly, the researcher wanted to try by all means not to make children feel confronted and intimidated in the process. Thirdly, this approach made the remaining parents and guardians to be involved in their children's traumatic life of bereavement. This then further triggered zeal and a desire on their part to play a supportive role for their bereaved children.

### **1.9 Research design**

With regards to research design, Mouton (2005) contributes that "It focuses on the end product". The author further explicates that "It also takes into account the kind of result that it is aimed at." It is further affirmed that "The logic of the research is also taken into consideration. This is about the kind of evidence required to address the research questions adequately" (2005). In order to obtain both qualitative and quantitative data, a survey research approach was embarked on. To obtain quantitative data, a questionnaire and structured interview process were adopted in order to gather the required information from

population of the congregations. Information and statistics about the congregations' location, including the number of seventy (70) children in 2014, has already been obtained to guide the sampling procedure and technique.

### **1.9.1 Study population**

The population under investigation comprises the *Idutywa* bereaved children. The *Idutywa* district of the Free Church in Southern Africa has Four (4) congregations and an estimated number of seventy (70) bereaved children. These children belong to church members of the four (4) congregations and their extended families. The researcher focused his attention on these bereaved children. This area has a number of families who were affected by the *Marikana* saga, and other children lost their parents through various forms of death. This means that the researcher's focus is on the religious community.

### **1.9.2 Sampling procedure**

The study adopted a multistage sampling procedure. The sampling approach began with the division of the population into congregations; in this process, four (4) congregations were constituted. It is important to mention that even though these congregations fall under *Idutywa* district/circuit, where the church only has one congregation, geographically, this district/circuit also covers *Centane* congregations that fall under the *Centane* Municipality. These congregations form one district, which is named after the rural village in *Idutywa* (*Ngcingwane village*). The congregations who fall under *Centane* Municipality used to form a district/circuit - an autonomous district. Due to the fact that in *Idutywa/Ngcingwane*, there is only one congregation, it was deemed necessary to amalgamate these two Districts into one. The other reason for this is: this was meant for these districts to meet their financial obligations of the church as a collective since they struggled to meet these financial obligations as separate districts due to small numbers.

Congregation 1: *Idutywa* congregation situated in the *Ngcingwane* village.

Congregation 2: *Macibe* congregation situated in *Macibe* village under *Centane* Municipality.

Congregation 3: *Msentu* congregation situated in *Msentu* village under *Centane* Municipality.

Congregation 4: *Godidi* congregation situated in the *Godidi* village under *Centane* Municipality.

### **1.9.3 Selection process**

This process only encompasses bereaved children and those who take care of them (remaining parents, guardians and grandparents). The researcher acknowledges that interviewing children can be a challenging process. Some children can be shy and find it difficult to open up in terms of communication, thus making the process rather slow and uncomfortable. It is in this context that the researcher believes it is appropriate to interview remaining parents and guardians of bereaved children who may struggle to communicate. There are cases where some children still have a remaining parent or a guardian. In this section, the researcher presented the methodology of the study; in the following section, the focus is on significance of this study.

### **1.10 Significance of the study**

The researcher feels that this study is extremely important because it focuses on children, who are the future of the church. Jackson (1994:7) concedes that “We should not forget that children must also be disciples of Jesus Christ.” Furthermore, it must be noted that children are also the future of the society. This then means that by applying theological guidance during bereavement to young children, we are also preparing them for the kingdom of God and for their place in society. The study will assist the leadership of the Church with tools regarding the empowerment of young people during bereavement.

This study is also different and unique. The researcher believes that the application of theological guidance over loss to *Xhosa* children during bereavement has never been researched, needless to mention, even at Doctoral level. The researcher was therefore convinced that this study must be undertaken in a bid to make a precise contribution to the well-being of young *Xhosa* children during bereavement. In this section, the researcher duly presented the research methodology of this study; the following section presents limitations of this study. This is about setting the boundaries for the study.

### **1.11 Limitations of the study**

The limitations of the study are as follows:

- The study only focused on children who need theological guidance during bereavement; this means that elderly people were not the focal point of the study;

- The study only focused on *Xhosa* children, so children from other cultures were not part of the research process. This means that the results were only for the benefit of the selected children;
- The study only focused on the religious community. This is important because it has a bearing on the research findings and outcomes of the research. This means that the research findings only affect the religious community and not the larger community;
- The approach used in the research is that of a theological nature as opposed to a psychological and clinical approach; and
- The study focused on one church - Free Church in Southern Africa. This means that the study did not involve other churches and religious bodies.

In this particular section, the researcher presented the limitations of this particular study; in the following section, the researcher presents ethical consideration of this study. This is about the moral aspect of the study.

### **1.12 Ethical considerations**

In this regard, Bless (2013:28) in *Ncube* (2015:66) defines this concept thus: “The word `ethics` is derived from the word `ethos`, meaning one`s character or disposition. It is related to the term `morality`, derived from Latin term `moralist`, meaning one`s manner or character.” Throwing some light to this definition, *ibid* (2013:28) cited in *Ncube* (2015:66) affirms that “A moral issue is concerned with whether the behaviour conforms to a code or set of principles.”

The researcher takes this definition into account as it is about one`s behaviour conforming to rules and prescripts that govern the research processes. The researcher then, took it upon himself to guard against plagiarism and people`s ideas and contributions were always acknowledged. Ethical clearance was obtained from the Social Development against child abuse register and from the University research ethics committee. Informed consent of children interviewed was diligently pursued, and all undertakings were conducted according to the University procedures and regulations. In this section, the researcher presented ethical consideration of this particular study; in the following section, the researcher considers the intellectual property of this study.

### **1.13 Intellectual property**

Every book and any other source used are listed and acknowledged in the bibliography section. The researcher considered the intellectual property of this study, so the following section deals with the definition of terms.

### **1.14 Definition of terms**

This section focuses on the definition of key concepts and terms used within the research project. The following terms and concepts are defined: African theology, African spirituality, grief, *Ubuntu* concept and the African Renaissance.

#### **1.14.1 African theology**

The researcher notes the comments made by *Maimela* (1992:31-42) and *Mofokeng* (1992:85-94) that “Until recently, God’s images in African theology were mainly formulated in terms of Black theology and the liberation paradigm.” Bringing in another important element, *Chuba* (1998:60) emphasizes that “Africans themselves are the target of African theology.” The author is of the view that a “Theology cooked in an African pot is to serve God’s purpose among His people. This has a special reference to the underprivileged.” Louw (2008:162) explicates that: “When it comes to cultural stratifications and structures in African theology, God is depicted along the lines of tribal issues. This notion includes family ties and social structures. In addition to this, God is perceived as the great Ancestor.”

He further concedes that in this context, “The Divine is expressed symbolically in stories. These stories are believed to link God to the realm of Ancestors”. *Setiloane* (1998:34) cited in Louw (2008:162) maintains that “In African theology, God is perceived in terms of vitalism. This means that God is a force that moves and rules humanity. The same force is believed to determine the fate of humanity in the world.” The author goes on to announce that “For an African, things exist because God exists. The Spirit of God penetrates everything and is everywhere.” Referring to God images, Louw (2008:165) is of the view that “For African theology, God images should make God present in the context of Africa.”

He adds that “The God image which can represent God’s presence in an African context is that He is our Companion.” *Motlhabi* (1994:11) speaks of the “Contextualization of African Theology.” In this regard, the author advocates that “African theology is necessarily a contextual theology. It is so called because it is intended to relate to the situation or context of the African people.” The author continues to explore this concept in conceding that “To

relate meaningfully, African theology must speak about God in a way that is understandable to the African people.” It is further affirmed that “African theology must take into account the background, culture, traditions as well as customs, history and on-going life experience of African people.” It is also argued in this context that “...The God about whom African theology must address the African people must be an African God: God must be God incarnate in Africa as well as in each distinct context of the African continent.”

The author concludes by affirming that “Such a God must reveal God self in the African medium.” In conclusion, the researcher notes the following aspects: Black theology and liberative paradigms are still applicable in the understanding of an African, which takes place through the lenses of African theology. These concepts are not something of the past, as *Maimela* (1992) and *Mofokeng* (1992) seem to suggest. African theology is targeted to serve God’s purpose among his people including the underprivileged. God must be viewed within the framework of family ties. God, in this context, is linked to the realm of Ancestors and is believed to be a great Ancestor.

#### **1.14.2 African spirituality**

Nwachuku (1994:81) maintains that “African people are fundamentally and deeply spiritual.” It is further maintained that “In African spirituality, life revolves around the worship of the Supreme Being, God.” Building on this same concept, Berinyuu (1988:19) is of the view that “Spirituality and religious dimensions are vital for the understanding of an African person.” Skhakhane (1995:110) argues that the “African community is the core of African spirituality.” According to this author, “Community refers not only to the living, but also to the Ancestors. African Spirituality consists of an intimate relationship of people and their Ancestors. This relationship initiates and governs their activities in life. This same process guarantees harmony and peace with other beings” (1995:112).

Bosch (1974:40) cited in Louw (2008) is of the view that “African Spirituality is structured, not along the lines of a pyramid, but of a circle. This means that Community and Communalism are the centre of a religious life in Africa.” Long (2000:23) maintains that “The transcendence and experiences of God in Africa are closely related to life and daily events. God is present in everyday life and controls life events.” The author further concedes that “God is just” and that “He punishes sin” (2000:24).

The researcher concludes that African spirituality is based on the following concepts:

- i. Life revolves around the worship of God, and He is regarded as a Supreme Being;
- ii. An African person is defined and understood by African spirituality;
- iii. African spirituality can be understood through the lenses of a community;
- iv. The living and the Ancestors are linked in the realm of African spirituality;
- v. God is actively involved in daily life events and He punishes sin;
- vi. African theology and African spirituality are inseparably closely linked; and
- vii. There is much interplay between these concepts.

### 1.14.3 Grief

De Klerk (1996:97, cited in Louw, 2008) defines grief as “The experience of loss; this loss is in full awareness that the process cannot be reversed. Irrevocable loss causes real grief. This is grief that is experienced as an intense and acute form of sorrow and sadness.” The researcher also notes that grief, as a process, has different aspects. Some of these aspects are dealt with by Louw (2008:550):

- **Realization:** In realization, mourners acknowledge an external reality which has already taken place. They try to accept this reality in their personal and emotional levels;
- **Internalization:** Internalization means that through grief, the mourner wishes to say: this is my grief;
- **Separation:** This is about extreme yearning and underlines seeking and longing for the loved one as well as attempting to bring him/her nearer. It is an indirect process through which distance is gained;
- **Re-orientation:** All through sorrow, the bereaved seeks a new order and life-patterns to bridge the disruption;
- **Formation and growth:** During mourning, one can grow towards a new system of values and a more profound personal maturity. Louw (2008:551-557) also deals with other aspects that are related to grief, discussed below:

- Coping mechanisms;
- Various reactions and forms of expressing grief;
- Various phases of grief; and
- Tasks of mourning.

There are several other aspects discussed by Louw that are related to coping mechanism; these are:

- **Denial:** When the pain is too intense and the shock too great, denial is a temporary process of emotional cessation and survival. The mourner experiences the loss as unreal. Denial is a mechanism for survival to enable one to carry on with life temporarily;
- **Suppression:** This is an attempt to keep the pain away from one`s very being because the immediate feelings of sorrow make one desperate: ‘I cannot cope; I do not see my way clear through this’;
- **Identification:** The bereaved tries to compensate for the loss by means of memories to bring the loved one as close as possible. The yearning for, and experiencing the deceased as a living reality, often finds expression in dreams, which could be most comforting, but also most disturbing and upsetting;
- **Idealizing:** This is a process in which all the negative characteristics of the deceased are eliminated in order to cling to all positive characteristics. Idealizing forgets and crowds out the bad and remembers only the good; and
- **Regression:** Regression is a refusal to continue living with the pain. The person reverts to the familiar in their need for dependence upon sources of support. The next concept discussed by Louw is “Various reactions and forms of expression of grief.”

#### **1.14.4 Various reactions and forms of expression of grief.**

Louw (2008:552-555) presents various reactions that are essential in expressing grief on the part of the bereaved, and they are as follows:

- **Shock, numbness and disbelief:** A state of shock causes total obstruction of emotions. A deadly feeling of being completely drained and numb flows over the emotional world of the bereaved. Usually, the news is so overwhelming and seems so unreal that the griever acts almost mechanically. There is a feeling of being in a dream of a nightmare from which he (the bereaved) will awake (Raphael, 1984:34 in Louw, 2008:552).
- **Tears and sorrow (reaction of weeping):** A reaction of weeping is vital and must not be viewed as a sign of weakness, but as the indication of the intensity of the pain of loss. Tears also bring about an emotional discharge. This external expression of sadness facilitates demonstrative comforting by relatives and friends. Christians must realize that strength in the Lord does not imply that one may not weep. By not giving way to tears, one suppresses one`s sorrow or merely postpones it. Being strong in the Lord implies that one has a haven for one`s pain and that God, as the Father, understands.
- **Stress and behavioural reactions:** Grief causes specific psychosomatic reactions: muscle tension and blood pressure increases, pulse acceleration, breathing difficulties, excessive perspiration, secretion of adrenalin into the bloodstream and mobilization of energy when glycogen is converted into sugar. This condition of raised preparedness is extremely draining and exhausting, especially in a terminal situation, where relatives anticipate the demise. Vossen (1985:65) in Louw (2008:553) suggests reactions such as restlessness, agitation and attempts to seek contact with the dead. The bereaved tries to restore the situation to that prevailing prior to the loss in a sustained attempt to bring the deceased back.
- **Anger and feelings of hostility:** The bereaved may possibly feel anger towards the deceased, who has caused this crisis, especially when a financial or social crisis develops as a result of a sudden death. The bereaved could be embittered and be convinced that all is actually most unfair. Feelings of hostility may easily be transferred to God; he is blamed for the mess in which one has landed. The Pastor must be mindful of the fact that, because of this the whole theodicy, problems come sharply to the fore in the mourning process. Lamentation, as presented in many psalms, also plays an important role. It could be used to verbalize negative feelings towards God.
- **Guilt and feelings of guilt:** It is obvious that loss evokes reproach. Soul-searching takes place. Suddenly the bereaved realizes the extent of all his/her short comings in the

relationship of love. Real guilt could be the consequence of faulty, sinful behaviour or unfinished business between the bereaved and the deceased. The mourner could then possibly perceive his/her loss as God`s punishment for past sinful behaviour. The principle of forgiveness plays a significant role in the process of reconciling oneself with guilt and feelings of guilt. The mourner must be encouraged to confess past wrong and sinful behaviour, where upon absolution must follow. When the problem lies more on the level of guilt feelings, they are merely an indication of the intensity of the emotional pain of regret and self-reproach. The pastor should then encourage the bereaved to get it off his/her chest by expressing and communicating these feelings of guilt. Reactions of anger and guilt differ. In anger, the bereaved blame the deceased; in guilt, the bereaved blame themselves for wrong doing for which they themselves are responsible.

- **Parting anxiety:** Anxiety is directly associated with feelings of helplessness and insecurity. Death always causes a crisis in respect of the human need for security. This anxiety now forms part of experiencing an amputation...This specific condition of anxiety in mourning grief is referred to as `parting anxiety` which is part of the whole process of detachment and separation. It is important in pastoral care to understand parting anxiety in order to convey God`s closeness and presence to the mourner. It could be most meaningful to the bereaved to understand that Christ himself experienced anxiety during his suffering...
- **Depression:** Depression is the most common reaction to bereavement. Depression during adaptation must be viewed as normal reaction. Indications of such a mourning depression are feelings of helplessness and powerlessness, anxiety about an uncertain situation and future, negative feelings, thoughts and actions. In a certain sense depression could be viewed as internalized anger. The bereaved are profoundly angry, but realize that nobody is to blame and that they as individuals are utterly lonely and isolated in their grief. Nobody else can mourn on their behalf; they must do this on their own. When depression has such a strong hampering influence that all functions cease and the bereaved become paralyzed, they see only darkness and are bogged down in the past. When depression drains all their energy and they cannot see their way clearly into the future, depression becomes despair and their future seems meaningless. During their depression, it is crucial that the bereaved become aware of hope and are encouraged to identify positive alternatives or realities...

- **Longing:** Grief darkens the mourner`s total emotional experiential world. Longing causes the person to become totally ill. It could then happen that a person in acute grief actually feels ill. The intense yearning for the deceased loved one causes incredible sorrow. The creation of a dream world of fantasies is caused by longing as an expression of the process of grief, which is often very disturbing, but could also be healing, especially when longing is combined with rituals such as taking leave of the corps, the funeral service, visits to the grave and looking at photo graphs. Dreams may play a great healing role in the process of mourning, especially when the mourner finds an opportunity to share them with somebody who listens and helps to interpret them.
- **Relief:** Especially after a deceased`s long terminal illness, a sense of relief by the bereaved is often interpreted as infidelity, giving rise to feelings of guilt. Relief should, however be perceived as a normal reaction and could be most positive, especially if the griever can combine it with gratitude. Louw then goes on to deal with the “Various phases of grief.”

#### 1.14.5 Various phases of grief

- **The phase of confusion and disorder:** It is obvious that coming to terms with the news of bereavement immediately after receipt, in the sense of full acceptance, is impossible. Resignation and acceptance are part of a long term process. Death penetrates the most intimate area of human being: love. The effect is confusion and total disorder on an existential and relational level. The impact of shock and feeling of numbness arouse various defence and coping mechanisms, denial being the most common. Pastoral care at this point must be restrained; this is not the time for intense discussions or empty words, but for support and deeds of sympathy. What is called for is a comforting, understanding and listening presence.
- **The phase of loss and seeking:** As reality begins to register, the bereaved has a strong preoccupation with the deceased. By recalling memories, the bereaved tries to restore contact with the deceased. In this manner, slowly but surely reality is internalized. During this phase of intense longing, the real pain of sorrow arises. The realization penetrates: the deceased is gone forever and the loss is final. The real pain of grief is then experienced as a total loss of communication. When, during normal activities, the griever spontaneously

wants to share something with the deceased, then with a shock realizes that the deceased is gone forever, an acute form of weeping and grief sets in.

- **The phase of adaptation, acceptance and reorganization:** Slowly, but surely as time passes, grievors start to adapt. The whole process of acceptance means that the bereaved must make their grief part of their ego structure `It is my pain and is a reality` and faith structure `It is my loss before God and God is an inherent part of it`. Then the knowledge surfaces that God is not apathetic, but reaches out in sympathy to the grieving. Then the bereaved can try to formulate new aims and objects for future life, which together with a constructive programmer of action; can be of great assistance in giving meaningful momentum to the grieving process. The social environment, especially the family, is intensively interwoven into this process of reorganization. Grief affects the entire family system in which the deceased had a specific place and position. Now nobody must try and take his/her place. It is important that pastoral care assists members to adopt new positions and roles within the family structure. A systemic understanding of the process of grief is most important for pastoral care. Raphael (1984:54) in Louw (2008:557) argues that “Bereavement will affect the family system in many ways. The death of a member means that the system is irrevocably changed.” The author also affirms that “Interlocking roles, relationships, interactions including communication, psychology and needs can no longer be fulfilled in the same way as before death.” With regards to the family unit the author affirms that “The family unit as it was before, dies and a new family system must be constituted. The death will be a crisis for the family unit as well as for each individual member and each component subsystem.” Friedman (1985:168-169) in Louw (2008:557) perceives death as the most drastic happening in a family system “Death creates processes which could even be transferred to the next generation...More cut-offs begin and more reconciliations are accomplished during this passage.” The author further affirms that “More shifts in responsibility occur. It is more likely that some family members will find new freedom, and some will suddenly find themselves stuck.”
- **The lasting and continuing phase:** The question is often posed: How long does mourning have a specific beginning and ending? In a certain sense, one is never rid of the pain of sorrow. The acuteness diminishes, but the vacuum and longing often remain for the rest of one`s life. That is why it is so important that the bereaved are not forced to end the mourning process. It is true that the passing of time heals, but mourning takes time. It

is also true that the most violent moments of grief take place two to four months, and again between nine and twelve months after the death...

This particular section focused on the presentation of the definition of terms and concepts, the following section focuses on tasks of mourning.

Louw (2008:562) In this regard presents some several tasks:

Acceptance of the reality of the loss, in this context to refuse acceptance is to negate the reality of the process of mourning, working through the pain of grief, suffering during bereavement implies that, one has to feel and live one's grief. Worden (1991:13) in Louw (2008:562) refers to the negation of this task of working through the pain as 'not to feel'. Adjusting to an environment in which the deceased is absent, bereavement cannot be separated from the entire system of relationships, cultural values and social environment. Role adjustment and the finding of new roles, represents a challenge to the mourner's potential to adapt to loss. Refusal to adapt may create confusion of roles and meaning. Emotionally relocating the deceased and moving forward in life, the task of entering into new relationships does not depend on giving up the deceased spouse, but on finding a suitable place and space for the spouse in a network of growing relations. Worden (1991:17) in Louw (2008:562) refers to the incompleteness of this task as 'not to be loving'. Holding on to the past attachment and making a vow never to love again is not to understand one's own pain of loss and one's longing to live again. The researcher notes that this is in the context of loss and grief. Collins (2007:466-467) addresses grief in biblical terms, the author notes that "Death and grief are mentioned often in the bible. In the Old Testament, for example we read about Jacob mourning over the loss of Joseph and refusing to be comforted." Collins also mentions "David grieving over the anticipated loss of his infant son and the death in the battle of his grown sons, Amnon and Absalom, Jeremiah lamenting the death of King Josiah." The author looks at "David's grief as the most moving one, when David learns that his closest friend Jonathan had died in the battle." Collins moves on to mention that "Psalms tell us of God's presence and comfort as we walk through 'the valley of death' and we learn that the word of God encourages those who weep with grief." According to Collins, "Isaiah introduces us to the Messiah as man of sorrows and acquainted with bitterest grief - who knew the pain of being rejected by those whose sins he came to bear." Collins then moves on to cite the example of Christ with regards to grief in that "Early in his ministry, Jesus preached his

Sermon on the Mount and spoke about grieving. `God blesses those who mourn, for they will be comforted` he said.”

Collins further argues by saying that “When Lazarus died, Jesus was deeply moved...Jesus knew that Lazarus was about to be raised from the dead, but the Lord still grieved...In the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus was crushed with grief...” The author says that “Even for the Christian who believes in an afterlife, grief is normal, healthy and intensely felt...” Collins (2007:468) mentions some tasks that are faced by most people when they grieve:

- Accepting that the loss has taken place and that it is real and permanent;
- Experiencing and expressing the emotions and deep thoughts that are associated with loss. This includes reliving special moments from the past, recalling warm memories, and expressing sadness, loneliness, acute sorrow and sometimes anger which may be directed at the deceased person, somebody else or at God;
- Untangling oneself from the ties that bind the person to the deceased or to whatever else has been lost. This involves letting go, saying good-bye, and slowly adjusting to an environment and lifestyle in which the deceased person or lost object is missing permanently. It does not mean that the deceased person is forgotten. A re-evaluation of the relationship and continuing emotional bonds persist, but the grieving person moves on with the realization that from this point life will be different because an important person is gone; and
- Reinvesting one`s energy into forming new relationships, pursuing new projects, setting new goals, and cultivating fresh dreams or aspirations. This stage often seems to be the most difficult because people feel guilty and insecure about reinvesting their energies into new things. This also can be difficult because grieving people often feel depleted and drained of the energy that may be needed to keep moving. In this section, the researcher presented some tasks of grieving, in the following section the researcher focuses on prolonged grieving.

Collins (2007:470) goes on to mention what he calls “Type of loss.” In this regard, the author maintains that “Each type of loss brings its own kind of suffering and reaction.” Collins makes an example about the death of a revered and respected leader that can bring grief to thousands of people, especially if the leader symbolized the hopes and

expectations of those who mourn. The author is of the view that “This mass grieving differs from the grief experienced by a close relative of someone who dies.” It is further argued that “In adult life, the death of a parent is the most common type of bereavement and the loss that is handled best, especially if the parent is older.” Another point is made that “Loss of a wife or husband is likely to be much more difficult. The joys, challenges and burdens of life that previously were shared now must be borne alone and that can be very stressful.” According to the author, “This often involves learning to live alone with loneliness, anxiety and the need to make decisions or do routine tasks...” Collins (2007:472) further concedes that grieving may be prolonged and more difficult when some of the following things occur:

- The death is considered exceptionally untimely, for example, the death of a successful adult in the prime of life and at the beginning of a promising career;
- The mode of death is considered incomprehensible, senseless or tragic; examples are: murder suicide, serious accident or terrorist attack.
- There was such extreme dependency on the lost person that the mourner feels immobilized and has had little basis for building self-confidence, personal identity or meaning in life;
- The mourner`s work environment, family or other environmental circumstances disallow or disapprove of any expression of grief; and
- The dead person extracted a promise from the survivor that he or she would never grieve, be sad, remarry or move.

Blom (2006:179) also mentions other critical aspects in connection with grief and how it also affects children. The author reports that:

“Children worldwide are more and more exposed to traumatic situations such as divorce, family violence, physical and sexual abuse, chronic diseases such as cancer and HIV/AIDS. These situations cause grieving reactions in children that can manifest in different kinds of behaviour, for example, temper tantrums, depression and poor school performance” (2006:179). In addition to this, Figley (1985) cited in Blom (2006:184), focuses on trauma and defines it as “An emotional condition of discomfort

and stress that arises from memories of a personal experience of an occurrence that has destroyed the individual's sense of invulnerability towards pain." The author goes on to include the following points in an attempt to master the definition of trauma:

- An actual or threatening possibility of death or a serious injury;
- Threatening of the physical integrity of the individual;
- Being an eyewitness to an occurrence of death, injury or the threatening of the physical integrity of another person; and
- Taking note of the unexpected or violent death, serious injury, or threat of death or injury experienced by a family member or other interested party.

Keppel-Benson and Ollendick (1993) cited in Blom (2006:184) reflect on typical reactions that follow as a result of trauma. These are presented as follows: "Avoidance of stimuli of related occurrences, intensified reactions and attention problems, including reliving of the trauma occurrence."

The authors in this same context introduce some symptoms that are related to trauma. They concede that some of the most important symptoms in these categories that may be experienced by the child include: "Nightmares, repetitive play in which the child is stuck in reliving the trauma and is unable to establish psychological distance from the traumatic event, clinging to parents and fear of strangers, outbursts of anger, irritation, weepiness, nervousness, regression to previous stage of development, withdrawal and amnesia..." (Keppel-Benson & Ollendick, 1993 in Blom, 2006:184). In this section, the researcher looked at the definition of trauma and the results thereof. The next section focuses on the concept of *Ubuntu*.

#### **1.14.6 *Ubuntu* concept**

*Mandela* (2005:82), when explaining the *Ubuntu* concept, maintains that "One is a human being because of others." The author further explains that "This concept is becoming a global concept according to the destiny of our being human." The author also believes that "The Spirit of *Ubuntu* has added globally to our common search for a better world" (2005:82). Pobe (1992:6) cited in Louw (2008:155) is of the view that "*Ubuntu* is about one's own humanity being enriched by others." The researcher cannot agree more, while Van Binsberg

(2003) cited in Louw (2008) is of the opinion that “The concept of *Ubuntu* is within the processes of internationalization and globalization.” These processes are paramount in explaining and stating clearly what it means to be African. The author further believes that “The *Ubuntu* philosophy can bring about a positive change. The envisaged change will be in the form of an African experience with regard to an African identity.” This then should mean that the application of theological guidance to bereaved children is based on *Ubuntu* philosophy. These children should not be left by themselves during their time of loss but need to be supported in terms of theological guidance. In this section, the focus was on a brief definition of *Ubuntu* concept; the next section focuses on the envisaged structure of the study.

### **1.15 Envisaged structure of the study**

Chapter Two: The literature review: All the relevant literature with regard to the study are presented and discussed in this chapter. The chapter comprises three sections, namely, generic literature review section, theory analysis section and primary literature review section. Chapter Three: This chapter focuses on the research methodology. The researcher discusses the sampling procedure, the instrument used in the research process and the research design. Chapter Four: The chapter focuses on data analysis, interpretation and presentation of findings. Chapter Five: The chapter focuses on the presentation of recommendations based on the collected data.

### **1.16 Conclusion**

In this chapter, the researcher offered the background of the study, illustrating what triggered him to undertake this research. Preliminary literature review was done to synthesise and summarise the nature of the challenge of child bereavement and grief. The research problem that has led the researcher to undertake this study has been adequately explained. Research questions have also been presented to guide the study to explore the causes, impact and possible solutions to the challenge. These research questions were aligned to the aims and objectives of the study. A suggested theory for the study was identified and developed. Justification for such a theory was discussed through supporting theory. The research methodology that the study followed was provided and discussed under the following: research design, sampling and sampling size. The significance of the study was mentioned and the limitations identified. Ethical clearance and matters related to intellectual property and definition of terms are noted throughout the chapter. The next chapter will then tackle the literature review of the study.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 Introduction

As this chapter deals with extensive literature review of this particular research, it is worth looking briefly at what Mouton (2005:87) advocates in this regard: “When we speak about reviewing a body of scholarship (a literature review), we are in fact interested in a whole range of research products that have been produced by other scholars.” The author goes on to give a reason as to the importance of literature review for research purposes which is: “To ensure that one does not merely duplicate a previous study...” (2005:87). As the researcher embarked on this study, works produced by other scholars on child care during bereavement were explored. This is meant to show that the researcher has read widely on this particular topic. This process is also about evaluating contributions breaking a new ground in this regard. This means that this particular research has never been conducted in this particular Denomination, and does not duplicate any previous study, as Mouton warns.

In this chapter, a comprehensive, critical and contextualized literature review is duly presented. The presentation of literature review comprises scholarly works dealing with issues around grieving children and their spirituality and reviews literature that deals with child bereavement on a general basis across the cultural spectrum.

The second concept to be explored in this chapter is with regard to theories which have unique contribution to this particular study. These would be theories that underpin what the researcher seeks and aims at achieving. It must, however, be noted that some theories will not necessarily deal with children specifically. They are dealing with the application of theological guidance for people who grieve in general. Those theories that are relevant in this regard will help in preparing the ground for the application of theological guidance for bereaved children. This means that there are concepts that can be used from these theories to strengthen the contribution in terms of theological guidance. A critical evaluation and analysis of such theories will be embarked on whereby the researcher will then point out the most relevant theories to the envisaged research. The researcher believes that such theories contributed a great deal to the envisaged research process.

The third and final section of the literature review focuses on presenting literature that has a potential to close the identified gap. This means that in this particular section, the researcher looks closely at literature that focuses on African theology and Spirituality. It then explains how such works contribute in this process and be seen as useful tools for grieving *Xhosa* children. This then links the research topic with the following key sections: research problem statement, research questions and literature that serve as a tool box in solving the problem. This presents this particular section of the literature review as primary literature review section wherein the researcher introduces key aspects of this critical chapter. In the next section, the researcher focuses on the generic literature review.

## **2.2 Generic literature review section**

The Leguin online website which deals with grief in children argues for critical issues with regards to child grief and how to take care of grieving children. The author identifies four aspects of dealing with grief and begins by stating that “Children are often the forgotten `mourners` in a household stricken by a tragic death.” The reasons for this are clearly stated by the author as follows:

- Their needs are honestly overlooked in the emotional turmoil (grieving process);
- Adults think that by not confronting the issue head on, they somehow shield children from the pain (this does not work);
- Many adults think that children do not understand death, and therefore are not affected deeply by it; and
- Some adults do not know how to deal with children regarding this area, so they just leave them alone (ignoring them). The author goes on to concede that “A little effort, sensitivity and honesty on your part as an adult, will go a long way towards drawing your children out, and helping them to process their own grief in a healthy and successful way.”

There are several other aspects the author covers in the process of taking care of grieving children. The first of these is “Helping your child grieve.” The author elaborates as follows: “Grief is a normal and a natural reaction to loss. Do not tell your child not to feel bad. Do not tell him/her to stop crying. Children deserve the same respect afforded to adults during bereavement.”

The author further argues that “Although as a parent, you love your child, and don’t want them to feel bad, this is something that you cannot and should not prevent. It is as important for children to feel the same full constellation of painful emotions, and they must experience grief in all its stages as for an adult.” The author also affirms, “If you just step back and realize that feeling bad is a normal reaction to a tragic loss, then you can see how it would be better for your child to feel bad (normal) about it.” According to the author, “Don’t try to make children feel better by keeping them busy, either. As with adults, all this does is to postpone or bury grief work that needs to be done. Children need very much to feel all the pain and sorrow that a grievous loss merits.” The author further states that “Never smooth over a child’s grief; instead, listen to them and let them ventilate and cry when they feel doing so.”

The author further warns that “Children must not be sent to their rooms to find an alternative activity to keep them busy in an attempt to shield them from the pain.” It is further stated by the author that “Children must be encouraged to express their painful emotions and sadness freely. Keeping the grief inside themselves unexpressed prevents them from completing their mourning. This can create serious emotional problems later in their lives.” The author concludes this argument by saying that “As painful as it maybe for you to watch, your child must learn how to cope with loss and tragedy. Don’t rob him/her of this valuable learning experience.” The second aspect dealt with by the author is “Don’t let children grieve alone.” Under this aspect, the author affirms “Don’t let your children grieve alone. Include them in the story telling and reminisces about the deceased. Encourage children to tell stories about times they spent with their loved one, both good and bad times. Let them contribute ideas for the memorial service, and even take part in the memorial service if possible. It makes them feel important and useful during this overwhelming time. Let them see adults crying and grieve, so that they will see that it’s fine for them to cry too.” The author further affirms that “Contrary to what you might think, children are not harmed by seeing their parents or other adults cry and lose a little control during bereavement. It may upset them initially, but in the long run, it is healthy for them to see their elders react normally in times of grief. Just reassure them later that no matter how sad you are, you will still love and take care of them.”

The author also explicates that “Sharing your grief with your children can be an opportunity to create a connecting bridge to them. Shutting them out can do the opposite, (creating a gulf between you and them). It’s a good thing to mourn and cry in front of your child, within

reason. But don't add to his/her burden by turning him/her into your personal confidante, or overwhelm him/her with your own grief. Turn to another adult or support group if you need help. "The author also stresses the fact that "Children must not be expected to act like adults saying to a male child 'you need to be the man of the house now, and you must take care of your mother.' Telling a child to take his father's role in the house will not help him overcome his grief over the loss of his father.

The third aspect the author deals with in this context is "What to say to children about the loss" The author opens this discussion by conceding that "There are effective ways to help your child talk about the lost loved one, and express his/her grief over it. If you ask him/her directly "How do you feel about Grandpa dying?" Or "Do you feel sad that your brother died?" The author is of the view that by asking these questions to the child, the parent will always get the following answer 'I am fine.' The author suggests a better approach by stating that "A better approach is for you as an adult to speak first. Talk openly and honestly about the deceased, express your sadness and pain."

It is further suggested that as an adult, say something like 'Boy I am sad that Grandpa died, I will miss his funny jokes won't you?' It is believed that "By saying this to the child, you are sending the message that it is fine to feel bad, and that there is nothing wrong to speak about it." It is also believed that "This will result in the child feeling safe to speak out and will do this freely from his/her heart." The author further affirms that "It is quite alright and helpful for you to hug and cry along with your child, never be afraid to cry in front of your children." This leads to the fourth aspect presented by the author, and that is "Honesty is the best for bereaved children" In this regard, it is noted by the author that "It is important for the adult or parent to answer all the child's questions about the death that has occurred honestly. You don't need to tell them every detail about what happened to the body after a motorcycle accident. But you need to tell them in simple language what has happened. Children need such information in order to process this new aspect of life and death into their world. "The author goes on to say "Their imagination often provides them with images that are much scarier or gruesome than the truth. "The author further states that "Children must be encouraged to ask any questions they wish to ask about death. They may be very curious about what happens to the body after a person dies. They may even ask if the body is cold, hungry or how the body goes to the bathroom in that casket. "The author insists that such questions must be answered honestly "Answer honestly that once a person is dead, their

heart, mind and body no longer work. They no longer breathe talk or move, their body is no longer warm, but cold to the touch.”

The fourth and the last of these concepts is about “Whether children should attend funerals.” In this regard, the author’s comments are as follows: “If the children are old enough to understand that the person has died and would be reasonable quiet, then by all means, give them an option of going to the funeral if they want to. However, don’t force them to go if they don’t want to.” The author affirms “A funeral serves a purpose for adults and children during the bereavement process” It is further argued that “It helps to affirm in a concrete way that the loved one is actually dead and is going to be buried. It provides affirmation of the death and some amount of closure; it also provides much needed support from the family and friends.”

The author goes on to argue that “A funeral service exposes children, perhaps for the first time to the process and ritual of death. This further helps them to understand the finality of death and that it is fine to feel hurt about it and mourn openly as others are doing.” The author warns that “Shielding children from the funeral process, you rob them of an important life lesson to be learned.” In this same context, the author emphasizes the importance of preparing children for funerals. This means that they should not just be taken to funerals without having been prepared “Make sure to prepare the child by explaining to them what will happen in the burial and what they will see, and that people maybe crying.” The author also concedes that “If there will be an open casket, they need to be told how the body will look like, and must be given the choice whether or not they want to view the body.” It is further argued that “The funeral experience could be traumatic for children if they are not thoroughly prepared beforehand.”

Bowlby (1980), Worden (1986), Case (1987) and Forrest and Thomas (1991) cited in Makunga and Shange (2009), in their research in drawings as a method of evaluation and communication with bereaved children, have noted that “Research suggests that children do present with grief reactions in the form of behaviour following attachment loss.” Forrest and Thomas (1991) cited in Makunga and Shange (2009:1) have documented that “The emotional pain experienced by bereaved children may, at times, be unrecognized and therefore unresolved.” While Siegel, Mesgno and Langosch (1991) cited in Makunga and Shange (2009) affirm that “Psychological development and mental health of children, may be affected by the death in a child’s family or immediate environment.” According to Siegel

(1960) and Forrest and Thomas (1991), “Research has shown that many children express painful experiences effectively through drawings, a medium of expression experienced as easier than verbal articulation.” In affirming this concept, Koppitz (1983) cited in Makunga and Shange (2009:1), noted that “During the elementary school years, boys and girls can express their thoughts and feelings often better in visual images than in words.”

Goldman concurs with Leguin in his online article *Children and grief* (accessed 18 September 2014) which addresses issues pertaining to grief experienced by children. The author emphasizes that “Children can grieve as much as adults do” and further emphasizes that “Children can be affected deeply by issues such as sudden death and traumatic death.” The researcher strongly believes that the ultimate purpose is to bring hope and healing to children who are affected by grief. Louw (2008) connects well in this concept as he deals with the theology of life and healing. In this context, the author argues that “Without the necessary equipment and preparation, illness can be experienced as an unbearable burden.” Louw also deals with the application of theological guidance to hospitalized and dying children; he puts emphasis on the application of theological guidance in an African context.

Nuckels (2013) argues that “When grief is not addressed, acknowledged and expressed, it causes one to live in the shadows of the ghosts of grief” and this refers to the grief that is “Disenfranchised or condoned.” The author also uses the term ‘carried grief’ to describe “Unacknowledged and unmourned grief.” The author believes that when one experiences loss, but does not mourn or acknowledge the normal and necessary, thus resulting feelings of grief, that person carries that grief forward into his/her future. This means that there is an on-going hampering of the ability to live life with meaning and purpose on the part of such a person; in this regard, children are also affected. Here the author also makes the point that “Children are aware of and familiar with the concept of death.” Speaking in his own context, the author is of the view that “children from the farms have experienced death of farm animals as well as death of members of their extended families.” The author further believes that in his culture, “Children tend to be insulated from the pain of the grief process as well as religious activities, privacy, protection and autonomy.”

Collins (2007:472-474) presents some aspects that are related to the effects of grief as:

- Physical effects;
- Emotional and cognitive effects;

- Social effects; and
- Spiritual effects.

Kennedy (2006:01) commenting on the impact of a death of a parent says “The death of a parent is a life shaking event for which few are prepared.” The author goes on to argue that “This experience can wound us deeply, leaving lifetime scars. Or it can, if grieved fully, initiate profound unprecedented change and open our world into new perspectives and choices.” Kennedy also presents “Ten steps in grieving the loss of a parent.” These steps will help equip bereaved children to be able to cope during their bereavement. The steps are as follows:

- **Acknowledge the importance and power of this event:** The death of a parent shakes the very foundations of our lives. It is natural though often uncomfortable, to feel raw and vulnerable alone and out of control;
- **Take time each day to honour your grief:** Set up a sanctuary in your home or in nature, a protected place where you can open fully to your grief for ten to twenty minutes every day;
- **Address unfinished business with your parent:** it is very common for unresolved feelings toward your parent to surface after his or her death. The grieving period is an important time to heal these old wounds and begin to say good-bye;
- **Participate in creating new family patterns:** The family system is often thrown into chaos and upheaval after a parent`s death. Old patterns do not work with the same predictable results. The family may thrash around for months, seeking a new balance with one another. This is a brief window of opportunity, when the family is opened up to change before a new system is established;
- **Explore the direction and quality of your life.** The death of a parent often initiates a period of painful questioning: Where am I going in my life? What do I really value? What are my beliefs? Does my life really matter? This questioning is a critical part of the grieving process;
- **Don`t pressure yourself to get back to normal:** Many expect that grief will be over in a few weeks or months. Grief has its own rhythm, nature and timing that resists our

attempts to control it. For some, though certainly not all, there is a marked shift around the first anniversary of your parent's death. However, as the years pass, grief may heal up from time to time. Each time it surfaces, see it as an opportunity for more healing;

- **Learn to parent yourself:** Give yourself nurturance, love, protection and encouragement. Clarify the expectations you had of your parent, that he or she never could fulfil...You can grieve what your parent did not give you and begin to appreciate what he or she did give you;
- **Let your friends know what you want and need from them:** Offer them some suggestions of ways that they can help and support you, perhaps bring you a meal, doing some errands, giving you a back rub, taking a walk with you, checking on you regularly. Assert that you need to withdraw. Let them know about anything that they are doing that is not supportive. Encourage them to educate themselves about grief, so that they will know what to expect. Remind them that grief takes a long time to heal;
- **Each year, acknowledge the anniversary of your parent's death:** Take time to reflect and do something special to commemorate that date. Be gentle with yourself as this is a vulnerable time in which many may feel depressed and emotional; and
- **Celebrate the changes and new perspectives:** These will begin to manifest in your life as you move out of the dark middle phase of grief. When you feel ready, act on new ideas inspirations and insights.

These are critical points for people who grieve the loss of a parent. This is as important for bereaved children as it is for bereaved adults. Bereaved children should be taken through these aspects during their mourning. Each and every aspect should be unpacked and applied gently and effectively to children. It is extremely important that the care giver should be mindful of the fact that bereaved children need healing and support during their loss over their parent/s. This is where theological guidance comes in the form of African theology and Spirituality.

Lungu (1994 cited in Ngombane, 2013) identifies Pastoral therapy as a therapy that "Creates communion with God and fellow believers, including their children." Lungu (1982, cited in Ngombane, 2013) also defines Christians as "People who accept the resurrection of Christ."

The author further emphasizes “The continuity of relationship between the living and the departed by being in Christ.” The importance of having fellowship with God is further encouraged by Ngombane, who is of the view that “God heals even in our life time; it is not something of the past.” It is also stressed that “God heals those who believe.” The author stresses that “Children are also part of the community of God and need to be healed as well.”

Popular Psychologists Seifert and Rosemary (2011) present three psychological stages which children go through during their developmental stages. This process takes place according to children`s different ages. The researcher feels that these stages are helpful for any person working with children in any field including bereaved children. They give some kind of an idea as to the way in which children falling under a category, in terms of age, exercise their minds. The first of these stages is the “Preoperational stage: ages 2-7” Under this stage, the authors affirm that “Children use their new ability to represent objects in a wide variety of activities but do not yet do it in ways that are organized or fully logical.” It is further affirmed that “One of the most obvious examples of this kind of cognition is dramatic play, the improvised make-believe of preschool children.” These authors are of the opinion that “This kind of play is witnessed by people who have a responsibility of children of this age.” An example of this kind of play is presented in the following scenario: “Ashley holding a plastic banana to her ear and saying `hello Mom, ` can you be sure to bring me my baby doll? `Then she hangs up the banana and pours tea for Jeremy into an invisible cup. Jeremy giggles at the sight of all of this and exclaims `Oh Ashley, the phone is ringing again, you better answer it.” And on it goes. “In this context, the authors affirm that “In a way, children immersed in make-believe play seem mentally insane in that they do not think realistically.” It is further argued that “They are not truly insane because they have not taken leave of their senses.” An example is made that “At some level, Ashley and Jeremy always know that the banana is still a banana and not really a telephone; they are merely representing as a telephone and are thinking on two levels at the same time, one imaginative and the other realistic.”

The second stage presented here is the “Concrete operational stage: ages 7-11” In this stage, it is affirmed that “As children continue into elementary school, they become able to represent ideas and events more flexibly and logically. Their rules of thinking still seem very basic compared to adult standards and usually operate unconsciously, but these rules allow children to solve problems more systematically than before and is successful with many academic tasks. “Here it is further affirmed that “In the concrete operational stage, a child

may unconsciously follow the rules, if nothing is added or taken away, then the amount of something stays the same. This simple principle helps children to understand certain arithmetic tasks. This stage is called the *concrete operational stage* because in it, children operate mentally on concrete objects and events. They are not yet able, however, to operate or think systematically about representations of objects or events.” The third and final stage is the “Formal operational stage: ages 11 and beyond” In this stage, it is affirmed that “The child becomes able to reason not only about tangible objects, but also about abstract ones. Hence, it has the name Formal operational stage as this is the period on which the individual can operate on forms or representations.”

Brewster (2010:69) cited in Van Rensburg (2013:19) speaks of the “Importance of building self-reliance in children who find themselves in crisis.” The crisis in question here also includes child bereavement. The author proposes several concepts in this regard:

- Allow children to do what they can do themselves without intervening;
- When help is given, look for the contribution from the recipients, and they will appreciate it more;
- Focus on teaching so children can take what they learn and use it in future;
- Start where the children are, and with what they have available...including their own interests;
- Encourage them positively. Reinforce each step that children and their parents take to meet their own needs and solve their own problems;
- Go at the pace of the child or his/her group. Small successes are vital in order to gain the confidence to take the next step; and
- Know when to phase out. Allow them to fail; we learn to depend upon ourselves through failure as well as success.

Smith (2009) makes the following contribution with regards to children and parental death situations:

- Many adults falsely believe that children bounce back after grieving for a short period and that their grief will progressively lessen until it is no longer there;

- In fact, Eppler (2008) cited in Smith (2009:7) suggested that children who have experienced the death of a parent tend to report a lower self-esteem, experience depressed states and have higher levels of anxiety;
- It is imperative that adults understand and acknowledge the fact that children do not grieve the same way as adults;
- If their unique grieving process is not taken into consideration, there may be detrimental effects on the children`s development and overall psychological well-being;
- Theories have been generated regarding the grieving process of children who have experienced a parental death;
- Bowlby (1980) in Smith (2009:7) advocates for the importance of adults to recognize that children have limited understanding for figures of speech;
- When children are told their deceased parent is sleeping, they tend to fear falling asleep themselves; and
- Children do not have the mental capabilities of adults, and therefore, they understand and respond to death in various unique ways that are also influenced by their age at the time of the event.

Hadley (2007) shares that “Children with cancer, children who have lost limbs and children who never had any visit from their parents,” were around her. Furthermore “There was a lack of spiritual support for these children.” In her use of the model for pastoral care for children, the author explores the history, theology and biblical literature that speak to children directly. She examines sources that are primarily written about adults yet might be applied to children. Her point of departure is based on the “Theology of the wounded.” This addresses the healing of children who are wounded and saturated in pain and strife. She concurs with writers who affirm that “Children are naturally spiritual beings, and that they deserve the care of the community of faith.” The author refers to Witvliet (1999) in Hadley (2007) as one who “Creates a theology of the child as spiritual leader in the church based environment on biblical foundations.”

The researcher also notes the contributions made by Naughton, Hughes and Smith (2007) in exploring the concept of children`s rights. In this article, it is observed that “Children are rarely regarded as citizens with a right to participate in civic life.” The concern is raised that “Adults generally develop laws, policies and practices and expect children to conform without considering their rights and needs.” The article also reflects on the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989). In this Convention, it is stated that “Children have the right to relax and play and to take part in a wide range of cultural, artistic and other recreational activities.” According to the researcher, it must be noted that children also have the right to spiritual support and care when they experience crises such as sickness and bereavement.

Jackson (2007:50) mentions the role of families in supporting bereaved children. The author notes that “Families have a duty to ensure that bereaved children are not alone with worries and fears.” The author further argues that “This is because children who feel safe will discuss issues pertaining to their experiences with people they can trust.” The author goes further to suggest that “Children will also determine how they want to remember their loved one, thereby preventing complicated grief.” Kroen (1996) cited in Jackson (2007:50) announced that “The path that a child will follow through grief is as unpredictable as children themselves; therefore, primary caregivers should be alert to the most common early warning signs.” It is argued that “The early warning signs include: sadness, withdrawing, crying over long periods of time, limited or excessive sleep and expression of suicidal thoughts.” Corr et al (2000) cited in Jackson (2007:50) argues of “The importance of significant others being alert to potential complications in grief and mourning which may need a professional assessment to determine healthy grief reactions from unhealthy grief reactions.” Woo and Wong (2003:45) in Jackson (2007:50) provide “A comprehensive list of early warning signs and symptoms that help primary care givers identify if, and when a bereaved child may need professional intervention.” These authors provide the following signs and symptoms:

- When the child excessively imitates the dead person;
- Repeatedly mentions wanting to join the dead person;
- Shows a sharp drop in school performance;
- Refuses to attend school;

- Is unable to respond to acts or words of comfort;
- Rejects support;
- Refuses to believe that the person has died;
- Grieves excessively;
- Has difficulty weeping;
- Loses interest in friends or daily activities;
- Shows major changes in his/her sleeping or eating patterns;
- Has nightmares;
- Is afraid of being alone;
- Acts much younger than his/her age; and
- Uses drugs or alcohol to dull the emotional pain (Woo & Wong, 2003:45 in Jackson, 2007:50).

Another concept that is taken into consideration in this regard is the “Importance of memories.”

The author states that “Memories play an important role in the grieving process because they comfort the living and honour the dead.” Partab in Kasiram et al (2007) cited in Jackson (2007:132) “Describes the memory Book project and its adaptation in a South African context.” It mentioned that “The method has come to be used by several organizations to assist children and families dealing with death and dying, especially those infected and affected by HIV/AIDS.” It is also stated that “The project not only keeps memories alive but strengthens the child’s sense of belonging and builds resilience in children whose parents/primary caregivers are living with or have subsequently died from AIDS.”

The author presents a list of some of the practical activities recommended to help bereaved children share, record, or store precious memories:

- Writing: poetry, writing a letter (to share some important event that has taken place), creative writing which permits the child to express thoughts and feelings (which the child may or may not be comfortable discussing with significant others), and making a birthday or Mother`s day or Christmas card can be used;
- Diary/journals: these can be used for recording reactions to the death and/or memories of the deceased, or to record how they coped with intense feelings;
- Photographs: looking at photographs of the deceased may bring back bittersweet memories, not only as a constant reminder of what the loved one looked like, but also a reminder of good times too. Although many children do not have access to photographs, it is still important to note that for those who do, photographs remain one of the most prized possessions linking the child to the deceased. If children do not have access to photographs, they could be encouraged to draw/sketch a picture as a reminder of their loved ones; and
- Communication: There are various ways in which children can come to terms with grief by communicating with others. These are:
  - a) Spirituality/religion: talking to loved ones through prayer, or the belief that the dead still communicate with the living, vice versa;
  - b) Communicating with significant others: talking about their loved ones, hearing stories about their loved ones, or learning new things about their loved ones. While this may make children feel sad, more importantly, it makes them realize that their loved one has not been forgotten by others. In general, children enjoy hearing stories about the various stages of their loved ones lives, or the importance of the life of someone so dearly loved;
    - Personal possessions: wearing something that belonged to the deceased, such as a favourite item of clothing or jewellery, can help children feel connected to their loved one;
    - Music: listening to favourite songs provides a connection between children and the deceased. Although feelings of sadness may be associated with music, children nevertheless enjoy listening to a favourite song;

- Special occasions: visiting the cemetery on anniversaries, birthdays, or Christmas day are ways in which the bereaved gather together to remember the deceased, or honour the memory of an important person, as well acknowledge the loss;
- Memory Box/Books: children can be encouraged to create a memory Box/Book to store some of the treasured possessions associated with the deceased; and
- Death-related literature to help bereaved children: special emphasis is placed on the value of death-related books as tools in helping bereaved children to find ways in which to cope with their grief. This is done by reading stories that they can identify with or stories that can initiate discussions about death and dying between children and significant others. Jackson (2007:19-24) goes on to speak of the developmental levels in middle childhood. The author shows how these levels contribute to the way in which children understand death. The first of these levels is known as “Cognitive development.”

Louw (1998) cited in Jackson (2007:20) maintains that “There is significant cognitive skills development during the middle childhood years and overall improvement in memory performance.” It is further argued that “Cognitive development depends on a child’s sensation, perception, conceptualization and of processing circumstantial information.” The author further argues that “An important feature of middle childhood is the advancement in cognitive sophistication and children’s learning about themselves, and their environment improves and expands considerably.”

It is also argued that “Loss through death is experienced in different ways at different developmental stages.” Worden (1996) cited in Jackson (2007:20) affirms that “By the age of five, most children can understand that death is irreversible and universal...” A comment is also made that “In the absence of the explanation of the facts of death, children may fail to understand what death is, and may fantasize in the absence of an explanation.” In this same context, it is further argued that “As children mature, so too does their understanding of death and dying.” The author also makes the point that “Adults need to acknowledge their own apprehension about talking to children about death, but they do need to respect children enough to be honest and open to them about death and dying. “According to the author, “Children of school going age are as capable as adults of comprehending death...”

According to Kubler-Ross and Kessler (2005:84) cited in Jackson (2007:21), it is conceded that “Children do not have the words or permission to voice their grief, while adults have trouble expressing their emotions.” It is further argued here that “When children do not discuss their feelings, it should not be assumed that they are resilient, but rather that they may be hesitant to do so because they are not encouraged or perhaps not allowed to.” These authors also make a comment that “However, if children are given facts, they will be able to think and behave in the light of increased understanding.” It is further discussed that “The death of a parent/primary caregiver disrupts childhood and may impact negatively on a child’s development.” According to them, “Death is a subject that needs to be discussed openly and honestly with children, the details of which should be appropriate to their age and cognitive developmental stage.”

According to Mphuthi (2004) cited in Jackson (2007:21) “Coming to terms with a death of a loved one is always traumatic and painful, with every one having their own unique way of grieving because bereavement, grief and mourning are highly individual phenomena.” The author goes on to affirm that “Given that children communicate at different levels, according to their developmental or reading level, there is an extensive body of literature available on the subject of children and grief that can read to or by children.” According to the author, “This may promote the process of effective communication while minimizing misunderstandings about death and dying.” According to Kubler-Ross and Kessler (2005:79) cited in Jackson (2007:21), “Adults need to be realistic about their views of life. If not, they perpetuate their incorrect beliefs, and children who take these beliefs and assumptions into adulthood will have little sense of reality and life.” The next level to be discussed is “Personality development.”

Louw (1998) cited in Jackson (2007:21) argues that “Current literature on childhood development also deals with the development of self-concept, emotional development and the development of sensitivity towards others, all of which are important determinants of personality development during middle childhood.” According to Meyer (2003:3) in Jackson (2007:21) “The incompleteness of our knowledge about the forces that control behaviour results in different opinions about the nature of human behaviour and what motivates it.” According to Lindon (1998:143) in Jackson (2007:21), “The term *personality* is used primarily when discussing adults, whereas the term *temperament* is used to describe individual differences in childhood and to explain the in-built tendencies for children’s

behaviour and reactions to their experiences.” On the same score, according to Digman, McCrae and John in Bee (1997:250) cited in Jackson (2007:21), there is a reference to “Big Five” traits used to describe children`s personality:

- Extroversion;
- Agreeableness;
- Conscientiousness;
- Neuroticism; and
- Openness.

It is further mentioned that “A person`s self-concept is one`s idea of who and what one is and of one`s values as an individual. Individuals do not exist or function in isolation. They live in environments with particular physical, social and cultural forces, and those help determine their behaviour.” Meyer (2003:3) cited in Jackson (2007:21) defines personality as: “Constantly changing but nevertheless relatively stable organization of all physical, psychological and spiritual characteristics of the individual which determine his/her behaviour in interaction within the context in which the individual finds himself or herself.”

Commenting on the concept of middle childhood, Louw (1998) in Jackson (2007:22) extrapolates that “Middle childhood is an active period of personality development as it is accompanied by greater emotional maturity as well as a development of sensitivity towards others, suggesting a decrease in egocentrism.” On the other hand, Corr (2000:309) cited in Jackson (2007:22) maintains that “Each child`s individual personality will be a powerful variable in the ways in which he or she can and does think about death.” The author adds to this by saying that “Children are described as being more sensitive during middle childhood; the experience of a parent`s/primary caregiver`s death may influence their self-concept more negatively than in the previous developmental stage.” It is further affirmed that “Facing the changes associated with the parental death challenges the very core of the child`s existence, and no-one can be adequately prepared to deal with this experience regardless of one`s personality development.” In the next section, “Emotional development” is discussed.

Emotional development, according to De Klerk and le Roux (2003) cited in Jackson (2007:22), pertains to the “Importance of caregivers to develop the level of emotional

intelligence in children so that children are better prepared to face challenges.” This emotional intelligence development is defined by de Klerk and le Roux (2003) in Jackson (2007:22) as “The ability to identify, understand and control thoughts and feelings, communicate them appropriately to others and have empathy with the emotions of others, thereby leading to meaningful interaction.” It is further discussed that “Children learn that they are able to mask the physical manifestations of their inner emotions and also to learn to read facial expressions of others with great accuracy...” Kroen (1996:11) cited in Jackson (2007:33) discusses ways in which children react to grief. “A child’s reaction to death depends on the child’s personality, sensitivity, coping skills, level of development and abstract thinking skills.” It is also argued that “It is very important to recognize that grieving is a skill which can be learnt. Children learn how to react or respond to emotional experiences from significant others in their lives, but mostly from their primary caregivers.”

Horowitz et al., cited in Worden (2001:15) in Jackson (2007:33) maintain that “Children may also experience fear that the other parent will die too, or may become unduly dependent on the surviving parent, while others may need constant reassurance that someone will always be there to take care of them, especially in the case of children from single parent families.” The author further argues that “The fear of abandonment is also a reaction to the loss of a parent/primary caregiver.” The discussion goes on in this regard that “In some instances, bereaved children are known to regress into younger behaviour.” It is further argued that “Bereavement can lead to intense regression where the bereaved perceive of themselves as helpless inadequate incapable and childlike or personally bankrupt. “The discussion carries on that “During the adjustment to an environment in which the deceased is missing, the bereaved are also faced with the challenges of adjusting to their own sense of self.” On this note, Worden (2001) is of the view that “These negative images are not permanent and usually give way to more positive ones as the bereaved person learns new ways of coping with their environment and the experience.”

The author goes on to argue that “The most common defence mechanism for blocking out painful feelings and emotions is repression, which is a defence mechanism by which unacceptable thoughts and feelings are banished from consciousness.” It is further argued by the author that “Most of us are taught that losing control of our emotions is wrong, that crying is a sign of weakness, or that displays of anger or fear are signs of immaturity.” According to Marrone (1997:20) cited in Jackson (2007:33), it is argued that “In emotional repression, the

muscles and nerves block out or mute what are unacceptable bodily feelings, or thoughts and emotions painfully connected to an event in our lives, or we consciously or unconsciously forget memories of those events.” The author is of the view that “Because children vary in their reactions to death, the extent of support from family members and significant others will also determine how the child copes with the grieving process.” Marrone (1997) in Jackson (2007:33) speaks of regression “As one of the numerous emotional reactions which grieving children may exhibit in response to the loss of a loved one.” The author emphasizes the point that “It is, therefore, not uncommon during the initial stages of coping with death and bereavement when a child’s sense of security is threatened...” Corr et al (2000:213) in Jackson (2007:34) speak of physical reactions saying: “Grief is not only felt as an emotional reaction to loss but it can also manifest itself in physical sensations.” Examples of how grief can be expressed physically are presented as follows:

- **Grief feelings:** include sadness, anger, guilt, self-reproach, anxiety, loneliness, helplessness;
- **Grief physical sensations:** include fatigue, hollowness in the stomach, a lump in the throat tightness in the chest, aching arms, over-sensitivity to noise, shortness of breath, lack of energy, muscle weakness, dry mouth or loss of co-ordination;
- **Grief cognitions:** include disbelief, confusion, preoccupation, sense of presence that the deceased has not actually died, paranormal (hallucinatory) experiences or dreaming of the deceased; and
- **Grief behaviours:** include sleep and/or appetite disturbances, absent mindedness, social withdrawal, and loss of interest in activities that previously were sources of satisfaction, crying and avoidance of reminders about the deceased, searching or calling out, restlessness and over activity.

Corr et al (2000) in Jackson (2007:34) mentions “Social additional expressions of grief.” The author maintains that these expressions “Can be experienced in the religious and spiritual domains of life. Examples of these include more (or less) frequent praying; changes in the child’s levels of participation in church (or temple/mosque) based activities; and changes in the perceptions of the role or significance of supernatural spiritual beings in the child’s life.”

Kubler-Ross and Kessler (2005:7), in Jackson (2007:41), present five stages of grief which are used as a basis from which bereaved people are able to identify what they may be feeling. These feelings are based in their attempt to deal with life and loss. The stages are presented as follows:

- **Denial functions:** These act as a buffer or a sense of numbness after receiving unexpected or shocking news. Denial is usually a temporary defence and will soon be replaced by partial acceptance;
- **Replacement of denial:** The first stage of denial is replaced by anger, rage, envy or resentment and by asking `why me` questions;
- **Bargaining:** Bargaining is usually an attempt to postpone the inevitable;
- **Depression:** When the person`s numbness, anger and rage is replaced with a sense of loss, actual or impending;
- **Acceptance:** Acceptance refers to the stage when the bereaved person has worked through the previous stages. Related to these aspects, Wolfelt (2001:3) in Jackson (2007:42) presents a series of needs for understanding grieving children. They are presented as follows:

- i. **Acknowledgment:** Children need to acknowledge the reality of the death of their loved one. They need to understand the meaning of the word `dead`. This is because so often, adults use common euphemisms which are more gentle and less direct when referring to an unpleasant experience instead of using direct language when discussing death and dying with children;
- ii. **To embrace:** Children need to feel and embrace the pain of loss. Most authors on this topic believe that children should be encouraged to talk and share their painful thoughts and feelings with someone they can trust - someone who will listen and non-judgmentally. More importantly, if adults openly express their feelings in front of children, then children will learn that it is acceptable to feel the pain of the loss and mourn in the presence of others;
- iii. **To remember:** The child must be made to remember the person who died, and adults should not deny a child`s pain by preventing them from actively remembering the person

who has died. Children find great comfort in looking at photographs of their loved one, listening to or retelling stories about the life that meant so much to them. Children need to be encouraged to share special moments about photographs;

- iv. **New self-identity:** Children need to develop a new self-identity because part of the child`s self-identity was formed by the relationship with the person who died. Wolfelt (2001) cautions against caring adults trying to find a substitute to `fill in` for the person who died, although finding a supportive relationship for the child is encouraged; and
- v. **On-going support from adults:** Bereaved children should receive on-going support from caring adults. This should take place through the grieving process as there is no specific time period for a child to grieve. Bereaved children need compassionate support their grieving process, not only immediately after the bereavement, but also in the months and years ahead to help the child become healthy, loving adults.

Kroen (1996:16) in Jackson (2007:22-23) concedes that “Sharing emotions with young children is healthier than hiding them as the former encourages children to express feelings.” The authors go on to advise that “Lessons in emotional expression should not only be for the sole purpose of expressing hostile feelings, but sharing how one feels in all situations; this will equip children with the skills necessary to identify and deal with their own feelings regardless of age and gender.” In this same context, “Children should learn that no-one is happy all the time, that sadness is a necessary adjustment to life” Kroen (1996:16) in Jackson (2007:23). Another valuable contribution made by these authors is that “Children realize that different emotions can be experienced simultaneously. They also learn to identify and attribute inner feelings to emotions by expressing, controlling or hiding their feelings.” Another important point raised is that “As children mature, they develop the ability to identify the emotional labels such as love, anger and fear and of attributing inner feelings to them.” Worden (1996) in Jackson (2007:23) presents four emotions that are mostly identifiable with bereaved children as:

- Sadness;
- Anxiety;
- Guilt; and

- Anger.

These emotions are responses to the death of a parent Worden (1996 in Jackson (2007:23). The next aspect to be discussed is “Gender-role development and stereotyping”. Gender-role development and stereotyping, according to World Vision (n.d.) cited in Jackson (2007:23), is explained thus: “Children are labelled by virtue of their gender as either boys or girls, but childhood is not exempt.” It is further argued that “...Gender roles are acquired through a process of socialization and through the culture of a particular society. Despite the South African Constitution advocating gender equality, many social and cultural practices continue to discriminate against female children.” The argument carries on that “Children become more aware of their gender roles during the middle stages of childhood where girls and boys usually identify with role models of their respective gender and model their behaviour accordingly.”

It is further argued that “Girls are allowed to be emotional whereas boys may be culturally constrained and need to control their emotions.” According to this argument, “Gender-role stereotyping may often prevent children from expressing their emotions; for example, boys are taught that `cowboys` do not cry.” According to Louw (1998) cited in Jackson (2007:23), “Such gender-role stereotyping prevents children from fully expressing their emotions. Children who are allowed unrestrained emotional expression while growing up are better able to deal with their own emotions by developing ineffective methods of coping.” According to Marrone (1997) in Jackson (2007:23), “Gender emotional expression and grieving styles affect males and females in different ways. Males were more likely to hide their distress...which implicitly suppressed emotions, such as crying and sadness especially in front of peers or in public. However, girls are more inclined to show their emotions and seek comfort and support from family members and friends.”

Worden (1996) in Jackson (2007:24) presented the following findings with differences between boys and girls without looking at the gender of the deceased parent:

- The degree of loss of a mother is worse for most children than the loss of a father;
- Girls, regardless of age, showed more anxiety than boys over the two years of bereavement;

- Girls were more sensitive to family arguments/fights that occurred in the early months after the death;
- Somatic symptoms were also more likely to be experienced by girls than boys, especially one year after the death;
- Girls spoke more to their surviving parent about the death and were better able to share their feelings with the family than were boys;
- Girls tended to be more attached to the dead parent than boys and after one year and were more likely to idolize the deceased;
- Girls were more likely to keep objects belonging to the dead parent than boys;
- Boys were more likely to evaluate their conduct as worse than their peers, and were more likely to have learning difficulties during the first year of bereavement; and
- Boys were more likely to be given specific instructions `to grow up` than were girls in the early months after the loss.

The following section deals with issues pertaining to “Informing a child of a significant death.” Jackson (2007:31) discusses the issue of the grieving children within the school environment and how this environment can contribute towards the upliftment of such children. The author maintains that “Schools are public places in which bereaved children may grieve. It is further argued that “Schools cannot compensate for children`s severe losses, and teachers cannot ease children`s grief alone. Schools, however, must become aware that children living through bereavement may experience various emotional reactions to grief during the school day.” According to Woo and Wong (2003) cited in Jackson (2007:31) “Children may become preoccupied with thoughts of their deceased parent or primary caregiver during lessons.” It is further argued that “When children are discouraged or prevented from expressing grief, this may impact on the other aspects of their development and their school performances in particular.” London and Lourens (2004) cited in Jackson (2007:31), speak of the “Need for schools to become emotionally safe places by taking the initiative to implement programs to protect strengthen, and support children against the ravages of social disorganization and family collapse.” Kroen (1996) and Abrams (2000) in Jackson (2007:31) agree thus: “In order to create as much stability for the grieving child

outside of the home, it is advisable for the child to return to school as soon as possible.” Commenting on this same aspect, Newman (2000) in Jackson (2007:31) argues that “Children at different ages may experience their involvement with teachers in different ways.

Children learn that a secure relationship can serve as a base from which one can safely seek help.” It is argued that “Teachers are not expected to be experts in dealing with grieving children but are important in identifying early warning signs that may indicate that the child is experiencing difficulties.” Jackson (2007:34) goes on to speak of the “Challenges faced by orphaned or vulnerable children and maintains that “With the death of a parent/primary caregiver becoming an increasingly a common life experience for many young children in South Africa, the government can no longer be considered solely responsible for providing for the needs of all orphaned or vulnerable children.” It is further argued that “When the orphaned child is from a single-parent household, the primary caregiver`s death has greater consequences for their lives.” An example is made by the author that “If children have to relocate to live with others or are placed in residential care, they may feel that they cannot burden their new caregivers and may stop the mourning process in the belief that the death of their loved one may have no significance for their new caregiver.”

According to Ramsden et al (2002) in Jackson (2007:34), “This fact means that the child also had no-one with whom to commiserate. The decrease in the life expectancy rate for adults in our country adds to the dilemma because fewer adults will be available to take care of children`s needs.” The author further affirms that “When children are hurt and angry, reckless behaviour becomes a likely consequence. Secondary trauma will result if children cannot deal with their loss in a loving, safe and secure environment.” It is further argued that “This may result in on-going hurt and pain where feelings of distrust, anger despair and anxiety persist. Society has a moral duty and obligation to the children of our country to do whatever it takes to allow children to be children.”

Jackson (2007:35) then goes on to elaborate on “Child-headed households.” It is argued that “The death of a parent/primary caregiver may result in children being left without appropriate adult supervision, especially in respect of single-parent families.” The argument carries on that “Caring for orphans or vulnerable children is an additional burden for families that are already poor because the HIV/AIDS crisis plunges poor families into even greater poverty.”

Lyles (2006) introduces critical points for informing children of a death that has occurred:

- Keep it simple and use `died` not, `sleeping`;
- Allow your child to express raw However, they may find it meaningful when they are older to know that they had a chance to say goodbye;
- If your child`s parent or other close relative died, invite him or her to participate in the service;
  - Some children like to write and/or read a poem or story about the loved one; feelings freely or ask questions;
  - Answer questions honestly and simply;
  - Do not go into detail, unless asked;
  - Offer only as much detailed information as is requested;
  - If the death was due to a violent crime, explain how the child will remain safe;
  - If the body is suitable for viewing, allow the child to see your deceased loved one, if requested. Prepare the child for what he or she will see;
  - Tell your child what will be happening in the next few days;
  - Give your child choices in what to do. Some children want to go to school the day of the death;
  - Familiar routines are comforting. Inform the school of the death before your child returns; and
  - Reassure your child that he or she will be cared for and explain the plan.

In addition to these important and critical aspects regarding informing a child of a death and issues regarding the grieving of children in the school environment by Jackson (2007), Lyles (2006) goes on to speak about whether or not children should attend funerals or memorial services, following

- A basic guideline is to let your child decide what he or she wants to do;

- Expressions of grief are unique to each individual;
  - Many children prefer to attend the funeral or a memorial service;
  - Some may prefer not to attend;
  - Pre-schoolers may have a difficult time sitting through a service;
  - Others choose to sing a song or pray while others choose to stay in the background;
  - Trust your child to know what is best for him or her in this matter;
  - Prepare your child for what will be experienced. Will there be a body? A viewing?
- If there is a body to view, explain that their loved one is not hurting, hungry or cold;
  - If your family chose cremation, assure the child that the loved one experienced no pain during cremation;
  - If your child chooses, allow him or her to see and touch the ashes; and
  - Generally, children appreciate being included and being given the opportunity to make their own decisions about participation in services.

Spiegelberg (2006) speaks of the biological knowledge and understanding of death by children. The author explores the Piaget's theory of cognitive development. According to the author, the theory "Uses developmental stages to explain children's understanding of death." He further affirms that "It is also important to note the effect of biological knowledge on children's understanding of death." Bering and Bjorklund (2004) in Spiegelberg (2006) argue that "Increased biological knowledge allows children to understand that, certain functions will no longer continue after death." It is further confirmed that "When death occurs, children use their present biological knowledge to attribute functions from the living individuals to the deceased." Another aspect stressed by the authors here is that "Children aged three (3) to seven (7) years no longer attribute biological imparaties to the deceased party, including the need to eat and drink, brain functioning and the thought of new life." There are also psychological functions with regards to these, that is, "Psychological functions

that children continue to attribute towards hearing, seeing, thirst and hunger.” According to these authors, “Epistemic functions that children continue to attribute include the ability to think, believe and knowledge. It is important to note that by preschool years, children who comprehend the irreversibility of death seem to have a capacity to understand that activities and physical processes that are essential to the functioning of human body cease to exist after the death of an organism.” Individuals from ages seven (7) to twenty-one (21) believe that biological and most psychological states cease to exist after the death of an organism.

Even though children in this age group believe that psychological and perceptual states end with death, they also believe that other psychological states such as being emotional, desire and epistemic states still exist. As biological knowledge increases, children have the increased ability to apply this knowledge. This helps them to decipher their thoughts and beliefs about death and dying. Emswiler and Emswiler (2000) in Spiegelberg (2006) speak of bereavement defence mechanisms by children. These authors state that “Even though the adult’s grieving process and that of a child differs, a child will probably still experience many of the same emotions an adult does. However, children lack skills for understanding, coping with and expressing what is happening with them during times of bereavement.” It is further discussed that “Due to the fact that children lack these crucial skills, they often use defence mechanisms to help themselves recover during times of bereavement.”

Denial is the first defence mechanism to be discussed hereunder. “Children, who are unable to face the reality of the loss, will use denial as a defence mechanism.” According to Emswiler and Emswiler (2000) in Spiegelberg (2006), there are two forms of denial used by children when they are faced with loss. One of these is cognitive denial and occurs when a child is aware of the loss and its details, but views the loss with scepticism. Affective denial is another form of denial which occurs when a child accepts the loss cognitively but does not express emotions that are congruent with the loss.

Splitting is another form of defence mechanism. This form occurs when children claim to be experiencing only feelings that they believe are acceptable by others, or that are manageable. In this form of denial, feelings that are thought to be unacceptable may be attributed to other people, toys or pets. Children may use this mechanism as an avoidance tactic to avoid talking or dealing with their emotions during bereavement. Devaluing is the last form of defence mechanism in this context. Devaluing occurs when children pretend not to care or to have emotions about the loss that has occurred in their lives. When using this mechanism, the child

is attempting to remove him/herself from the situation, which allows the child to experience less pain. Even though this defence mechanism will not work, it does seem to help the child to feel temporarily safe. According to Spiegelberg (2006), "It is important for adults to be aware of these mechanisms so that they can help the children to explore the feelings and thoughts that they are trying to deny or avoid. If the feelings are left unexplored, the child may be negatively affected by unresolved grief."

Schuurman and Lindholm (2002) cited in Spiegelberg (2006) speak of the nature of relationship and its implications on children during bereavement. This refers to the type of relationship that a school aged child had with the deceased as this relationship may create differences in the bereavement process. This refers to three relationships in the form of parental bereavement, sibling bereavement, and friendship bereavement. All these three relationships can impact on the bereavement process in different ways. The death of a parent is usually a devastating experience for a school aged child. Despite the relationship between the child and the parent, the school aged child's sense of stability and refuge are robbed when the death of a parent occurs. Servant and Hayslip cited in Cait (2005) in Spiegelberg (2006) suggest that parental death negatively influences the perception of interpersonal relationships of bereaved children. This leaves the child with feelings of inferiority and inadequacy in their relationships with others.

That is why it is so important for the surviving parent or other adults in the bereavement life of the child to provide ample social support for the grieving school aged child. Cait (2005) cited in Spiegelberg (2006) argue that "If the social support is not provided, the child may continue to carry the feelings of inferiority and inadequacy." The author further states that "The death of a parent may also cause the child to take on responsibilities of the deceased parent." It is further argued that "the role replacement of the deceased parent by a child may create significant changes in the child's life as well as in the entire family." Commenting of another form of death, which is a death of a sibling, Riches (2002) cited in Spiegelberg (2006) states that "the death of a sibling may also create significant problems for a school aged child." The author further states that "sibling relationship may be the most underestimated relationship an individual will ever experience, but this does not mean that it cannot create problems."

Holiday (2002) cited in Spiegelberg (2006) suggests that "Older siblings may experience guilt when a younger sibling dies because they feel that they could have prevented the death."

The author further suggests that “The younger siblings may experience a sense of fear and insecurity when an older sibling dies.” Riches (2002) cited in Spiegelberg (2006) is of the view that “A sense of no longer being cared for occurs when parents are preoccupied with the death of other siblings. While the parental figures are mourning the loss of one child, the other children may feel that they are being ignored or forgotten.”

Commenting on the death of a friend, which is the last of these forms of death, Schuurman and Lindholm (2002) cited in Spiegelberg (2006) argues that “The death of a friend may have a significant effect on a school aged child. The effects of a friend’s death seem to increase as the child gets older; this is because of the critical role played by peer relationships in the lives of young adolescents.” These authors also state that “While coping with the loss of a friend, a child is going to experience many feelings. These feelings may include depression, abandonment and sadness.” It is further emphasized here that “The school aged child may also experience a change in his/her relationships with the surviving friends. Some friends may even become closer over the bereavement period, thus finding comfort in each other’s company.”

It is worth noting what Watson (2006) argues, when the author reflects on the importance of the well-being of children and their meaning in life as members of the society. The author focuses on the improvement of children’s well-being in five domains:

- Physical, mental health and emotional well-being;
- Protection from harm and neglect;
- Education, training and recreation;
- Contributions made by children in society; and
- Social and economic well-being.

Nyanjaya (2006) speaks of the suppression of grief by males and how it has a potential to lead to death. The author also mentions the negative impact this had on him when he grew up as a young boy and elaborates on this issue as follows:

“Suppression of grief is the reaction that denies the expression of the true feelings of the impact of loss. The grieving male keeps his feelings under tight control. In an attempt to be

brave, he wears a mask that portrays emotional strength or false front. The feelings are buried beneath the surface and are not allowed expression. Showing emotions may be interpreted by society as a sign of weakness; this may also be seen as a lack of faith.” The author further explains that “When males suffer, trauma is expected to abuse or hides their gift of emotions and tears in order to qualify as men.”

Neuger and Poling (1997) cited in Nyanjaya (2006) affirm that “Suppression of grief is a cover of true feelings.” Nyanjaya (2006) goes on to assert that “When men suppress their grief process, they will be faithfully responding to the teachings of their forefathers.” The author also states that “The society should through grand parents and community leaders encourage proper stewardship in handling grief.” Commenting on this same issue, Balswick (1992) cited in Nyanjaya (2006) affirms that “Not only does inexpressiveness over grief becomes part of males, it also becomes a social expectation, re-enforced by patterns and institutions of our culture.” The author even goes further to say that “For this reason, it is not only individuals who need to change, but we also need to bring change into our larger systems and structures.” The author (Nyanjaya) goes on to mention his Zimbabwean culture in this regard that “In Zimbabwe, from childhood, males are encouraged to control their grief. Statements like ‘a man does not cry` are often used.”

There is no doubt in the researcher`s mind that this process would have been and is detrimental for young children. This means that instead of getting support during bereavement, young males will be told not to cry because as males, they must be strong. This is a cultural aspect that needs scrutiny and correction. The writer concurs in this regard that, this is also the case in the *Xhosa* culture. Children are likely to grow up under this set-back. This warrants the necessity of this particular study, as it is aimed at helping them in this regard.

The researcher notes the contribution made by National Association of School of Psychologists (2003) which focuses on helping children cope with grief. There are several points presented by this association in this regard:

- Allow children to be teachers about their grief experiences. Give them the opportunity to tell their stories, and you must be a good listener;

- Don't assume that every child in a certain age group understands death in the same way or with the same feelings. All children are different, and their view of the world is unique and shaped by different experiences;
- Grieving is a process, not an event. Parents and schools need to allow adequate time for each child to grieve in the manner that works for each child. Pressing children to resume normal activities without the chance to deal with their emotional pain may prompt additional problems or negative reactions;
- Don't tell half-truths to children about the tragic event as they are often brilliant and sensitive. They will see through false information and wonder why you do not trust them with the truth. Lies do not help the child through the healing process; neither does it help the child to develop effective coping strategies for life future tragedies or losses;
- Help all children regardless of age to understand loss and death; and give the child information at the level that he/she can understand. Allow the child to guide adults as to the need for more information or clarification of the facts presented. Loss and death are both part of the circle of life that children need to understand;
- Encourage children to ask questions about loss and death. Treat their questions with respect and willingness to help the child to find his/her answers;
- Don't assume that children always grieve in an orderly or predictive way. We all grieve in different ways, and there is no one correct way for people to move through the grieving process;
- Let children know that you really want to understand what they are feeling or what they need. Sometimes children are upset, but they cannot tell you what will be helpful. Giving them time and encouragement to share their feelings with you, may enable them to sort out their feelings;
- Children need long-lasting support. The more losses the child suffers, the more difficult it will be to recover. This is especially true if they have lost a parent who was their major source of support. Try to develop multiple support structures for children who suffered significant losses;

- Keep in mind that grief work is hard. It is hard work for adults and needless to say for children as well; and
- Understand that grief work is complicated. The sudden or violent nature of death can further complicate the grieving process.

The researcher further notes the contributions made by Schoepke (2003) in this process. The author speaks of the “Cognitive understanding of death.” The author affirms that “The concept of death is difficult for children to understand.” Nagy (1948) and Piaget (1950) cited in Schoepke (2003) theorize that “What children understand about death depends upon their age and experience.” Nagy (1948) cited in Schoepke (2003) conducted studies to define “What children actually understood with regards to death.” It is confirmed that from these studies, “Three major developmental stages categorized by age were identified for young children.” The first of these categories is `preschool children.

According to Nagy (1948) cited in Schoepke (2003) “Children under age five understand death as irreversible and final.” The author goes on to say that children in this age group “Also view death as departure and that the person is living somewhere else.” Children are also “Curious about how that person continues to live or about the nature of their lives in the grave.” According to the National Association of School of Psychologists (2001) cited in Schoepke (2003), “Pre-schoolers aged three to five do not grasp the finality of death and its irreversibility. They may link certain events or magical thinking with causes of death.” It is further stated that “At this age group, children may believe that a dead person can be awakened or be put back together again.”

They may even believe that after grandma dies, she may come back and play with them again.” The author further argues that “These children cannot comprehend the concept of death and need to play and reminisce to support their emotions of loss.” The second of these categories is `early elementary age`. Nagy (1948) cited in Schoepke (2003) affirms that, “From age five to nine, death is most often personified and thought of as a contingency. Death may take on imagined forms such as the grim reaper, a skeleton, a ghost or an angel of death.” At this age group, the author also affirms that “For a child, death is something that can be avoided or escaped from.”

According to Kelly (1990) cited in Schoepke (2003), “This developmental stage is identified by Piaget as `the concrete operational stage` where children see their world in terms of real

objects and are concerned with mechanical aspects of how things work.” At this stage, children “Are believed to understand the causes of death, but may over generalize them.” The author goes on to state that “Children at this stage understand that if large plains crush into buildings, people in these plains and buildings will die, but they may assume that if plains stop flying people will not die.” It is further emphasized that “At this age, children can understand that dead people differ from living people because they cannot move, feel, hear, smell or speak (non-functionality). According to Landsdown and Benjamin (1985) cited in Schoepke (2003), “It is more difficult for children of this age to understand that dead people have a physical change in their appearance or they decay, and this concept does not develop until nearer puberty.” Schaefer and Lyons (1988) cited in Schoepke (2003) affirm that “During this age group, it is a transitional time to understand the universality of death. Children at this age have an acceptance of death happening to others, but not to themselves or their own families.”

It is further believed that at this age, “Death is viewed as a taker or something violent that comes and gets you like a burglar or a ghost. Often at this age, children retain magical thinking. They are afraid that death is contagious.” The authors also affirm that “Some children may think that they can catch death by just playing with the child whose parent has died, or by playing in the same house where the dead person lived.” According to these authors, “Due to their magical thinking, children may also need reassurance that they are not at fault in some way and have not caused the death of a loved one.” According to Sheldon (1998) cited in Schoepke (2003), “By age five to nine, children may understand the difference between temporary separation and death.

Over half of all children age five or six have a full understanding that death is final and permanent, and by age eight and nine, virtually all children understand this core concept of death.” The third of these categories is middle school age. According to Nagy (1948) cited in Schoepke (2003), “After age nine, the child grasps that death is a process happening within us and is both final and universal.” It is also emphasized that “Death is inevitable and cannot be avoided. At this age, children have an acceptance of death as something that could happen to them.” The author is also of the view that “Children at this stage are more realistic and cognitively comprehend death as a final event, but may not understand the more abstract adult concepts related to death. At this stage, they want facts and are curious about what happens physically to make a person die.”

According to the National Association of School of Psychologists (2001) cited in Schoepke (2003), “Children at this age may want to know how the dead person looks like and what process the body goes through at burial.” It is further argued that “They may not have the language to express their guilt feelings of anger, vengeance and despair.” In this regard, it is maintained that “They rather express it with acting out or self-injurious behaviour. They may still think that wishful thinking or passed behaviour caused their loved one to die.” In this regard, it also stated that “They may view such death as a punishment for their thoughts and actions.”

In this same context, Lyles (2004) speaks of the importance of words that can help in supporting grieving children and words that can be detrimental in this regard. First words that can help support grieving children:

- I am sorry your mom/dad/sister died;
- What was your dad/mom/brother like?
- Tell me about your...;
- What was his favourite food?
- What do you miss the most?
- What is the hardest part for you?
- What is the hardest time of the day for you?
- I cannot how you feel, but I remember how I felt when my...died;
- I care about you;
- I care about how you are feeling;
- Is there anything I can do in the classroom to help?
- Is there anything in the classroom you would like to change to feel more comfortable?
- Would you like to talk about it?

- I am available at this time, if you would like to come by to talk;
- Whenever you want to talk about it, I am here for you;
- I am thinking about you especially today because I am aware that it is your mother`s birthday; and
- I am here to listen if you want to talk, or just spend time together...

Mary (2004) in Jackson (2007) provides possible words that have a potential to hurt the bereaved child. These could be a warning not only to caregivers, but to counsellors as well. The author suggests the following words:

- I know just how you feel;
- I know just how you feel, my dog died last year;
- Lick your wounds and move on;
- You will get over it;
- It will be okay;
- Don`t think about it;
- You are better off without him;
- Don`t cry;
- It`s your fault;
- You drove your father to drink;
- Tears won`t bring her back;
- Be strong;
- Forget about it; and
- You are the man/woman of the house now.

Collins and Rau (2001:8) cited in Drimie (2002:8) argue how the question of HIV/AIDS can have an impact that can lead to poverty, which can also affect children at large. The following points are presented in this regard:

- HIV/AIDS is changing the contours and dynamics of poverty through its demographic and socio economic impacts. These impacts may, according to some authors:
- Create inter-generational poverty by impoverishing surviving orphans, often forcing them out of school thus limiting their livelihood options. This takes place by fragmenting or dissolving households and by decimating the fragile asset base of the poor;
- Alter the age structure and composition of the poor by decimating the young adult population while impoverishing an increasing number of children and elderly people;
- Result in irreversible survival mechanisms for the poorest as what to some extent unique about HIV/AIDS, is that the shock it inflicts is one from which many households are unable to recover. In particular, the erosion of the household asset base tends to be permanent;
- Intensify discrimination and marginalization of poor people living with HIV/AIDS as well as their families. This is especially the case with women who are often perceived to be responsible for transmitting the HIV virus;
- Increase the prevalence of poor female headed households (young widows with small children as well as elderly grandmothers looking after grandchildren) and thus the feminization of poverty and agriculture; and
- Exacerbate unequal asset distribution (land, livestock and labour) leading to landlessness and destocking. Once land and livestock are sold, the recovery potential of these households is severely diminished.

In concluding this argument, in the light of all the works that have been presented in this generic literature review section, the researcher takes note of the following:

- These works are highly informative and relevant in all processes of child therapy;
- In different ways these works confirm that, children do grieve and they need support during bereavement;

- Children do understand the concept of death according to their different levels and ages;
- Children have their own Spirituality which plays a critical role during their bereavement support;
- Parents need to contribute towards supporting their own children during bereavement; and
- Even though these sources are generic in their approach, they reveal a lot of things with regards to the world of children. In this section, the researcher looked at generic literature review section. In the next section, the researcher will briefly introduce the identified gap.

### **2.2.1 The identified gap**

As much as these works have widened the horizons of the researcher and of those who care and are interested in the well-being of children, there is a gap that has been identified by the researcher in this regard. The gap is of such a nature that these works are not moving from the premise of African theology and Spirituality. The second thing is that they are generic in their approach. In other words, their focus is not on *Xhosa* speaking children nor do they touch on cultural aspects of the *Xhosa* speakers. The researcher then intends to close the gap in the primary literature review section which is the last section of this chapter. In the following section, (theory base section), the researcher focuses on different theories who contribute in this regard.

### **2.3 Theory base section: Interpretation of theories**

Under this section, the researcher seeks to establish all contributions made by different theories in this regard. This process will also include analysis and application of the said theories including their relevance in the concept of child care during bereavement. The first theory to be discussed is known as `stage theory. `

#### **2.3.1.1 Stage theory: Crabb (1997:148) in Louw (2004:311-312)**

This theory presents the following:

Identification of problematic emotions: this is connected to negative feelings and sinful patterns, and this process looks at how the other person feels. Identification of goal orientated

behaviour which played a role in the development of the problem: this particular process looks at what the other person did in creating the problem. Identification of wrong problem thinking: this aspect looks at the attitude of the person towards the problem. According to this process, problem thinking can be changed by determining the origin of dysfunctional conceptions. This also looks at identifying the origins of the whole process of wrong assumptions that have created the problem. In this process, the person should be encouraged to express emotions concerning such conceptions and those that affect his/her belief. The person should be supported emphatically while he/she is considering these conceptions and is in the process of changing his/her way of thinking. This is regarded as the appropriate time to teach the person new concepts. These new concepts will fill his/her thoughts for the better.

At this stage, problem assumptions should be written down, while on another sheet of paper biblical suppositions, in contrast to previous suppositions, should be indicated clearly. The person involved in this process should, at this stage, constantly read and rethink what has been written. Previous assumptions and suppositions should be changed through learning biblical thinking. In this process, the scripture is used to clarify concepts about a particular issue at hand. Confession of sins plays an important role in this regard, and this renews thoughts and contributes to new thinking. The purpose of this envisioned change in assumptions and suppositions is meant to clarify biblical thinking. The counsellor must be able to strengthen the person's surrender and new commitment. At this stage, responsible decisions should be taken and exercised.

In order to generate real change, one does not start with emotions move to deeds and then to the conceptions. Rather, the order is invariant: first, the facts (a renewed mind) secondly, the faith (doing what the facts suggest); thirdly, feelings (facts become experientially and subjectively real in their nature. Particular goals must be planned at this stage; a person must be given specific instructions to carry out. This process encourages a biblical orientated behaviour. A person must be helped to identify spirit controlled feelings, that is, feelings of serenity, calmness and peace indicate joy. This joy means that the life of such a person moves in an entire new direction. This theory has a layout of stages that contribute to theological upliftment and guidance and are as follows:

**Stage one:** Identification of problem feelings.

**Stage two:** Identification of problem behaviour.

**Stage three:** Identification of problem thinking.

**Stage four:** Identification of biblical thinking.

**Stage five:** Identification of commitment.

**Stage six:** Identification of biblical behaviour.

**Stage seven:** Identification of Spirit controlled feelings.” In this section, the researcher presented the contents of the stage theory. In the following section, the researcher will present the Directive and Confrontational theory.

### **2.3.1.2 The directive and confrontational theory: Adams (1977:45) in Louw (2004)**

This is a second theory to be discussed in this section. Adams uses the concept ‘nouthentic counselling` to guide the person to personal and behavioural change. This change happens through a process of confrontation. As a result of this approach in pastoral care, a person acquires an admonishing character. Such personal change is deemed necessary because sin is the basis of all human problems. This directive approach does not only differ from the non-directive approach to counselling, but it also severely criticizes the influence of psychology. Here, the underlined issue is that pastoral care cannot learn anything from psychology, and it is believed that clinical and counselling psychology, as well as psychiatry and pastoral care, are in competition. This means that a non-believing psychiatry and a psychologist cannot be effective in relieving problems. Psychiatry counselling is not valid in the biblical sense, and his is because those who are assisted by worldly methods cannot grow spiritually. This then means that the relationship between psychology and pastoral care is not smooth - needless to mention that it almost does not exist. According to Adams, pastoral care must develop its own methods that are based on biblical principles. Such an attempt is not only viable, according to the author, but also affirms that if pastoral care is founded on a biblical theory, all problems can be resolved.” This is further affirmed and emphasized as follows: “You need not draw upon sources which aim to replace that which the bible has given us. Thus, we need not turn to psychologists and psychiatrists to learn what the bible has said all along over the ages” (Adams, 1983:26-27). In this section, the researcher looked at directive and confrontational theory. In the following section, the researcher will focus on the Reformed theory.

### **2.3.1.3 Reformed theory:**

This is a third theory to be discussed in this section, and it forms part of the theory base section which contributes to the whole presentation. This theory is based on the Reformed tradition and focuses on Pastoral ministry. The following aspects are presented: Pastoral care which expresses discipline, admonition and conversation and Pastoral care which converts sinners. This conversion takes place by means of the kerygmatic proclamation of the gospel. Such theories by Furet and Heitink imply movement away from admonition to communication, conversation and counselling. Both Calvin and Luther investigated what confession meant, and in later developments, these two approaches contributed to the notion that the central function of Pastoral care lay in the kerygmatic components of proclamation and conversation.

Pastoral care was then viewed as the offer of redemption to sinners and the approach takes place through the therapeutic process which translates to forgiveness and the care of the soul. The care of the soul is the kerygmatic proclamation of the word in order to redeem the sinner and convey forgiveness, and soul care should be viewed as an extension of the proclamation of the word. The word is focused on human life; therefore, Pastoral care is word care which uses the sacraments and church discipline to prevent spiritual backsliding.” In this section, the researcher presented reformed theory. In the following section, the researcher will present Hermeneutical theory.

### **2.3.1.4 Hermeneutical theory: Louw (2004:256)**

This is the fourth theory dealt with in this section. The theory makes use of five Psycho-Pastoral responses and skills. These skills indicate and present an interdisciplinary approach. They are as follows:

- i. Probing:** The art of questioning;
- ii. Comfort:** The art of supporting and empowering;
- iii. Interpretation:** The art of assessing and understanding;
- iv. Empathy:** The art of listening and unconditional acceptance; and
- v. Edification:** The art of directing and communicating the gospel.

Relating to the theory by Louw, Sweeney (2001:41) presents three approaches he believes are relevant in all matters of theological guidance, especially to children. These are as follows:

- i. Psycho analytic approach;
- ii. Child centred approach; and
- iii. Jungian approach.

Landreth in Sweeney (2001:43) highlights that the most relevant and applicable approach in this regard is the child centred approach:

“The child, and not the problem, is the point of focus - the therapist only helps to release what already exists in the child” (2001:43). In this section, the researcher presented hermeneutical theory. In the next section, the researcher will present self-actualization theory.

#### **2.3.1.5 Self-actualization theory: De la Porte and Herbst (2003)**

There are several other theories presented by De la Porte and Herbst (2003) that contribute a great deal to the whole concept of theological guidance and reflection. The first of these is a theory known as the Self-actualization theory.

“This theory is probably one of the most well-known psychological theories in the world and is applicable to many facets of human and social being. The most prominent element of this theory is the hierarchy of human needs. It also focuses on the ultimate goal of self-actualization,” (2003). Gouws and Meyer (1997) cited in Dela Porte and Herbst (2003) define the self-actualization theory as “A theory where the individual’s optimal use of talents, abilities and potential are explored and utilized.” The key aspects of this theory are presented by Moore (1988:376) in De la Porte and Herbst (2003). They are as follows:

The individual is recognized as a positive and worthy being. This being is regarded as having an active will to grow with an integrated functioning. The human’s need to self-actualization is the basic motive of all human functioning. The individual does not need to change his/her basic nature, but has to explore and utilize existing potential. Needs fulfilment is the basis for human functioning, starting with physiological needs and exploration of existing potential. The environment plays an important role in needs fulfilment and causes humans not to reach the ideal of self-actualization. A holistic view of the human being is emphasized. In this

particular section, the researcher presented self-actualization theory. In the next section, the researcher will look at the presentation of Narrative theory.

### **2.3.1.7 The Narrative theory: Boje (1999) in De la Porte and Herbst (2003)**

The Narrative theory holds that knowledge and stories (narratives) emanating from people`s culture, families and experiences shape people in a greater extent. Narrative theory focuses on counselling and community work and looks at people as experts in their own lives. It also views problems as separate from people and focuses on giving meaning through stories we tell. These stories are defined as events linked in sequence across time according to a plot. Key aspects of the theory are:

- A narrative is a Meta code for making sense;
- Narrative theory involves post modern social constructionist paradigm;
- People are regarded as experts in their own lives;
- Narrative theory is less corrective, instructive or persuasive in nature but rather more respectful;
- Narrative theory involves creativity and reflection;
- Self-knowledge is an essential component of being an expert of one`s own life and can empower people;
- Knowledge and stories are the way people give meaning to experiences;
- People can be assisted to challenge the ways they find subjugating;
- People can be encouraged to rewrite their lives according to alternative stories;
- Curiosity and willingness to ask questions are important components in therapy; and
- In therapy, the aim is to move from thin descriptions to alternative stories and rich and thick descriptions.

In this section, the researcher presented the Narrative theory by Boje. In the next section, the researcher will present the Existential theory of Viktor Frankel.

### **2.3.1.8 Existential theory: Viktor Frankel (logo therapy) in De la Porte and Herbst (2003).**

This theory is also known as logo therapy defined as a meaning orientated philosophy. It is also a treatment application developed by Frankel and others used by members of many disciplines to help people search for humanistic and spiritual significance of their lives.

Key aspects of the theory:

- Man has freedom of will;
- Man`s basic motive in life is a search for meaning;
- Life is meaningful;
- Man needs to know more about being human;
- Man has a need for emotional and spiritual growth;
- Man`s needs for meaning often appears under difficult circumstances or in situations where all other needs are fulfilled;
- Fulfilment of psychological needs is not man`s ultimate goal, but is the way to meet spiritual needs; and
- The meaning of life cannot be created - it has to be found.

In this section, the researcher presented Existential theory of Frankel. In the following, section the researcher will present the Liberative theory by Clinebell. 2.3.1.9 The Liberative theory by Clinebell (1984).

The Liberative theory also contributes to the theory base section and seeks to present a life changing approach. In the early centuries of the church, pastoral care was called *the cure of souls*. Cure (from the Latin *cura*) means to heal, but more often it means to care. Both healing and growth were originally included in the meaning of this word. Pastoral care and counselling are a study plant with deep roots in the wisdom of the past. Its flourishing in the last half century has resulted from the convergence of four streams, namely: the clinical pastoral education movement, the new understandings of human beings from the social and behavioural sciences, the flowering of contemporary psychotherapies and the surging interest

in psychology and psychotherapy. In the church today, the newer streams have flowered into the century spanning stream of pastoral care, thus producing a river of healing and growth. Counselling pastors should learn all they can from contemporary sources. However, their self-identity should be moulded by their time-tested tradition of shepherding and not by the recent theory of psychotherapist. (1984).

Key elements of the theory are as follows:

- i. Healing: this focuses on spiritual healing, marriage counselling and therapy;
- ii. Sustaining: here issues such as preserving, consoling and consolidating are dealt with;
- iii. Guiding: this entails giving advice and listening;
- iv. Reconciling: this covers areas such as confession, forgiveness and disciplining; and
- v. Nurturing: it covers training for new members in the Christian life and religious education.

The researcher believes that these five steps of the liberative theory by Clinebell can be linked to some concepts of liberation theology theory, as advocated by Gustavo (1970:6-22). The author proposes the following concepts:

- i. Liberation theology involves political and social liberation, the elimination of the immediate causes of poverty as well as injustice;
- ii. It involves the emancipation of the poor, the marginalized, the down trodden and the oppressed from things that limit their capacity to develop themselves freely; and
- iii. It involves liberation from selfishness and sin and endorses re-establishment of a relationship with God and with other people.

In this section, the researcher presented a theory base section which presents several theories. In the next section, the researcher will present the critical analysis and discussion of the theories that have been presented in this section.

## **2.3.2 The critical analysis and discussion of the theories presented under the theory base section: Interpretation of theories**

### **2.3.2.1 The stage theory: Crabb (1977:14) in Louw (2004:311-312)**

The researcher notes that this theory focuses on the following aspects:

- Identification of problem behaviour;
- Identification of problem thinking;
- Identification of biblical thinking;
- Identification of commitment; and
- Identification of biblical behaviour.

The researcher notes the importance of all the points mentioned in this theory. In the same vein, one seeks to align the relevance and the applicability of these to child therapy during bereavement. The researcher chooses to select three of these points, and these are the ones deemed relevant in this regard. However, this does not mean that other aspects of this theory are not relevant. The question of applicability for children is the determining factor in this issue. On the basis of this, the researcher will reflect on the identification of the problem behaviour, identification of biblical thinking and the identification of biblical behaviour.

#### **2.3.2.1.1 Identification of problem behaviour**

One feels that this is an important aspect for child therapists during bereavement in the family. The behaviour of the child/children when there is death affecting the family, especially when a mother or a father of the child dies, changes. It must also be noted that children tend to blame themselves when there is crisis in the home. Commenting on issues of this nature, Blom (2006:151) says that: “Children blame themselves for the trauma in their life despite the amount of support they receive from therapists or parents. Although the trauma that they are exposed to is not their fault, it often seems to become an introject in their life.” The author also says that “Children younger than eight years are egocentric and therefore do not have the skills to understand that they are not responsible for the bad things that happen to them.” Commenting on the emotions involved on the part of children, the

author affirms that “The emotions they experience when blaming themselves can contribute to self-fragmentation.”

Blom further explains that “During therapy, children often experience polarity in that one part of them is self-supportive while the other part is still experiencing anxiety.” The author concludes by advising that “It is important that children are helped to use the supportive part in themselves in order to handle the detrimental part.” The author then also gives the meaning of self-nurturing and its effectiveness “Self-nurturing means that children learn to accept those parts of themselves which they hate in order to achieve integration. They must accept and nurture themselves in order to maintain their control and must be able to forgive themselves and be aware of the polarities in their lives, both the bad and the good.”

The researcher strongly believes that these issues mentioned by the author can affect the behaviour of the child negatively. This means that the polarities can confuse them if they are not helped and supported during bereavement. The researcher further believes that children need to be led in a specific process to help them to gain positivity about themselves. In this regard, Oaklander (1994, 1999) in Blom (2006:152-153) suggests a process of self-nurturing for children which consists of three stages. During these stages, different projective techniques can be used:

The first stage is when children must come into contact with their introjects or the part of themselves which they find unacceptable. This can be reached by means of projective techniques such as drawing, clay modelling and metaphors and a monster technique suitable for this process. Schoeman (1996) in Blom (2006:153) describes it as follows: “Ask the child to identify a monster in his or her life.” It is also suggested by the author that “Pictures of the monster can also be shown to the child so that he/she forms an idea of how a monster looks like.” It is further advised that “Younger children can be requested to draw the monster or to model it out with clay.” The author asserts that “This will help them to project it more concretely according to their level of development” This discussion focuses on the following questions:

- For how long has the monster existed?
- Do other people know about the monster?
- Is there anything about the monster that makes you afraid?

- Would you like to have a monster in your life?
- Can you give the monster a name?
- How old were you when the monster came into your life?
- Ask the child to place the monster in an empty chair and talk with it.

The author concludes by affirming that “Children can be asked to model their younger self out of clay, a clay model of themselves at the age when the monster came into their life.” In this section, the researcher focused on the identification of problem behaviour. In the next section, the researcher will then deal with the identification of biblical thinking and biblical behaviour.

### **2.3.2.1.2 Identification of biblical thinking and biblical behaviour**

The researcher believes that the application of this process will have a positive impact in the behaviour of the child. The researcher will also discuss two aspects under this theory, that is, identification of biblical thinking and biblical behaviour. These concepts, for the researcher, have to do with the theological impact on children during bereavement. During bereavement, they must be helped to think biblically and behave as such. This confirms the fact that God has something to say to children, and that must influence them. During bereavement, the therapist must put this into perspective and apply it as such through African theology and Spirituality. Connecting this to the theological approach, Sweeney (2001) uses the word *empathy* and links it with the theology of children thus:

“Empathy was indeed a lifestyle for Jesus Christ. In fact, the greatest act of empathy in human history was the Incarnation, the God of the universe entering our world...By entering the child`s world, we are learning more about Christ and becoming more like him. We must consider how Jesus might have interacted with children. He was obviously a busy man, but he called children to himself. He paused and stopped in the midst of the demands of the crowd and the disciples to spend time with some children. Jesus must have honoured children as he honoured adults with love, acceptance and understanding. The Creator of the world and the child`s world took time to enter the child`s world. We should do the same. As important as entering the child`s world is, however, it is not an easy task. It is hard to answer children`s questions when we are no longer children.”

Here, the emphasis is on the fact that the child therapist must be able to communicate with children. In order for him/her to be able to do this, he/she must love, accept and understand children just as Jesus did. This means that before child therapists can apply African theology and Spirituality to grieving children, they must first enter their world in this fashion. In this section, the researcher dealt with the identification of biblical thinking and biblical behaviour. In the next section, the focus will be on the directive and confrontational approach.

### **2.3.2.2 The directive and confrontational approach: Adams (1977:45) in Louw (2004)**

The researcher notes that Adams focuses on personal and behavioural change. The change in question here, the author believes, comes through confrontation. The researcher further notes that Adams criticizes the influence of psychology. He believes and affirms that pastoral care cannot learn anything from psychology. In this regard, it is worth noting that there are some scholars who share the same view with Adams (1977). Meier (1989:16) in Collins (1981) states that: “The fact that both psychology and the bible provide information for daily living, as well as information about how human beings can be expected to think and behave, has produced tensions. “In addition to this, Collins (1981:21) advises that “There is conflict, and to deny this conflict and pretend that integration between psychology and theology has already taken place does not clarify - neither does it solve this problem.”

Some scholars believe that Theology in Christian counselling has already lost its identity, and psychology has gained the upper hand over it. This is revealed in the type of question asked by Mowrer (1961:60): “Has evangelical religion sold its birth-right for a mess of psychology pottage?” One also notes comments made by Heitink (1979:256-257): “The precedence given to psychology reached its pinnacle in the Clinical Pastoral Education movement started by Boisen; training was mostly done in psychiatric hospitals, and the emphasis was strongly leaning towards psychology.” Adding to this, Kilpatrick (1983:14) speaks of psychology seduction and asserts that: “Christians have let their faith become tangled in a net of popular ideas about self-esteem and self-fulfilment, which are not Christian at all.” On the contrary, there are other scholars who have different views and do not see eye to eye with Adams. Collins does not reject their criticisms in totality, the author advises that: “Many of the criticisms are valid, although few are as new as the book writers seem to imply. Sincere followers of Jesus Christ want to exercise great care in the techniques that are used. We do seek to be guided by the Holy Spirit in our work, and we are sensitive to the issues raised by our critics.”

It is worth noting what Wise (1955) argues about as: “Those who reject the integration of psychology and theology, like heresy hunters, create an atmosphere of distrust and suspicion.” It is further argued that “Their books are concerned with spiritual deception but blur all distinctions between ideas and thinkers.” The author also asserts that “They employ guilt by association and lump the innocent with the guilty ones.” The author also announces that “Christian counsellors are condemned just because some of their theories show common interests with secular theories.” The author makes a reference to “Hunt and McMahon, authors of the Seduction of Christianity.” It is argued that these authors “Equate modern psychology and meditational prayer with the ancient practice of sorcery. They condemn prayer for the healing of memories as a form of occult practice.” It is also highlighted that “Although meditation and visualization in prayer have been used in the church for centuries, these authors postulate that these practices are demonic. They also declare that psychology is not really a science.”

Lantz (n.d.) in Wise (1955) observes that: “There are several points in which Hunt and McMahon are unbiblical, anti-Christian, irrational, or inaccurate and states that:

- Their logical fallacy of inclusion (every silver mine is a hole in the ground; therefore, every hole in the ground must be a silver mine);
- Due to the fact that sorcerers have influence, they see all attempts by counsellors who use psychology to influence as sorcery;
- Sorcerers use meditation, drama, visualization and self-talk. Therefore, according to them, anyone who uses these techniques is guilty of sorcery and the occult;
- They conclude that because behaviourism is psychology, all psychology is behaviourism;
- Instead of critiquing a specific psychological theory, they reject psychology in totality;
- Their hermeneutics are suspect; they make bible verses say what they want them to say;
- They play around with the meaning of words, condemning, for instance, holistic approaches as satanic sorcery; and
- They accuse people who believe in spiritual laws, physical laws and scientific laws as trying to manipulate God.

The researcher has taken to consideration all the comments made by different scholars. Some scholars are against the integration of theology and psychology while others are pro this integration. Child therapists who apply theological guidance to children during bereavement may, at some stage under abnormal situations, come across children who are psychologically disturbed. In this regard, they must bear in mind that they are not psychologists and must not try and turn themselves into psychologists. This will have a detrimental effect not only to children but to themselves as well. Given this reasoning, the researcher is convinced that psychology can be useful in this regard in the form of referrals. This means that when child therapists discover that the child/children they are dealing with are psychologically disturbed, they must refer them for psychological assessments. It must also be noted that there are psychologists who are Christians. Instead of rejecting psychology in its totality, people must at least go for Christian psychologists. The following section focuses on Reformed theory.

### **2.3.2.3 The Reformed theory: Fiet and Heitink in Louw (2004:25-28)**

This theory focuses on pastoral care that expresses discipline, admonition and conversation. It also focuses on pastoral care that converts sinners. This whole process takes place through the proclamation of the gospel. Pastoral care is also viewed as the offer of redemption for sinners. Soul care should be viewed as an extension of the proclamation of the gospel. According to the researcher, this theory is not appealing when it comes to the application of theological guidance to children during bereavement. This is because it puts heavy emphasis on the conversion of sinners. This, however, is not out of order but is not so applicable for purposes of therapy. The only aspect the researcher finds relevant is the soul care concept mentioned hereunder. The soul care in this theory is regarded as the extension of the proclamation of the gospel. One understands this concept as relating and translating into taking care of souls theologically. This is in line with what the researcher sought to achieve in this research. The only difference is that this must be achieved through therapy and not so much through preaching to children while they grieve even though, in a way, preaching is implied. This must be seen as an attempt to support children during their loss and not to look at them as sinners to be converted even though slowly but surely, this therapeutic theological approach can have a lasting spiritual impact in their lives.

The soul care mentioned here must, at all costs, translate into child support during bereavement and must take place through theological guidance in the form of African theology and Spirituality. When it comes to issues of grief and children, Sweeney (2001:197)

has the following to advise: “Grief and loss are typical issues in the developmental cycles of life. They are, however, perhaps more challenging to deal with in children because children lack abstract thinking skills and formal operations to process loss as adults do.” The author also affirms that “This is combined with children’s egocentric nature, and these factors make grief and loss for children a traumatic occurrence.” The author further announces that “Children are always developing; therefore, their understanding of death and their reactions to illness and losses are also undergoing change.”

Another affirmation is made by the author that “Children grieve in ways that are both different from and similar to the way adults do. Children need significant support as they deal with loss.” It is conceded that “These issues are important in the evaluation and treatment of grief and loss with children.” It is advised that “Therapists must consider children’s physical, emotional and spiritual development as well as the fluidity of the developmental stages and phases. In some ways, children grieve similarly to adults.” The author affirms that “Both children and adults are affected by the depth of a relationship, the prevailing circumstances at the time of a loss, the support or lack of support, varying levels of coping skills as well as differences of gender, culture and religion.” The author concludes by asserting that “Children process grief differently from the way adults do.”

Contributing in this argument, Blom (2006:123) reveals the importance of taking note of the children’s emotions. The author advises that “Children’s emotional expression is an important indication of the nature of their process, and some children are not aware of what emotions are, but this does not mean that they are not experiencing emotions.” The author further affirms that “They just often do not know how to verbalize them. In many cases, children tend to suppress negative emotions and will seldom announce on their own during a therapeutic session when they want to talk about an emotionally painful aspect.” The author concludes by asserting that “An emotional pain and unfinished emotions are often reflected by the child’s behaviour and process.” The author concludes by stating that “Assistance given to children to identify their suppressed emotions is an essential aspect during therapeutic work with children.”

According to the researcher, the concept of soul care should encompass all the aspects mentioned by Sweeney (2001) and Blom (2006). This entails taking care of children’s grief and their understanding of death while nurturing their emotions and working on their behavioural aspects theologically. The following section focuses on Hermeneutical Theory.

#### **2.3.2.4 The Hermeneutical theory: Louw (2004:256)**

This theory focuses on the following key aspects:

- i. Probing: The art of questioning;
- ii. Comfort: The art of supporting and empowering;
- iii. Interpretation: The art of assessing and understanding;
- iv. Empathy: The art of listening and unconditional acceptance; and
- v. Edification: The art of directing and communicating the gospel.

The researcher believes that these aspects are relevant for children during grief therapy through theological guidance. The therapist must be able to apply these concepts to children during therapy. In applying these concepts effectively, the researcher feels that relaxation and techniques, as suggested by Blom (2006:101), are applicable:

“...Children need to learn how to relax, as tensions often contribute to psychosomatic symptoms such as stomach aches and headaches which, in turn, can contribute to symptomatic behaviour.” The author also affirms that “Tension can also affect children’s posture, and they may walk with rounded shoulders and necks. Tension is often the way in which children protect themselves against physical or mental attacks, the so-called fight or flee reaction, which develops in the body.” Another cause of this according to the author “Can be the suppression of emotions due to the fact that the child is deprived of the consent to express it. When children learn to relax, they can also express the cause of their tension more easily.” Blom (2000), Fontana and Slack (1998), Oaklander (1988), Schoeman (1996b), Shapiro (1997) and Van der Merwe (1996b) in Blom (2006:101) suggest the following:

- Use metaphors;
- Let the children imagine that they are a snowman which has just been made and that the sun is warm;
- Tell them that they are slowly but surely starting to melt, from their heads to their toes, until they are just a pool of water on the ground;

- While the therapist proffers the metaphor to the children, they dramatize what they say by using their body;
- Let the child do bending and stretching exercises;
- Teach the children to let their bodies relax progressively from their feet to their facial muscles and by breathing deeply while music is playing;
- Use music at the start and end of sessions to let the child relax. The child can listen passively to the music or it can be combined with movement;
- Use meditation. Children can for instance be asked to close their eyes and imagine they are swimming in the sea and that they move up and down like waves;
- Then they start feeling that they are melting and disappearing in the sea;
- They are then one with the sea and are asked to hear the sound of the sea in their heads until the noise moves away and the wave comes back;
- Take children on a relaxed, guided fantasy; and
- Ask them to shut their eyes and imagine that they are going to a comfortable place which they know and which they like, or a place which they imagine will be pleasant.

One is convinced that in the case of children, one needs to try by all means to make children relax during therapy. This means that these concepts by Louw (2004) will only work when children are relaxed. The application of theological guidance during bereavement must be complemented by this process. This, however, does not do away with or replace the application of a theological guidance through African theology and Spirituality but rather enhances it and prepares the ground for the latter. The following section focuses on self actualisation Theory.

### **2.3.2.5 The self-actualization theory: De la Porte and Herbs (2003)**

According to this theory, the individual is recognized as a positive and worthy being. The human's need for self-actualization is the basic motive of all human functioning. The individual does not need to change his/her basic nature but has to explore and utilize the existing potential. The environment plays an important role in needs fulfilment. The

researcher is of the view that this theory has something to offer in this research process because the individual is recognized as a positive and worthy being, so this very important for child therapy during bereavement. This is because children have been neglected in the past regarding this process. Commenting on the neglect often suffered by children, Louw (2008:486) affirms that: “Children are often neglected in the area of theological guidance due to the mistaken view that they are adaptable do not experience crises until they are teens, and that childhood is the golden age of innocence.”

Louw asserts that children should not be neglected under the guise that they can cope on their own. Collins (2007:220) sheds some light in this regard as well and comments as follows: “Too often, when there is little adult understanding or supervision, the disruptive behaviour at age four turns into more serious behavioural problems by age eight. This leads to adolescent aggression, defiance, substance abuse and sometimes depression and suicide.”

Here, Collins builds on what Louw calls *the neglect of children*. Collins spells out the consequences that come as a result of parents neglecting their children. Children need supervision and support from their parents and child therapists during bereavement. The way in which therapists can do this is by applying theological guidance to children during their loss. Parents must cooperate with child therapists during this time and, in turn, they must also comfort their children during their loss. Leaving children to cope on their own has a potential to result in a series of behavioural problems, as mentioned by Collins (2007).

The other important thing to be taken note of is that we must always remember that children, just as adults, have a divine origin and have been created by God. Sweeney (2001:6) says the following: “Children are persons created by God. Most church members and mental health professionals readily acknowledge that people below a certain age or height are children, but few of them know how to communicate with the person of the child. The fact that an individual is only five years old does not, in any way, make that individual a lesser person. That person (child) is just as deserving of respect and recognition and has a right to be listened to genuinely with respect.”

This means that by taking care of children during bereavement, we will be doing service to God the almighty. Children do feel the impact of death just as adults, so they need support during their loss. In this regard, Blom (2006:5-9) advises that: “For most children, death is a new experience and like all new experiences, the unknown can be confusing and frightening

in their little world. Most children do not know what to expect following the loss of a family member or friend.” The next section focuses on the Narrative Theory.

### **2.3.2.7 The narrative theory: Boje (1999) in De la Porte and Herbst (2003)**

In narrative theory, people are regarded as experts in their own lives. This theory is more respectful and less corrective wherein people are encouraged to rewrite their lives according to alternative stories. According to the researcher, it is fitting to link this theory to the whole process of theological guidance for children during bereavement. In other words, one must ask the question: can children narrate their own stories? The researcher is of the view that this is possible with children. It must, however, be taken into consideration that children do not tell their stories the same way adults do. It is worth noting what Louw (2008:489) has to contribute in this regard: “Storytelling by children is another very useful method to communicate. They can be asked to draw what they feel and what they are experiencing, and then they can be asked to tell a story about any of their art activities.”

Building on this concept, Blom (2006:160) argues as follows with regards to the usefulness of stories and the requirements thereof: “Stories must also meet specific requirements in order to promote the process of identification, projection, modelling, catharsis and self-insight in the child.” Smith (1982) introduces the following requirements:

- i. Each story must link to the living world of children, as well to their stage of life, although the living world of children and of the character needs to be identical;
- ii. It must link to the emotions children experience. When a child is sad about a parent’s death, the character in the story must also experience this emotion;
- iii. There must be a distinct main character with which children can identify; and
- iv. There must be other characters in action in situations that correspond with the children’s situation, for example, a dog that is scared of the large dogs that tease him/her;
- v. It must present a model of healthy processing to children by means of characters in the story. The characters must be able to offload their emotions, seek causes of behaviour, obtain intellectual and emotional insight, recognize their own potential and abilities, use healthy handling strategies and have definite life objectives;

- vi. The story must have a model that makes use of healthy and effective handling strategies. On the basis of the action of the main and other characters, children must be given an example of the ways in which situations can be handled;
- vii. The character that models the handling strategy must function in a healthy way on various levels, psychologically and socially;
- viii. The story must end with a reassuring conclusion. The main character must be optimistic although it should never offer children false reassurance; and
- ix. The stages, when using stories, as well as the requirements that stories must meet, are aimed at promoting children`s projection of emotions - in other words - at promoting their self-awareness. In order to obtain this projection, it is important that the story links to children`s living world so that they can identify with it.

This whole process and all the steps mentioned here confirm that children can tell their own stories and just need to be guided in this process. The researcher further believes that this process is effective and should bring meaning in children`s lives. Once again, Blom (2006) adds another approach in this regard, it is known as a mutual story telling technique - in this technique:

“The child tells the therapist a story, whereupon the therapist tells the child his or her own story using the same character as in the child`s story, but a better solution for the problem is presented. As the child`s story is a projection, it should reflect an aspect of the child`s life situation...” (2006). Schilling (1996) in Blom (2006) is of the view that stories can also be read to children: “A story can be read to a child, whereupon specific questions can be asked in respect of the main character`s emotions and handling strategies in the story. The example is: I will tell you a story, and I would like you to think of solutions for the problem which the character experiences in the story. Once we have discussed the story, I will ask you to write another ending to the story by drawing a picture.” According to the researcher, this process is useful in training children to be able to express their feelings even during bereavement and will guide child therapists in their support for these children. The following section focuses on Existential theory.

#### **2.3.2.8 Existential theory: Viktor Frankel in De la Porte and Herbst (2003)**

Some of the key aspects of this theory are as follows:

- Man has freedom of will;
- Life is meaningful; and
- Man needs to know more about being human.

There are other aspects of this theory that could be discussed with regards to child grief; however, the researcher chooses to discuss the concept: *life is meaningful*. This is because when a child loses a parent, the whole world of that child changes and life loses meaning within a very short space of time. The child's world becomes small, and the child's dreams are shattered. The researcher concurs with Blom (2006:5-9) when the author says that: "For most children, death is a new experience and like all new experiences, the unknown can be frightening and confusing. Most children do not know what to expect following the loss of a family member or a friend. Young children may not understand what death really is and may be confused or even frightened by the reactions of other family members. In the case of traumatic death, confusion and fear is even greater."

There is no doubt in the researcher's mind that during this critical period in the child's life, continued and unswerving amount of support is needed for the child. This is where theological guidance is needed for the child. The child must be helped to find meaning in life and not only that, he/she must be able to enjoy life. Children need to be reminded and told that they are important. Children must be encouraged to open up and start reaching out and growing out of their traumatic situation.

Sweeney (2001:126) suggests a sand play technique: "Sand play technique enables children to process pain and trauma in a non-threatening manner and acts as a magnet for children. Before they realize it, their hands are sifting, making tunnels, shaping mountains, runways and riverbeds. When miniature toys are added, a whole world appears, dramas unfold and absorption is total." The following section focuses on the Liberative Theory.

### **2.3.2.9 The liberative theory: Clinebell (1984)**

The key concepts of the theory are as follows: healing, sustaining, guiding, reconciling and nurturing. The researcher is convinced that all these five aspects presented by the author in this process are applicable for grieving children. The main aim of applying theological guidance to children during bereavement is to bring healing to them since they must be healed from their trauma of bereavement and loss. The author also speaks of sustaining due to

the fact that sustaining also covers consoling - it is relevant for grieving children. Children need to be consoled during their grieving period. This process needs to be carried out through theological guidance through African theology and Spirituality. The researcher also notes the relevance of guidance as it translates into giving advice and listening. Grieving children need to be advised and listened to during their loss and bereavement. In terms of reconciliation, they need to be reconciled both to themselves and to God the almighty. Children easily blame themselves when there is a crisis in their homes; hence they need to be first reconciled to themselves. They also need nurturing so that they can grow out of their crises of bereavement and be able to stand on their own.

The researcher believes that the concepts presented by Clinebell can also be linked to the three main dimensions of liberation theology, as advocated by Gustavo (1970:6-22). First, liberation theology involves “political and social liberation, the elimination of the immediate causes of poverty and injustice; “second, it involves “the emancipation of the poor, the marginalized, the down trodden and the oppressed from things that limit their capacity to develop themselves freely and in dignity.” Third, liberation theology, “involves liberation from selfishness and sin, and it endorses re-establishment of a relationship with God and with other people.”

In the light of these dimensions, the researcher believes that young grieving Xhosa children must be liberated from their exclusion in the grieving and mourning cultural processes. The mind-set of those who do not believe that children need theological guidance during bereavement also need to be liberated. Liberation theology will influence the thinking of such people; it will further change their approach towards new life, and they will begin to see things differently. The researcher would like to conclude this theory-base section by stating that all the techniques discussed in linking the theories to child therapy during bereavement do not replace African theology and Spirituality. These techniques rather pave and prepare the way for the application of theological guidance during bereavement through African theology and Spirituality. This confirms the fact that children cannot be approached the same way as adults. In this section, the researcher presented the theory-base section which focused on the presentation of theories that underpin concepts of well-being for people needing support. In the following section, the researcher focuses on the primary literature review section. This section contains literature that has a potential to close the identified gap.

## **2.4 The primary literature review section**

In this section, the researcher presents literature that has a potential to close the identified gap. In this process, the researcher presents the following concepts: A brief definition of grief, presentation of the letter written by a grandmother to her grandchild. (See Appendix two {2}), the role played by different mourning rituals and their relevance, discussion of African theology and Spirituality, discussion of the *Ubuntu* concept, the discussion of African Renaissance and conclusion.

### **2.4.1 A brief definition of grief**

According to De Klerk (1996:97) cited in Louw (2008), grief is defined as the “Experience of loss in full awareness that the process cannot be reversed. Irrevocable loss causes real grief which is experienced as an intense and acute form of sorrow and sadness.” Grief as a process has different aspects some of which are dealt with by Louw below:

#### **Realization**

In *realization*, mourners acknowledge an external reality which has already taken place and they try to accept it on their personal and emotional levels.

#### **Internalization**

Internalization means that through grief, the mourner wishes to say: ‘this is my grief.

#### **Separation**

This is about the extreme yearning, seeking and longing for the loved one as well as trying to bring him/her nearer; it is an indirect process through which distance is gained. Applying himself in defining grief, Adams (1978:136) concedes that “Grief maybe called `a life shaking sorrow over loss. Grief tears life to shreds and shakes one from top to bottom. It pulls him loose; he comes apart at the seams. Grief is truly nothing less than `a life shattering loss and is not simple sorrow.” Corr et al (2000) cited in Jackson (2007:16), define grief as “The reaction to loss and includes sorrow, pain, distress or sadness about that loss, especially when it was associated with the death of a significant other.” It is further argued that “Grief signifies one`s reactions to the impact of the loss and manifests itself, both internally and externally.” Another point argued by the author is that “Grief is not entirely associated with

feelings, but encompasses three components: somatic, behavioural and emotional components.”

The argument continues to stress that “Grief is a gathering of internal thoughts and feelings experienced when the loved one died.” Corr et al (2000) cited in Jackson (2007:16), reflect on the concept of mourning which is intertwined with grieving “Mourning is the process of coping with loss which includes such feelings as sorrow or regret for the loss, in an attempt to incorporate them into the routine of our daily lives.” Worden (2001) in Jackson (2007:16) defines mourning “As adaptation to loss which is a process and not a state that individuals have to undergo in order to regain an interest in life.” According to the researcher, there is no contradiction in the definitions by these two authors - coping with loss and adapting to it is the same thing and must be seen as such.

In this same vein, bereavement is also defined because it is a component that forms part in this whole process and is linked to grief. “Bereavement is the actual state of deprivation caused by the loss, while grief is a psychological state characterized by mental anguish while emotional pain in response to the loss.” It is further argued that “The intensity of the bereaved person`s grief is not necessarily related to the degree of love for the deceased, but rather to the degree of feeling, both negatively and positively for the deceased” Backer et al, (1994) cited in Jackson (2007:16-17). Strobe et al (2001:214) cited in Jackson (2007:17) mention three important things with regards to bereavement: consequences, coping and care...” In this section, the researcher briefly presented the definition of grief and its impact. In the following section, the researcher will briefly present some government policies and programmes for the support of children.

With regards to government policies and programmes that are in place for the support and general well-being of children. World Vision (n.d. 114) cited in Jackson (2007:37) presents government organizations who are involved in this process: Child and Family Welfare provide care and support. Child Safety and Security provides for the protection of children while the Department of Education provides schooling for children; Department of health provides health services for children, psycho-social support and socio-economic support such as child care grants, legal aid and representation. The Social Development Department provides vocational or life skills training. Ramsden (2002:31) in Jackson (2007:38) presents other government services to help families or primary care givers for children in need. The

researcher deems these as important as they have a potential to contribute towards child care in terms of theological guidance. These services are listed as follows:

- Child support grant available for children under eleven (11) years of age;
- Foster Care Grant is available once an applicant (not a legal guardian) has been registered as the child's foster parent (under the Child Care Act). This grant is available for children from birth to age eighteen (18). The foster parent application is reviewed every two years to determine if the child is receiving adequate care;
- Adoption is permanent, and no grant is available for parents who adopt a child;
- Placement of children in need of care in a Place of Safety or Children's Residential Home;
- Social Relief Grant is temporary help offered to people who are destitute and not able to meet their needs;
- Free Health Care for children (under 6 years) at all provincial clinics or hospitals; and
- Exemptions from school fees for children in foster-care, registered children's homes or whose primary caregivers are not able to pay school fees.

The researcher strongly believes that these government support services for children in need and suffering are also helpful for bereaved children. These support structures are also therapeutic in nature. This is because in one way or the other, they play the role of the missing parent in the case of a bereaved child. They contribute to the well-being of grieving children. In the recommendation section, the researcher will recommend a similar course of action to be followed by the Free Church in Southern Africa. This may not necessarily be the same, as presented in the government context. In this section, the researcher briefly presented government policies and programmes for the support of the bereaved children during their grief. In the following section, the researcher will once again touch on the further definition of grief.

In defining grief even further, Newman and Newman (1999:491) cited in Nyanjaya (2006) define grief as "Cognitive and emotional reaction that follows the death of a loved one." Lewis (1998:6) cited in Nyanjaya (2006) states that "There is a great hurt in grief, the feeling

no one else really understands, and that no one else has ever suffered in quite the same way as to this extent.” The author also affirms that “The assumption that is often made to those who have lost their loved ones is, therefore, not fair and is unfounded.” The author goes on to say that “When we tell bereaved people: ‘I do understand what you are going through’ or ‘I know what it means.’ These utterances might mean that, we project our grief into the current griever.” The author also says that “If grief is the price one pays for the love invested in a relationship, then no one can understand how the grieving person feels.”

Nyanjaya (2006) speaks of another form of grief known as ‘disenfranchised grief’. The author also speaks of the fact that “The method to handle grief will either be constructive or destructive depending on the expectations of the society.” Neuger and Poling (1997:206), Cook and Oltjenbruns (1998) cited in Nyanjaya (2006) acknowledge that “The non-recognition of certain bereaved person’s rights, role or capacity to grieve, leads to abnormal or complicated grief.” The author connects and links this form of grief to males in reporting that “Males are often disenfranchised when they experience loss as they are expected not to feel the pain, and if they do, they should not express it.” In this section, the researcher dealt with the brief definition of grief; in the following section, the researcher presents the grandmother’s letter to her grandchild; this is still in the process of analyzing the process of grief.

#### **2.4.2 A narrative from a Xhosa Grandmother to her grandchild - by Khululeka grief support group for children and youth**

To illustrate the position of children in this process, the researcher has chosen to use the information contained in the narrative which is in the form of a letter from a *Xhosa* grandmother to her grandchild. The reason for this is that the letter contains critical information with regards to this issue; it also touches on some aspects that involve children. There are also two rituals that are selected for discussion; however, these will be discussed later under a specific section that deals with rituals. The main thing in the narrative is to introduce these. These rituals reveal a lot of information with regard to the cultural approach to grieving and mourning of the *Xhosa* people. The place of children in this whole process is assessed accordingly.

#### **2.4.2.2 Reflection on the narrative by the grandmother**

It would seem that the grandmother has moved away from the traditional way of thinking with regard to the traditional way of grieving (ignoring children during bereavement). It is also clear from her letter that in the past, the place of children had been overlooked in the whole grieving process. The grandmother admits that this was done out of ignorance. They never realized that children suffer loss as much as adults do. In this same letter, she shows a paradigm shift in favour of children. In this section, the researcher briefly presented the letter from a *Xhosa* grandmother to her grandchild. In the following section, the researcher will then present rituals and their role in mourning.

#### **2.4.3 The role of mourning rituals in grief**

This is an important aspect in the whole process of bereavement in the African context. This is important because it embraces a cultural concept in this regard. If one has to be successful in child therapy in the African context, particularly among *Xhosa* speakers, such a person must be able to link this aspect in the process thereof. Mourning rituals play a critical role in the African culture; therefore, they cannot be excluded from the application of theological guidance to African children.

Commenting on the role played by these rituals, Nyanjaya (2006) affirms that “A grief process can lead to early acceptance or delayed acceptance of death, depending upon cultural practices (socialization).” The author goes on to state that “Childhood development and attachment to the object of love that had been lost, and exposure to other cultures can be complicated.” The author also explains that “The interpretation of the acceptance on the part of the bereaved and what symbolizes it varies according to different cultures.” According to the author, “Holding on to the deceased in an African bereavement process, if well attended to through funeral rituals would lead to healing.” The author also mentions that “In the Western concept of a grief process, a continued attachment to the deceased would be interpreted as pathological grieving, while in an African concept of mourning, the true stage of healing is achieved when the bereaved individual manages to re-invest his/her libido in the deceased and move on with life.”

Nyanjaya (2006) looks at funerals and memorial services as rituals that play a critical role in the grieving process. The author explicates that “These rituals have a potential to fulfil the following roles:

- To give recognition that a life has been lived;
- They confirm the dignity and worth of human beings;
- They provide public recognition in a structured way that death has occurred;
- These rituals allow the bereaved to publicly express and share the loss;
- They facilitate the expression of grief that is consistent with cultural values;
- These rituals provide an immediate support network for the bereaved;
- They serve as a rite of passage from one status to another for both the deceased and the bereaved; and
- The rituals also provide an opportunity to re-establish contact with distant relatives and a larger society, and this leads to group cohesion.”

Cook (1998) cited in *Nyanjaya* (2006) contributes to this by affirming that “These rituals can build family relationships and further assist in re-alignment of family roles such as an appointment of a guardian.” The author further affirms that “The guardian would help the remaining spouse look after the remaining children, pending the final ceremony which is the cleansing of the spirit of the dead which takes place after a year.”

Hendriks (2004:137) also speaks of the criticality of funerals as contributing rituals in addressing bereavement in African context. The author argues that “Funerals probably are the most important examples of indigenous African rituals.” The author further maintains that “Very special activities take place: the songs differ from normal hymns during church services and a variety of traditional practices are adhered to.” The author refers to practices such as “A watch (night vigil) with regular all-night prayers and preaching...” Community members participate in the ceremonies that aim at removing contaminated spirit from the mourners, and they will be reunited to the society again.” There are other two rituals that play a critical role in the cultural grieving and mourning processes of the *Xhosa* people. These rituals are referred to as *Umkhapho* and *Umbuyiso* rituals. *Mbiti* (1975:69) cited in Van Heerden (n.d.) affirms that “In *Xhosa* culture, death marks the beginning of a new phase of family membership and does not mean extinction as the dead become ancestors. They rather take on different roles in the family than when they were living as they occupy the

ontological position between the spirits and men.” The author goes on to elaborate that “They, in effect, speak a bilingual language of human beings whom they recently left or of God to whom they are now nearer than they were in their physical life.”

Commenting on this same process, *Soga* (1931) concedes that “The departed ancestors are always close by and have direct communication with the living and can be contacted.” The picture drawn by *Mbiti* and *Soga* is that of life after death. The dead occupy a different environment and can be contacted by the living. There is another aspect brought in by *Mtuze* in this regard “The living dead have to be mandated by the living to act on their behalf, hence when the head of the household dies, the *Umkhapho* and *Umbuyiso* rituals are performed. The *Umkhapho* ritual literally means to say `farewell` to the spirit of the deceased, while *Umbuyiso* ritual means to `bring the spirit of the Ancestor back home`. Due to this belief in an afterlife, sorrow over the death of someone is combined with the belief that the departed continues to live in the hereafter.” Focusing more on the concept of *ukukhapha*, Van Heerden (Personal communication with Hirst, June 21, 2000) argues that: “Following the death of a grandparent, parent or sibling, the *Umkhapho* ritual is performed to accompany the spirit of the deceased to the ancestors. The rites are performed under the auspices of the local clan by the male household head or his proxy.”

To perform the *Umkhapho* ritual, a cow must be slaughtered. However, before the slaughtering of the cow, there is a process to be followed in terms of choosing a cow. Heerden, giving details supplied by Hirst, elaborates on this process: “Choosing a beast for the *Umkhapho* ritual depends on the importance of the person being buried. A cow may be slaughtered for a very important person while a goat may be slaughtered for others. Assuming a goat is to be slaughtered, a white goat without a blemish is recommendable and appropriate. Before it is slaughtered in the byre, the officiator or his proxy calls on the ancestors of the agnatic group or clan by name. After the goat has been killed by cutting its throat, the blood is collected in a dish, and a special portion of meat (thin strip known as *intsonyama*) is cut from the inside muscle of the right foreleg and lightly roasted on the fire in the byre. No salt should be added to the meat. What has been stated here is regarded in the highest esteem by the *Xhosa* people, and for them, this is a solemn occasion that must not be interrupted and is conducted and performed with extreme caution, single mindedness and respect. One other thing that must be taken into consideration is that in *Xhosa* tradition, life is communal; this means that people do things together. When it comes to grieving, *Mbiti*

argues “As life in the *Xhosa* tradition is communal, grieving is also a communal activity” (Mbetse, Personal communication with Van Heerden, May 21, 2001). According to Setiloane (Personal communication with Van Heerden, September 8-10, 1999), “For the period of around two weeks, people sit with the bereaved and share the person’s pain. The researcher focuses briefly on more information on these important rituals.

#### **2.4.3.2 Defining the concepts of *ukukhapha nokubuyisa* (farewell and bringing back rituals)**

Before touching on these two rituals, Yawa (2010:53-55) speaks of the processes that unfold prior to the funeral. The processes lead to the performance of rituals, and some of them are similar to those that have already been mentioned earlier. During this period, the author writes that “When one dies at home, the eyes of the deceased are closed by the eldest present member of the family.” It is further affirmed that “This is considered a privilege because it is believed that the deceased passes on blessings to the one who closes his or her eyes.”

The author also elaborates on the room the deceased dies in: “The room or hut that he or she dies in is evacuated, and the dead is left alone.” The author also mentions the significance of this process as “This signifies that the hut where the deceased lies ceases to be the operations room, and the mourning starts. The furniture is taken out; a mat is put for the bereaved to sit on.” It is also mentioned that “The chief mourner sits specifically on a mat below a window. It is not compulsory for a man to sit, but it is compulsory for a woman.”

It is also stated that “When one dies outside his or her home, an elder of the family comes to make the announcement to the bereaved. The way one dresses also change during this time. For a woman, it is compulsory to cover her head with a black scarf and put on a blanket over her shoulders. A man is not expected to cover his head or to put a blanket over his clothes.”

With regards to children, the author writes “Children in the homestead are taken to the neighbours to protect them from the source of the pain, as put by Chief *Ncamashe*.” The author further speaks about the food that is eaten during this period: “The food that is eaten by the family also changes to simple *inkobe* that is, boiled dry mealies and *irostile* which is roasted bread. (This is the case among *Xhosas* in the former Ciskei region of the Eastern Cape). One is also required to drink black coffee without milk or cream.” The author, when speaking of the burial day, comments as follows: “The deceased is buried at midday, when the shadow of the person standing corresponds directly with the person. It is believed that

when the shadow and the body collide, that signifies the completeness of the person, and that is the time one should get buried.”

According to the author, during this time, “A cow is slaughtered so that the skin may be used to wrap the deceased with or be put on top of the coffin. This practice differs from one traditional family to the next.” It is also mentioned that “A goat is also slaughtered; the meat from the goat is specifically meant for family members only. Each family member is given a piece of goat’s meat to eat. The chief mourner eats a special part of the goat which is called *igxalaba*, meat taken from the shoulder of the goat.” The author then speaks of the day after the burial: “On this day, new clothes for mourning are sown for the widow by family members. This consists of white traditional gear, and only one set of clothes is sown. The bereaved goes to the river and washes it when it is dirty and waits for it to dry.” The author also highlights the fact that “The bereaved only stops wearing the clothes when they are in rags, no matter how long it takes for them to be in rags (when the dress is torn, it is not repaired). There is no change of attire from a man’s side except putting on a button covered with a black cloth with the attire he is wearing.” *Yawa* (2010:53) also affirms that “What is also done on this day is that all members of the family have to go, preferably to the river, to wash the whole body so that *isimnyama sikhutshwe*, that is, to take off the bad luck.” According to the author, “The bathing could either be taken in the homestead or at the river.

All members of the family are expected to cut all their hair as a symbol of mourning. The chief mourner goes to the forest in order to get firewood.” According to the author, “This ritual is done in order to help the bereaved feel better and get fresh air.” With regards to the bereaved, it is also said that “The bereaved has to clean the main hut and also paint it; this ritual signifies a new start or new beginnings.” *Yawa* (2010:53) also writes that “Every family member is given a button covered in a black cloth in order to be seen by everyone that they are in mourning.” The author further comments that “The community members are expected to be sympathetic and not to raise fights with the bereaved.” Mention is made of an eight-day period after the burial and what takes place during this period: “On the eighth day after the funeral, a ceremony called *the washing of the spades* is held. Traditional beer is brewed by the bereaved and served on this day to the young men who dug the grave.”

Then the author moves on to speak of the four-month period after the burial: “On the fourth month after the funeral, the bereaved brews traditional beer again so that people can be able to visit her unlimitedly. The bereaved white clothes are dyed in yellow ochre in order to mark

this stage in the bereavement process.” Then the author speaks of the period “Between four months and a year.” It is stated that during this period, “A cow which is called *eyamarhamncwa* is slaughtered for the purposes of helping the deceased to be accepted by the ancestors and mingle well with them (the name, *eyamarhamncwa* is used in the former Ciskei region not necessarily in the former Transkei region of the Eastern Cape). This ritual is called *umkhapho*, which is to accompany.” [The researcher’s note: the most common usage of this connotation of *inkomo yamarhamncwa* is (*inkomo yezilo*) rather than *eyamarhamncwa*].

The author mentions another critical period after the burial of the deceased in this regard and that is: “A year after the burial.” It is stated that “In most traditional homesteads, the mourning period lasts for a year after the deceased has been buried. If the chief mourner is a woman, she is expected to burn the mourning clothes and wear regular ordinary clothes, the buttons which were worn by the bereaved family, are also burnt.” It also mentioned by the author that “In other households, however, the mourning period is dependent on the durability of the mourning clothes. If the mourning clothing, for instance, gets completely worn out after a two-year period, so will be the length of the mourning period.” It is further stated that “After a year that the deceased has passed on, a cow for *ukubuyisa*, that is, to bring the deceased back home, is slaughtered. This ritual is performed to invite him or her formally to come back and take care of the family.”

Then mention is made of the involvement of the children in this process and is noted as follows: “Children are involved in the bereavement process from the outset, but this depends on the level of understanding and the age of the child. On one hand, a child younger than six years is usually not told directly about the death and only told about the death when he or she is in deep sleep.” In this process, the child is also told that “He or she must never ask about the whereabouts of the deceased again because the deceased has died. On the other hand, school going age children are told personally about the death since they are expected to behave in a certain manner even at school.”

The author further writes that “On the day of the funeral, younger children are not allowed to go to the graveyard; this is the way of protecting them against the pain of death (this differs from one household to the next). Regarding rituals that take place during this period, children are also involved and are also given a special bath which intends to wash off the evil that has come to the family.” It is further noted that “Their hair is cut, and they are given buttons covered with black cloth to wear all the time. Children are also expected to behave in certain

way during this period of bereavement. The way they carry themselves should reflect those who are mourning; they must not, for instance, participate in school activities like playing soccer and may not be involved in fighting, so even when provoked, they must maintain restraint. They are not allowed to socialize and attend parties. This has to be observed at least for three months.” In this section, the researcher looked at mourning rituals and their relevance. The following section briefly presents a poem that is part of the mourning and grieving process. The following poem shows the impact of bereavement on those affected by it. It also touches on the meaning of grief thereof.

#### **2.4.3.3 A poem on Grieving by (Doves Group)**

*Grieving is as natural as crying when you hurt, sleeping when you are tired, eating when you*

*Are hungry, sneezing when your nose itches*

*It`s nature`s way of healing a broken heart. A cut finger is numb before it bleeds, it bleeds*

*Before it hurts, it hurts until it begins*

*To heal, it forms a scab and itches until finally, the scab is left*

*Where once there was a wound.*

*Grief is the deepest wound you have ever had. Like a cut finger, it goes through stages and*

*Leaves a scar.*

*I have not offered any outlines to follow - nor formulas to work -*

*Nor platitudes to say to yourself. There are none -*

*Grief has no short cuts. It is lived through.*

*Most of these are victims of the pitfalls we have tried to avoid...*

*Some of them just never find the last big step.*

*They wait for healing to happen to them. They wait for time to take care of it all.*

*Time does the most healing - but there must come a day when each of us must*

*Decide to live again -*

*That day is one big difference between those who get well and those who do not.*

*May you find this day and let it dawn in your life...*

*Growth is saying ...goodbye*

*And saying*

*Hello.*

According to the researcher, there are two things underlined in this poem:

- i. Grief is real and has a negative effect on those affected by it, including children - in this study - *Xhosa* children; and
- ii. Grief does not have a final word. People affected by grief, including children, do recover through mutual support by others. In their definition of grief, including normal and complicated grief, Drenth, Herbst, and Strydom (2010) define grief as “An experience felt all over the world by people who have lost a loved one through death.” It is further argued that “The manner in which the grieving takes place may differ from culture to culture.” Worden (1991:75) cited in Drenth, Herbst and Strydom (2010) argue that “Distinctions between normal and complicated grief are not easy to make. The setting of a cut-off point between normal and complicated grief is hampered by factors such as culture, religion, personality, society, mode of death, relationship with the deceased and many more.”

The authors also note that “It is also not easy to differentiate between complicated grief and other related disorders such as depression, anxiety disorders and post-traumatic stress disorder.” In this section, the researcher briefly looked at the poem and its relevance in all matters that are related to grief and mourning. In the following section, the researcher will briefly look at grief and children. This is important for this research since the focus is on bereaved children.

### 2.4.3.3 Grief and children

When defining grief, Blom (2006:185) goes broader and posits that “Loss can briefly be described as a condition of losing someone or something that is to the disadvantage of the child because the person or thing lost has played an important role in the healthy functioning and existence of the child.” Blom further affirms that “Built into the loss situation is the element of separation which leads to the child’s experiencing of separation anxiety.” The author reflects on grief in this regard “The term `grief` refers to the emotional process that follows loss, while `mourning` refers to the process of adjustment to the loss, also referred to as `being in mourning. ``” Ward and Associates (1993) and Worden (1996) cited in Blom (2006:186) present some grief reactions by children when they experience loss:

- Disbelief, shock, dulling, searching, wishing to reunite;
- Longing memories, dreams and games have undertones of grief (emotions), psychosomatic reactions;
- Reduced interest in things that previously took up a great deal of attention and time (depression), sorrow, feelings of dullness while actions are automatically carried out;
- Sleeping disorders, difficulty in concentrating, anger and irritation;
- Problems with academic performance, concentration problems and dropping of scholastic performance; and
- Self-destructive behaviour, thoughts of suicide and other behaviour that threatens the emotional and physical safety of the child Ward & Associates (1993); Worden (1996) cited in Blom (2006:186).

These reactions confirm the effects of grief and loss on children, needless to mention that *Xhosa* children are not exempted from this phenomenon. This calls for the need to support these children who must not be left alone during bereavement as this will be detrimental to them. These children must be helped and supported to grow out of their pain and grief and regain wholeness. The researcher strongly believes that theological guidance through African theology and Spirituality will make a mark in the lives of these children. Another critical aspect is introduced in this regard. This is about “Grief and post-traumatic stress reactions of the child in relation to age phases.” Blom (2006:187) maintains that “When a loss takes

place, the child moves through the same series of emotions as the adult does.” The author further says that “The difference lies in the expression...this is especially related to the age and development level of the child.” Age categories are presented as follows:

- **Birth to two years:** Children in this age group react as a result of the separation that has taken place rather than to the occurrence itself - for instance - in the case of the divorce or death of a parent (Lendrum & Syme, 1992 cited in Blom, 2006:187). The emotional condition and reaction of the other parent will determine the reaction of the child falling in this age group (Pennells & Smith, 1995; Ward,1993 in Blom, 2006:187);
- **Age two to five years:** According to Gurwitch (2002) cited in Blom (2006:187), at this age, children have already developed an ability to think and have a measure of self-control. This means that they have a certain amount of independence, and this gives them a little more self-confidence. Loss experienced at this stage by children undermines their self-confidence and they all of a sudden experience their world as uncertain and unsafe. Feelings of anxiety, fears and worries about safety of self and others maybe expressed after a traumatic event by the child and may result in clingy behaviour to the primary caregiver. It is the view of Pennells and Smith (1995) in Blom that “Children attempt to make sense of occurrences by repeatedly asking questions. They also become easily confused as a result of the explanations. They may even feel that their thoughts, wishes and actions have caused the loss situation” Ward (1993) in Blom (2006:187);
- **Age five to nine years:** With regards to this age group, Lendrum and Syme (1992) and Pennells and Smith (1995) in Blom (2006:188) maintain that “At this age, children have already begun school and are supposed to have basic skills with regards to social integration which allow them to form part of a greater social network than just the family.” They further affirm that “The incorporation into a greater social network makes them sensitive to other persons and to the comments of their peer group.” It is further argued that “Children learn who they can trust with their thoughts and feelings. They notice very carefully the reactions of adults to the loss situation and may even deny their own feelings in order to shield the feelings of adults.” The argument continues to address the impact of “Fears and fantasies” in that “Fears and fantasies lead to the personification of an occurrence such as death as a monster or a

ghost.” It is further affirmed that “Many questions are still asked at this age, with reference to the causes and the consequences of not only their own actions but also the actions of others.” Another point is made that “In the case of death, questions like ‘how will mummy breathe, and who will give her food?’ may also be asked.” The following point focuses on age nine to twelve years;

- **Age nine to twelve years:** With regards to this age group, Pennells and Smith (1995) and Ward (1993) in Blom (2006:187) argue that “During this phase, of concrete thoughts, the child begins to develop a greater cognitive ability to understand, for instance the finality of death.” It is further discussed that “The child still thinks in terms of the one or other such as good people and bad people, for instance. This is known as polarity.” It is the view of the authors that “It is still difficult for children at this stage to deal with contradictions and euphemisms and figurative speech; for example, they would have difficulty in dealing with such statements as ‘your sister has gone to Jesus.’ Gurwitch (2002) in Blom (2006:188) is of the opinion that “Behaviour changes result from this as traumatized child may show signs of irritability with family members, friends and events and even anger outbursts.” The author concludes by saying that “A measure of adulthood begins phasing in at this stage in that the child realizes cognitively that the situation is irreversible in the case of death.” In this section, the researcher spent time on grief and children. In the next section, the researcher will then look at some tasks that must be carried out by a grieving person during the grieving process.

Worden (1996) in Blom (2006:189-191) presents some tasks that must be carried out by a grieving person during the grieving process:

- **Acceptance of the reality of the loss or new context:** initial reactions of shock and disbelief are replaced in time by the recognition of the reality of what has taken place. This requires that children should be able to understand abstracts such as the finality and irreversibility of the situation. The awareness of an individual’s relationship to the physical and social world is gained through reality testing, and a young child who is not yet capable of this finds it difficult to understand the reality of the loss;
- **The experience of the pain of the loss or the working through of emotional aspects of the loss:** A variety of feelings may be present as normal reactions to loss.

Generally, feelings of grief include feelings of sorrow and discomfort in other words painful feelings. For the child, feelings present mostly on the somatic and the behaviour levels. Children must be assisted to approach this task gradually so that their ability to deal with it is not overwhelmed;

- **Feelings that are experienced are the same as those of adults:** Children evince feelings of sorrow, anger, guilt, anxiety and other feelings associated with loss. From a systemic perspective, one must keep in mind that the reactions of adults and other determinants, as highlighted above, have an influence on the child`s own ways of dealing with things. By helping children to work through their feelings, they are offered an opportunity to experience feelings of mastery. The expression of feelings can take place through projective techniques such as drawing and sand play;
- **Adjustment to a changed environment:** The re arrangement, restructuring and re-definition with which children need to be assisted with reference to their own place and role and the absent person or object is the third task in the healing process. Adjustment is a process and for children it means that as they get older, they should be assisted in each phase of life. The meaning of the loss and the reality of how the loss touches the life of children must, therefore, be re-evaluated in each stage of development; and
- **Re-investment in life:** The relationship that existed with the person or object must be redefined and emotionally placed and integrated into the life of the child. Briefly, children must be helped to get on with their life and to deal with the loss and its implications. This may even mean that children might have to learn certain skills such as learning to study on their own. The process of adjustment is complex, and a variety of factors influence it. Influential factors must be continuously assessed and taken into account during the assistance of the child. In this section, the researcher presented some tasks that must be carried out during bereavement. In the next section, the focus will be on the discussion of African theology.

#### **2.4.4 The discussion of African theology**

According to Kato (1975, 1987:55) cited in Han (2013), “African theology seems to be a funeral march of biblical Christianity and a forerunner of syncretism and universalism.” Agbeti (1975:6) in Han (2013:17) believes that “African theology is the systematic

presentation of the religious beliefs, ideas and practices of African traditional religions and the interpretation of the pre-Christian and the pre-Muslim African people's experience of their God." The author further suggests "A clear demarcation between African theology and African Christian theology...the former concerns African traditional religious belief and practice; the latter deals with the interpretation of the Christian gospel in Africa." Tienou (1982c:8) in Han (2013:17) is of the view that "The term African theology is an ambiguous one and does not connote a specific and exclusive Christian identity." According to the author, it is further stated that "African theology is not exclusively allowed to use the expression `Christian theology.'" According to Mbiti (1998:146; 2003), "The most common term nowadays is *African theology*, even though the multiplication of names for it has been, and continues to be." On the other hand, Muzorewa (1985:78) in Han (2013:17) tends to "Differentiates a `theology of African traditional religion` or `African traditional theology` that is based on the African traditional religions from `African theology` that is done by Christians and based on the bible." According to Nyamiti (1994:63) in Han (2013:17), "African theology that is based on the bible and Jesus Christ differs from `African traditional theology` that articulates the reflection on God expressed in African traditional religions."

Fashole-Luke (1975b:74-75) cited in Han (2013:18) maintains that "The task of theologians is to relate the Christian gospel to their particular cultural and social as well as political situations." It is further argued that "African theology has not been and never will be a unified movement. Instead, it will take different colours depending on the local situation." Tienou (1984:20) in Han (2013) explicates that "It seems preferable to use African theologies because of the diversity of situations in African Christianity and of the plurality of theological approaches in Africa." It is worth noting what Mbiti (1978:72) in Han (2013:19) says in his attempt to define African theology "African theology is a theological reflection and expression by African Christians." Nyamiti (1994:63) cited in Han (2013:19) defines African theology as "The understanding and expression of the Christian faith in accordance with African needs and mentality, in the broad sense and as the systematic and scientific presentation or elaboration of the Christian faith according to needs and mentality of the African people in its strict sense." On the other hand, Sawyer (1987:26) in Han (2013:19) defines African theology as "An attempt to interpret Christ to the African in such a way that he feels at home in his faith."

It is worth noting Fashole-Luke (1975b:77) in Han (2013:20) commenting of the essence of African theology, the author affirms that “The essence of African theology is to translate the one faith of Jesus Christ to suit the tongue, style, genius, character and culture of African people.” Moyo (1983:97) in Han (2013:20) defines African theology as “Attempt by Christians in Africa to reflect systematically on God’s revelation in Jesus Christ and to articulate the results of that reflection through categories of thought which arise out of the philosophy of the African people.” It is worth noting Kurewa’s definition (1975:36) in Han (2013:20), that “African theology is the study that seeks to reflect upon and express the Christian faith in African thought form and idioms as experienced in African Christian communities and always in dialogue with the rest of Christendom.”

As far as the definition of African theology is concerned, the researcher concurs with the following definitions by Mbiti and Nyamiti: Mbiti (1978:72) in Han (2013:19) defines African theology as “Theological reflection and expression by African Christians.” Nyamiti (1994:63) also cited in Han (2013:19) defines it as “The understanding and expression of the Christian faith in accordance with African needs and mentality.” In this regard, the researcher then feels that African theology is a relevant mechanism through which African (Xhosa) children can be cared for during their bereavement. They need to be assured that God cares for them as they are and do not need to be westernized to be accepted and comforted by God. This is also about contextualizing theology. God is the God of any culture and He is also God of the African. Motlhabi (1994:6-7) speaks of sources of African Theology as presented by African Theologians: “The Bible and Christian heritage, African anthropology, African traditional religions, African Indigenous churches, experiences of cultural forms of life and arts, extended family, hospitality and communal life.”

However, the author questions the way in which these sources are prioritized and argues that “The placing of the Bible and the Christian heritage first reflects the bondage to which many African Theologians are still subject.” It is further argued by the author that “Logically and practically, these sources are not first in the life of an African, or any other Christian for that matter.” These sources; according to the author; “Are added realities to the African’s life and existence” and concludes by saying that “It may be better to speak about their centrality than priority.”

The researcher fully concurs with the author that the centrality of these sources is the most convenient concept in this regard. All these sources have something to contribute to the well-

being of an African. The researcher's attention is particularly drawn to two concepts, namely, hospitality and communal life. For the researcher, these concepts mean that there is warmth and fellowship displayed in the mutual commitment in doing things together. This further confirms the relevance of African Theology for nurturing and supporting those who grieve, in this context, *Xhosa* children. This implies that African people mourn together and comfort each other mutually as a unit and boils down to the fact that the language of exclusion is foreign to African people. The exclusion of children in the grieving and mourning processes by *Xhosa* speakers is, therefore, not a cultural setback but that of ignorance. This is a gap the researcher sought to close in this study. To bring in new knowledge.

Capps (1984:66) cited in Louw (2004:304) highlighted the theological impact in connection with therapy in the form of counselling (theological guidance) but does not necessarily refer to African theology in particular. The researcher strongly believes that the author's presentation is applicable for the context of African theology in the form of theological guidance. The author refers to this approach as 'Theological diagnosis' and argues that theological diagnosis:

- Could reveal the motives underlying personal behaviour;
- Could identify the possible causes underlying a problem;
- Could expose inadequate formulations of the problem;
- Could also help to discover untapped personal and spiritual resources;
- Could clarify the problem, thereby allowing for a better foundation of the truth; and
- Tries to assess a problem in terms of the deepest intentions of shared human experience.

The author, in this same context, mentions three metaphors that are of great importance, that is:

- **The shepherd metaphor:** This offers the best interpretation of the contextual theory in which the possible causes of the problem are sought, as well as the available sources. The shepherd should understand a problem within his/her own context and identify relevant sources for self-understanding;

- **The wounded healer metaphor:** This metaphor interprets an experiential theory and involves identifying with the experience of a problem and sharing it with another. The wounded healer can identify him/herself with the pain of others and encourage self-disclosure; and
- **The wise fool metaphor:** This metaphor offers an interpretation of the revisionist theory. It provides a new perspective on the problem, as well a new understanding of the person. The wise fool can give an opinion and develop a new perspective.

McKeever cited by van Arkel (1987:120) in Louw (2004:309) discusses the life story (narrative) theory and presents five key areas deemed useful by the researcher. These are not only useful but are also relevant in theological guidance for people who have challenges. This, according to the researcher, includes bereaved children. These key areas are presented as follows:

- The person`s patterns of pain: The amount of suffering and pain endured by a person or the absence there of;
- The person`s ability: This is about an ability to make a decision to commit him/herself to an issue;
- The components in a person`s life: This is about indicating bonding and liberation;
- The strength: or weakness of a person`s identity; and
- The person`s perception of reality.

The researcher is convinced that this theological diagnosis including the three metaphors is extremely important for theological guidance during bereavement. In this regard, this diagnosis has a potential to help and support bereaved *Xhosa* children because the researcher deems it as adding value and strengthening the theological muscle of the intended approach embodied by African theology. This means that *Xhosa* children must be able to draw support from this theological diagnosis. The onus is with the caregiver to unlock these concepts and apply them to children who have experienced loss in different ways. Communication between the caregiver and affected children is a master tool, and children must be able to understand and know what the caregiver is communicating to them without being intimidated. The

researcher shares the same thought and understanding with Sweeney (2001:6) when the author maintains that “Children are persons created by God.”

The researcher notes the comments made by Maimela (1992:31-42) and Mofokeng (1992:85-94) cited in Louw (2008) affirming that “Until recently, God’s images in African theology were mainly formulated in terms of Black theology and the liberation paradigm.” Louw (2008:29) continues to say that “During times of oppression, liberation theology was an attempt to free human beings from oppressive systems that violate basic human rights.” Louw further says that “It focuses on the ideology behind social systems in order to free human beings from destructive institutions and patterns of thinking. Liberation theology flourished during times of revolutionary action, and its main goal is to transform society.” It is further emphasized that “Healing is more or less equivalent to freedom...” Bringing in another important element, Chuba (1998:60) in Louw (2008) emphasizes that “Africans themselves are targets of African theology.” The author is of the view that a “Theology cooked in an African pot is to serve God’s purpose among his people.” This has a special reference to the under-privileged. Louw (2008) concedes that “When it comes to cultural stratifications and structures in African theology, God is depicted along the lines of tribal issues. This notion includes family ties and social structures. In addition to this, God is perceived as the great Ancestor.” The author further states that in this context, “The Divine is expressed symbolically in stories. These stories are believed to link God to the realm of Ancestors.”

Setiloane (1998:34) cited in Louw (2008:162) maintains that “In African theology, God is perceived in terms of vitalism.” This is explained that “This entails that God is a force that moves and rules humanity. The same force is believed to determine the fate of humanity in the world.” The author goes on to state that “For an African, things exist because God exists. The Spirit of God penetrates everything and is everywhere.” Referring to God images, Louw (2008:165) is of the view that “For African theology, God images should make God present in the context of Africa.” He further affirms that in this context, God must be viewed as our companion.”

Meiring (2007:3-13) also touches on several themes in an attempt to contextualize African theology. The first of these is the concept of ‘*Ubuntu*’. In explaining this concept, the author writes “The African world view emphasizes the importance of the community more than most, and this is summed up in the well-known concept of *Ubuntu* ‘I am because we are.’

While the students of the Enlightenment would say 'I think therefore I am.' Africans say 'I belong therefore I am.'

Adeyemo (1998:374), Gerloff (1998:49), Ndungane (2003:102), Setiloane (2002:21), Tutu (1999:35) cited in Meiring (2007:3) say that "An African is a being in community." The authors further affirm that "This belief in community often contradicts western notions of individuality." Mbiti (2005:1) cited in Meiring (2007:3) relates that "For example, when a husband and a wife have marital problems, the whole community gets involved in an effort to reconcile the partners." It is further argued that "Similarly, African people say 'we have been killed' if one member of their community was killed, and not only the offender but the whole community takes responsibility for the misdeed." According to Meiring, "The community does not only include human beings but also nature, the world of the spirits, ancestors and even God." Du Toit (1998:398) in Meiring (2007:3) calls this "Kinship with nature in which animals and plants, like human beings, have their own spiritual existence and place in the universe as interdependent parts of a whole."

The author goes on to elaborate on the horizontal and vertical dimensions in the context of African theology. In explaining these concepts, the author first touches on how 'Western theology' approaches these concepts. "Theologians often distinguish between our horizontal and vertical relations and obligations. Our vertical relationship refers to God, while our horizontal relationship entails our dealings with God's creatures." It is further stated that "In traditional theology, both these dimensions are important and emphasized. The difference lies in the sequence. Western theology with some exceptions emphasized that the vertical dimensions precede the horizontal. Our relationship with God determines our relationship with the rest of creation" (Meiring (2007)).

It is further argued that "A broken relationship with God leads to strife among humans and struggle against nature." Huber (1990:43), Van de Kooi (2002:105-106) and Steyn (2005:133) in Meiring (2007:4) opine, "Our relationship with one another can only be restored by first being reconciled to God." According to the author, "Western Christianity thus seems to be more worldly inclined and focuses more on the vertical dimensions than on the horizontal." The author believes that this is not the case with 'African theology' Nyirongo (1997:61), Tutu (1996:16-17) and Van Niekerk (1982:24) cited in Meiring (2007) argue that "African theology reverses the order. According to African thought, our relations within the community determine our relationship with God, and reconciliation starts with humans being

reconciled.” It is explained that “It is because African theology is much more than worldly focus, and views the affairs of humans as all important.” A further explanation is given that “Instead of a dualistic world view, African people approach the world holistically, and they believe that all creatures in creation are linked.” It is also stated that “When reconciliation is needed, their solution for it is to reconcile on a horizontal level and to expect that the vertical dimension will follow from that.”

Thorpe (1991:5) cited in Meiring (2007:4) argues that “African religion is very much part of the society in which it is found. It is thus orientated to this world and has a clear horizontal dimension.” The author also emphasizes that “African religion is also permeated by an awareness of the spiritual invisible dimension of life.” It is further stated that “Trees, rivers, streams and rain are more than merely things to be utilized. They have a spiritual quality which unites them to human beings in a greater cosmic whole.” Thorpe continues to say that “The ancestors or living dead continue to be a spiritual part of this greater cosmos even after they have ceased to exist as a physical part. The creator, and even the creation itself, belong to this vertical or spiritual dimension.”

Meiring also focuses and discusses sin and reconciliation from a point of view of African theology. In doing this, the author first focuses on Western approach towards sin and reconciliation. It is argued that “The Western tendency to privatize religion determined the Western Christian understanding of sin during much of church history.” According to Meiring “Western theology usually sees sin as something that God punishes us for, instead of something that God rescues us from.” Maimela (1985:65) and Hayes (1998:175) cited in Meiring (2007:4) believe that “This understanding of sin led Western missionaries to try to induce a sense of guilt for sin in their indigenous Christian hearers...They complained that, Africans had no sense of sin...They called Africans incorrigible savages, and various other uncomplimentary names.” Meiring defines the `African’s view` of sin in that “They believe that, God is the creator of everything including the society. Society, according to their belief system is a moral entity since the Creator provided a moral code which directs individuals’ behavioural patterns.” It is further stated that “This moral code can be violated, and any infraction of it is regarded as sin, which earns the displeasure of God. Such sinful acts include immoral behaviour, breaking covenant, ritual mistakes, breaking of taboos, committing an abominable act, offence against God or man and pollution...”

Meiring (2007) also discusses `liberation` as “One of the most significant contributions of African theology. African liberation theology, revolted against the spiritual enslavement of African people and against the loss of their sense of human dignity and worth.” In this regard, the author sees African theology as a liberative ideology. In this regard then this theology is a relevant tool for bereaved *Xhosa* children. It must liberate them from the pain of loss and bereavement. It also has a potential to liberate those who do not believe and are adamant that children do not grieve and need to be enlightened in this regard. Meiring also focuses on the concept of *ancestors*. According to Tutu (1996:15) and Zulu (1998:188) cited in Meiring (2007:9), “The role of the ancestors is a contentious issue for many African Christians.” It is argued that “The majority of mainline African Christians probably follow the early missionaries’ advice and distanced themselves from the veneration of the ancestors.” It is, however, further explained that “A number of prominent African theologians, many of them Roman Catholics, have started questioning this and tried to explain that veneration of the ancestors is not necessarily identical to worshipping them, it is not idolatry.” It is further explained that “The African initiated churches often involve the ancestors in their theology or replace them with new kinds of intermediaries.” Meiring expresses own belief in this regard: “I believe that even the importance of the ancestors can be understood in terms of their being `below.’ The horizontal focus may explain that because the ancestors are still part of the community, humans must cherish their relationship with them as a way of maintaining God’s created order.” Crafford (1996:15) cited in Meiring (2007:9) believes that “There is no such thing as ancestral worship since ancestors are not worshipped as if they were gods. Instead, they are revered as members of the community having greater status and power, and at times even regarded as behaving arbitrarily and are argued with.”

Tutu (1996:15) and Zulu (1998:188) cited in Meiring (2007:9-10) argue that “The ancestors also represent the ideal community and serve as a model for their descendants of what their communities should be like. Imitating the ancestors is a kind of cure for...bickering factions and guilt ridden individuals.” Zulu (1998:187) in Meiring (2007:10) argues that “The ancestors in African society serve as a model of perpetual peace and harmony to be emulated.”

According to Mhlophe (2013:218), “In Africa, it is generally assumed that dead people are endowed with superhuman abilities akin to granting them divine status.” The author further argues that “The idea is that there exists some kind of a pyramid structure where God is on

top, ancestors occupy the middle, and the bottom is occupied by witchdoctors and medicine men. The ancestors are believed to occupy a place a little lower than God.” Mhlophe goes on to argue that “It is believed that they take on some of his functions like protection and provision, etc. It is not clear what role Jesus, the Holy Spirit or God’s angels are playing in this structure.” The author further argues that “What people who consult the dead are convinced of is that their ancestors are in the presence of the Almighty doing his bidding. In this pyramid structure, it is believed that communication that is from the ancestors actually originates from God himself.” The other point made by the author is that “Ancestors are believed to be the conduit God uses when he communicates with people, and when people desire to communicate with God, they do so via the ancestors.” The author is of the opinion that “Some people actually do not even bother to pray to God but direct their petitions to their ancestors with the hope that they will pass them on to God.”

Mhlophe (2013:232) also concedes of the way in which “The dead are remembered in Africa.” In this regard, the author mentions something ritualistic in arguing that “The first ritual done for the dead involves the slaughtering of a goat to incorporate and accompany the deceased into the world of the dead.” According to the author, “This is done so that the recently deceased joins his long- deceased relatives as an ancestor. It is further discussed that “In the next ritual, an ox is slaughtered in order to bring back the spirit of the deceased to now become an ancestor and watch over the household.” The author goes on to speak about “The danger posed by the ancestors.” He argues that “Ancestors have a terrible reputation.” The author goes on to argue that “It is believed that they can be responsible for inclement and adverse weather conditions. They can cause drought or strike a whole community with some disaster.” It is further argued that “They can cause car accidents, barrenness and many other things...” Putting this in perspective, the author refers to its logic “The logic is that, nothing is safe until it has received the blessing of the dead. Even a child that has not been dedicated is said to be in great danger.”

Meiring then goes on to explore the concept of `Eschatology` as viewed by Africans. “It is often said that Africans do not have eschatology. They look back to a golden era when all lived in harmony and have little awareness or interest in the future.” (2007:10). *Mbiti* (1969:16-17) in Meiring (2007:10) argues that “For Africans, the future extends to a period of about six months to two years, at the most. Events outside this range lies beyond what

constitutes actual time. At the most, we can say that this short future is only an extension of the present” Mbiti (1969:17) in Meiring (2007:10).

The author makes a comment that “Modern changes that swept through Africa during the last century brought an awareness of a brighter future for many Africans with sometimes dangerous consequences. Mbiti (1969:221) in Meiring (2007:10) explains as follows about the Africans: “Their hopes are stirred up and set on the future. They work for progress, wait for an immediate realization of their hopes and create new myths of the future. It is here that we find the key to understanding Africa political, economic and ecclesiastical instability.” Mbiti (1969:235) in Meiring (2007:10) goes even further and says that “They cannot conceive the possibility that the end of the world is an ultra-historical myth which cannot be fitted into the immediate conceptualization of individual men and women.” It is further argued that “They are bitterly disappointed when their Christian eschatology brought to Africa by missionaries is too otherworldly and abstract - that it has little bearing on the community...”

Another concept discussed by Meiring in the context of African theology is the concept of ‘God in the community.’ Meiring (2007:11) says that “The African contention that the community is the primary arena of interaction between humans and God may well be closer to the Biblical message than Western metaphysics.” Milbank (1997:273-274) and Reuther (2002:15) cited in Meiring (2007:11) argue that “The idea of the community is thoroughly Christian and shows that Christ overcomes evil in community with his followers, thus providing a memory of perfect community and a new language of community.”

It is further argued that “The Christian claim is that the narratives about Christ show the love of a difficult and demanding practice that requires more subtlety, style and correct idiom than mere ‘well meaning’. It shows that here is the Logos, the lost harmonic pattern of genuine human life which can now be re appropriated” Milbank (1997:273) cited in Meiring (2007:11). It is also argued that “The community may not only be a prime example of brokenness and wickedness, but a harmonious community may instead be home to God’s self-revelation. Within the healthy community, human beings prosper, and based on the support of the community, one can grow” Meiring (2007:11). *Tutu* (1999:35) cited in Meiring (2007:11) argues that “A person with *Ubuntu* is open and available to others, affirms others and does not feel threatened that others are able and good; for he or she has a proper self-assurance that comes from knowing that he or she belongs in a greater whole and is

diminished when others are humiliated or diminished. When others are tortured or oppressed, or treated as if they were less than who they are.”

Adebo and Harold (2003:7) speak of the relevance of black (African theology) in Post - Apartheid South Africa. “...Black theology remains relevant in post-apartheid South Africa because of its relationship with BCM (Black Cultural Movement). Black theology was a means of reminding Blacks of their self-worth and dignity.” The authors continue to say that “...Self -worth and self- dignity is not only meant for Blacks...” The second reason for the relevance of African theology, as stated by Adebo and Harold, is that “Black theology is still relevant with regards to the idea of reconciliation.” It is further stated that “Liberation seeks a true and genuine integration of humanity, and true liberation engenders forgiveness and reconciliation.” This argument goes on to state that “Where there is true liberation, one is free from the residue of deep seated anger and the spirit of vengeance. In this sense, both the oppressed and the oppressor can embrace one another in the spirit of forgiveness.” It is further noted, “However, Tutu has argued unequivocally that such reconciliation is possible, as was demonstrated by Mandela after his release from prison and his setting up of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC).” It is also argued “Moreover, the philosophy of *Ubuntu* and the *imago Dei* (image of God) can be a model through which Black theology of liberation can seek ways of reconciling with the people on other side of the divide.”

Mwanbazambi (2010:4) cited in Adebo and Harold (2013:8-9) notes the following with regards to Black theology:

- Black theology of liberation can be an effective instrument for re-evangelization and reintegration of South Africa;
- The vibrant nature of Black theology and the source of knowledge it provides have opened the way to reach Africans with the gospel of Christ...using African symbols and narratives;
- Black theology is also relevant through reconstructing, re-conscientizing, Christian education, contextualizing African theologies, rethinking the Christian mission for African churches, re-imagining new ways to realize community development based on biblical hermeneutics, assisting the on-going struggle against poverty, developing new jobs, Christian leadership and searching for a new inclusive language of naming and communication;

- South African Black theology...proposed a new way for the positive transformation of African societies;
- It is a new approach to our search for pastoral or missiological model of care that is contextual and liberating;
- Black theology continues to be relevant, both as an academic tool and a praxis tool for South African Blacks;
- It is an intellectual tool because it can be a means of engaging theological discourse in South Africa;
- Black theology, because of its cultural ideology, is an intellectual/theological think tank for the church in South Africa;
- It could be adapted to a pastoral use because at its root is the concern for the oppressed, the marginalized and the lost; and
- Black theology of liberation seeks, like Jesus, to reach out to the down-trodden and societal rejects and make them relevant by giving them hope in the world. Mwanbazambi (2010) cited in Adebo & Harold (2013:8-9).

Given this discourse of Black (African theology), the researcher feels that it is the correct and relevant tool for bereaved *Xhosa* children. This is because of its liberative and pastoral nature, as explained in this discourse. *Xhosa* children need to be liberated from their exclusion in theological support given to the elderly during bereavement in terms of therapy. Theological guidance should be applied to them as well. This coincides with the following statement: “Black theology of liberation speaks against every form of oppression in the society and affirms the rights and dignity of persons, irrespective of their colour, creed, or status in life...” Mwanbazambi (2010) cited in Adebo & Harold (2013:9). The following scripture references show the divine favour and approval for children:

- i. **Psalm 103:13:** “The Lord is like a father to his children, tender and compassionate.”

- ii. **Proverbs 22:6:** “Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.”
- iii. **Proverbs 6:20-21:** “My son, keep your father`s commands and do not forsake your mother`s teaching. Bind them upon your heart forever; fasten them around your neck.”
- iv. **Psalm 127:3-5:** “Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord; the fruit of the womb is a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, so are the children of one`s youth. Happy is the man who has his quiver full of them.” These scripture references also show that taking care of children is a divine imperative and therefore must be taken seriously.

In this section, the researcher briefly presented some scripture references with regards to God`s favour for children. In the following section, the focus will be briefly on relevance and applicability of black theology.

The researcher believes that the relevance and applicability of Black theology need not only be further established, but to be defended as well. This is because there are some scholarly thinkers who believe that Black theology is not relevant in the post-apartheid South Africa. This is true of Jesse Mugambi and Charles Villa-Vicencio respectively. Mugambi (2003:128) cited in Adebo and Harold (2013:3) suggested at the Nairobi conference of the AACC that “all forms of African theology...needed to shift emphasis from the Exodus motif of liberation to a theology of reconstruction.” Mugambi further stated that “The problems of racism, colonialism, neo-colonialism and ideological branding had caused so much destruction and distortion in African societies that efforts needed to concentrate on rebuilding the political, economic and religious arenas of African society.” To promote reconstruction theology, three levels are presented in this regard:

- **Personal level:** Dealing with individuals` efforts to reconstruct personal life, finances and intentions, including motives after the destruction caused by colonialism, exploitation and oppression;
- **Ecclesial level:** Dealing with the involvement of the church in its theological articulation to engage the public in such a way that would move it towards reconsideration of church life, management, finances and pastoral care that would

propel society in the direction of rebuilding what had been destroyed through colonialism and apartheid; and

- **Cultural level:** Dealing with cultural re-orientation involving economic, political, social, ethical and religious issues...” Mugambi (2003:128) cited in Adebo and Harold (2013:3).

Villa-Vicencio (1992:2) cited in Adebo and Harold (2013:3) concurs with Mugambi that “There is a need for a paradigm shift in theological contemplation in line with the major shift in the political landscape in Africa.” Villa-Vicencio argued further that “Due to the repudiation of apartheid and the unbanning of political organizations such as the African National Congress (ANC) and the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC), it is necessary for the proponents of Black theology to shift their position from the clamour for justice and equity to reconstruction...”

In this regard, one notes that Black theology and liberative paradigms are still applicable in the understanding of an African which takes place through the lenses of an African theology. These concepts, one believes, are not something of the past, as Maimela (1992) and Mofokeng (1992) in Louw (2008) and Mugambi including Villa-Vicencio seem to suggest. African theology is targeted to serve God’s purpose among his people, including the underprivileged. God must be viewed within the framework of family ties; thus God is linked to the realm of the ancestors and is also viewed as the great ancestor. In this section, the researcher discussed African theology at length because it is the means to close the identified gap with regards to bereaved *Xhosa* children. The following section focuses on the discussion of African Spirituality because African Spirituality is closely linked to African theology.

#### **2.4.5 The discussion of African Spirituality**

In the context of African Spirituality, Louw (2008:165-166) speaks of the realm of the spiritual world: “When one talks of African Spirituality, one cannot ignore the realm of spiritual world.” The author goes on to say that “Spirits are real entities that are involved in life events, and the world of traditional Africa is filled with different spirits.” Louw also says that “Some of these spirits are evil, some are not.”

Long (2000:27) cited in Louw (2008:165) refers to the world of African Spirituality as “The world in between.” Long (2000:28-29) cited in Louw (2008:165) gives an outline of the

spiritual world in between and calls it “Spiritual taxonomy.” The author then goes on to give the following distinctions: “Divinities are manifestations of God - this means that the spirits are vehicles or hands of God. The second distinction is “Ancestral spirits - this means that the ancestors are part of daily life events and should be taken into account in life decisions.” Here it is further affirmed that “The ancestral spirits continue to play a vital role in the lives of their descendants, often acting with benevolence, protecting and guiding those in whom they continue to live. They further mediate their requests to deities or more powerful spirits.”

According to Setiloane (1989:17) cited in Louw (2008:166), “Africans do not worship the spirits, but they pay respect to them and serve them in the same way as one serves and respects one’s parents.” The author goes on to say that “On the other hand, the spirits share in the mystery of transcendence and should not be seen as humans either.” The author further affirms that “The spirits are not God although they share divine characteristics. Within the African societal order and the network of relationships, ancestors play a decisive role. This, however, does not mean that Africans are worshipping ancestors. Ancestors are not gods but are merely part of the systemic network of relationships. “The author further affirms that “Ancestors are the protectors of life and of the community, and Africans do believe strongly in the presence and influence of ancestors in daily life. “In this regard, Berinyuu (1988:8) in Louw (2008:166) adds by saying that “Because Africans believe in ancestors, they do things often unconsciously to reflect such a belief, but they do not worship them as gods.”

Solomon, in her undated and unpublished Master’s thesis (n.d.), addresses the question of “Beliefs in the hereafter.” In this argument, the author says that “On the question of hereafter, the *Xhosa* people have many ideas.” The author goes on to state that “On the whole, these ideas point to the fact that there is very little difference between the present and the hereafter, except that the latter is invisible.” It is further argued that “One of the reasons for this belief could probably be that if the hereafter was terribly different from the present life, people would find it disturbing to their imagination and would feel great resentment at death.” According to the author, “For the majority of people, the hereafter is situated on the same earth; it has rivers, mountains, forests, fields, cattle, sheep, goats, dogs, chickens, wild animals and all the things we find in our physical life.” The author is of the view that “Some *Xhosa* people believe that the departed remain in the neighbourhood of their human homestead and are still part of the family. Their surviving relatives and friends feel that the departed are close to them.”

The author further notes that “The *Xhosa* believe that a person is made up of the body and spirit. Death is recognized as the point when the spirit departs from the body.” It is further affirmed that “Because the spirit is closely associated with breathing, people know that the spirit has gone when the person stops breathing. Even though the spirit leaves the body, it is thought that in many clans among the *Xhosa*, for a while, it lingers around the body or the homestead.” According to the author, it is for these facts that “The appropriate funeral rites *ukukhapha* (accompanying the spirit of the departed) must be performed to send off to enable it to go away and join other spirits. It is also believed that the spirit does not lose the identity it had when it was a living person.”

In this same context, the author further explores “The concept of the living dead.” According to the researcher, this is closely related to the concept of “Hereafter” which has been discussed hereunder. The author argues that “While surviving relatives remember the departed, the spirit more or less leads a personal continuation of life. It has become what has now been particularly called - the living dead.” The author further affirms that “The people regard the living dead as being much like a human being although it is dead.” Another point is made that “If it appears to members of the family, they will say that, they saw `So and so. ` Up to that point, it has not lost its personal name and identity.”

It is further explained that “During this period, which may last up to four or five generations, it is possible for something of the features, characteristics and personality of such a spirit (living dead) to be noticed in a newly born child.” It is further argued that “Other manifestations of the living dead are said to occur in dreams, visions, possessions and certain illnesses or mental disturbances. In dreams and visions, people claim to encounter the spirit of the living dead to talk to it and to receive certain requests from it.” Concluding this part, the author says that “If the living dead make demands which can be fulfilled, people normally meet them.”

The author then goes on to tackle another concept which is also closely related and intertwined with the concept of the living dead. It is, according to the researcher, the same spirits in question but approached in different ways. In this regard, the author speaks of the concept “Remembering the dead.” Here, the author maintains that “*Xhosa* people believe that death is not the end of human life and that a person continues to exist in the hereafter.” According to the author, “This continuation of life beyond death is recognized through practices of remembering the departed.” It is further confirmed that “This concerns mainly

the living dead, that is, the spirits of those who died up to four or five generations back. Heads of families, adults and married people are remembered in this way, not babies, children and the unmarried.” The argument carries on that “Sometimes the dead or ancestors are given food which is normally in the form of seeds of all sorts of cultivated grain. “This is put in a new billycan, sealed and taken to the nearby stream. It is expected to flow against the current in an upright position then sink on the other side of the river...”

The author also argues that “Another method of remembering the departed is to consult them through an *Igqirha* (witch doctor) when a major family undertaking or decision is about to be made or when there is a major illness.” It is also discussed that “Naming the dead in prayers is another way of remembering them.” Another point made by the author in this regard is that “These departed members of the family are believed to relay prayers to God since it is considered rude in traditional *Xhosa* life to approach an authority directly (God being the highest authority) unless it is absolutely essential.” It is also stated that “The departed are also remembered by naming children after them, especially if their features have been inherited by these children.” With regards to married women, it is stated that “Married women in the family are then not expected to use this name and normally use nicknames to call children thus named. In the concluding remarks over this issue, the author thus concludes, “Thus we see in traditional *Xhosa* life that the departed are not really forgotten. Through rituals, dreams, visions, possessions and names, they are recalled and respected.” On the author’s note, “The departed are considered to be still alive, and people show by these practices that they recognize their presence.”

Masango (2006:3) makes some comments with regard to African Spirituality. The author maintains that “The theme of Spirituality has become a common word in modern life. Current interest in Spirituality is evident both at popular and scholarly levels. This theme is heard on radios and televisions. These days, it is also shared in seminars, conferences and University classes...” Mbiti (1977:76) cited in Masango (2006:6) affirms that “The African view of the universe or the world understand Spirituality mediators as people who fill up the area between man and God.” According to Masango (2006:6), “This concept can be a beautiful and beneficial contribution in understanding the world of communication among Africans, especially when introducing Christianity and the concept of Jesus as Mediator.” The author further argues that “This could have helped them connect to the world of Jesus as the Saviour of the world, especially its process of hierarchy.”

Masango comments that “It makes sense that one can only speak to the King (God) through ancestors or mediators, especially the good ones who lived to the fullest.” According to the author, this is because “Only good role models are respected, especially those who have shared their good behaviour with others in the village.” Masango also discusses `the death of good Elders` and its relatedness to African Spirituality and all that goes with it: “Generally speaking, not everybody becomes an ancestor in the true African life. For example, those who lived bad lives can never be considered as ancestors when they die.” It is further argued that “In Africa, as mentioned before, death does not represent the end of human existence but rather a change in its status” (2006:3). Mbiti (1977:70) cited in Masango (2006:4) concedes that “It is a natural consequence of the strong belief in African religion that human life does not terminate at the death of the individual but continues beyond death. It follows, therefore, that there must be myriads upon myriads of human spirits. Many of them appear in legends, myths and folk stories; others are spoken about in normal conversations among people; and some possess people or appear to people in visions and dreams.”

Based on this, Masango (2006:7) concludes that “In other words, the African world has been interacting between the world of the living and the dead. Note that the process begins even before the last breath has been breathed out. We are now entering the area of deep human Spirituality through the process of death.” To explain this phenomenon, the author gives an example “In certain villages, elders become living ancestors as they reach the prime age in their lives. They become Spiritual advisors to the young ones.” Masango explains that “This process starts when they are sharing their Spiritual gifts or insights while they are still alive, and then proceed to do so when they pass on to the other life” (2006:7).

When it comes to who becomes an ancestor in the African context, Olupona (2000:11) cited in Masango (2006:7) explicates that “It is important to note that not all dead people automatically attain the status of ancestorship. Death is not always a requirement for it.” It is further explained that “The notion of ancestorship implies the idea of selection before any other consideration to a social model based on the idea of exemplification in the strictest sense of the word. A good elder becomes an image of God when he dies. Masango qualifies this by concluding that “In other words, an ancestor is someone who has reached a great age and maturity in life, who during his or her lifetime, has acquired a vast experience of life including deep Spirituality, hence they share their rich experiences and Spiritual life with young other villagers” Masango (2006:7).

In this same context of African Spirituality, Masango discusses the concept of African values and connects it to the concept of *Ubuntu* and that of the ancestors: “The concept of *Ubuntu*, connected to the idea of ancestorship, shapes a way of living that respects human beings, life, the elderly, as well as the community” (2006:8). Nwachuku (1994:81) cited in Louw (2008) maintains that “African people are fundamentally and deeply spiritual. In African spirituality, life revolves around the worship of the Supreme Being, God.” Building on the same concept, Berinyuu (1988:19) cited in Louw (2008) is of the view that “Spirituality and religious dimensions are vital for the understanding of an African person.” Skhakhane (1995:110) cited in Louw (2008) believes that the “African community is the core of African Spirituality.” According to the author, “Community refers not only to the living, but also to the ancestors.” It is further argued that “African Spirituality consists of an intimate relationship of people and their Ancestors. This relationship initiates and governs their activities in life.” It is concluded that “This same process guarantees harmony and peace with other beings.” Commenting on Spirituality, Walsh (2003) cited in Loubser (2007) maintains that “Spirituality is a key family dimension that promotes the adaptation of family members, as well as the family as a unit.”

Wolin (1999) in Loubser (2007) takes it further and argues that “Spirituality can be experienced and expressed through religion, characterized by beliefs, social organizations and cumulative traditions.” The author goes on to advise that “Spiritual traditions are optimistic in that they keep hope alive in the midst of hardship.” It is further affirmed that “Such traditions share the belief that there is a way through trauma and tribulation and that human beings have the ability to find this way.” Fukuyama and Sevig (1999) cited in Loubser (2007) add that “Spirituality also promotes realistic hope, attachment of meaning, values, inner freedom, belief systems, peak experiences as well as man`s relationship with God.”

Walsh (2003) in Loubser (2007) believes that “Spiritual beliefs have an influence on the way in which adversity is managed, pain and suffering is experienced and meaning is attached to symptoms.” On this same context, Doherty (2003) in Loubser (2007) emphasizes that “Spirituality cannot be ignored in counselling because it is a core aspect of human life...” Bosch (1974:40) in Louw (2008) affirms that “African Spirituality is structured, not along the lines of a pyramid, but of a circle. This means that community and communality are the centre of a religious life in Africa.” Long (2000:23) in Louw (2008) maintains that “The transcendence and experiences of God in Africa are closely related to life and daily events.”

It is also argued that “God is present in everyday life and He controls life events.” “The author further believes that “God is just” and that “He punishes sin.” It is worth noting that Cilliers (n.d.) notes the concept of culture as connected to notion of Spirituality. The author argues that “Spirituality is always culturally formed and informed, and the formation of Spirituality is always cultural contextual.” Raiter and Wilson (2005:122) cited in Cilliers (n.d.) define culture as “Those ideas, beliefs, feelings, values and institutions which are learned and by which a group of people order their lives and interpret their experiences, and which give them an identity distinct from other groups.” On the other hand, Sarong (2002:40) cited in Cilliers (n.d.) define culture as “That complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.” Webb (2001:21) cited in Cilliers (n.d.) when speaking of culture, argues that “We live and move about in the culture with which we are closely and invisibly enmeshed.”

The researcher then concludes that African Spirituality is based on the following critical concepts: Life revolves around the worship of God and He is regarded as a Supreme Being; an African person is defined and understood by African Spirituality; African Spirituality can also be understood through the lenses of a community; the living and the ancestors are linked in the realm of African Spirituality; God is actively involved in the daily life events; and African theology and African Spirituality are inseparably closely linked together.

The next section focuses on the philosophy of *Ubuntu*. The researcher views this concept as part of care giving; therefore, it is relevant in the whole therapeutic process. Caring for bereaved *Xhosa* children is both theologically based and enhanced by the *Ubuntu* concept which says out loud that we exist because of others. Bereaved children in this culture need to be shown that the community of God (the church) cares for them. This is important as this study is focused on a religious community.

#### **2.4.6 The discussion of the *Ubuntu* philosophy**

Onto this concept of *Ubuntu*, Cilliers (n.d.) adds the concept of *Ubunye* (unity). The author argues that “Coupled with *Ubuntu*, Africans also adhere to the spirit of *Ubunye*, which literally means: we are one.” It is further argued that “This has to do with the integration of life, which also includes the spirit world and the departed ancestors.” It is further commented that “In Africa, life is not divided into compartments with separate spiritual and secular components. Life as such is spiritual and is perceived as a wholesome holistic experience.”

The author goes on to say that “Africans, indeed have a more systemic understanding of life. Life is a dynamic space for holistic relationships, an integral whole of cosmic and social events. Africans adopt a non-analytical approach to our existence on this planet.” Berinyuu (1988:5) cited in Cilliers (n.d.) confirms this notion by saying that “In Africa, there is no division and/or differentiation between the animate and inanimate, between the spirit and matter, between living and non-living, dead and living, physical and metaphysical, secular and sacred, the body and the spirit.” It is further argued that “Most Africans generally believe that everything (human beings included) is in constant relationship with one another and with the invisible world and that people are in a state of complete dependence upon those invisible powers and beings. Hence, Africans are convinced that in the activities of life, harmony, balance or tranquillity must constantly be sought and maintained...”

When defining the concept of *Ubuntu*, Chaplin (n.d.) maintains that “*Ubuntu* is an African word for a universal concept.” The author goes on to add that “*Ubuntu* is a potential for being human to value the good of the community above self-interests.” The author also stresses the point that “*Ubuntu* is to strive to help people in the spirit of service, to show respect to others and to be honest and trustworthy.” With regards to the role of *Ubuntu* in connection with humanity, the author is of the view that “*Ubuntu* regards humanity as an integral part of the eco-systems that lead to a communal responsibility to sustain life.”

It is further argued that “*Ubuntu* shares natural resources on a principle of equity among and between generations.” According to the author, “*Ubuntu* is fair to all, is compassionate and is a collective respect for human dignity.” It is also affirmed that *Ubuntu* refers to people and is one of those things that you recognize when you experience it.” The author also expresses that “An African expression of *Ubuntu* says: ‘your pain is my pain’, ‘my wealth is your wealth’, ‘and my salvation is your salvation’.” It is further argued that this concept “Is about being so rooted in the community that your personal identity is defined by what you give to the community.” The author further believes that “A person with *Ubuntu* is open and available to others, affirms and respects others and does not feel threatened by other’s strengths or abilities...” In this section, the researcher dealt with the *Ubuntu* concept. The next section focuses on African Renaissance.

#### **2.4.7 The discussion of African Renaissance**

The researcher is convinced that African Renaissance is closely related to *Ubuntu* concept. These are concepts that define the meaning of being an African. Mbeki (1998:40), when

defining African Renaissance, emphasizes that “It is a plea for a radical change, it is a struggle for dignity and humanity.” This is further elaborated on in the African Renaissance statement:

“We must rebel against the tyrants and the dictators, those people who seek to corrupt our societies, and steal the wealth that belongs to the African people ...We must...conduct war against poverty, ignorance and backwardness...Our vision of an African Renaissance must have as one of its central aims the provision of a better life for the children of Africa...the people must enjoy and exercise the right to determine their future.”

Commenting on this same concept, Mavimbela (1998:30) concedes that “African Renaissance must also be seen as an indication of a new frame of mind. It is the enlightenment or the revival of the classic understanding of the freedom of the human spirit.” The author further affirms that “It is also a quest for meaning and a search for dignity.” According to Teffo (1999:165-169) cited in Louw (2008), “African Renaissance can be linked to the concept of African Spirituality. These two concepts, when put together, can translate into the notion of Communality. Communality assists Africans to understand their identity.” The author goes on to concede that “Daily life should be experienced in terms of mutual respect for people and their values.” Mtetwa (1996) in Louw (2008) advises that “These values for African people reflect a spiritual destiny.” The researcher places great value on the importance of these values as highlighted by the authors in this regard.

It is worth noting that when discussing the African Renaissance, Creff (2004:2-3) first explores the concept of *Ubuntu*. According to Louw (n.d.) cited in Creff (2004:2), “*Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu* is translated from *Xhosa* as ‘a person is a person through other persons’ and forms the foundation of *Ubuntu*.” According to Creff, “*Ubuntu* is a word common to two indigenous South African languages, namely *Zulu* and *Xhosa*.” It is further argued that “This concept of individual significance being achieved through the community is the basic understanding that has been repeated by many black South Africans.” According to *Mbigi and Maree* (1995) in Creff (2004:2), “*Ubuntu* is a metaphor that describes the significance of group solidarity on survival issues that are central to the survival of African communities...” Sindane (1995) in Creff (2004:2) argues that “*Ubuntu* does not escape the problem of being differently defined by different people.” It is further argued that “*Ubuntu* is humanism. It is a belief in the centrality, sacredness, a foremost priority of the human being in all our conduct throughout our lives.” Louw (2002) cited in Creff (2004:2) concurs and even elaborates more

on this concept saying “*Ubuntu* is African Humanism since the *Ubuntu* concept encompasses a deeply spiritual connotation that includes the role of ancestors in an individual development.” It is further argued that “Ancestors are regarded as an extended family, and many rituals include acknowledgment of ancestors.”

Meanwhile, Broodryk (1997) cited in Creff (2004:2) argues that “Many Africans’ belief in God takes place through the mediation of ancestors.” Teffo (1994) in Creff (2004:2) is of the view that “*Ubuntu* implies a deep respect for religious beliefs and practices.” Creff goes on to argue that “*Ubuntu* encompasses sound moral values while simultaneously indicating that humankind is the source and measure of all that matters, pointing to the influence of African Humanism within the concept.” It is also argued that “The traditional African worldview advances the understanding that the spirit world defines the worldview of the people and their lives.” Van der Walt (2003) cited in Creff (2004:2), when addressing the concept of the African Spirituality, argues as follows “Pervasive, hidden, unexplainable, unpredictable and powerful spirits govern and control everything and everyone and affect the well-being of individuals, families, clans and tribes...” Creff (2004) goes on to discuss the “Traditional African Religion and the interpretation and the application of *Ubuntu*.” The author notes that “It is notable that while there is a clear and common understanding regarding the basic meaning of *Ubuntu*, there are differences in the way and degree to which individuals interpret the concept and apply it in their organizations.” Mbigi (2000a) cited in Creff (2004:6) states, “I am convinced that the African spirits and their virgin form of creativity, which is psychic visioning, can be applied to give birth to the African Business Renaissance in the areas of industrial espionage and market intelligence-gathering strategy as well as product and service innovation.” It is further discussed that “African Spirit Hierarchy is used to provide a framework for organizational transformation and lists the nine spirits in their English translation in order of significance as God, Rain maker Spirit, Hunter’s Spirit, Innovative Spirit, Divination Spirit, Clan Spirit, War Spirit, Avenging Spirit and the Witch Spirit.” Louw (n.d.) cited in Creff (2004) “Used the *Ubuntu* concept synonymously with African Humanism.” According to Van Niekerk (1994) cited in Creff (2004) “The definition of *Ubuntu* in Zulu ‘*umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*’ i.e., ‘a person is a person through other persons’ is only possible through an ancestor...” The last section discussed by Creff (2004) in this context is African Renaissance. Boloka (1999:93) cited in Creff (2004:3) notes that “The concept of African Renaissance is linked to Thabo Mbeki who articulated it as “A means to Africa’s empowerment.” It is also argued that “A significant characteristic of the post-

apartheid era in the fledgling South African democracy is the desire of the nation to redeem itself from its torrid past...” Boloka (1999:4) cited in Creff (2004:3) goes on to argue that “These new identities are illustrated in the type of symbols such as the ‘rainbow nation’ attributed to Desmond Tutu and the concept of the blossoming of Africa, popularized by Thabo Mbeki as the African Renaissance.” It is further affirmed that “South Africa is used as a model for the attainment of a peaceful democracy and the development of the African Renaissance throughout the continent.” Creff (2004:3) notes that “In a speech in Japan in 1997, Mbeki (as cited in Boloka) noted that the reason for an African Renaissance is the need to empower the African peoples to deliver themselves from the legacy of colonialism and neo-colonialism and situate themselves on the global stage as equal and respected contributors, as well as beneficiaries of all the achievements of human civilization...” Creff (2004:3) also notes that according to Mbeki as cited in Makroba (1999), “One of the central aims of the African Renaissance is the provision of a better life for these masses of the people whom we say must enjoy and exercise the right to determine their future.” It is further argued that “Renaissance must, therefore, address the critical question of sustainable development which impacts positively on the standard of living and the quality of life of the masses of our people.” In this section, the researcher explored the African Renaissance and its relevance in this whole undertaking. In the next section, the researcher will focus on the integration of these concepts.

## **2.8 The integration of African theology, Spirituality, African Renaissance and *Ubuntu***

The researcher seeks to justify the discussion of African Renaissance and *Ubuntu*, in this section even though the focus is on theological guidance through African theology and Spirituality. In the same breath, the researcher attempts to show how these concepts contribute to child care during bereavement. According to the researcher, African theology focuses on how African people view God, needless to mention that *Xhosa* people are also part of this definition. The researcher is convinced that since *Xhosa* children emerge from this background, this is fitting and applicable to them. African Spirituality: is more focused on African beliefs and the Spirituality thereof. These concepts form theological guidance for *Xhosa* children during bereavement in this research project by virtue of their relevance and applicability as well as their uniqueness in this whole process. They are definitely part of the belief system of this particular culture. African Spirituality fits in as far as African theology is concerned. African Renaissance: is more on the cultural identity of African people and their heritage. It also emphasizes how such heritage should be upheld. This then becomes a

contributing factor in the whole process of child care during bereavement. It further strengthens the contribution of African theology to child care during bereavement. *Ubuntu*: focuses on the inter-dependence of African people. In the African context, a person exists because of others as this is about sharing and doing things together. This then means that, if these concepts of African Renaissance and *Ubuntu* are applied during bereavement, there will be no exclusion on the part of *Xhosa* children in bereavement processes. African Renaissance and *Ubuntu* concepts simply endorse and mean that African people do things together; in this context, they mourn together as their culture binds them together. This then means that the exclusion of *Xhosa* children in the bereavement processes in terms of theological guidance is based on lack of knowledge and not on culture as African culture embraces inclusivity (Africans do things together). To address this problem, theological guidance through African theology and Spirituality is, therefore, the relevant approach. This approach is unique to *Xhosa* children, and the researcher is optimistic that this approach will yield good results in this whole process. This means that these concepts; African Renaissance and *Ubuntu* form a firm base for the application of theological guidance for bereaved *Xhosa* children through African theology and Spirituality. In this section, the researcher looked into African Spirituality, African Renaissance and *Ubuntu* with regards to their relatedness to African theology as contributing factors for child care. In the next section, the researcher will present the conclusion.

## **2.9 Conclusion**

In this chapter, the researcher covered the following aspects: Generic literature review section, theory base section and primary literature review section. In the generic literature review section, the researcher has presented scholarly works that deal generally with child grief, child therapy and child spirituality. However, these works pose a gap. In the theory base section, theories that deal with therapy in different ways were presented; these were also linked to child therapy, one way or the other. In the primary literature review section, the researcher presented works that have a potential to close the gap. This section clearly shows and indicates that African theology and African Spirituality are suitable means to close the gap. Other concepts such as African Renaissance and *Ubuntu* have been discussed due to their relevance to African theology and Spirituality during child bereavement. In the next chapter, the researcher focuses on the research methodology. This will map out the path the researcher followed in achieving the outcomes of this research project. This is the subject of chapter three.

## CHAPTER THREE

### RESEARCH CONTEXT AND METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher outlines how the whole research process unfolded and stands as a preamble to chapter four of this research project. This means that if things are not dealt with properly in this chapter, chapter four will not be understood and linked to any meaning. The researcher also aims at making sure that, there is cohesion, unity and connection between the topic, research problem and the research questions. This means that as this chapter spells out how the research process unfolded, this must confirm what is stated in the topic of this research project. The researcher sought to investigate how *Xhosa* children should be taken care of during bereavement. This is based on the fact that it is proven that, they are not fully catered for in the grieving process. The solution is therefore based on the contributions made by African Theology and Spirituality, and the researcher regards these concepts as relevant tools to solve this problem. The chapter is divided into three sections: Introduction, research context and research methodology. In this section, the researcher has introduced this particular chapter and all that it entails; in the following section the researcher discusses the context of the research site.

#### 3.2 Context of the research site

The researcher in this section will discuss the following themes: Demographics of the location, Population, Socio-economic status and Religious status. The researcher chose this particular approach to ensure validity and reliability. De Vos (2005:159) in Jackson (2007:6), when speaking of a good research approach, advises that “The term *research methodology*, embraces the rules and procedures applicable to a specific research project.” The author further maintains that “This justifies the chosen way by demonstrating its validity and reliability.” Commenting on this same concept, Collins (2000:11) extrapolates that “The selection and implementation of a suitable research method ensures that researchers work independently of external influence or personal position.” The author concludes by advising that “This will help researchers to arrive at a conclusion which is based on demonstrable and measurable evidence.” In this undertaking, the researcher is also convinced that, this

approach also guides the researcher in producing the desired and measured evidence and prepares the ground for findings and recommendations. In this section, the researcher briefly dealt with the context of the research site, in the following section the researcher will briefly present the demographics of the location.

### **3.2.1 Demographics of the location**

The research context and the demographics are identified in this section. The researcher identified four congregations where the actual study was conducted. This means that sample of the research participants was selected from these congregations, and the analysis data collected was limited to the input made by these respondents from these four congregations. Detailed information regarding these congregations will be provided later in the study, and will be the subject of chapter four (4). This entails their names, geographical information and the statistics thereof and followed by the analysis of each congregation. The analysis involved the following concepts: age, gender, education, socio economic status and marital status respectively. With regards to multiracialism, there are no other races found in the location of this study except *Xhosa* speaking people. However, in some of these areas where there are six (06) local tuck shops and stores of different sizes and capacities, Africans from the larger African countries are found. These emerge from countries such as Somalia and Ethiopia and are running tuck shops found in some of these villages. The researcher would also like to point out that these Africans from other African countries are not part of this study. They are only mentioned due to the fact that they interact with the local population. In this section, the researcher briefly looked into the demographics of the location, and the next point to be discussed is multiculturalism. This is also an important aspect to be looked at because *Xhosa* people are divided into sub-groups with their own different heritages.

#### **3.2.1.2 Multiculturalism**

In her book, *A bed called home, life in the migrant labour hostels of Cape Town*, Mamphela (1993:1-6) gives helpful insights into various aspects of the *Xhosa* culture, much of which has also been made available online in articles dealing with countries and their cultures. This section provides the background needed for this aspect to give clarity to certain issues dealt with in this section. The researcher refers to issues that are binding in terms of heritage and cultural aspects that make *Xhosa* people unique.

Mamphela (1993) explicates that “The word *Xhosa* refers to a certain group of people and a language of South Africa. The *Xhosa* speaking people are divided into a number of subgroups with their own distinct but related heritages”. The author goes on to explain that “One of these subgroups is called *Xhosa* and other subgroups are the *Baca*, *Bomvana*, *Mfengu*, *Mpondo*, *Mpondomise*, *Xesibe* and *Tembu*.” It is further affirmed that “Before the arrival of the Europeans in the late 1600s, *Xhosa* speaking people occupied much of the Eastern South Africa. The region extended from the Fish River to the land inhabited by the *Zulu* speaker’s south of the modern City of Durban”. The author further explains that “This territory includes well-watered rolling hills near scenic coastal areas as well as harsh and dry regions further inland.” The author also declares that “Many *Xhosa* people live in Cape Town, East London and Port Elizabeth. *Xhosa* people can be found in lesser numbers in most of South Africa’s metropolitan areas...” (1993).

In the immediate focus area of the research project, these other social groupings are not found and only the *Xhosa* grouping that is found in the research site. These other social groupings are just mentioned as they relate to the *Xhosa* grouping and share some common aspects of the *Xhosa* culture. Due to the fact that these other groupings are not found in the research site, the researcher does not deem it necessary to spend time on them. In this section, the researcher looked into multiculturalism. In the next section the researcher will then look into the language of the *Xhosa* speaking people.

### **3.2.1.3 The language**

Mamphela (1993) advises that “The *Xhosa* language is properly referred to as *isiXhosa* and is a *Bantu* language closely related to *Zulu* language”. The author also affirms that “As with other South African languages, *isiXhosa* is characterized with respectful forms of address for elders and in laws. The language is also rich in idioms. To have a warm hand, for example, is being generous.” The author further affirms that “The *Xhosa* language contains many words with click consonants that have been borrowed from *Khoi* or San words. The (*X*) in *Xhosa* represents a type of click made by the tongue on the side of the mouth.”

When it comes to the use of language in this area, *Xhosa* language is spoken and is the mother language of the participants. The challenge is that even the mother language can be complicated for young children during bereavement. When there is bereavement in one of the *Xhosa* families, there are devotions that are usually conducted by preachers to comfort the bereaved family. The language that is mostly used in these devotions, one believes, does not

bear any meaning for *Xhosa* children. Examples are expressions such as *tutwini*, *akuhlanga lungehliyo*, *imela igobele esandleni*, *nguThixo obenikile ikwanguye nothabathileyo*, *sisebomini nje sikwasekufeni*. As reflected in the research background, these expressions do not have any meaning to children. The underlined truth and meaning in these expressions is that, (those who are bereaved are not alone in that situation and that death is a common event and that it does occur. God is the giver of life and has a right to terminate life. Those who are bereaved must therefore be comforted). These are good expressions in themselves, needless to mention that their meaning can only be understood by the elderly people, but these concepts need to be explained to children. If they are told, for example, that God gives and takes life, for them, this leaves a lot to be desired. They may then see God as being unfair and as a killer; this must be explained to them in a simple language. In terms of language, there is only one language that is spoken in the research area, and that is *Xhosa* language. The argument of the researcher is that *Xhosa* language must be simplified when children are addressed during bereavement.

The researcher then strongly believes that, if this language aspect can be taken into account as suggested, bereaved *Xhosa* children will then benefit. The application of theological guidance during bereavement will then be effective and yield good results in terms of support. In this particular section, the researcher looked into the issue of language; the next section focuses on population and the size of the research area. This is because the religious community who form the research context is part of this larger population.

#### **3.2.1.4 Population (the size of the research area in terms of statistics).**

In this regard, the researcher presents general population statistics of the research area (Idutywa) by Statistics South Africa (2011). This will be followed by a brief reference to the religious community which is a focus area of this research. This reference to the larger community is meant to show that the religious community in question here is part of the larger community. The table is hereunder presented in this regard.

Total Population	11076
Young (0-14)	20.6%
Working Age (15-64)	78.1%

Elderly (65+)	1.3%
Dependency ratio	28
Sex Ratio	84.7
Population Density	532 persons/km <sup>2</sup>
No Schooling (aged20+)	2.2%
Higher Education (aged 20+)	18.4%
Matric (aged 20+)	31.6%
Number of households	3142
Average Household Size	2.3
Female Headed Households	56.3%
Formal Dwellings	73.1%

The other critical aspect here is that, the religious community is not only part of the larger community; they also interact and share some common interests with the larger community. In a nutshell this means that, the church is part of the larger community. One example in this regard is that, when there are church conferences some church members are accommodated in the surrounding households. These households belong to the larger community. This then means that, the reference to a larger community is important for this study.

The religious community involved here comprises *Idutywa* bereaved *Xhosa* children. The *Idutywa* district of the Free Church in Southern Africa has four congregations and a convincing number of seventy (70) bereaved children. These children belong to the church members of the four (4) congregations and their extended families. This area has a string of families who were affected by the *Marikana* saga while other children lost their parents

through various forms of death. The study adopted a multistage sampling approach which began with the division of the population into four congregations: *Ngingwane* congregation, *Macibe* congregation, *Godidi* congregation and *Msentu* congregation. The numbers for these congregations, in terms of statistics, will be provided later in the chapter. In this particular section, the researcher looked into the population and size of the research area; the next section briefly reflects on educational status of the participants.

### **3.2.1.5 Education**

There are different levels of education for participants. The researcher believes that educational levels are important in this research process as some form of formal education could enable the participants to apply themselves effectively in this regard, especially when it comes to data collection process. It could help them in their analysis of the children in question in this study. The participants are remaining parents or guardians of the bereaved children, including grandparents. They were requested to provide information on behalf of their bereaved children as per the parent reported questionnaire. Their different levels of education are presented in chapter four (4) as it deals with data analysis, interpretation and presentation of findings. In this section, the researcher briefly looked into the educational aspect of the participants; the next section briefly reflects on the income of the participants.

### **3.2.3 Income**

This is another concept deemed important by the researcher. The socio economic status of the participants determines how these remaining parents or guardians look after these bereaved children financially. Details of the economic status of the participants will also be profiled in chapter four (4) of this particular study. The socio-economic status discussion covers the following concepts: employed, unemployed, and self-employed. In this section, the researcher briefly highlighted the income status of participants; the next section focuses on religious state of the research area.

### **3.2.4 Religious state: churches and religious bodies found in the research area**

Churches and religious bodies in the research area are represented in the following denominations: the United Methodist Church of South Africa, the Baptist Union of South Africa, Anglican church, Order of Ethiopian church, Uniting Presbyterian church, Jerusalem Zionist church and her sub-groupings, the Assemblies of God, the Roman Catholic church and the Free church in Southern Africa (which forms the research site). The presence of these

churches and religious bodies in this area is also important as it means that the Free Church is not the only denomination in the area. It further means that there is religious interaction in the research area. This can also mean that the research undertaken within the Free Church can have a ripple effect to these other churches. These churches may learn to take care of their bereaved children as well if that is a gap and a needy area in their own congregations. Due to the fact that the research project is focused and being conducted in the four congregations of the Free Church in Southern Africa, the researcher therefore deems it fit to give a brief overview of the Free Church in Southern Africa. This overview entails the establishment of the Free Church in Scotland, the establishment of the Free Church in South Africa and the doctrinal position of the Free Church.

### **3.2.5 The establishment of the Free Church in Scotland: key concepts**

In this regard, the researcher will only focus his attention on the establishment of the Free Church in Scotland and focus on the establishment of the Free Church as a denomination. This takes into account the fact that the Free Church came into being as a result of an effort by twenty-six (26) ministers. These ministers felt that there was unwarranted state interference into the affairs of the church, and according to them, the church did not have a unique role to play because of such state interference. A crucial example of such incidents is around the calling of a minister by a prospective congregation. The government of the day had to choose a minister for such a congregation. The twenty-six (26) ministers stood against this practice and proclaimed that the church should be free from interference of the state. This is how the name Free Church came into being (being free from state interference and dominance). The Free Church was established as a denomination and the establishment thereof became part of South Africa as well including the research area. Graham (2009). The next section focuses on the establishment of the Free Church in South Africa.

### **3.2.6 The establishment of the Free Church in South Africa**

Subsequent to the establishment of the Free Church in Scotland, the Free Church was also established in South Africa. In this regard, the researcher seeks to zoom on key aspects of the establishment thereof. It is worth noting the contribution made by Rev Alexander Dewar as a key figure in this regard. Dewar was instrumental in establishing three (3) districts namely: Burnshill, Pirie and *Ngcingwane* (research site) Graham (2009). The author throws some light by mentioning briefly Dewar`s report: “Next day we had our regular services in the hut, and although in some way the people had to travel long distances in the cold and wet weather, the

place was crowded out...” Dewar further reports that they examined some candidates for admission into church membership of the Free Church. (2009:38). It is further reported that in the following week, the communion service was held. The place of worship was again crowded with big numbers. In this church service, it is said that some children and adults were baptized, and the adults were accepted into church membership of the Free Church. (2009:38). In this regard, the contribution of Chief Jamangile who lived in the *Tsolo* area of the former Transkei, is undoubtedly remarkable.

Under his auspices, people managed to build their own church in this area. The Chief’s influence was not confined in the *Tsolo* area, but spread to the Idutywa area (the research area). The Free Church gained growth in these areas because of Chief *Jamangile*’s influence as he obviously was a great motivator to his people (2009:39). Regarding forming of districts, “In the early days of mission among *Xhosa* people, when a congregation was established in a main centre, a mission station was set up; gradually, out-stations or preaching places would be opened; these, along with the main congregation, would constitute a district” (2009:39).

Normally, there would be one minister, one Kirk session and one Deacon’s court in the district.” (2009). In this whole process, the work of the *Ngcingwane* district grew from strength to strength, needless to mention that the work also spread to *Centane* area which also forms the research area. Having showed that this is a religious community, the researcher will then focus on the theological contribution of the Free Church with regards to issues related to theological guidance for children. This process involves the presentation of doctrinal articles of the Free Church. These are presented to discuss whether or not they have support to offer children during bereavement. In this section, the researcher looked into the religious state of the research area, and in the next section, the researcher will briefly introduce the doctrinal position of the Free Church as a Denomination.

### **3.2.7 The doctrinal position of the Free Church**

The doctrinal position of the Free Church is based on what is known as “Calvinism” since the Reformation. There are four articles that were produced by John Calvin on which the whole Free Church doctrine is contained. They are presented as follows:

**Article one:** Deals with the connection between the knowledge of God and the knowledge of ourselves and the nature of such a connection. **Article two:** Deals with issues around the fall of Adam including the curse of the human race due to Adam’s fall is also dealt with. **Article**

**three:** Deals with benefits of being in Christ. These benefits are made available to us through the Spirit of God. **Article four:** Explains the nature of the true church and the duty thereof. Calvin (1989).

With regards to these articles, the researcher has just given a summary of what is contained in them in terms of doctrine. Other doctrinal documents of critical importance with regards to Calvinism since the Reformation (a period during which some clergy men such as John Calvin, Martin Luther and many others revolted against the teachings of the Roman Papacy) are as follows: The Westminster Confession of Faith by Williamson (1964) and the Shorter Catechism by White cross (1968).

The researcher argues that there is a gap in these articles with regards to their contribution to child support during bereavement. This then means that there is no Ecclesiastical response and contribution for bereaved *Xhosa* children as the church is not involved in this process. This gap, therefore, according to the researcher justifies this study as it is aimed at closing the same gap. In this particular section, the focus was on the doctrinal position of this particular denomination; in the next section, the researcher will briefly look at the research site.

### **3.2.8 Research site**

The *Ngcingwane* District forms the research site of this study and comprises congregations who fall under Centane Municipality. These congregations fall under the supervision of Rev *N.P. Mpayipheli*. They form the research site as they are under investigation with regards to the bereavement of *Xhosa* children and how they cope with grief. There are four congregations who form the *Ngcingwane* District, namely: *Ngcingwane* congregation (*Idutywa*), *Macibe* congregation (*Centane*), *Msentu* congregation (*Centane*) and *Godidi* congregation (*Centane*). Information regarding the statistics of these congregations will be presented later in the chapter. In this section, the researcher briefly dealt with the research site; the following section focuses on the research method which is a critical part of the research project.

### **3.3 Research method**

This section is critical in any research project as it serves as a road map for the research project. In this section, the researcher will focus on key concepts such as: research design, methodology, survey research, quantitative and qualitative research paradigm assumptions. This section also includes other aspects such as: distinctions between qualitative and

quantitative approaches. The researcher also examines the advantages of using both qualitative and quantitative approaches in research. Other concepts such as triangulation, sampling, sample size and data gathering instruments are also discussed. Moreover, the researcher introduces key concepts regarding the intended approach of this study; in the following section, the focus is on research design.

### **3.3.1 Research Design**

In defining a research design process, Smith (2008) extrapolates that “The research design is the general approach you use to solve your research problem. The most important part of the design is the structure of the study.” The author goes on to explain the structure as follows “By structure, we mean identifying logical and sequential divisions of the study. What major steps will be needed? How should these steps be ordered? These steps will form the major parts, chapters or sections of the research theses or dissertation.”

The author further concedes that “When one knows the steps and their sequence, it is usually easy to work through them one by one determining the exact methodology needed for each step.” In the same vein, Mouton (2005) advises that “Research design focuses on the end product: What kind of study is being planned, and what kind of result is aimed at? It also focuses on the logic of the research: What kind of evidence is required to address the research questions adequately?” In this research project, a survey research design approach was adopted in order to obtain both qualitative and quantitative data. In gathering a qualitative data, a questionnaire was used. Since it is not always easy to collect information from children, the design of the questionnaire used is the parent reported questionnaire (a parent or guardian answering questions on behalf of the child). This approach is also meant to get the parents/guardians involved in their children`s grieving process, and be fully aware of what these children are going through during bereavement.

Grandparents were also part of this process. This means that parents, grandparents and guardians can develop a support base for their own children and learn how to support them instead of shielding them. The specific questions contained in the questionnaire are dealt with and made visible under the item: research instruments. In this section, the researcher dealt with the research design of this study, the following section deals with the methodology of this particular study.

### 3.3.2 Methodology

Smith (2008), reflecting on the research methodology and specifically drawing the line between research design and research methodology, advises that “In the research design section, you present a broad overview of the steps that are necessary to solve the research problem.” The author further affirms that “In the research methodology section, you take each step in turn and describe exactly how you plan to do it. You need to describe each step in sufficient detail that, by the end of the study, others can confirm that you did it properly.” De Vos et al (2005:159) cited in Jackson (2007:6) insinuates that “The term *research methodology* embraces the rules and procedures applicable to a specific research project and justifies the chosen way by demonstrating its ‘validity and reliability.’” Collins et al (2000:11) in Jackson (2007) explicates that “The selection and implementation of a suitable research method ensures that researchers work independently of external influence or personal position, in order to arrive at a conclusion which is based on demonstrable and measurable evidence.”

In defining research methodology, Mouton (2005) advises that “Research methodology focuses on the research process and the kind of tools and procedures to be used. It focuses on specific tasks such as data collection or sampling at hand.” The author also argues that “Research methodology further focuses on the individual (not linear steps) in the research process. It looks at the most objective (unbiased) procedures to be employed.” Mouton supports De Vos et al (2005:159) in Jackson (2007:6) as well as Collins et al (2001) in Jackson (2007:6). The only difference is that Mouton mentions the concept of tools, but in a nutshell, these authors concur in this regard. The presentation of these scholars contributes a lot to the research at hand. The researcher is convinced that contributions by these scholars shaped the research process at hand. The use of these techniques gives clear guidance in putting together a solid contribution in this project. In order to collect the required data, a questionnaire was used as a research instrument in order to obtain the necessary information for the research project. The design of the questionnaire is a parent reported questionnaire (a parent or guardian answering questions on behalf of the child respectively). This design of the questionnaire is helpful in making sure that the remaining parents or guardians are involved in what their children are going through. Secondly, it helps in limiting chances of making children feel threatened and intimidated. The questionnaire is the only research instrument that was used in this project, as authorized by the Ethics Research Committee of the University of Fort Hare. All the expected answers were then recorded on the

questionnaire for data analysis purposes after the data collection process; this paved way for recommendations presented in chapter five (5) of this study. In this section, the researcher looked into the methodology of this particular study; the following section focuses on survey research.

### **3.3.3 Survey Research**

In defining survey research, Calvary Academics Research manual (2009) conceded that “Survey research is structured questions to assess people`s beliefs, attitudes and self-reports of behaviour.” It is further emphasized in this manual that “If the researcher wishes to generalize the responses to a population, it is important to have a representative sample, and that surveys that rely on self-selection produce non-generalizable results” The emphasis is also on the fact that “Surveys also provide information for correlation research.” It is further argued that “One can correlate responses to some questions (often demographic questions) with responses to other questions (often attitudes or reports of behaviour).”

With regards to the survey question, it is argued that “It must be clear and unambiguous.” It is further argued that “Even if the questions are unambiguous and non-leading, people may display a social desirability bias and give positive or socially acceptable and desirable answers.” In this manual, survey methods are also dealt with and are presented as follows: (1) the interview or face to face method which is generally viewed as the best method for obtaining a high rate of responses, but is very costly; (2) Phone surveys, which are less expensive but have a higher non responsive rate ... (3) written or mail surveys, which are least expensive but have a very high non responsive rate. Follow up messages can help increase the response rate.” In this regard, the researcher used a questionnaire to collect data from the subjects. These were designed to enable the researcher to gather as much information as possible from the subjects. In the Calvary Academics research manual (2009), the following is discussed with regards to survey questionnaires - which it is about: “A structured interview (also known as a standardized interview or a researcher administered survey) and is a quantitative research method commonly employed in survey research.” It is further discussed that “The aim of this approach is to ensure that each interviewee is presented with exactly the same questions in the same order.” Commenting on the meaning of survey research, Smith (2008) affirms that “Survey research is a statistical tool designed to provide a broad overview of a representative sample of a large population.” In this section, the researcher looked into survey research, the next section deals with the quantitative and qualitative research paradigm

assumptions. In this regard, the researcher has chosen to use the following table of paradigm assumptions as suggested by Summer (2003). This table provides a holistic approach to Paradigm assumptions.

<b>View</b>	<b>Ontological Assumption</b>	<b>Epistemological Assumption</b>	<b>Axiological Assumption</b>	<b>Methodological Assumption</b>	<b>Rhetorical Assumption</b>	<b>End result</b>
Research Paradigm	Nature of reality	Relationship of researcher	Role regarding values	Process of research	Language of research	purpose
Quantitative	Object apart from research	Researcher is independent from what is being researched	Value free and unbiased. Values are emotive and therefore outside the Scientific inquiry	Deductive process cause and effect context free	Formal based on set definitions impersonal voice	To explain and predict
Qualitative	Reality is subjective and multiple as seen by participants in the study.	Researcher interacts with that being researched	Value laden and biased. Values are personally relative; need to be understood.	Inductive Process Mutual simultaneously shaping factors. Emerging design Context-bound	Sometimes informal evolving decisions personal voice.	Understanding and interpret. To critique and to identify potential.

### **3.3.4 Justification for the use of this template**

The advantage, as far as this template is concerned, is that it gives a clear breakdown of concepts regarding research paradigm assumptions. This process is deemed important by the researcher because it helps in explaining two critical approaches in research; qualitative and quantitative approaches. These two approaches are very important for the current research since the researcher is convinced that without these two approaches, there would be no logic in the current research process regarding child support during bereavement.

The author goes on to state other aspects with regards to these two approaches:

The quantitative approach includes the following elements: Traditional, Positivistic, Experimental and Empirical.

The qualitative approach includes elements such as: Constructivist, Interpretive, Historical and Postmodernism. (2003).

### **3.3.5 Qualitative approach**

Denzin and Lincoln (1994:12) cited in *Ngombane* (2013) affirm that “Qualitative research has been identified as research which examines and explores strengths which humanity possess”. In this same context, Glesne and Peshkin (1992:5-6) also cited in *Ngombane* (2013), observe that “Qualitative researchers seek to make sense of personal stories and the way in which these stories intersect.” These authors further affirm that “Qualitative methods are generally supported by the interpretivist paradigm. This paradigm is believed to portray a world in which reality is socially constructed, complex and ever- changing.” The next section discusses the quantitative approach.

### **3.3.6 Quantitative approach**

Commenting on the methods employed by quantitative approach, Glesne and Peshkin (1992) in *Ngombane* (2013) hypothesise that “Quantitative methods are supported by the positivist or scientific paradigm.” The authors also concede that “The scientific paradigm leads us to regard the world as made up of observable and measurable facts.” In this section, the researcher dealt with quantitative and qualitative research paradigm assumptions and the justification of their use. In the next section, the researcher will focus on distinctions between qualitative and quantitative research approaches.

### **3.3.6.1 Distinctions between qualitative and quantitative research approaches**

With regards to distinctions between qualitative and quantitative research approaches, Wyse (2011), focusing first on the qualitative approach, argues that “Qualitative research is primarily exploratory. It is used to gain an understanding of underlying reasons, opinions and motivations.” The author further asserts that “It provides insights into the problem or helps to develop ideas or hypotheses for potential quantitative research.” Qualitative research is also used to uncover trends in thought and opinions, and dives deeper into the problem.” Wyse goes on to affirm that “Qualitative data collection methods vary, using structured or semi structured techniques. Some common methods include focus groups (group discussions), individual interviews, participation and observations. The author also extrapolates that “The sample size is typically small in this process, and respondents are selected to fulfil a given quota.”

With regards to quantitative research approach, Wyse (2011) maintains that the “Quantitative research approach is used to quantify the problem through generating numerical data, or data that can be transformed into usable statistics. It is used to quantify attitudes, opinions, behaviours and other defined variables and generalizes results from a larger sample population.” Wyse continues to validate that “Quantitative research uses measurable data to formulate facts and uncover patterns in research.” Quantitative data collection methods, according to Wyse, “Are much more structured than Qualitative data collection methods. Quantitative data collection methods include various forms of surveys”. The author specifically mentions “Snap Survey Software” as one of the useful forms of Quantitative research. The “Snap Survey Software is the ideal solution for a Quantitative research tool where structured techniques, such as large numbers of respondents and descriptive findings, are required.” Wyse is also convinced that “Snap Survey Software has many robust features that help organizations to effectively gather and analyze quantitative data.” In this section, the researcher spent time on distinctions between qualitative and quantitative research approaches. In the next section, the focus will be on the advantages of using both qualitative and quantitative approaches.

### **3.3.6.2 Advantages of using both qualitative and quantitative approaches**

Before focusing on the advantages of using both these approaches in research, the researcher chooses to go through the combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods as presented by Case beer and Verhoef (2002). In this combination, these authors argue that

“Quantitative and qualitative research methods are most often associated with deductive and inductive approaches, respectively. Deductive research begins with known theory and tests; it usually attempts to provide evidence for or against a pre-specified hypothesis.” It is further affirmed by these authors that “Inductive research begins by making observations, usually in order to develop a new hypothesis or contribute to new theory.” With regards to further contributions of the quantitative and qualitative research approaches, Case beer and Verhoef (2002) go on to explicate that “Quantitative research is usually linked to the notion of science as objective truth or fact, whereas qualitative research is more often identified with the view that science is lived experience and therefore subjectively determined.” It is further argued that “Quantitative research usually begins with pre specified objectives focused on testing preconceived outcomes.

Qualitative research usually begins with open-ended observations and analysis, most often looking for patterns and processes that explain why and how questions.” It is further discussed that “When applying quantitative methods, numerical estimation and statistical inference from a generalizable sample are often used in relation to a larger population of interest. In qualitative research, narrative descriptions and constant comparison are usually used in order to understand the specific populations or situations being studied.” The argument goes on that “As a result, quantitative research is most often seen as a method trying to demonstrate causal relationships under standardized controlled conditions. Conversely, qualitative research is usually seen as a method seeking better understanding of some particular, natural (uncontrolled) phenomenon...” (2002).

According to the researcher, based on these scholarly contributions with regards to the combined uses of these two approaches in research, there are advantages that are underlined in this whole process. Using these approaches as a combined effort enables the researcher to apply a holistic approach to the research project. This means that the researcher was able to measure the qualitative (quality) contribution to the project. In terms of quantitative approach, the researcher was able to measure the extent and the size of the research project. There must be a measuring tool in the research process. This means that the researcher cannot interview two thousand (2000) children when he is supposed to interview seventy (70) bereaved *Xhosa* children, and this is where quantitative measures came in (Statistical element). In this section, the researcher looked into distinctions between qualitative and

quantitative research approaches. In the next section, the researcher will then look into justification for using both qualitative and quantitative research approaches.

### **3.3.6.3 Justification for using both qualitative and quantitative approaches**

The researcher has chosen these two approaches due to the fact that in a qualitative approach, one is able to gather reliable and justified information and rules out reliance on assumptions. In the qualitative approach, the process is based on quality and on verification and any collected data can be verified accordingly. In the quantitative approach, one measures the size of the research process, and this is deemed important by the researcher as it does justice to research. Failing to measure the size of the research rules out the effectiveness of any research process. Therefore, for the effectiveness of this particular research, the researcher was convinced that these two approaches are recommendable and critical.

In a nutshell, quality and measurement are critical and necessary for this study. This contributed towards reaching well informed findings and making recommendations at the end. In this section, the researcher looked at the justification for using both qualitative and quantitative approaches. In the following section, the researcher will look at triangulation.

### **3.3.6.4 Triangulation**

*Haralambos* (2008:664) in *Ncube* (2015:20) makes some assertions with regards to the importance of triangulation as a method of study. The author asserts that “Contextually unless otherwise stated, the term *triangulation* refers to a deliberate move to apply more than one research method so as to maximize the intended research findings.” The author also affirms that “This combination of research methods is sometimes referred to as methodological pluralism.” The following authors also elaborate in this regard:

Padget, cited in De Vos et al (2005:361) argues that “Triangulation refers to the convergence of multiple perspectives that provide the researcher with a greater confidence that what is being targeted was accurately captured.” De Vos et al (2005:362) in Jackson (2007:11) have identified the following advantages of using triangulation in qualitative research:

- It allows researchers to be more confident of their results;
- Divergent results from multi-dimensional strategies lead to enriched explanation of the research problem;

- The use of multi-methodological approaches leads to an integration of theories;
- It initiates fresh ideas and criticism; and
- It gives the expansion of scope and breadth of the study.

Denzin (1970) cited in Bryman (2003) points out that “Triangulation refers to the use of more than one approach to the investigation of a research question in order to enhance confidence in the ensuing findings.” The author goes on to argue that “Much social research is founded on the use of single research method; as such, it may suffer from limitations associated with that method or from the specific application of it; thus, triangulation offers the prospect of enhanced confidence.” Denzin also argues that “Triangulation is one of the several rationales for multi-method research. The term derives from surveying, where it refers to the use of a series of triangles to map out an area.” The author also makes a mention of four different types of triangulation that are effective in research. These are as follows:

- **Data triangulation:** This form entails gathering data through several sampling strategies so that slices of data at different times and social situations, as well as on a variety of people that are gathered, can be identified;
- **Investigator triangulation:** Investigator triangulation refers to the use of more than one researcher in the field to gather and interpret data;
- **Theoretical triangulation:** This refers to the use of more than one theoretical position in interpreting data; and
- **Methodological triangulation:** This approach refers to the use of more than one method for gathering data. Denzin (1970).

Following the above presentation, Denzin (1970) gives a critical evaluation of the process of triangulation and concedes that “The idea of triangulation has been criticized on several grounds. First, it is sometimes accused of subscribing to naive realism that implies that there can be a single definition account of the social world.” The author further affirms that “Such realistic positions have come under attack from writers aligned with constructionism and who argue that research findings should be seen as just one among many possible renditions of social life.” He goes on to explicate that “On the other hand, writers working within a constructionist framework do not deny the potential of triangulation; instead, they depict its

utility in terms of adding a sense of richness and complexity to an inquiry.” It is further argued that “As such, triangulation becomes a device for enhancing the credibility and persuasiveness of a research account.” The author goes on to highlight a second criticism in this regard.

Denzin (1970) suggests that “A second criticism is that triangulation assumes that sets of data deriving from different research methods can be unambiguously compared and regarded as equivalent in terms of their capacity to address a research question.” The author further affirms that “Such a view fails to take account of the different social circumstances associated with the administration of different research methods, especially those associated with between-methods approach following the four (4) distinctions made above. For example, the apparent failure of findings deriving from the administration of a structured interview to converge with focus group data may have more to do with the possibility that the former taps private views as opposed to the more general ones that might be voiced in the more public arena of the focus group.”

According to the researcher, it is a common practice that any research method will always undergo scrutiny and criticism. This does not mean that there are no useful aspects of the method as sometimes there is even nothing wrong with the method itself. Many people over the ages have always seen things differently from one perspective to another. One aspect that seems to complement the research at hand is data triangulation. In data triangulation, data is gathered through several sampling strategies so that slices of data at different times and social situations, as well as on variety of people, are gathered. This is the approach that was used by the researcher in collecting data from the participants of the research project. To be specific in this regard, the researcher used a multistage sampling procedure. This approach entails the following: “Gathering participants for a study and used in a study that involves a very large population. The entire population is divided into naturally occurring clusters and sub-clusters from which the researcher randomly selects the sample” (Adler School of Professional Psychology {n.d.}). The only difference in this regard is that, there is no random selection involved. Bereavement is a criterion that determined the selection of participants for this study, so this research focused on bereaved children. In this section, the researcher explored triangulation. In the next section, the researcher will discuss categories of sampling.

### 3.4 Sampling

Sampling, according to the researcher, is a process that assists the researcher to gather the intended data in order to make informed and refined findings in the field of research. This is apparent in the different categories of sampling discussed in this section. The first discussion is on categories of sampling.

#### 3.4.1 Categories of sampling

This section focuses on different categories of sampling, each discussed in the light of scholars' perspectives. The first of these categories is probability sampling.

#### 3.4.2 Probability sampling

According to Trochim (2006), "A probability sampling method is any method that utilizes some form of random selection." The author goes on to explain that "In order to have a random selection, you must set up some process or procedure that ensures that the different units in your population have equal probabilities of being chosen." According to the author, "Humans have long practiced various forms of random selection such as picking a name out of a hat or choosing the short straw." The author then also stresses the point that "These days, we tend to use computers as a mechanism for generating random numbers as the basis for random selection." The next category is convenience sampling.

#### 3.4.3 Convenience sampling

"Convenience sampling is one of the main types of non - probability sampling methods. A convenience sample is made up of people who are easy to reach." Castillo (2009). In this context, types of Non-Probability sampling are mentioned and briefly discussed as follows:

- **Consecutive Sampling:** this sampling approach includes all accessible subjects as part of the sample. This sampling technique can be considered as the best of all non-probability samples. This is because it includes all subjects that are available that make the sample a better representation of the entire population;
- **Judgmental Sampling:** in this type of sampling, subjects are chosen to be part of the sample with a specific purpose in mind. With judgmental sampling, it is believed that some subjects are fit for the research compared to individuals; and

- **Snowball Sampling:** This sampling approach is usually done when there is a very small population size. In this approach, the researcher asks the initial subject to identify another potential subject who also meets the criteria of the research. The down side of using this approach is that it is hardly representative of the population (2009).

Suggestions as to how to use Non-Probability sampling are presented as follows:

- This type of sampling can be used when demonstrating that a particular trait exists in the population;
- It can also be used when the researcher aims to do a qualitative pilot or exploratory study;
- It can be used when randomization is impossible, like when the population is almost limitless;
- It can be used when the research does not aim to generate results that will be used to create generalizations pertaining to the entire population;
- It is also useful when the researcher has a limited budget and workforce; and
- This technique can also be used in an initial study which carried out using a randomized probability sampling. Castillo (2009). The next section is on quota sampling.

#### **3.4.4 Quota sampling**

Quota sampling is non-probability sampling technique wherein the researcher ensures equal or proportionate representation of subjects, depending on which trait is considered as the basis of the quota. Castillo (2009). For example, if the basis of the quota is college year level and the researcher needs equal representation, with a sample size of 100, he/she must select 25 1<sup>st</sup> year students, 25 2<sup>nd</sup> year students, 25 3<sup>rd</sup> year and 25 4<sup>th</sup> year students. The basis of the quota is usually age, gender, education, race, religion and socioeconomic status.” (2009). The next section is on purposive sampling.

#### **3.4.5 Purposive sampling**

Patton (1990) defines Purposive sampling in a string of cases with different explanations thereof:

- **Extreme or Deviant case:** This is about learning from highly unusual manifestations of the phenomenon of interest such as outstanding success and notable failures, top of the class dropouts, exotic events and crises;
- **Intensity:** Information about rich cases that manifest the phenomenon intensely, but not extremely; examples are good students or poor students, above average or below average;
- **Maximum variation:** Purposefully picking a wide range of variation on dimensions of interest. Examples are diverse variations that have emerged in adapting to different conditions. It identifies important common patterns that cut across variations;
- **Homogeneous:** This case focuses on reducing variations, simplifying analyses, and facilitating group interviewing;
- **Typical case:** It illustrates or highlights what is typical, normal and average;
- **Stratified purposeful:** It illustrates characteristics of particular sub-groups of interest and also facilitates comparisons;
- **Critical case:** This case permits logical generalization and maximum application of information to other cases because if it is true of this one case, it is likely to be true of all other cases;
- **Snowball or chain:** This identifies cases of interest from people who know people who know what cases are information-rich, that is, good examples for a study and good interview subjects;
- **Criterion:** The case is about picking all cases that meet some criterion such as all children abused in a treatment facility; it is also about quality assurance;
- **Theory-based or operational construct:** Finding manifestations of a theoretical construct of interest so as to elaborate and examine the construct;
- **Confirming or disconfirming:** Elaborating and deepening initial analysis, seeking exceptions and testing variations;
- **Opportunistic:** This case is about following new leads during field work and taking advantage of the unexpected and flexibility;

- **Random Purposeful:** This particular case adds credibility to a sample when a potential purposeful sample is larger than one can handle. It reduces judgement within a purposeful category and is not for generalizations or representativeness;
- **Politically important cases:** Attention to the study is attracted or avoids attracting undesired attention by purposefully eliminating from the sample that which involves politically sensitive cases;
- **Convenience:** It saves time, money and effort but has the poorest rationale and the lowest credibility. It yields information-poor cases; and
- **Combination or mixed purposeful:** This case involves triangulation and flexibility; it also meets multiple interests and needs. Patton (1990).

The following criteria were used to select participants: Ages of participants, Gender, Educational qualifications, Socio economic status and marital status. In this section, the researcher presented categories of sampling. In the next section, the researcher will introduce the sample size of the Denomination in which this research was conducted.

### 3.4.6 Sampling size

Four congregations of the Free Church in Southern Africa (FSA) were selected. These congregations fall under the jurisdiction of the Northern Presbytery (a church authoritative body comprising Ministers and Elders who have jurisdiction over a certain number of districts/circuits in a certain demarcated area of that particular church). The selected congregations have been affected by several deaths that have also affected children. For this particular study, congregations were selected as follows:

Congregation	Area of study	Statistics
Ngcingwane/Idutywa	Idutywa	51
Macibe	Centane	39

Msento	Centane	29
Godidi	Centane	37

These congregations are relatively small in numbers but have a potential to grow. The families of the bereaved children form part of the membership thereof. The researcher will delve into the specific details regarding these children at a later stage, and the profiling of these congregations will be done in chapter four. The profiling will include names, ages, levels of education, socio economic status and their marital status. In this section, the researcher presented congregations who participated in this study. The next section focuses on data gathering instruments. This is important as research cannot be accomplished without gathering data. It is also not possible to collect data without instruments that are meant and designed for this purpose.

### **3.5 Data gathering Instruments**

The researcher used a questionnaire as a data collection instrument as directed by the Ethics Clearance Committee of the University of Fort hare. The questionnaire was designed as a parent reported questionnaire (Parent or guardian answering questions on behalf of the child). This was the only instrument used in this study, as approved by the Ethics Clearance Committee of the University of Fort hare. The contents of the questionnaire, including the design thereof, are presented as Appendix 1.

#### **3.5.1 Questionnaires**

In defining a questionnaire and its use, Smith (2008) concedes that “A questionnaire is a series of written questions a researcher supplies to subjects, requesting their response.” Smith goes on to assert that “In this process, different kinds of questions solicit different types of data (for example, open or closed questions, qualitative or quantitative questions).”

Babbie (1998) cited in Mouton (2005) warns of errors that are usually encountered when data is collected manually (by means of questionnaires). The author suggests that “When data is captured manually from questionnaires, transcripts and psychological tests, allowance must be made for human error.” To clarify this position, Clark (1992) and Newton and Rudestan (1999) cited in Mouton (2005) warn that “Incomplete questionnaires or tests that contain

many missing responses might introduce errors during data gathering.” In curbing these errors, the authors give the following advice: “Once quantitative data has been collected, it is imperative that validation checks are carried out and supplied. Such checks involve reliability analysis of questionnaire responses, item analyses, psychological tests scores, factor analyses and the simple inspection of marginal frequencies or percentages” Clark (1992); Newton & Rudestan (1999) in Mouton (2005).

In designing and utilizing a questionnaire, the researcher took into consideration all the comments made by the cited scholars, and the questionnaire was designed to get as much information as possible from the subjects. For the questionnaire and its design, see Appendix one (1). In this section, the researcher discussed the data gathering instruments for this research. In the following section, the researcher will briefly present focus groups for this particular study.

### **3.5.2 Focus groups**

With regards to focus groups, Smith (2008) advises that “A Focus group is a group discussion to solicit views about a focus area.” In the context of the research at hand, there are four congregations who formed focus groups. These congregations are: *Ngcingwane* congregation, *Macibe* congregation, *Godidi* congregation and *Msentu* congregation. In this study, congregants who are members of these congregations were interviewed on behalf of their bereaved children. This was done to allow the remaining parents, guardians or grandparents to be part of the grieving process for their children. This was also done to minimise pressure on children. Children can easily feel intimidated; this process ruled this possibility out.

Remaining parents, guardians and grandparents had to have a feel of what these children are going through. Secondly, it is not easy to get information from children in terms of interviews, so the affected children in these congregations were never interviewed. This, in a way, stood out as a pilot project. Grandparents who are members in these congregations were also interviewed because they spend most of their time with these bereaved grandchildren. The breakdown and analysis of these congregations is dealt with in chapter four (4). The analysis is done according to age, gender, education, socio-economic status and marital status. In this section, the researcher presented congregations who form focus groups of this particular study. In the next section, the researcher will then look into content and data analysis.

### **3.5.3 Content /data analysis**

Patton, cited in de Vos et al (2005:333) in Jackson (2007:11) argues that “Qualitative analysis transforms data into findings by reducing the volume of raw information, sifting the significant from the trivial, identifying significant patterns, and constructing a framework for communication of the essence of what the data reveals.” Steinberg (2004:123) cited in Jackson (2007:11) has argued that “At the heart of qualitative analysis is content analysis, and that an analytic method ensures that the interview is conducted in a language that is intelligible, coherent and conducive to easy interpretation.”

Referring to this concept, Mouton (2005:108) affirms that “Ultimately, all field work culminates in the analysis and interpretation of some set of data, be it quantitative survey data, experimental recordings, historical and literary texts, qualitative transcripts or discursive data.” The author continues to acknowledge what this data analysis entails. It is argued that “Analysis involves breaking up the data into manageable themes, patterns, trends and relationships.” Commenting on the aim of the analysis, the author notes that “The aim of analysis is to understand the various constitutive elements of one’s data through an inspection of the relationship between concepts, constructs or variables, and to see whether there are any patterns or trends that can be identified or isolated, or to establish themes in the data.” Emphasizing the concept of interpretation, the author argues that “Interpretation means relating one’s results and findings to existing theoretical frameworks or models and showing whether these are supported or falsified by the new interpretation.”

The author goes on to state that “Interpretation also means taking into account rival explanations or interpretation of one’s data and showing what levels of support the data provide for the preferred interpretation.” Mouton (2005:110) also warns of the errors that usually occur during data analysis. In this regard, it is noted that the first error “Is using inappropriate statistical techniques in quantitative analysis.” Howell (1999), Maleske (1994) and Newton and Rudestand (1999) cited in Mouton (2005:110) advise that “The appropriate use of statistical procedures is tied to assumptions about levels of measurement, normal distributions, the amount of variation in the data and sample size.” The second error Mouton (2005:110) mentions is “Drawing inferences from data that are not supported by the data.” Suggesting a proper approach to drawing conclusions, Abelson (1995) and Thiessen (1993) in Mouton (2005:110) suggest that “Conclusions that one may draw on the basis of any data set need to have sufficient and relevant inductive support before they are acceptable.”

Mouton (2005:110) mentions the third and the last error in this context and warns that “It is biased interpretation of the data through selectivity.” In stating a reason for this, Wright (1982) in Mouton (2005:110) makes the following assertion “Scholars very often attempt to prove their pet hypotheses without proper consideration of rival hypotheses and alternative explanations.”

In taking note of what has been dealt with in this data analysis section, the researcher took cognisance of all the suggestions made by scholars in this regard. The researcher then put together all the data collected through questionnaires and went through the data in terms of evaluation and analysis. This process was about the identification of themes as findings. The researcher checked whether or not questions were answered satisfactory and addressed the intended output, namely: to reveal how *Xhosa* children experience loss. Recommendations and suggestions are presented in the final chapter, which is chapter five (5) in an attempt to address the identified problem. In the following section, the researcher focuses on the reliability and validity in research.

#### **3.5.4 Reliability and validity in research**

Collins et al (2000:191) cited in Jackson (2007:12) defined reliability as “The degree to which a scale of measurement used in a survey or in an interview question yields consistent results or scores.” de Vos et al (2005:163) in Jackson (2007:12) explains that “Reliability occurs when a measuring instrument does not fluctuate unless there are variations in the actual variable being measured.”

Jackson (2007:12) argues that “Determining reliability in qualitative research can sometimes be more challenging than in quantitative research.” The author explains that “This is because the instruments used to collect the data are more flexible and dynamic.” In stating how reliability can be tested, Singleton, cited in de Vos et al (2005) in Jackson (2007:12) advise that “One can conduct a pilot test on a small number of respondents having characteristics similar to those of the target group of respondents.” Jackson (2007:12) further contributes that “A pilot test was conducted with a small group of respondents in order to test the efficacy of the interview guide.” The author reports that “This pilot test allowed the author to determine that the questions were clear, unambiguous and easily understood by the respondents.”

Vithal and Jansen (2006) cited in Jackson (2007:12) maintain that “Validity is an attempt to check whether the meaning and interpretation of an event is sound and includes determining whether a particular measure is an accurate reflection of what is intended.” Collins et al (2000) cited in Jackson (2007:12) maintains that “Validity is the degree to which the measurement actually measures what the researcher intends or claims to measure. In order for the measurement to be reliable, it has to produce the same results over a period of time...”

Mouton (2005) when speaking of reliability and validity in research, takes into consideration the use of instruments in research. The author argues that “When using an existing instrument, it is essential that information is available about the construct.” The author also argues that “Most of the existing questionnaires, scales and tests are probably developed in highly industrialized countries in Europe and North America.” The author goes on to suggest that “Such instruments usually cannot be applied to the South African context in multicultural and multi-ethnic studies.” (2005).

Taking note of what is said by the author and the warning thereof, the researcher took into account the adaptation of the questionnaire used in this research project. Therefore, the questionnaire was designed to meet the needs of young grieving *Xhosa* children and is a parent reported questionnaire (asking a parent or guardian questions on behalf of the child). The researcher believes that the remaining parents or guardians of the bereaved children are part of the healing process of their children and that they were as honest as possible in answering questions on behalf of their children. For them, this is the only opportunity they have for the well-being of their children and the healing thereof. This means that their contributions, in terms of giving answers and opinions, contributed a great deal to the validity and authenticity of the research instrument (Questionnaire). This necessitated that they be given as much time as possible to reflect as conveniently as possible on the questions asked in the questionnaire. In this section, the researcher looked at reliability and validity in research. In the following section, the researcher discusses the envisaged challenges during data collection process.

### **3.5.5 Challenges usually encountered during data collection**

In this section, the researcher discusses envisaged and expected challenges during the research process. This is due to the fact that when one is fully aware of the challenges and their nature, one can be better positioned to deal with the envisaged challenges. With regards to challenges usually experienced during research process, Schwiesow (2010) mentions the

following research challenges: “Choosing the right topic, choosing the right methodology, assembling a research team, finding study participants, getting Institutions to participate, staying motivated and working your plan and dealing with data.” (2010).

The researcher is of the view that for the current research, the challenge was not so much underlined in these concepts but was with dealing with participants that have already been identified. In this project, seventy (70) bereaved children were already identified among *Xhosa* speaking congregations of the Free Church in Southern Africa. The challenge is that this research project is the first of its kind among the *Xhosa* communities of the said church. The second challenge is with regards to the fact that this project is focused on children. Children need to be handled differently compared to elderly people because they are still developing, and their young minds are also undergoing a development process. This means that they need special care and a unique approach. The third challenge is that the research project is dealing with death related issues. This is a delicate subject for children, and the fourth challenge is that some parents tend to shield their children. There is a concern that their children will be exposed to ill-treatment and torture, and most parents do not even believe that children must be spoken to about death related issues. This is because they are ignorant of the fact that children can also grieve and that they also need healing. In order to overcome all these challenges, the researcher explained the whole process with regards to the research project. University rules and regulations were read out to participants as contained in the consent documentation of the Ethics Research Committee of the University of Fort hare. The researcher also explained that nobody was forced to participate against their will. In this section, the researcher explained challenges that are usually encountered during data collection process. The next section deals with Ethical considerations. This is a section on which the researcher explains how he conducted the research project with the dignity and the discipline it deserves. When there is no trust between the researcher and the participants, there is no way that the research project will be successful since people will be reluctant to open up to the researcher.

### **3.6 Ethical considerations**

With regards to ethical considerations, Jackson (2007:12) argues that “The concern with the ethical impacts of a research study is a justifiably important issue, particularly when the study involves working with children and sensitive issues such as bereavement and death.” Collins et al (2000:107) cited in Jackson (2007:12) suggests that “Concerns with ethics in research

should be reflective of the professional codes of conduct within the particular country in which the research is being conducted...” In the light of what Jackson is saying, the researcher shall duly abide by the ethical rules guiding the research conduct. This includes the required protocols and procedures expected by the University of Fort Hare. To this end, a letter from the General Assembly (A highest authoritative body) of the Free Church in Southern Africa was obtained to give the researcher permission to conduct the research within the church as requested. Ethical clearance was obtained from Social Development against child abuse register. This confirms that the researcher was investigated regarding previous charges of molesting or abusing children and cleared. An ethical clearance certificate with the reference number: *RASOISDINO1* was issued to the researcher by the University Ethics Committee. This document authorized the researcher to officially collect data by means of a questionnaire only. The researcher took it upon himself to uphold confidentiality at all costs, and people’s ideas and views, including their concerns, were respected. Therefore, no person was interviewed against their will, and nothing was said and presented on their behalf except the information that would have been presented by them as answers to the questionnaire. In this section, the researcher explained the ethical considerations of this study. The following section presents the conclusion of this chapter.

### **3.7 Conclusion**

In this chapter, the researcher discussed the way in which this research was conducted. This emanates from the fact that there was identification of lack of support for *Xhosa* children during bereavement. The chapter provided mechanisms for the solution of the problem at hand based on the contributions of African theology and Spirituality. Two main concepts were discussed in this chapter, namely, the research context and the research methodology. In the research context, the researcher made an attempt to show the relevance of this research project to the subjects. In the methodology, the researcher detailed the manner in which the research unfolded. In the next chapter, the researcher presents the data analysis, interpretation and presentation of the research findings. The next chapter is critical as it deals with the core business of this study, which is the empirical aspect thereof.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the empirical findings and the analysis of the study. The analysis is based on themes identified through data interpretation. Braun and Clarke (2006:9) also shed some light with regards to the usefulness of themes: “A theme captures something important about the data in relation to the research question and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set.” The researcher deems this definition critical in this study since addressing of the problem by means of recommendations heavily hinges on clear-cut data analysis and interpretation. In this regard, findings and the analysis are of great importance in this chapter.

These findings are based on results drawn from qualitative investigation processes. The investigations were based on theological guidance associated with bereavement of *Xhosa* children. The contribution of African theology and Spirituality to this phenomenon has been the key contributing element. The interviews were an endeavour to underpin and to unearth real problems and challenges experienced by bereaved *Xhosa* children. This emanates from the fact that these children are not being taken care of in terms of theological guidance during bereavement.

The study was conducted in the *Ngcingwane* District of the Free Church in Southern Africa. (*Ngcingwane* is the name of the village in Idutywa {Former Transkei}). The Free Church congregation in this area is named after this rural village. This then means that this study was focussed on a religious community as opposed to a larger community since this is an Ecclesiastical based project (Church involvement in child bereavement). The *Ngcingwane* District comprises four (4) congregations. Geographically, some of the congregations that fall under *Ngcingwane* District are found in *Centane* (A small town) which is two hundred (200) kilometres from Idutywa. *Centane* used to be an autonomous District, but due to its relatively small membership, the two Districts (*Ngcingwane* and *Centane*) were amalgamated. The other reason for this amalgamation was that these Districts were struggling to meet central fund obligations. Central fund is a (church fund where all congregations send money on

stipulated time frames). This money is mainly used to pay stipends to the church clergy (*izibonelelo zabe Fundisi*). The congregations are thus listed as follows: *Ngcingwane* congregation (Idutywa), *Macibe* congregation (*Centane*), *Msentu* congregation (*Centane*) and *Godidi* congregation (*Centane*). The families of the bereaved children form part of the membership of these congregations. The sample size of the study comprised seventy (70) bereaved children.

The research instrument used was a parent reported questionnaire (parent or guardian answering questions on behalf of the child) since it is not always easy to get information from children. Secondly, parents or guardians spend most of their time with these children and are more involved with these children than any other person. This is also meant for parents to have a feel of what these children are going through during bereavement. The next point presents biographical information of the participants. This information reflects people who were interviewed on behalf of the bereaved children in Idutywa (*Ngcingwane*) congregation. Grandparents were also interviewed. In this section, the researcher has introduced this chapter and all its different concepts. In the following section, the researcher will present demographic information for *Ngcingwane* Congregation.

#### **4.2 Demographic information for *Ngcingwane* Congregation**

The total number of participants was fifty-one (51). Males constituted eleven (11) participants while females were forty (40). The researcher also presents the profiling of grandparents for each congregation. This is based on the fact that, during the research process, grandparents made a unique contribution and are the ones who are looking after their grand children whose parents had died due to HIV/AIDS. These grand parents have to support their grandchildren socially, emotionally and financially. This means that the grandparents are the ones who spend more time with these grandchildren more than any other person. The grandchildren in question form part of the bereaved children. The profiling of the Idutywa (*Ngcingwane*) congregation is presented in the following table. Each congregational profile is followed by the profiling of grandparents who are part of that particular congregation.

#### 4.2.1 Table for *Ngcingwane* congregation

<b>Pseudonyms of participants</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Education</b>	<b>Socio economic status</b>	<b>Marital Status</b>
Nosisa	46	female	Grade 9	unemployed	Married
Ntombomzi	41	female	Grade 11	employed	Married
Nomsa	40	female	Grade 7	unemployed	Widow
Nonkonzo	39	female	Grade 12	unemployed	Married
Nokhwezi	38	female	Grade 8	unemployed	Married
Nolulamile	40	female	Grade 12	employed	Married
Nosizwe	51	female	Grade 6	unemployed	Widow
Dubase	47	female	Grade 4	unemployed	Widow
Ntombise	44	female	Grade 7	unemployed	Widow
Nomkhitha	39	female	Grade 9	employed	Married
Nondala	47	female	Grade 6	unemployed	Married

Noswekile	47	female	Grade 8	employed	Married
Nomalungelo	41	female	Grade 6	employed	Married
Nomvuso	42	female	Grade 5	unemployed	Married
Liziwe	48	female	Grade 7	unemployed	Widow
Nonyenzane	39	female	Grade 9	employed	Widow
Noketile	40	female	Grade 10	employed	Married
Lisa	49	female	Grade 9	employed	Married
Thembi	37	female	Grade 12	unemployed	Married
Siphosethu	40	female	Grade 7	unemployed	Married
Nomvo	51	female	Grade 10	unemployed	Married
Nomalunga	49	female	Grade 8	Self employed	Married
Nomposiso	53	female	Grade 6	Self employed	Married
Nomakhaya	55	female	Grade 9	Self employed	Married
Nomaesile	47	female	Grade 5	Self employed	Married
Nomlomo	46	female	Grade 11	Self employed	Married

Nomazwi	51	female	Grade 9	Self employed	Married
Nomazaza	48	female	Grade 11	employed	Married
Nomatumata	39	female	Grade 6	Self employed	Married
Nolizwi	44	female	Grade 12	employed	Married
Nomaqwa	48	female	Grade 7	Self employed	Married
Nomthandazo	55	female	Grade 9	unemployed	Married
Ntombikayise	49	female	Grade 7	Self employed	Married
Tolwazana	38	female	Grade 12	unemployed	Married
Nondumiso	47	female	Grade 11	Self employed	Married
Nodola	50	female	Grade 6	Self employed	Married
Noandile	49	female	Grade 8	Self employed	Married
Nosizwe	51	female	Grade 7	unemployed	Widow
Nosonke	40	female	Grade 10	Self employed	Married

Nompucuko	49	female	Grade 12	employed	Married
Sangqu	41	male	Grade 8	unemployed	Married
Nyathela	49	male	Grade 10	unemployed	Married
Mpongwana	45	male	Grade 6	unemployed	Married
Tshaka	39	male	Grade 12	employed	Married
Nceba	41	male	Grade 11	unemployed	Married
Nodola	38	male	Grade 12	employed	Married
Vuyani	51	male	Grade 10	unemployed	Widower
Maphondo	44	male	Grade 11	employed	Married
Mthetheleli	51	male	Grade 6	unemployed	Married
Mlandeli	46	male	Grade 7	unemployed	Married
Sisa	47	male	Grade 9	employed	Married

**Figure 4.2.1 Table of the Ngcingwane Congregation**

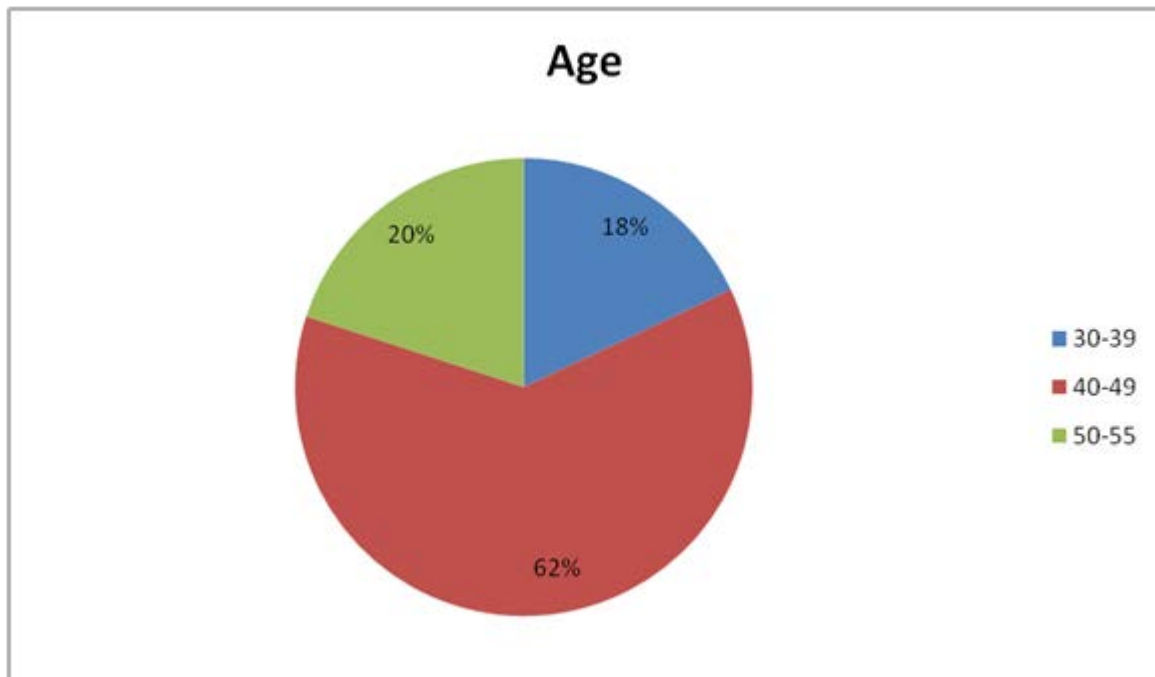
The fifty-one (51) congregants interviewed on behalf of their children provided information willingly. This emanates from the fact that remaining parents and grandparents were interviewed on behalf of their children by means of a questionnaire. The specific reasons for including grandparents and remaining parents in this process were:

Grandparents are believed to spend more time with these children and look after these children financially, socially and emotionally. It is not so easy to get information spontaneously from *Xhosa* children, and it made life a lot easier when remaining parents answered questions on behalf of their children. This approach was useful in the sense that it involved parents in real life issues regarding their bereaved children.

The design of the questionnaire used was a parent reported questionnaire (remaining parents and grandparents answering questions on behalf of their children). This was meant to accommodate remaining parents, guardians and grandparents. The demographic profile of the participants included: age, gender, levels of education, socio-economic status and marital status. This was the case with all the respondents that were interviewed. The real names of the respondents interviewed have been replaced with pseudonyms. Needless to mention that, this process included grandparents who were also interviewed from each of the four (4) congregations as indicated earlier.

The replacement of their real names with pseudonyms was done in order to make them feel comfortable. This process was the first of its kind in these congregations as they had never been interviewed in this way before. The replacement of their names with pseudonyms was also done in order to respect their anonymity and to uphold their confidentiality. With regards to this concept, Mouton (2005:243) advises of the right of participants to anonymity and confidentiality. The author concedes that “Informants have a right to remain anonymous.” The author continues to say that “This right should be respected both where it has been promised explicitly and where no clear understanding to the contrary has been reached.” The following section deals with the data analysis as presented in the above table. The data is presented in graphs for accuracy and clarity purposes. This is the pattern for all the congregations who form the research site of this research project.

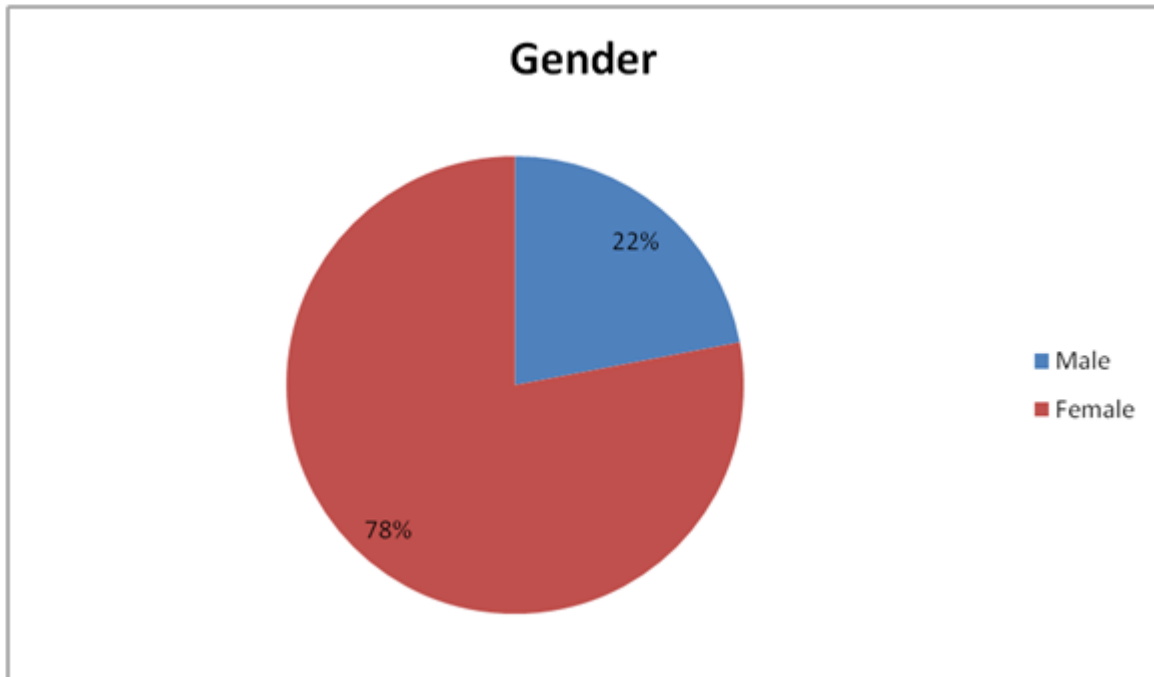
#### 4.2.2 Age



**Figure 4.2.2** Age analysis for Ngcingwane participants

The age analysis indicates three brackets (30-39), (40-49) and (50-55) respectively. The first bracket reflects younger respondents (18%). The second bracket reflects middle age respondents (40-49) (62%), while the third age bracket reflects an advanced age group (50-55). This bracket translates into twenty percent (20%). The researcher experienced a balanced equation in this regard. This section focused on the age analysis of the participants. The next section focuses on gender analysis.

### 4.2.3 Gender

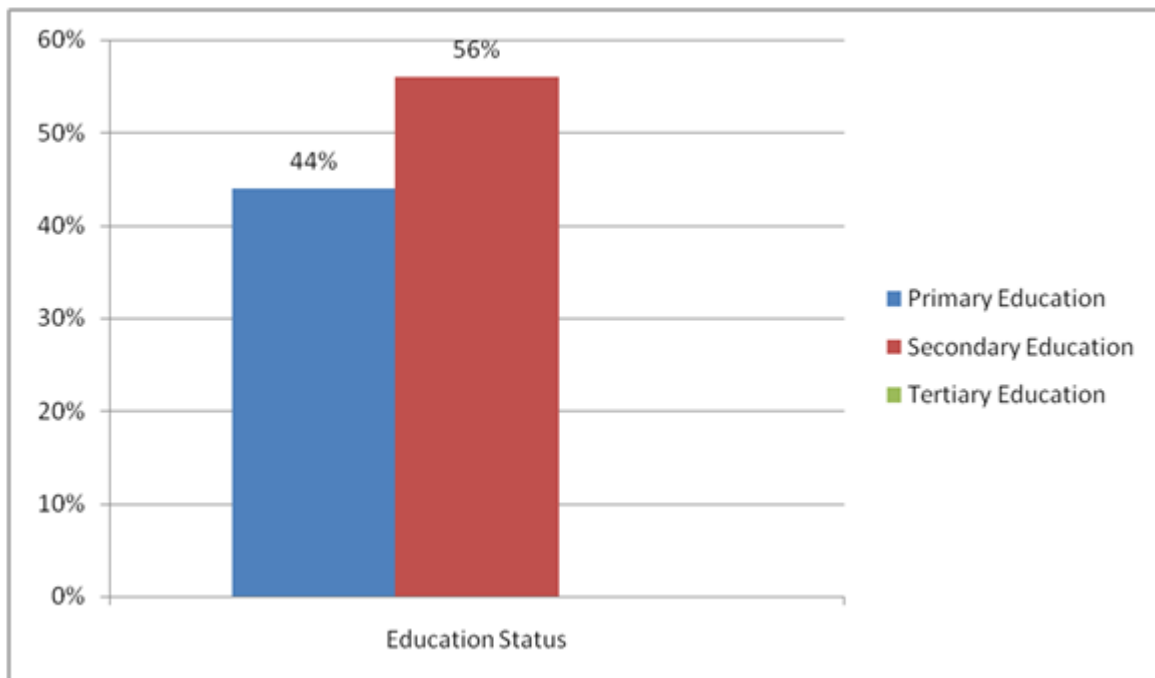


**Figure 4.2.3** Gender analysis for Ngcingwane participants

In terms of statistics with regards to gender, males were eleven (11) which translates into twenty-two percent (22%), while females were forty (40) which translates into seventy-eight percent (78%) respectively. This means that females were in the majority than males; this, however, does not mean that males were not willing to participate in this research project. Most *Xhosa* males were rather happy to allow their wives to speak on their behalf. It is also important to mention that women were neither forced nor intimidated to be part of this process but contributed spontaneously and willingly. On their part, this also came out of a desire to speak and contribute something about their bereaved children. The continued willingness and pro-activity on their part confirmed their high level of commitment to the cause aimed at caring for their children.

This was then highly appreciated by the researcher as it yielded good results. There was also a high level of co-operation between males and females in this process. This was evident in instances where either males or females reminded each other of certain aspects in this process. This was the case where it seemed that some of them had forgotten some details. This section focussed on gender analysis. The next section focuses on educational status of respondents.

#### 4.2.4 Education status



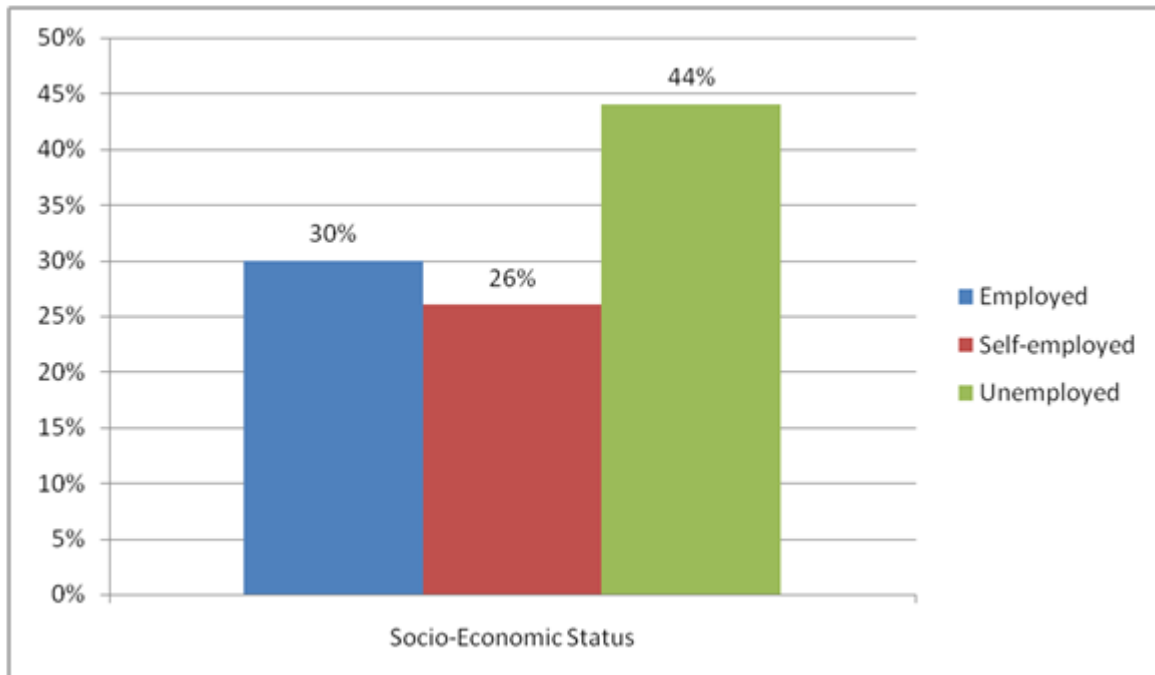
**Figure 4.2.4** Education Status for Ngcingwane participants

The researcher sees education as an important aspect of the empirical research. In a situation where respondents have a reasonable amount of education, things can be viewed with understanding. This can also be determined by the level of their education. In the case of the respondents who were interviewed on behalf of their bereaved children, this proved to be even more helpful. The researcher believes that enlightened people should be able to analyze things to a certain degree, and this was the case. This, however, does not undermine those who may not be privileged in this regard. The ratings of education for the respondents who were interviewed were both at primary and secondary levels. In terms of percentages, primary education level was forty-four percent (44%) while secondary education was fifty-six percent (56%).

In terms of tertiary education, there were no respondents with tertiary qualifications in this particular category of respondents. This, however, does not mean that there are no people with tertiary qualifications in the *Ngcingwane* congregation. The difference is that they are not part of those who have bereaved children. The percentage gap between these two levels of education of the respondents is not so vast. This then would mean that these respondents complemented each other to a certain degree in terms of education. This was very encouraging for the researcher as it yielded good results. There was also a high level of professionalism and common understanding. These respondents were able to give informed

answers based on their evaluation of their bereaved children. In this regard, one believes that their education contributed a great deal and further means that they had a reasonable amount of insight into the well-being of their bereaved children. This section dealt with educational status of respondents. The next section focuses on socio-economic status of respondents.

#### 4.2.5 Socio economic status

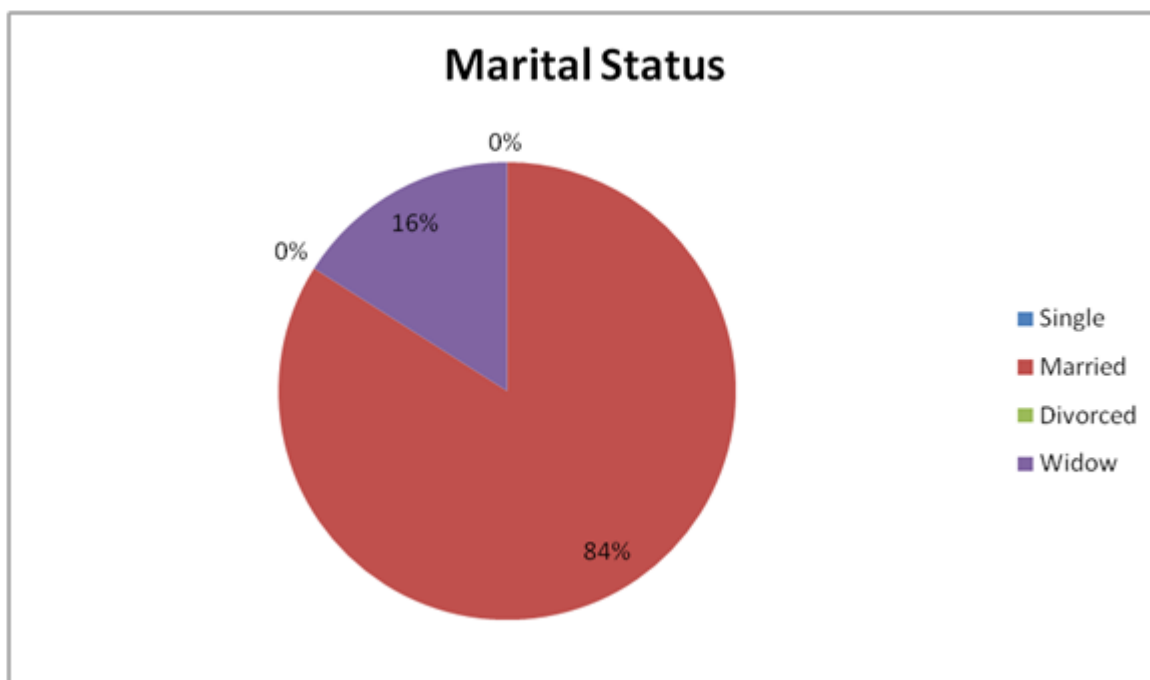


**Figure 4.2.5** Socio economic Status for Ngcingwane participants

With regards to socio economic status, different percentages were identified accordingly. The unemployment percentage is forty-four percent (44%). The employment percentage is thirty percent (30%) while self-employment is twenty-six percent (26%). With regards to the employed respondents, they reported that they hold different jobs in different places such as local tuck shops, municipality, road contractors, furniture shops, hardware dealers and local filling stations. Some of these respondents reported that they work as casual workers. The self-employed reported that they earn their living by selling clothing items usually acquired from cities such as Cape Town and Durban. Some are dealing in paraffin sales, order paraffin from big paraffin stores and sell it to the local population. Some respondents reported that they make building blocks and sell them to local people for construction purposes. The unemployed constitute the majority as they are rated at forty-four percent (44%). They reported that they do not have a source of income and that they spend most of their time looking for jobs. The church sometimes donates clothing items to such families. There are clothes that sometimes come from the mother church in Scotland (Free Church of Scotland).

Sometimes there are even finances that are donated - the church fund called (Sarah shields fund). This is a trust fund that was created from funds that were donated by a lady named Sarah by means of a last will and testament. The church uses this fund in looking after poor families. The unemployed reported that they do benefit occasionally from this fund, as this is not a permanent and regular donation. The unemployed respondents also reported that even if they wanted to send their bereaved children to professionals such as Psychologists and Social workers, they could not afford to do it. This is because these professionals are paid, and unemployed respondents do not have means to pay them. This section presented socio-economic status of respondents. The next section focuses on marital status of respondents.

#### **4.2.6 Marital status**



**Figure 4.2.6** Marital Status for Ngcingwane participants

In this particular congregation (*Ngcingwane*), there were no single (unmarried) respondents and no divorcees either. The vast majority of respondents were married as they were rated eight four percent (84%) which amounts to forty-three (43) respondents in terms of numbers. Widows are rated at sixteen percent (16%), which amounts to eight widows.

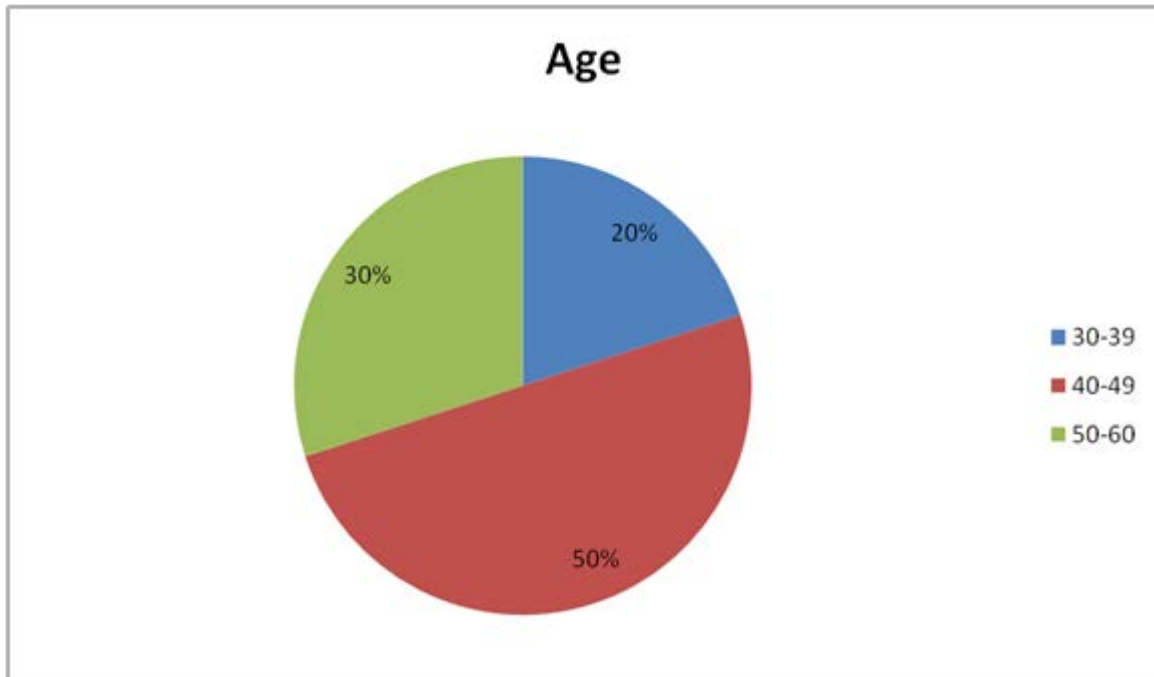
#### **4.3 Demographic information of grandparents for *Ngcingwane* participants**

The total number for *Ngcingwane* grandparents was nine (9), and these were all females. This does not mean that there were no male participants but that males in the case of couples were somehow reluctant to speak. This was not because they were against the process but were rather shy and did not think they were up to the task; they were more comfortable to allow their wives to speak on their behalf. This was the case with other aspects of this research project. This is evident where females seem to be a convincing majority than males.

### 4.3.1 Table of Ngcingwane Grandparents

<b>Pseudonyms of Participants</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Education</b>	<b>Socio Economic Status</b>	<b>Marital Status</b>
Nomthandazo	55	female	Grade 9	unemployed	married
Ntombikayise	49	female	Grade 7	Self employed	married
Tolwazana	38	female	Grade 12	unemployed	married
Nondumiso	47	female	Grade 11	employed	married
Nodola	50	female	Grade 6	Self employed	married
Noandile	49	female	Grade 8	Self employed	married
Nosizwe	51	female	Grade 7	unemployed	Widow
Nosonke	40	female	Grade 10	Self employed	married
Nompucuko	49	female	Grade 12	employed	married

### 4.3.2. Age

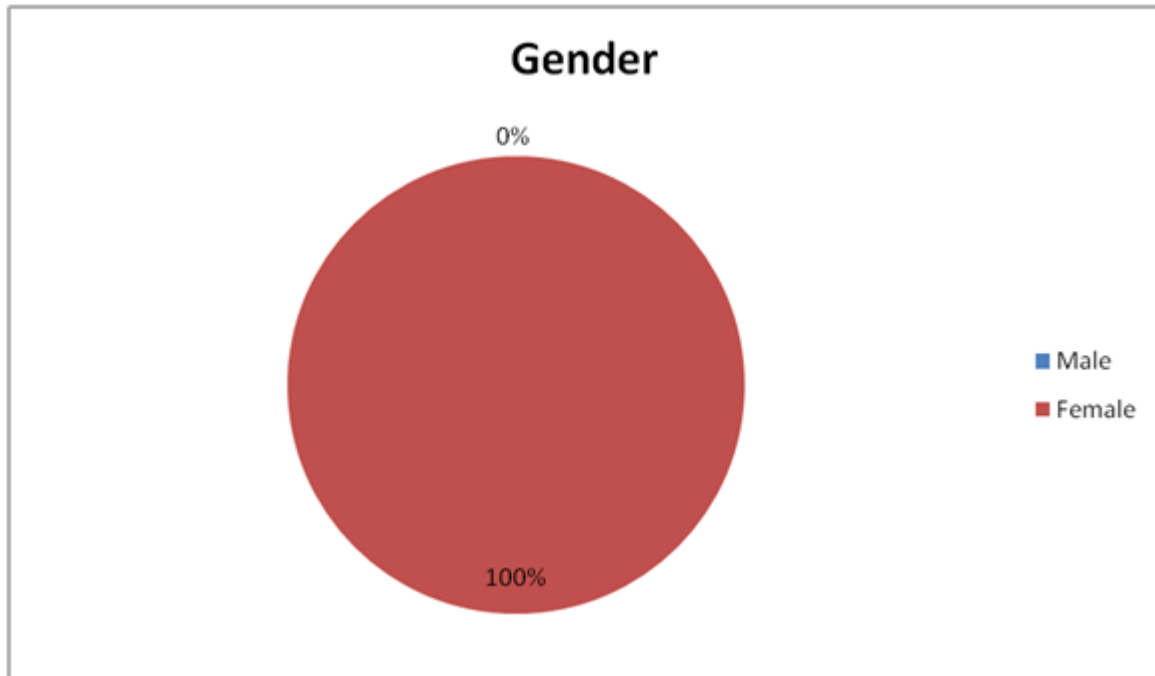


**Figure 4.3.2** Age analysis of Ngcingwane Grandparents

There are three (3) age brackets in this particular age analysis. These are listed as follows: (30-39), (40-49) and (50-60). The first bracket (30-39) is the younger age group. It might be rather unusual to have grandparents falling under this younger age group. One (1) respondent in this age group did have bereaved grandchildren. She actually lost some young girls who had children at young age. These young girls died due to the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Their young parents had no choice as they had to become grandparents to such children. The second age bracket (40-49) can be viewed as a middle age bracket, while a third bracket is (50-60). This is an advanced age bracket. In terms of percentages, the first age bracket (30-39) is rated at twenty percent (20%); the second age bracket is rated at fifty percent (50%), while the third bracket (50-60) is rated at thirty percent (30%). In terms of statistics, the first age bracket (30-39) was made up of one (1) respondent; the second bracket (40-49) was made up of five (5) respondents, while the third age bracket (50-60) was made up of three (3) respondents. The grand total is therefore nine (9) respondents. In this section, the researcher

dealt with age analysis of the respondents. In the next section, the researcher will focus on gender analysis of the respondents.

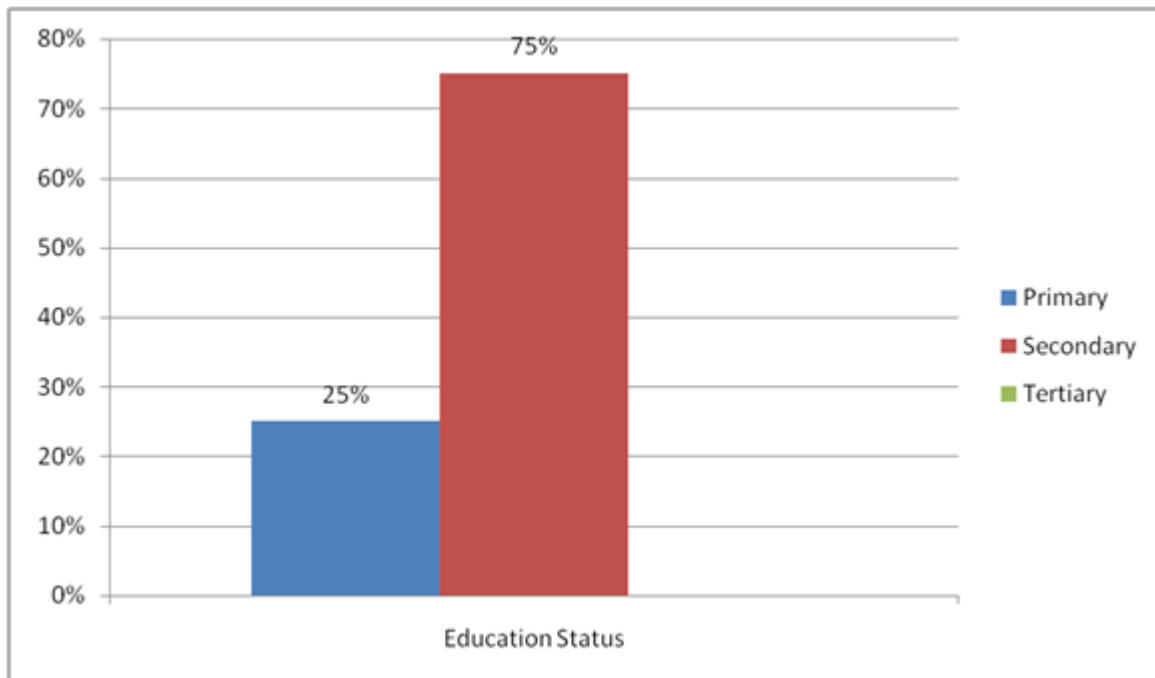
### 4.3.3 Gender



**Figure 4.3.3** Gender analysis of Ngcingwane Grandparents

With regards to gender analysis, there is only one percentage rating in this regard which is one hundred percent (100%) only meant for females. In terms of statistics, this percentage translates into nine (9) female respondents. This, however, does not mean that there were no males in the congregation and does not mean that males were against the data collection process. Males were rather happy to have females as communicators in this process and shows that there is paradigm shift on the part of males in this regard. In the olden days, traditional males in the *Xhosa* culture would have taken the stage and would not have allowed their wives to speak on their behalf in their presence. In this case, this was a spontaneous undertaking and a mutual process. The researcher in this section dealt with the gender analysis of respondents. In the next section, the researcher will look into the educational analysis of the respondents.

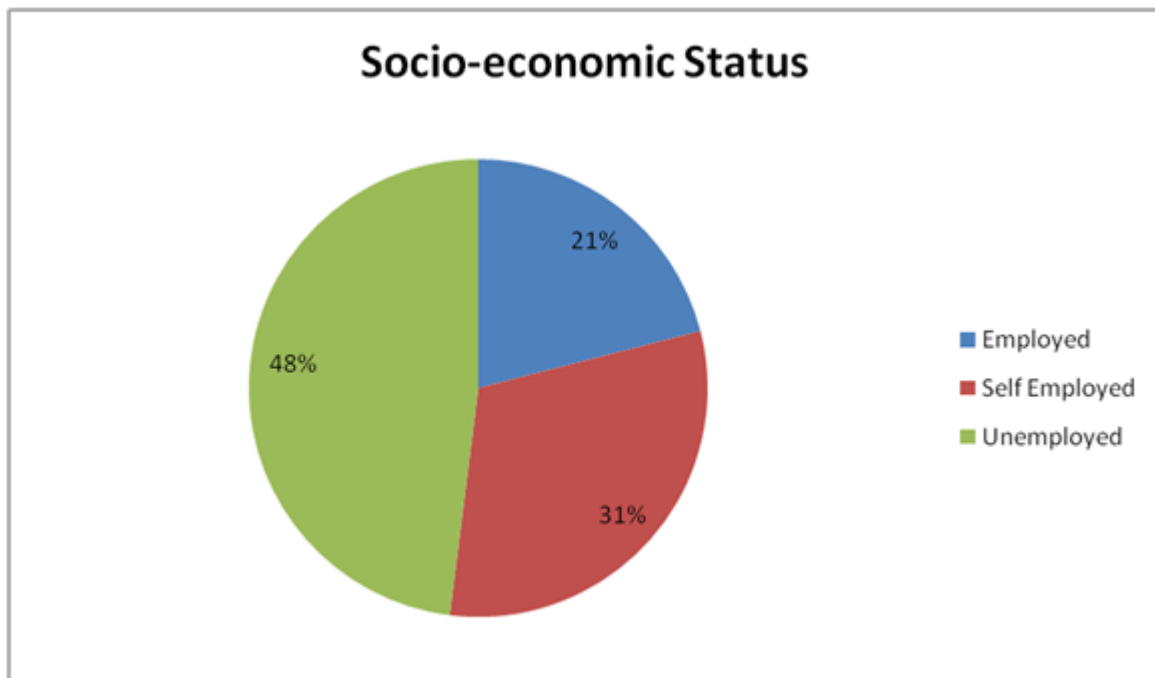
#### 4.3.4 Education status



**Figure 4.3.4** Education status of Ngcingwane Grandparents

In terms of education, education analysis was rated at two levels: primary and secondary education levels. The primary level was rated at twenty-five percent (25%) while the secondary education level was rated at seventy-five percent (75%). In terms of statistics, primary education respondents were three (3) while secondary education respondents were six (6). This makes the grand total of nine (9) respondents. There were no respondents with tertiary qualifications. The education levels, primary and secondary, were significant in the data collection process. The minimum education level reflected was an asset to the data collection process. It must also be noted that, this does not mean that in the whole congregation there are no people with tertiary qualifications; they are there, but are not part of this particular data gathering process. They do not form part of the bereaved religious community in this study. This section focused on the educational status of respondents. The next section focuses on the socio-economic status of respondents.

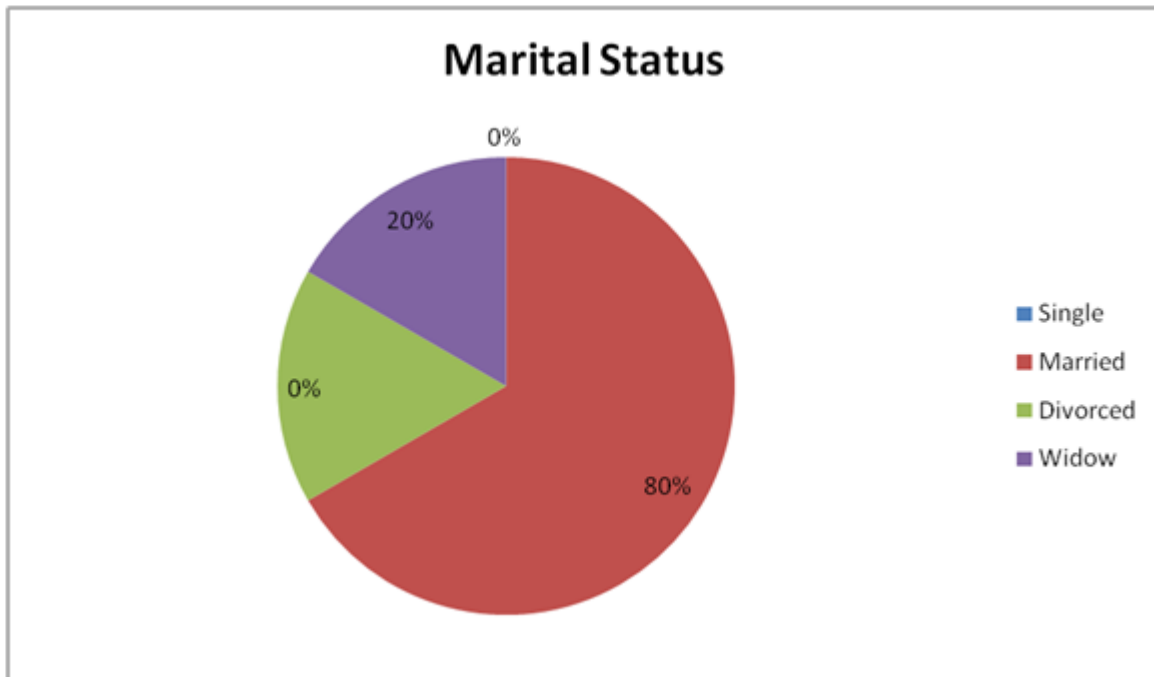
#### 4.3.5 Socio-economic status



**Figure 4.3.5** Socio-economic status of Ngcingwane Grandparents

The socio-economic status of these respondents reflects twenty-one percent (21%) of the employed respondents, thirty-one percent (31%) of self-employed. The unemployed were rated at forty-eight percent (48%). In this analysis, the level of unemployment is a bit high. These respondents reported that they do not have any jobs but sometimes get some donations from the church; however, this does not happen on regular basis. They further reported that in the midst of their unemployment, they have to grapple with the reality of their bereaved grandchildren. This then would mean that they do not have any motivation to look after these grandchildren. Those respondents who are employed reported that they work in different places such as the Magistrate`s court, local shops, local filling stations, local clinics and hospitals. The self-employed reported that they sell clothes ordered from big cities such as Durban and Cape Town. It is also a common practice in these areas for the self-employed to sell clothes. Some of them reported that they even sell paraffin on a regular basis. In terms of statistics, the employed are made up of two (2) respondents, self-employed are made up of four (4) respondents, while the unemployed are made up of three (3) respondents. The grand total, therefore, was nine (9) respondents. In this section, the researcher looked into the socio-economic status of respondents. The next section deals with marital status of respondents.

#### 4.3.6 Marital status



**Figure 4.3.6** Marital Status of Ngcingwane Grandparents

With regards to marital status, respondents were categorized into two (2) categories: married and widowed. Married respondents were rated at eighty percent (80%) while the widowed were rated at twenty percent (20%). In terms of statistics, the married were made up of eight (8) respondents, while there was only one (1) widow. There were no single (unmarried) respondents in this group. There were no divorced participants either. The grand total therefore is made up of nine (9) respondents. The researcher noted a high level of unity and warmth in this particular group. In this section, the researcher dealt with the marital status of the respondents. In the next section, the researcher focuses on the demographic information for *Macibe* congregation.

#### **4.4 Demographic information of the *Macibe* Congregation**

The total number for *Macibe* congregation was thirty-nine (39). Males were fourteen (14) while females constituted twenty-five (25) participants. The church members who were interviewed provided information in connection with their bereaved children. The process was dominated by a high level of emotions. Most interviewees were in tears as they provided information in this regard as the process actually triggered some sad and painful memories in their lives. This confirmed that parents who look after bereaved children need theological guidance themselves, and this could be a research topic for another study.

#### 4.4.1 Table for Macibe Congregation

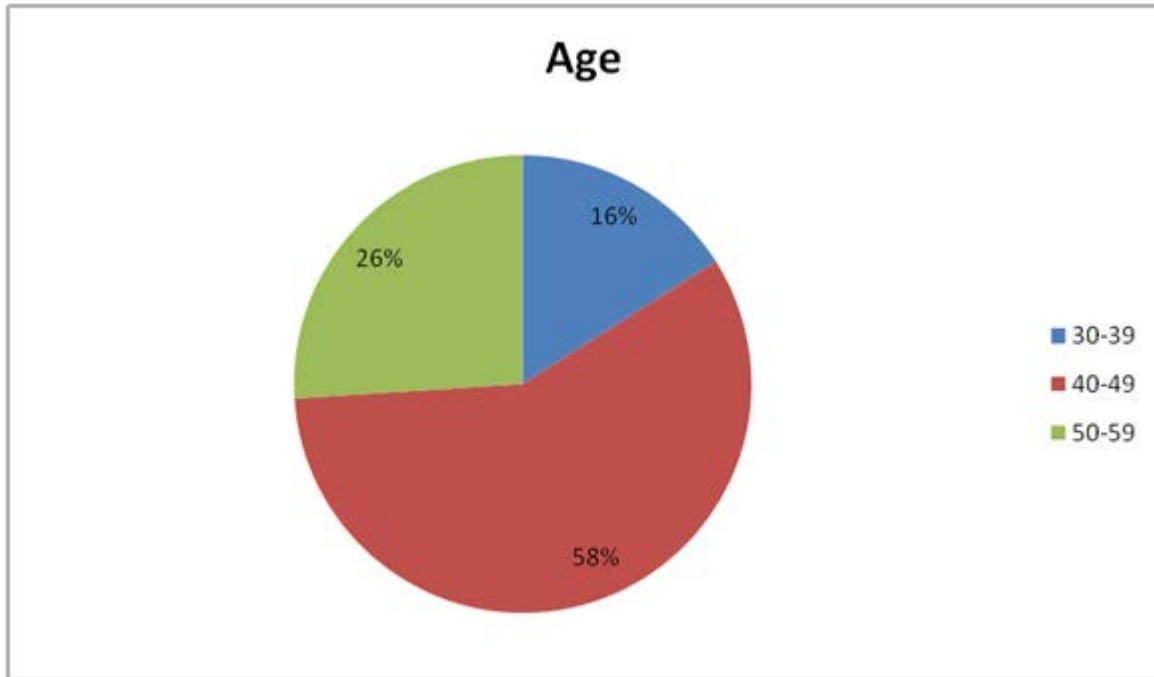
<b>Pseudonyms of participants</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Education</b>	<b>Socio economic status</b>	<b>Marital status</b>
Dondo	42	male	Grade 8	unemployed	Married
Ntitho	38	male	Grade 12	unemployed	Married
Xundu	47	male	Grade 9	unemployed	Married
Zembe	52	male	Grade 6	Self employed	widower
Lizo	40	male	Grade 9	Self employed	Married
Sakhele	51	male	Grade 4	unemployed	Married
Lizo	40	male	Grade 9	Self employed	Married
Stumama	47	male	Grade 5	Self employed	Married
Khaya	39	male	Grade 12	unemployed	Married
Ntshontsho	40	male	Grade 6	unemployed	Married
Ntshinga	52	male	Grade 9	Self employed	Married
Gozongwana	43	male	Grade 6	Self employed	Married

Dumani	37	male	Grade 9	Self employed	Married
Tyeni	49	male	Grade 6	Self employed	Divorced
Notumzana	47	female	Grade 6	unemployed	Married
Noputsu	42	female	Grade 11	Self employed	Married
Nolizwe	50	female	Grade 8	Self employed	Married
Gciniwe	48	female	Grade 11	Self employed	Divorced
Nomalizo	39	female	Grade 12	unemployed	Married
Nofanele	41	female	Grade 7	unemployed	Married
Deliwe	51	female	Grade 6	Self employed	Married
Noliso	40	female	Grade 9	employed	Married
Nozuko	50	female	Grade 11	employed	Married
Sizolwakhe	47	female	Grade 10	unemployed	Divorced
Nopotyi	52	female	Grade 7	unemployed	Married
Nompozolo	37	female	Grade 9	Self employed	Married
Nomjikelo	42	female	Grade 11	Self employed	Married

Ntombentsha	48	female	Grade 7	Self employed	Married
Phakama	50	female	Grade 11	unemployed	Married
Sisanda	48	female	Grade 9	employed	Married
Nongaka	38	female	Grade 12	unemployed	Married
Thandi	41	female	Grade 7	Self employed	Married
Lilitha	49	female	Grade 11	Self employed	Married
Sinombulelo	50	female	Grade 11	employed	Married
Thandaza	40	female	Grade 7	Self employed	Married
Nomzi	47	female	Grade 12	employed	Married
Nopopo	40	female	Grade 9	Self employed	Married
Nomfusi	50	female	Grade 6	employed	Married
Somkazi	42	female	Grade 9	Self employed	Married

*Figure 4.4.1 Table of Macibe Participants*

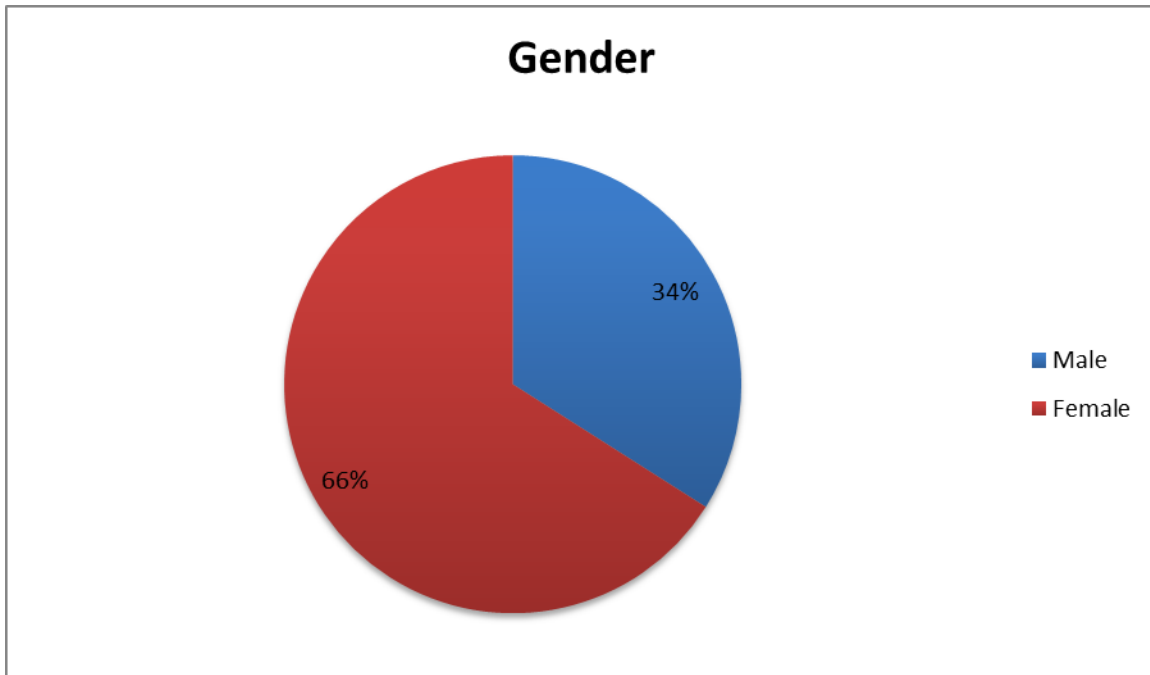
#### **4.4.2 Age**



**Figure 4.4.2** Age analysis of Macibe Participants

There are three (3) age brackets in this age analysis. In terms of age, respondents were categorized as follows: younger age group (30-39), middle age group (40-49) and advanced age group (50-59). In terms of statistics, the younger age group (30-39) was made up of six (6) respondents. The middle age group (40-49) was made up of twenty-two (22) respondents, while the advanced age group was made up of ten (10) respondents. Therefore, the grand total for all the respondents was thirty-eight (38) and the middle age (40-49) respondents were the majority. In this section, the researcher presented the age analysis of the respondents. The next section focuses on the gender analysis of respondents.

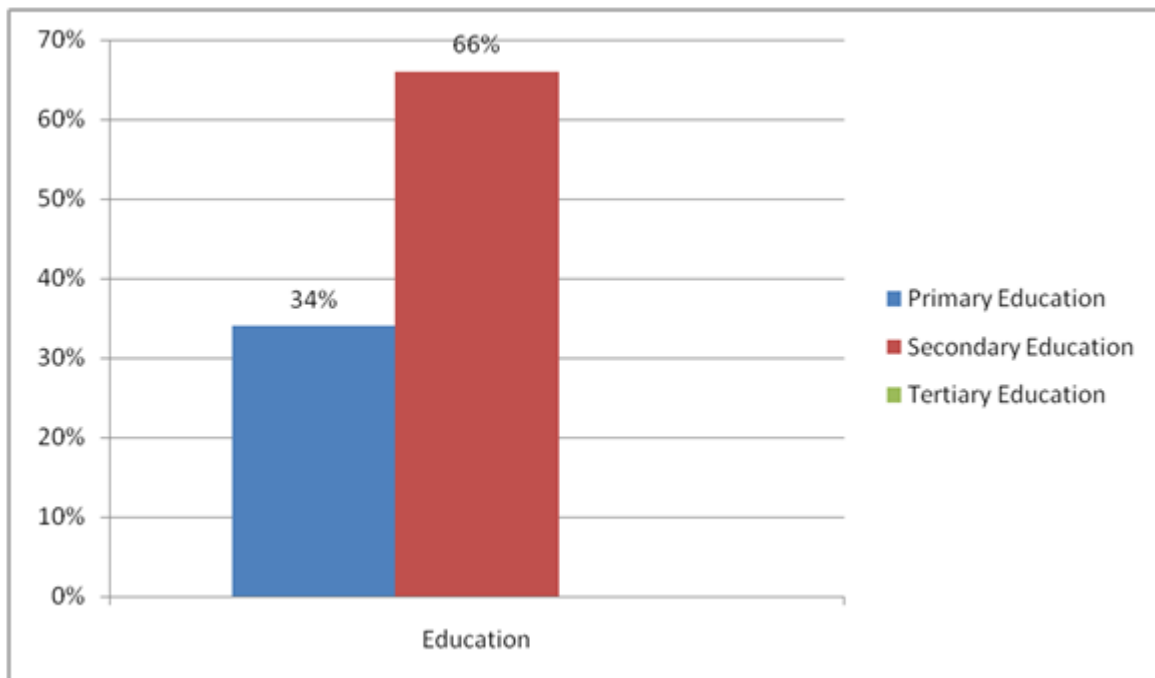
#### 4.4.3 Gender



**Figure 4.4.3** Gender analysis for Macibe Participants

In this regard, males were rated at thirty-four percent (34%), while females were rated at sixty-six percent (66%). In terms of statistics, males were fourteen (14) while females were twenty-five (25). The grand total then was thirty-nine (39) respondents, and females were in the majority. There was a reasonable amount of co-operation and mutual understanding among the respondents themselves. This did not pose any challenges for the data collection process. Respondents were rather optimistic and pro-active in their approach, applauded the process and showed great encouragement. They were keen that this process will ultimately yield good results. In this section, the researcher presented the gender analysis of the respondents. In the next section, the researcher will look into the analysis of educational status of the respondents.

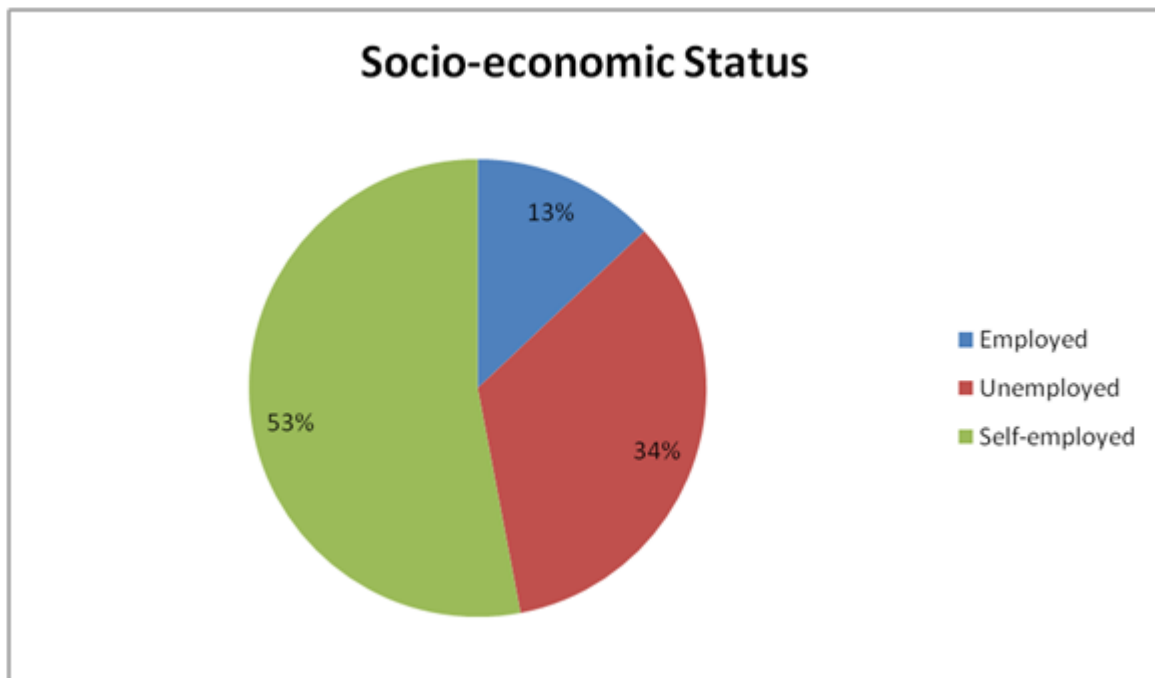
#### 4.4.4 Education status



**Figure 4.4.4** Education status of Macibe participants

With regards to education, there were two levels that were identified, primary and secondary levels. The primary education level was rated at thirty-four percent (34%), while secondary education level was rated at sixty-six percent (66%). In terms of statistics, respondents with primary education were fourteen (14), while respondents with secondary education were twenty-five (25). The grand total for all the respondents was then thirty-nine (39). Respondents with secondary education were the majority as compared to those with primary education. There were no respondents with tertiary qualifications. The minimum education these respondents had, contributed reasonably to the whole data collection process. In this section, the researcher looked into the educational status of the respondents. In the next section, the researcher will look at the socio economic status of the respondents.

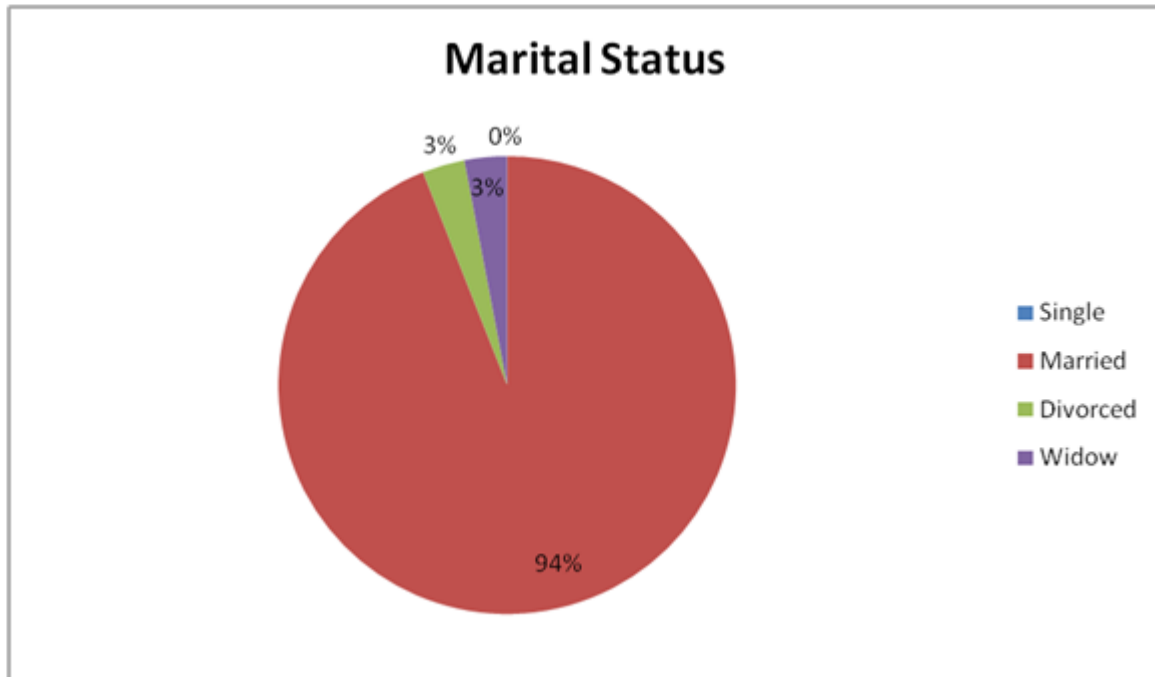
#### 4.4.5 Socio-economic status



**Figure 4.4.5** Socio-economic status of Macibe participants

The socio-economic status of *Macibe* congregation was classified into three categories: the employed, unemployed and self-employed. Employed respondents were rated at thirteen percent (13%), unemployed at thirty-four percent (34%), and self-employed at fifty-three percent (53%). The level of employment is reasonably low, and these respondents reported that they work at local shops, clinics, petrol filling stations, Municipality offices and Magistrate`s court. The unemployed respondents reported that they spend most of their time looking for jobs. The self-employed reported that they sell clothes and some make building blocks for selling to the local people. In terms of statistics, the employment status amounts to six (6) respondents. Unemployment status amounts to thirteen (13) respondents, while self-employed status amounts to twenty (20) respondents. The grand total was then thirty-nine (39) respondents. In this regard, the researcher dealt with the socio-economic status of the respondents. In the next section, the researcher will focus on the marital status of the respondents.

#### 4.4.6 Marital status



**Figure 4.4.6** Marital status of Macibe participants

With regards to marital status for *Macibe* respondents, there were three (3) categories: married, widowed and divorced. Married respondents were rated at ninety-four percent (94%), and the widowed were rated at three percent (3%). The divorced were rated at three percent (3%). With regards to statistics, the married were thirty-five (35), the divorced were rated at three (3), with only one (1) widowed. There were no single (unmarried) respondents, and it is also noticeable that the married respondents were in the majority. The grand total was thirty-nine (39). Here the researcher analysed the marital status of respondents. In the next section, the demographic information for *Macibe* grandparents will be presented.

#### 4.5 Demographic information for *Macibe* Grandparents

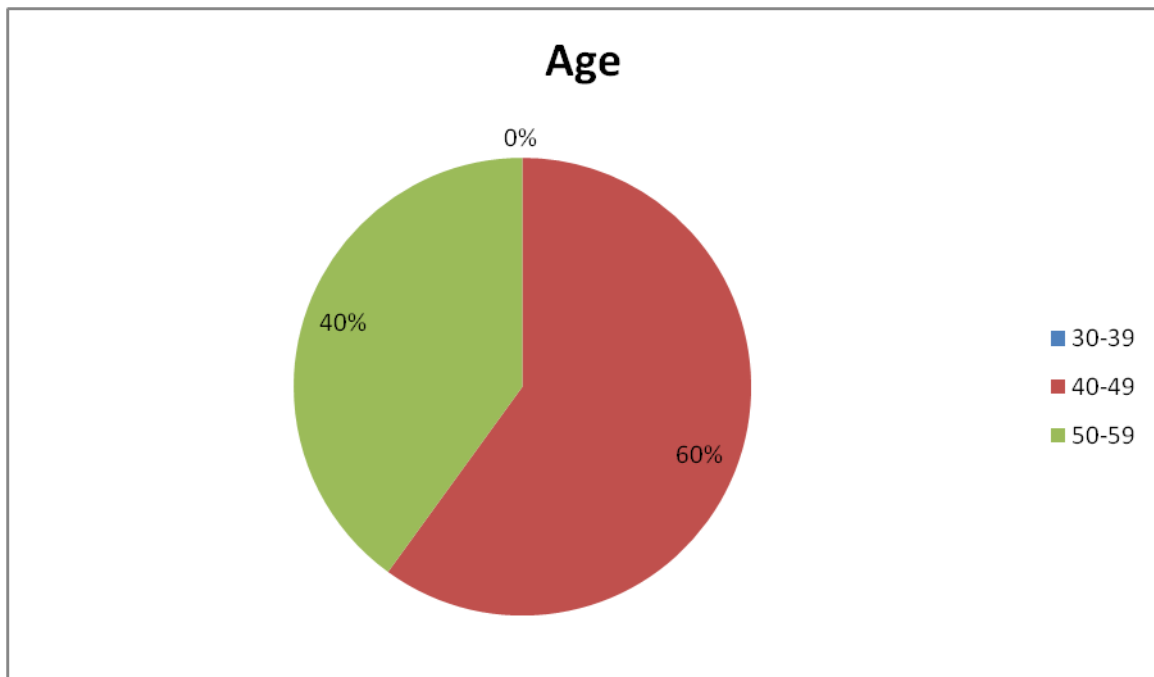
The total number of *Macibe* grandparents was ten (10). Males constituted two (2) participants while females were eight (8). These grandparents were interviewed on behalf of their bereaved grandchildren as they form part of the membership for *Macibe* congregation. They provided information from their unique perspectives as grandparents. This was based on the fact that they spend more time with their grandchildren. This process was characterized by a high level of optimism and positivism. They believed and hoped that things will eventually work out for the better regarding their bereaved grandchildren.

#### 4.5.1 Table of Macibe Grandparents

<b>Pseudonyms of participants</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Education</b>	<b>Socio economic status</b>	<b>Marital status</b>
Lizo	40	male	Grade 9	Self employed	Married
Zembe	52	male	Grade 6	Self employed	widower
Nozuko	50	female	Grade 11	Self employed	Married
Phakama	50	female	Grade 11	unemployed	Married
Nomjikelo	42	female	Grade 11	Self employed	Married
Sinombulelo	50	female	Grade 11	employed	Married
Nofanele	41	female	Grade 7	unemployed	Married
Ntombentsha	48	female	Grade 7	Self employed	Married
Thandi	41	female	Grade 7	Self employed	Married
Notumzana	47	female	Grade 6	unemployed	Married

*Figure 4.5.1 Table of Macibe Grandparents*

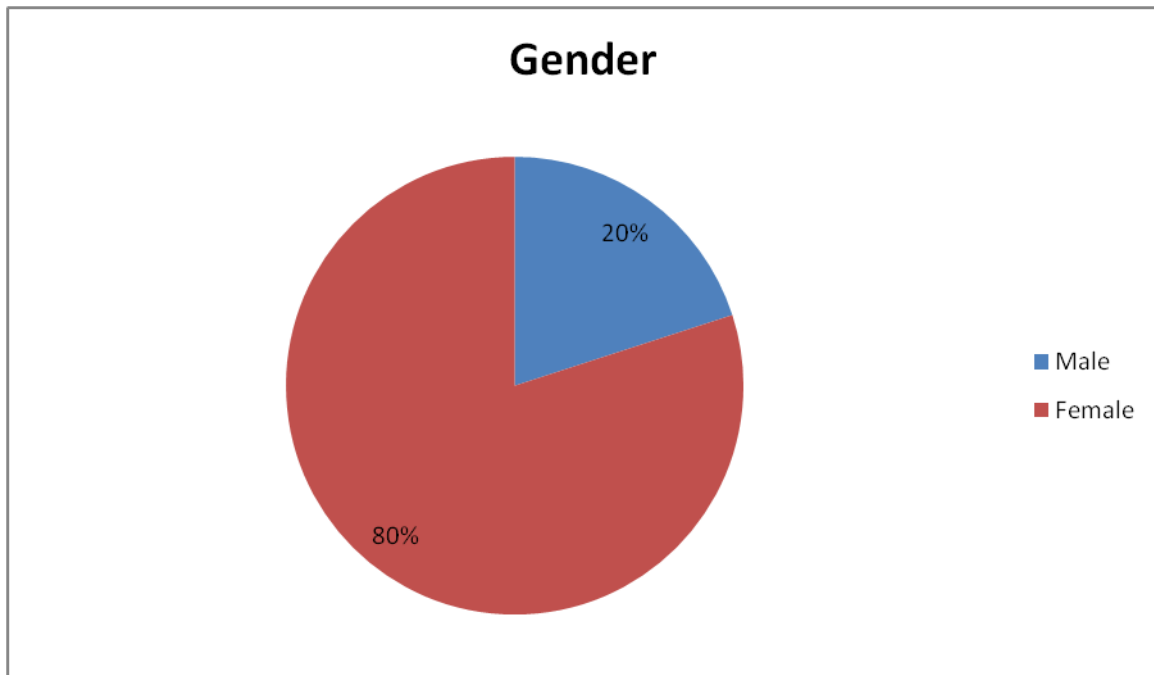
#### 4.5.2 Age



**Figure 4.5.2** Age analysis of Macibe Grandparents

The age analysis for *Macibe* grandparents is presented in two brackets: (40-49) and (50-59). In terms of percentages, the first bracket (40-49) was rated at sixty percent (60%), while the second age bracket (50-59) was rated at forty percent (40%). One can refer to the first age bracket (40-49) as a middle age bracket, while the second age bracket can be seen as an advanced age bracket. In terms of statistics, respondents falling under the first age bracket (40-49) were six (6); while at the advanced age brackets (50-59) were four (4). The grand total was ten (10) respondents respectively. These two (2) age brackets have an advantage when it comes to the nurturing of the bereaved grandchildren. In terms of their age, these grandparents should at least have a reasonable amount of experience in their role as grandparents and not as caregivers. In this section, age analysis of the respondents was done. In the next section, the researcher will focus on gender analysis.

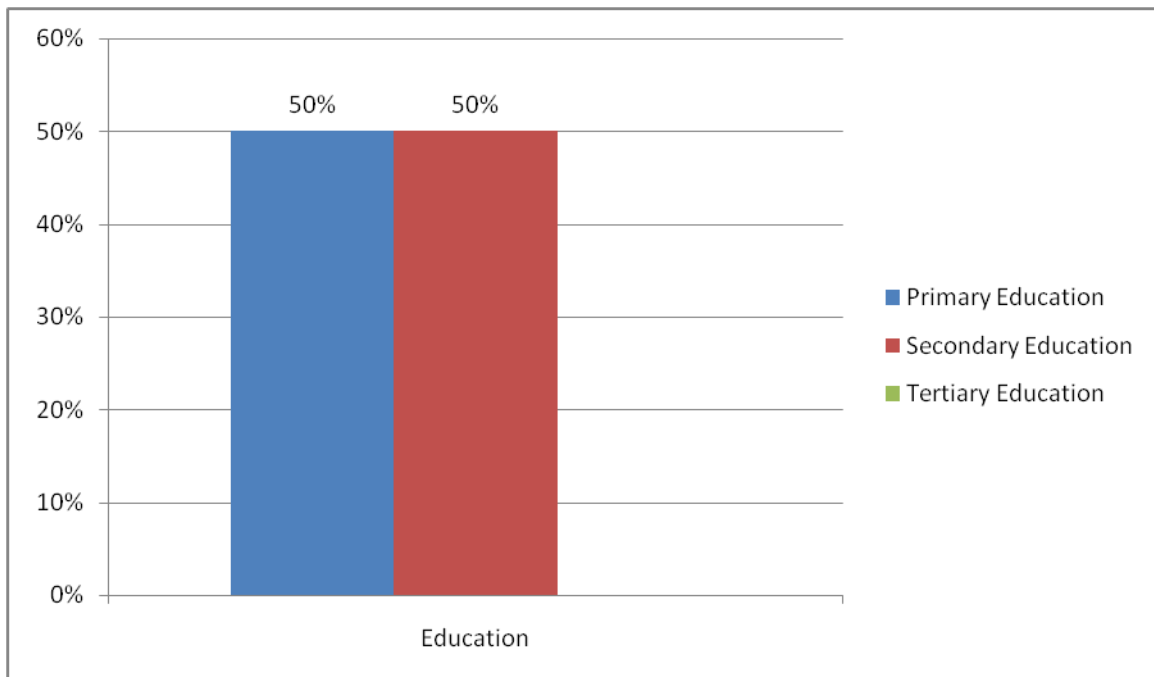
### 4.5.3 Gender



**Figure 4.5.3** Gender analysis for Macibe Grandparents

With regards to gender, respondents formed two (2) categories: males and females. In terms of percentages, males were rated at twenty percent (20%) while females were rated at eighty percent (80%). With regards to statistics, males were only two (2), while females were eight (8). The grand total was made up of ten (10) respondents. The researcher observed that there was a lot of interaction and a high level of optimism and co-operation in this group. This, however, does not mean that other groups from other congregations did not co-operate, but the researcher is not oblivious to the group dynamics in processes of this nature. Here, the researcher focused on gender analysis. In the next section, the researcher will delve into the educational status of the respondents.

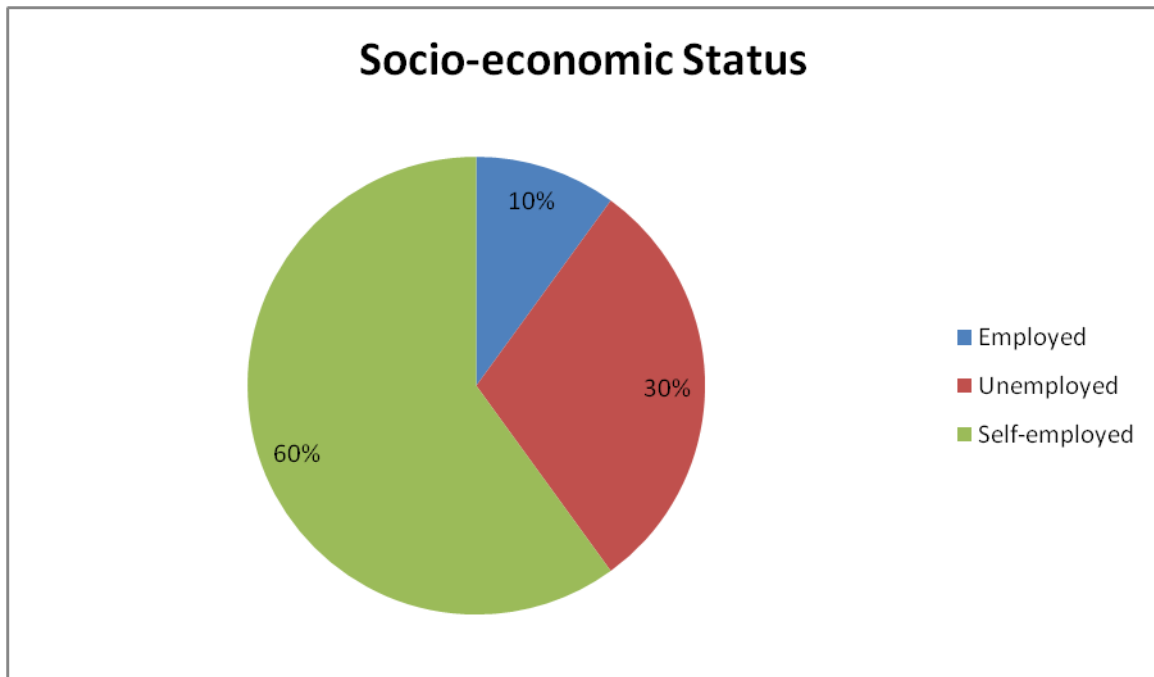
#### 4.5.4 Education status



**Figure 4.5.5** Education status for Macibe Grandparents

The education status was made up of two (2) levels: primary and secondary levels. Primary education level was rated at fifty percent (50%), while secondary education was also rated at fifty percent 50%. In terms of statistics, primary education respondents were five (5), while secondary education respondents were also five (5). There were no respondents with tertiary qualifications, and the equation was well balanced. This was a big advantage for the data collection process as respondents complemented each other. Here, the focus was on the analysis of educational status of the respondents. In the next section, the researcher will look into the analysis of the socio-economic status of the respondents.

#### 4.5.6 Socio-economic status

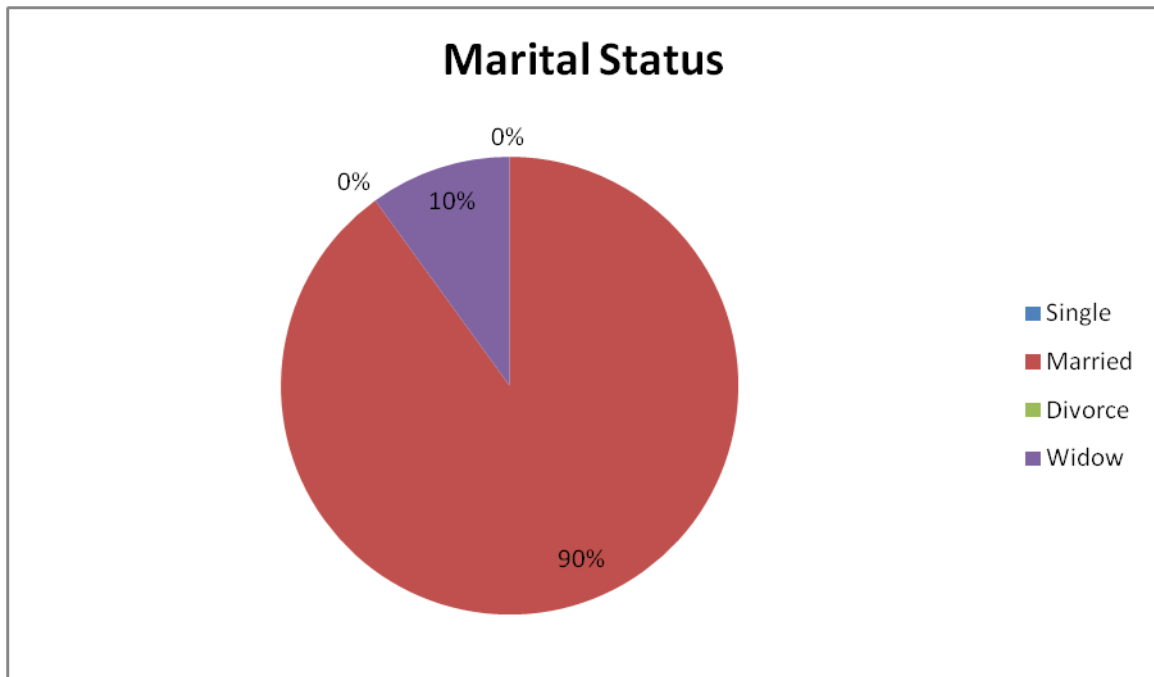


**Figure 4.5.6** Socio-economic status for Macibe Grandparents

The socio-economic status was made up of three (3) categories: employed, unemployed and self-employed. The employed respondents were rated at ten percent (10%), unemployed rated at thirty percent (30%), and self-employed rated at sixty percent (60%). The employed reported that he works at a local bakery. With regards to the unemployed, they reported that they are not working, and they are sometimes assisted by the church from donations from the mother church (Free Church of Scotland).

The self-employed reported that they make their living out of sales from different items. These items range from clothes, sour milk (*amasi*), paraffin and wood. It became clear that their self-employed status is not so well established and live from hand to mouth. With regards to statistics, there was only one (1) respondent under the employment category, while there were three (3) respondents under unemployment category. There were six (6) respondents who were self-employed. The grand total therefore for all these respondents was ten (10). In this section the researcher focussed on the socio-economic status of the respondents. In the next section, the attention of the researcher will be drawn into the analysis of marital status of the respondents.

#### 4.5.7 Marital status



**Figure 4.5.7** Analysis of marital status for Macibe Grandparents

The marital status falls under two categories: married and the widowed. The married were rated at ninety percent (90%), while the widowed were rated at ten percent (10%). In terms of statistics, the married were made up of nine (9) respondents, while the widowed were made up of one (1) respondent. The grand total for all these respondents was therefore ten (10). There were no divorced and single (unmarried) participants. In this particular section, the researcher presented the analysis of marital status of the respondents. In the next section, the researcher will zoom on the presentation of demographic information for *Msent* congregation.

#### 4.6 Demographic information for *Msent* Congregation

The total number for *Msent* congregation was twenty-nine (29). Males were thirteen (13) while females were sixteen (16). The interviewees were interviewed on behalf of their bereaved children. The interviews in this particular congregation were characterized by a high level of concerns. Parents were concerned because of what their bereaved children are still going through. However, despite all these concerns, the interviewees were still able to provide the required information about their bereaved children. They were also assured that

their bereaved children will be taken care of. These children will be supported through theological guidance.

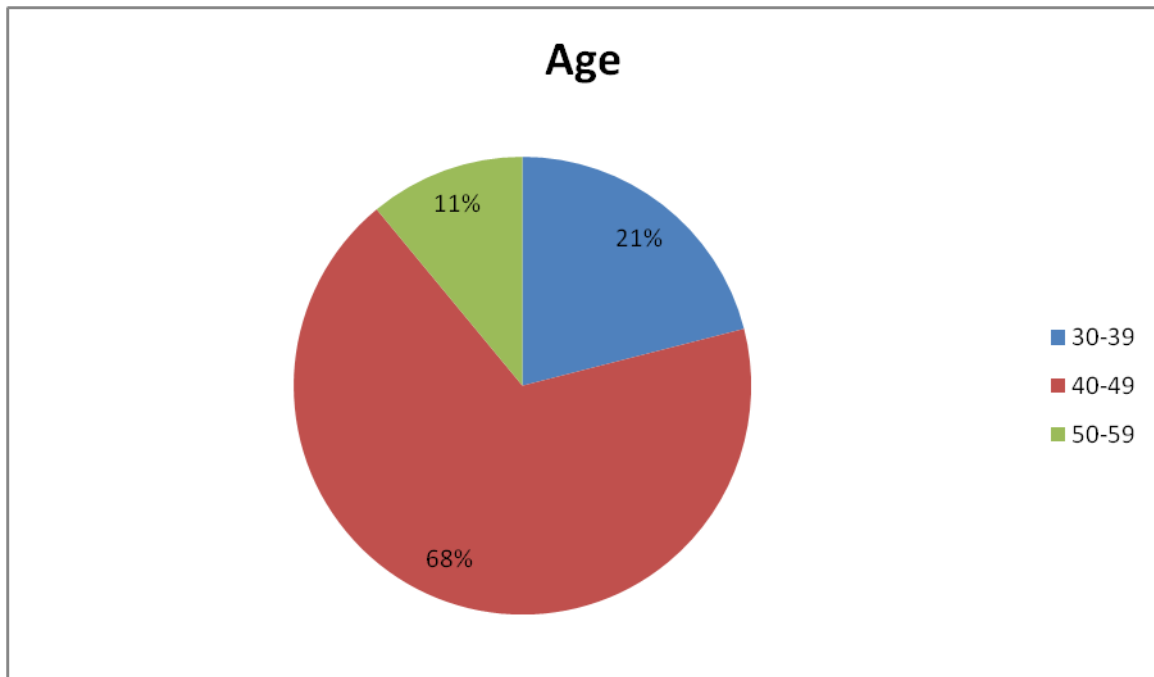
#### 4.5.1 Table of the *Msent* Congregation

<b>Pseudonyms of participants</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Education</b>	<b>Socio economic status</b>	<b>Marital status</b>
Nqaba	40	male	Grade 6	unemployed	married
Thembela	39	male	Grade 7	unemployed	married
Langa	48	male	Grade 11	Self employed	married
Thembekile	46	male	Grade 9	unemployed	married
Lumkwana	41	male	Grade 10	employed	widower
Mkhuseli	49	male	Grade 11	Self employed	married
Totwana	42	male	Grade 12	Self employed	widower
Luzuko	37	male	Grade 12	unemployed	married
Mihlali	39	male	Grade 9	unemployed	married
Lizo	41	male	Grade 12	unemployed	married
Mkhokeli	53	male	Grade 6	Self employed	married
Ntsikelelo	44	male	Grade 12	unemployed	widower
Sanele	51	male	Grade 8	unemployed	widower

Nonzukiso	47	female	Tertiary	employed	married
Nolwando	50	female	Grade 7	unemployed	widow
Nosisa	48	female	Tertiary	employed	married
Nozamile	40	female	Tertiary	employed	married
Nomaesile	42	female	Tertiary	employed	married
Nokwakha	45	female	Tertiary	employed	married
Lindiwe	39	female	Grade 11	Self employed	married
Phumeza	40	female	Grade 7	Self employed	widow
Noluvo	38	female	Grade 9	unemployed	married
Nothemba	43	female	Grade 11	unemployed	married
Nolundi	42	female	Grade 7	unemployed	married
Nobulumko	39	female	Grade 12	unemployed	married
Nowethu	46	female	Grade 5	Self employed	widow
Nokulunga	40	female	Grade 12	unemployed	widow
Nobathembu	47	female	Grade 8	Self employed	divorced
Thandokazi	40	female	Grade 12	unemployed	married

*Figure 4.6.1 Table of Msento Participants*

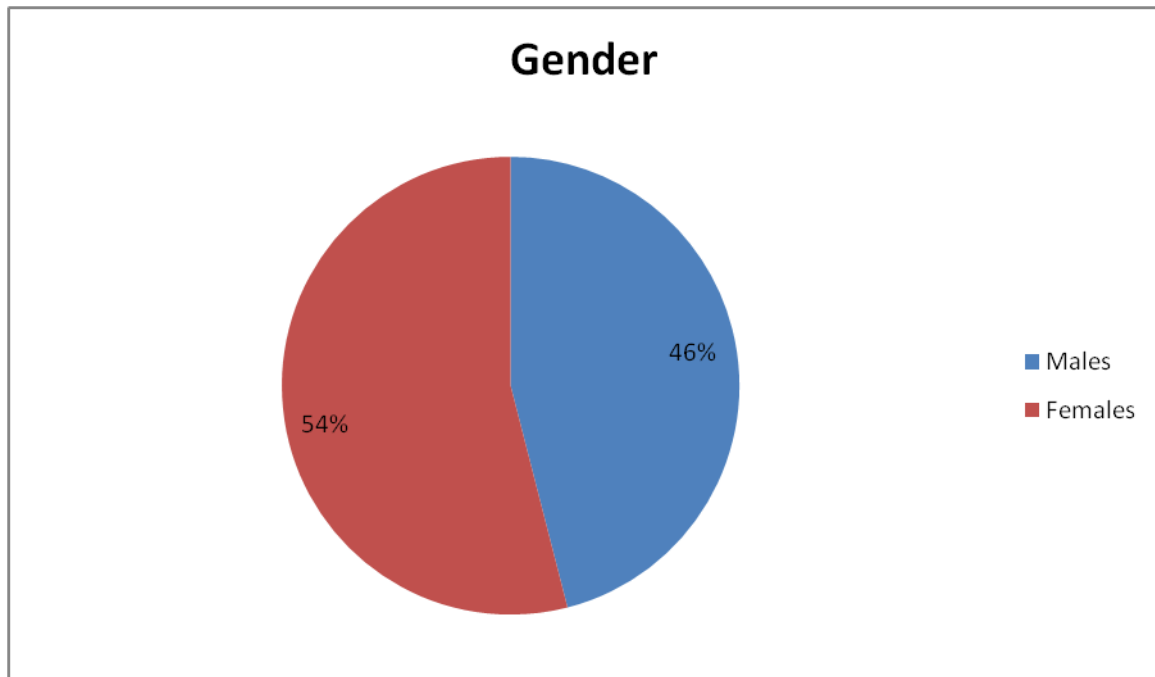
#### 4.6.2 Age



**Figure 4.6.2** Age analysis of Mseno Participants

The age analysis of *Mseno* congregation is presented in three (3) age brackets: (30-39), (40-49), and (50-59). It also makes sense to highlight that the first age bracket (30-39) can be linked to the younger age group. The second age bracket (40-49) can be linked to middle age group, while the third age bracket (50-59) can be linked to the advanced age group. In terms of percentages, the first age bracket is rated at twenty-one percent (21%). The second age bracket is rated at sixty-eight percent (68%), while the third age bracket (50-59) is rated at eleven percent (11%). In terms of statistics, there were six (6) respondents in the first age bracket (30-39). In the second age bracket (40-49), there were nineteen (19) respondents while there were three (3) respondents in the third age bracket (50-59). The grand total is made up of twenty-nine (29) respondents. Here the researcher presented age analysis of the respondents. In the next section, the researcher presents gender analysis of the respondents.

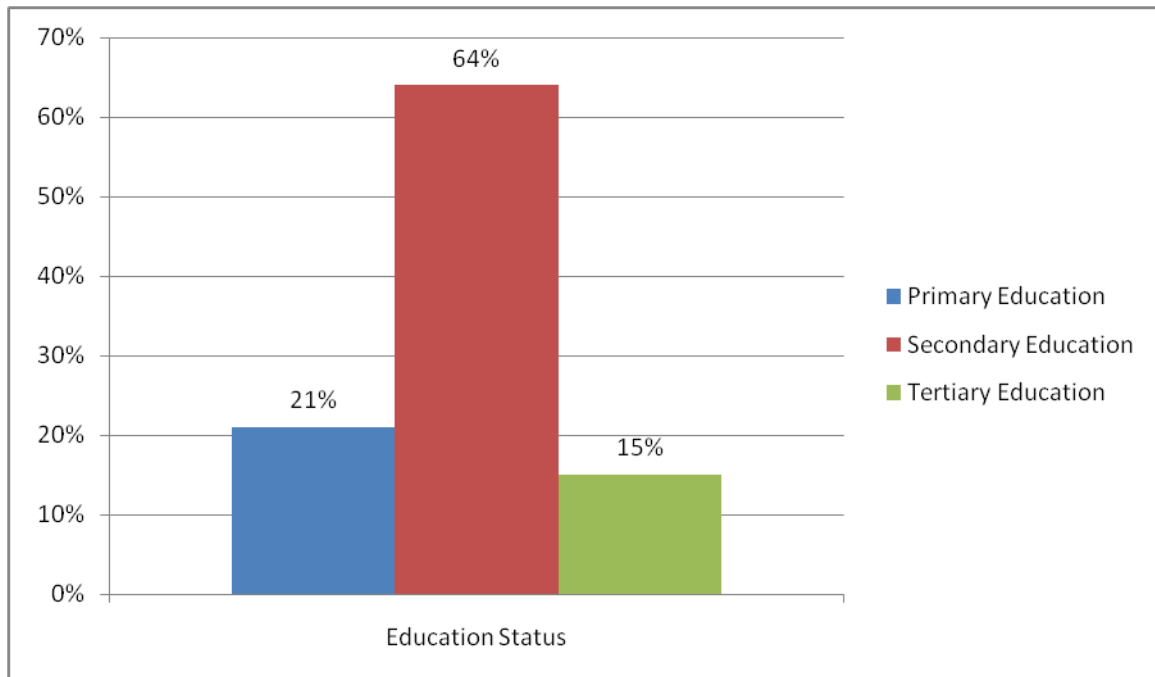
### 4.6.3 Gender



**Figure 4.6.3** Gender analysis of Msento Participants

The gender analysis is made up of males and females. Males were rated at forty-six percent (46%), while females were rated at fifty-four percent (54%). Females were a majority in this particular age analysis, and this seems to be the trend in this data analysis process. It also reflected in other congregations as well. This is not attached to any conflict or ill feelings on the part of the respondents as there was a high level of co-operation and mutual understanding among the respondents. In terms of statistics, there were eighteen (18) males, and sixteen (16) females. The grand total was made up of twenty-nine respondents. In this section, gender analysis of the respondents was presented. In the next section, the researcher will present the analysis of educational status.

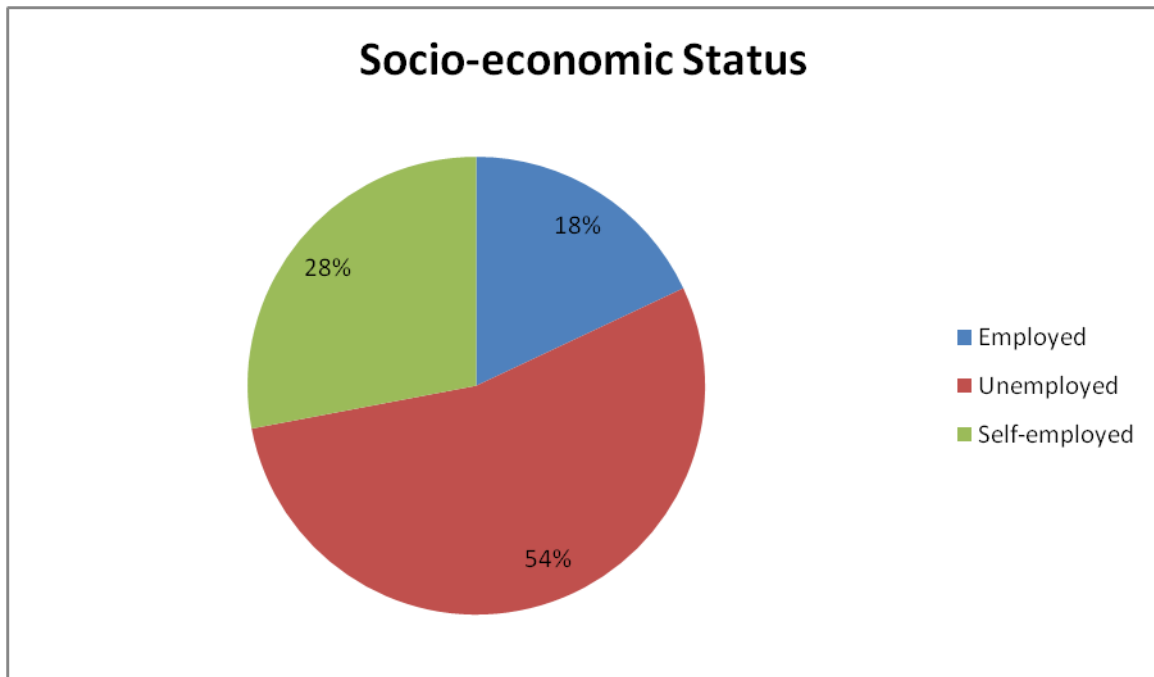
### 4.6.3 Education status



**Figure 4.6.3** Education status of Msento participants

The education analysis is presented in three (3) levels: primary, secondary and tertiary levels. The Primary level was rated at twenty-one percent (21%), Secondary level was rated at sixty-four percent (64%), while tertiary education was rated at fifteen percent (15%). In terms of statistics, there were seven (7) respondents with primary education. There were seventeen (17) respondents with secondary education, while there were five (5) respondents with tertiary education. Respondents with tertiary education were made up of three (3) teachers and two (2) nurses. The grand total was therefore made up of twenty-nine respondents. These education levels were of great importance in this data collection process. The researcher has realized that people who are armed with some kind of education can be helpful in data collection process. Their analytical capabilities were, to some degree, more concentrated. In this section, the attention of the researcher was drawn into the analysis of the educational status of the respondents. In the next section, the researcher will focus on the economic status of the respondents.

#### 4.6.4 Socio-economic status

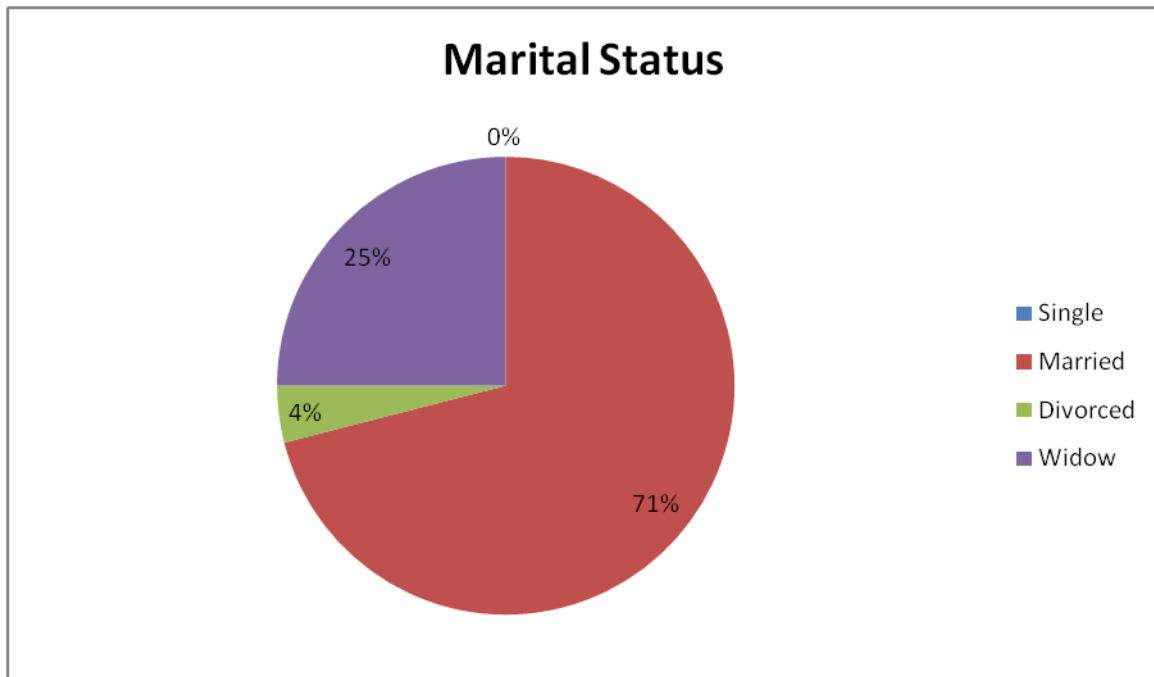


**Figure 4.6.4** Socio-economic status of Msento Participants

The socio economic status is divided into three (3) categories: employed, unemployed and self-employed. The employed were rated at eighteen percent (18%), unemployed were rated at fifty-four percent (54%), while the self-employed were rated at twenty-eight percent (28%). The employed respondents reported that they work at different places as local filling stations, local shops; some are even working as taxi drivers for local taxi owners.

The unemployed reported that they spend most of their time looking for jobs. In this particular congregation, these respondents are given a task to look after the church premises in terms of maintenance. This is not employment at all, but this effort is meant to support them one way or the other. Out of this, they get some financial assistance. As it is almost the case with most of these congregations, the level of unemployment is high. The self-employed reported that they sell wood, clothes, poultry, paraffin and sometimes sour milk. These items are marketable in the rural areas where these respondents are found. In terms of statistics, the employed were made up of twenty-nine (29) respondents. The unemployed were made up of fifteen (15) respondents, while the self-employed were made up eight (8) respondents. The grand total is therefore twenty-nine (29) respondents. In this section, the focus was on the socio-economic analysis of the respondents. The next section focuses on the marital status of the respondents.

#### 4.6.5 Marital status



**Figure 4.6.5** Marital status of Msento participants

The marital status is presented in three categories: married, divorced and widowed. The married were rated at seventy-one percent (71%). The divorced were rated at four percent (4%), while the widowed were rated at twenty-five percent (25%). There were no single (unmarried) respondents. In terms of statistics, the married were made up of twenty (20) respondents; the divorced were made up of one (1) respondent, while the widowed were made up of eight (8) respondents. The grand total therefore amounts to twenty-nine (29) respondents. In this section, the focus was on the analysis of marital status of the respondents. The next section deals with demographic information of *Msento* grandparents.

#### 4.7 Demographic information for *Msento* Grandparents

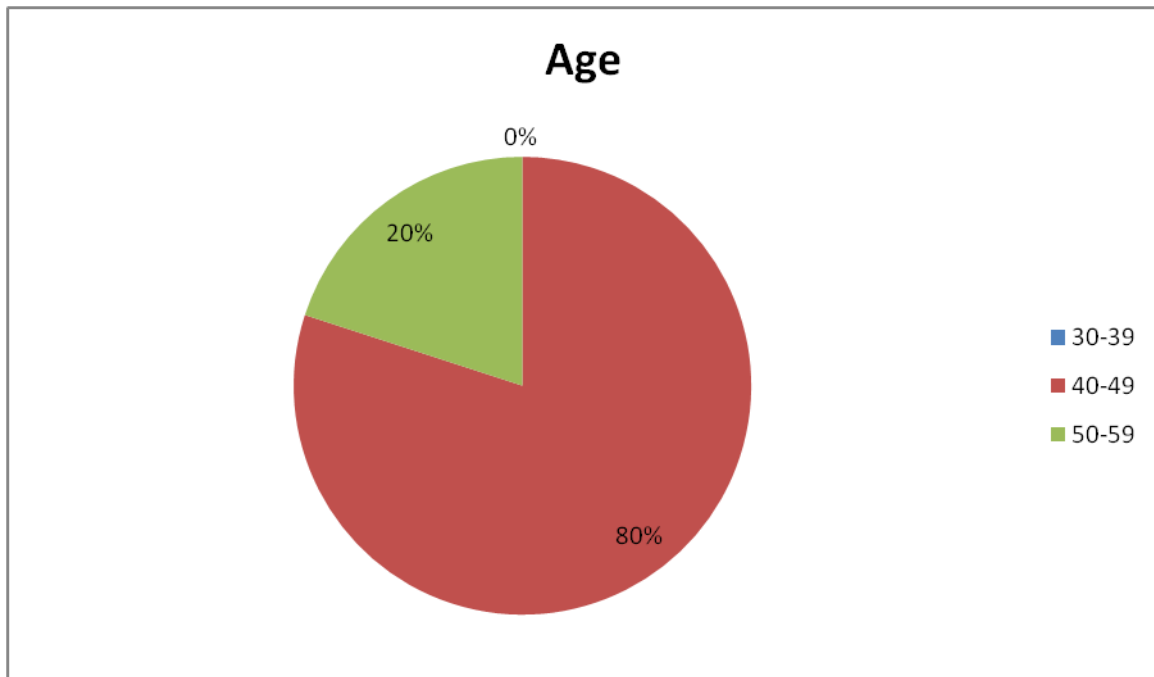
The total number for *Msento* grandparents was six (6). There were two (2) females and four (4) males. This was an exclusive case where men were willing to speak and did not leave the task for their wives. These grandparents willingly provided information about their bereaved grandchildren and also raised some concerns about their bereaved grandchildren. The shared concern revolves around remedies for these children, as they were eager to see remedial undertakings taking place in terms of support for these bereaved children.

#### 4.7.1 Table of Msento Grandparents

<b>Pseudonyms of participants</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Education</b>	<b>Socio economic status</b>	<b>Marital status</b>
Nqaba	40	male	Grade 6	unemployed	widower
Totwana	42	male	Grade 12	Self employed	married
Sanele	51	male	Grade 8	unemployed	widower
Phumeza	48	female	Grade 6	unemployed	widow
Thembekile	46	male	Grade 9	unemployed	married
Nolwazi	50	female	Grade 7	Self employed	married

*Figure 4.7.1 Table of Msento Grandparents*

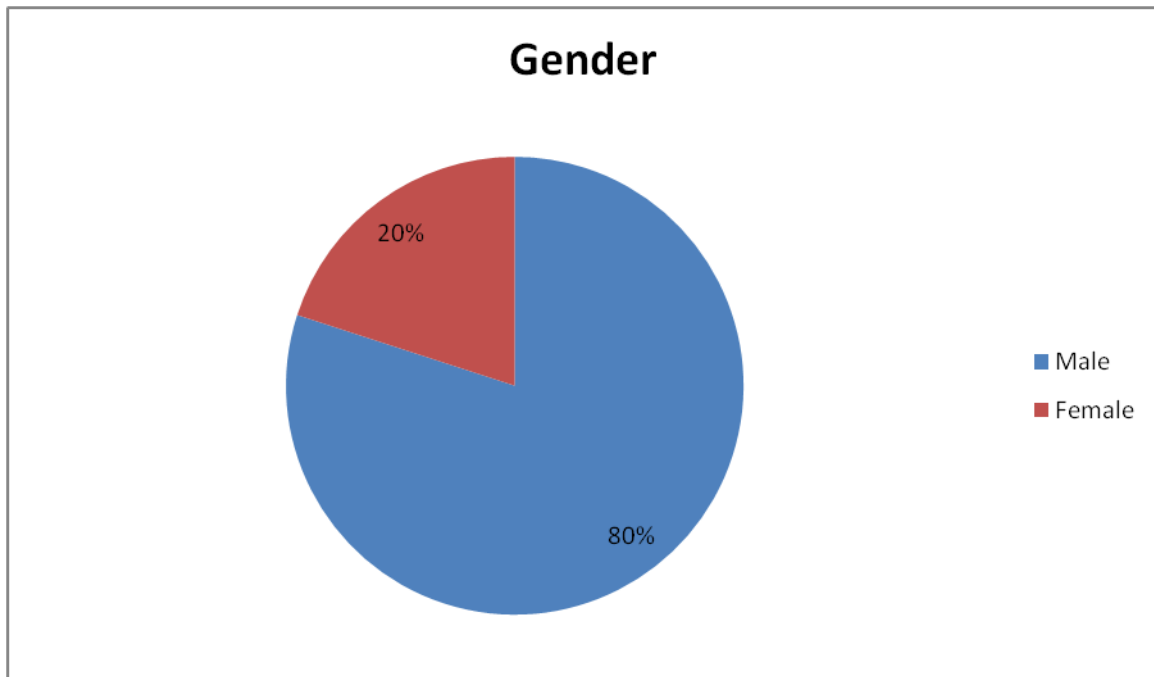
#### 4.7.2 Age



**Figure 4.7.2** Age analysis of Msento Grandparents

There are two (2) age brackets that are presented in this age analysis. The first age bracket is (40-49), while the second age bracket is (50-59). The first age bracket is linked to middle age group, while the second age bracket is linked to an advanced age group. In terms of percentages, the first age bracket was rated at eighty percent (80%), while the second age bracket was rated at twenty percent (20%). In terms of statistics, there were four (4) respondents who fall under the first age bracket (40-49), while there were two (2) respondents who fall under the advanced age bracket. The total number therefore was made up of six (6) respondents. In this section, the researcher dealt with age analysis of the respondents. The next section focuses on gender analysis of the respondents.

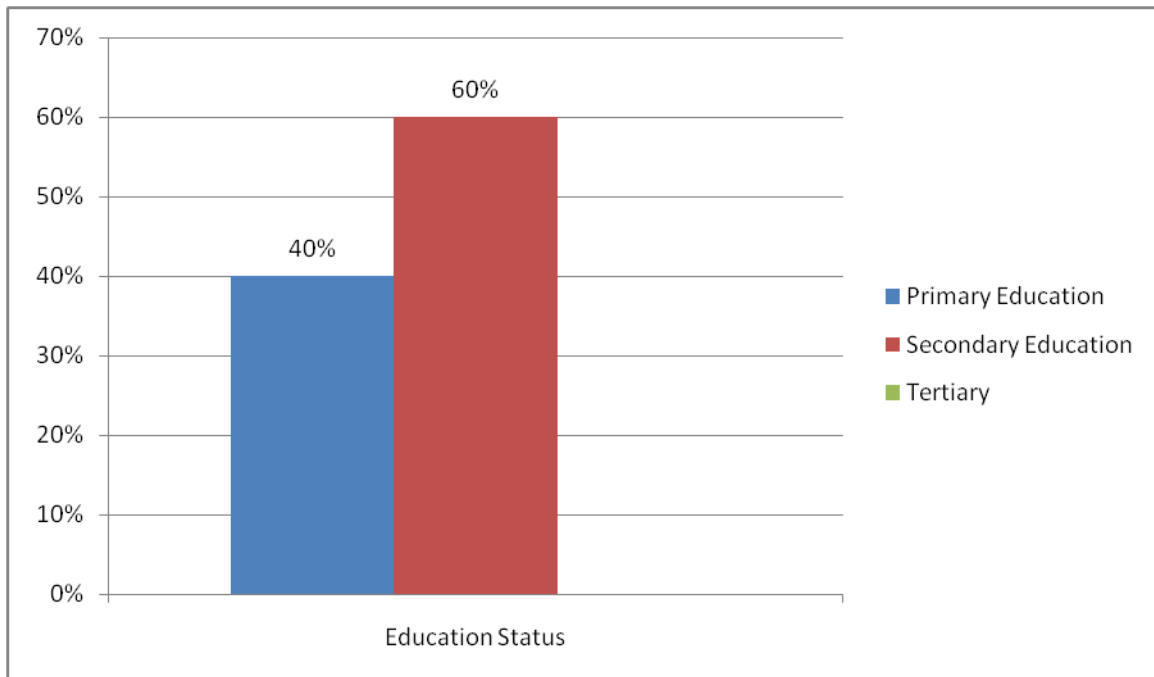
### 4.7.3 Gender



**Figure 4.7.3** Gender analysis of Msento Grandparents

In this gender analysis, males were rated at eighty percent (80%) while females were rated at twenty percent (20%). This is a unique gender analysis in terms of percentages. Females are usually on the majority as it has been the case with other congregations. In this particular case, females are a minority. This, however, did not cause any problems and challenges for the data collection process. One of the reasons for this smooth process is the fact that the researcher is familiar with the respondents and their families. In terms of statistics, there were four (4) males and two (2) females. The grand total therefore is six (6) respondents. In this particular section, the attention of the researcher was drawn into gender analysis of the respondents. In the next section, the researcher will duly deal with the analysis of the educational status of the respondents.

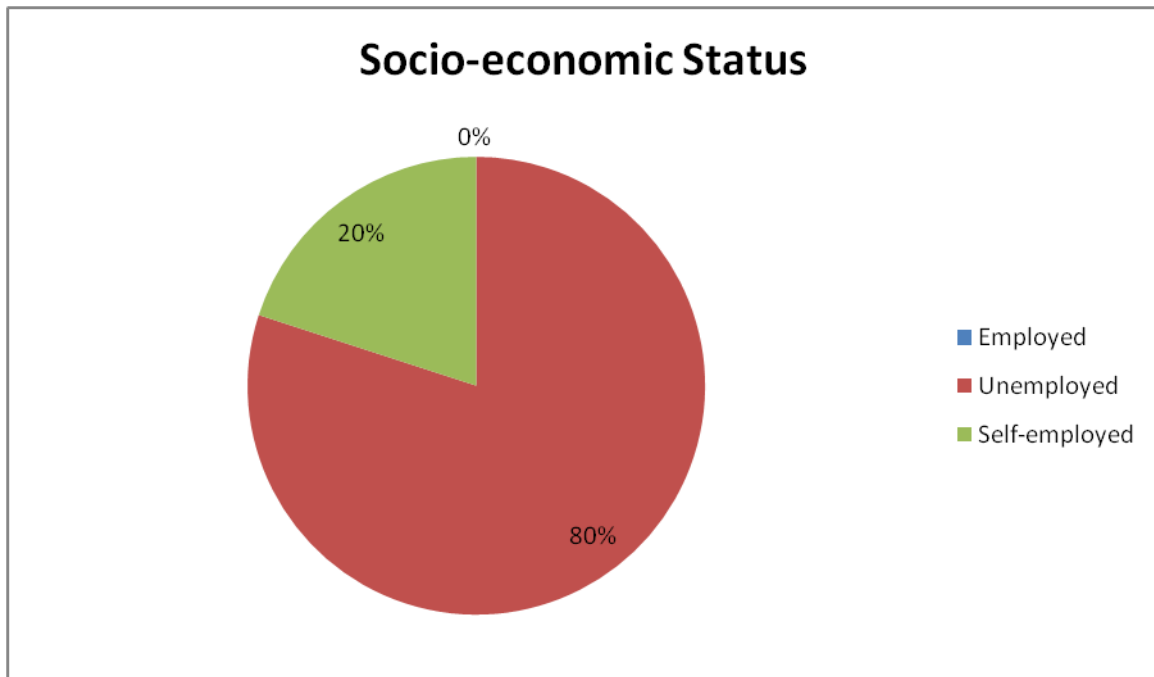
#### 4.7.4 Education status



**Figure 4.7.4** Education status of Msento Grandparents

The education status is presented in two (2) levels: primary education and secondary education levels. Respondents with primary education were rated at forty percent (40%), while respondents with secondary education were rated at sixty percent (60%). There were no respondents with tertiary education in this particular group. In terms of statistics, there were three (3) respondents with primary education, while there were also three (3) respondents with secondary education. The grand total therefore was made up of six (6) respondents. In this particular section, the attention of the researcher was drawn into the analysis of educational status of the respondents. The next section focuses on the socio-economic status of the respondents.

#### 4.7.5 Socio-economic status

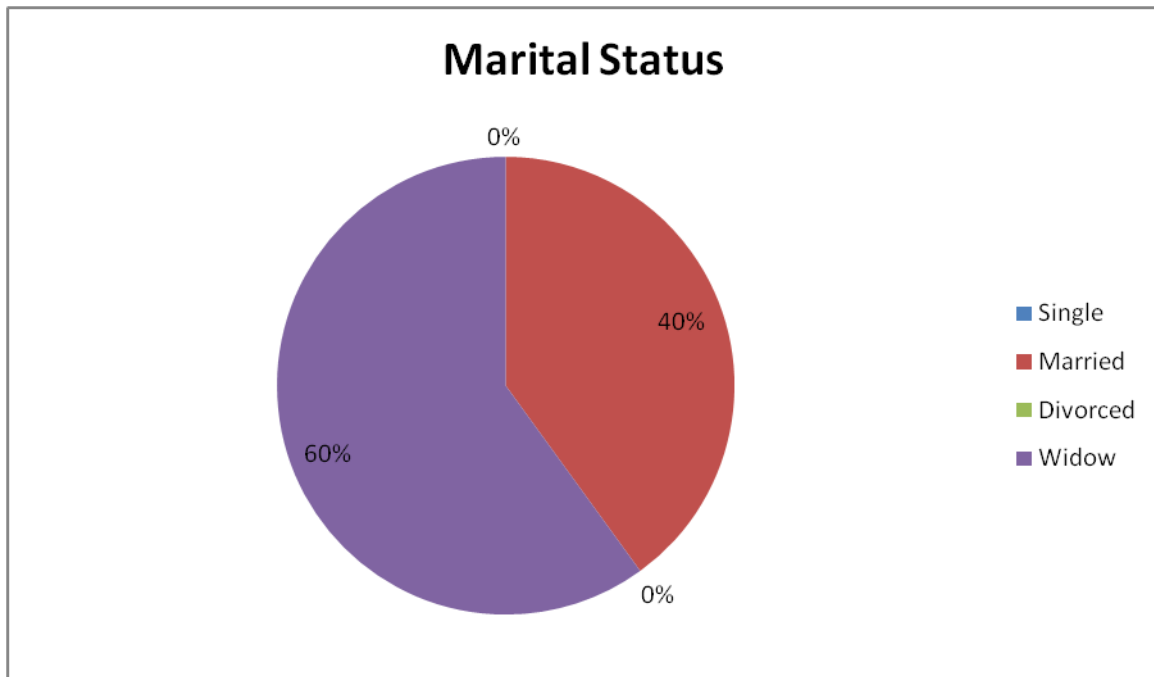


**Figure 4.7.5** Socio-economic status of Msento Grandparents

The socio-economic status in this regard is presented in two (2) categories; unemployed and self-employed. The unemployed were rated at eighty percent (80%) while the self-employed were rated at twenty percent (20%) respectively. In terms of statistics, the unemployed were made up of four (4) respondents while the self-employed were made up of two (2) respondents. The grand total therefore is made up of six (6) respondents. Once again, the level of unemployment is reasonably high.

These respondents reported that they do not have jobs at all and further reported that they spend most of their time looking for jobs. Some of them reported that they are on the waiting list as ground workers for the local Municipality. The self-employed reported that they make their living out of sales for clothing items and running small tuck shops (*izikroxoxo*). Some reported that they breed young pigs (piglets) for slaughter; the pork is then sold to local people. Some respondents reported that they bake fat cakes and sell them to local schoolchildren to make profit while some specialize in selling shoes for both males and females. There were no employed respondents in this particular group. This is an indication that this congregation is part of the poor community in this area. Here the researcher focused on the analysis of the socio-economic status of the respondents. The next section focuses on the marital status of the respondents.

#### 4.7.6 Marital status



**Figure 4.7.6** Marital status of Msento Grandparents

The marital status in this regard is presented in two (2) categories: married and the widowed. The married were rated at forty percent (40%) while the widowed were rated at sixty percent (60%). In terms of statistics, the married were made up of three (3) respondents, and the widowed were made up of three (3) respondents. There were no single (unmarried) respondents and no divorced respondents either. In this section, the researcher focused on the analysis of marital status for the respondents. The next section focuses on the profiling of the *Godidi* congregation.

#### 4.8 Demographic information for *Godidi* Congregation

The total number of the *Godidi* participants was thirty-seven (37), with sixteen (16) males and twenty-one (21) females. The interviewees provided information regarding their bereaved children and shared optimism. They were also interested to know what will happen to their bereaved children subsequent to the interviews and were assured that these children will be taken care of in terms of theological guidance.

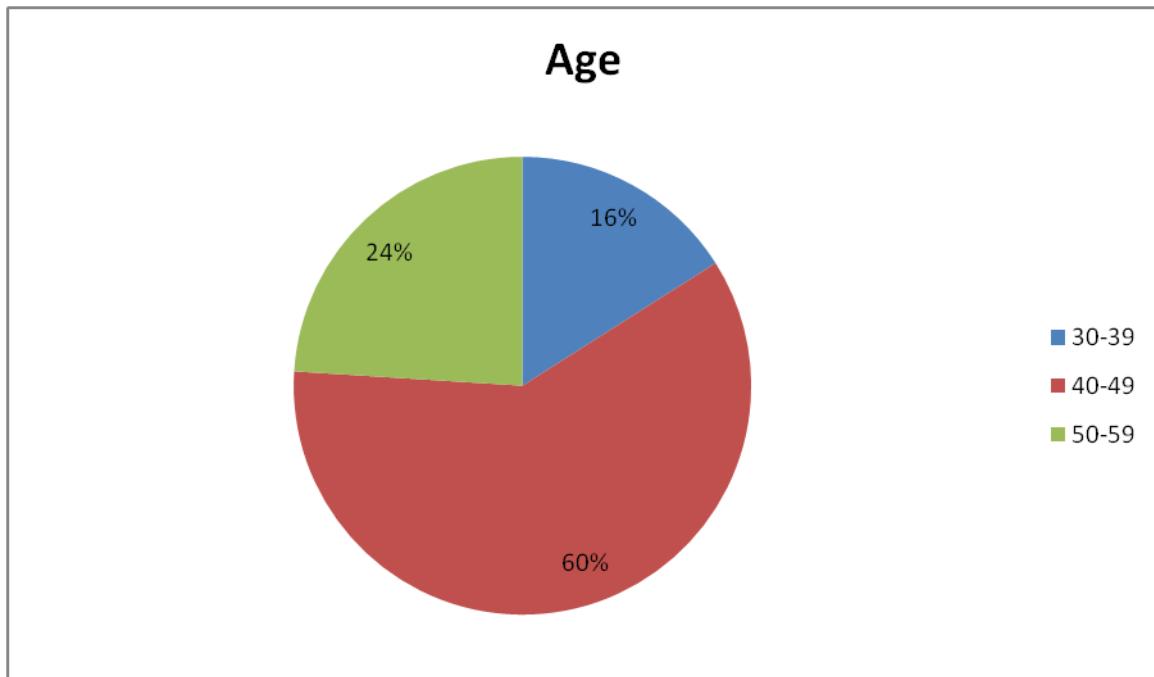
#### 4.8.1 Table of Godidi Participants

<b>Pseudonyms of participants</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Education</b>	<b>Socio economic status</b>	<b>Marital status</b>
Dalintetho	41	male	Grade 8	unemployed	married
Madodana	40	male	Grade 12	Self employed	divorced
Fuzile	51	male	Grade 9	employed	married
Gola	50	male	Grade 6	unemployed	widower
Mthunzi	48	male	Grade 5	Self employed	married
Solomzi	52	male	Grade 11	Self employed	married
Zamile	44	male	Grade 8	employed	married
Thembinkosi	48	male	Grade 6	Self employed	divorced
Nodeza	39	male	Grade 9	employed	married
Khulile	40	male	Grade 12	unemployed	married
Lindile	37	male	Grade 9	employed	married
Solakhe	46	male	Grade 7	employed	married
Demazana	42	male	Grade 11	Self employed	divorced
Fanisile	40	male	Grade 5	Self employed	married
Faniso	51	male	Grade 9	Self employed	widower
Moyisi	38	male	Grade 6	Self employed	married
Mtase	47	female	Grade 7	unemployed	married

Hombakazi	41	female	Grade 12	unemployed	married
Nolizwi	55	female	Grade 6	unemployed	widow
Thami	40	female	Grade 9	employed	married
Nobuzwe	44	female	Grade 6	Self employed	divorced
Nompumezo	51	female	Grade 4	Self employed	married
Nokulunga	41	female	Grade 9	Self employed	divorced
Masimini	39	female	Grade 12	unemployed	married
Mpondo	30	Female	Grade 12	unemployed	married
Khololwethu	50	female	Grade 11	Self employed	married
Sinomzi	47	female	Grade 12	Self employed	married
Ntsiki	41	female	Grade 9	Self employed	married
Fundiswa	39	female	Grade 12	unemployed	married
Noli	50	female	Grade 7	Self employed	widow
Sekiwe	47	female	Grade 6	unemployed	married
Nophelele	44	female	Grade 9	employed	married
Nowaba	48	female	Grade 11	employed	married
Zenzi	40	female	Grade 6	Self employed	married
Zanele	51	female	Grade 9	Self employed	married
Nobhekile	46	female	Grade 12	employed	married
Zaziwe	42	female	Grade 7	employed	married

*Figure 4.8.1 Table of Godidi Participants*

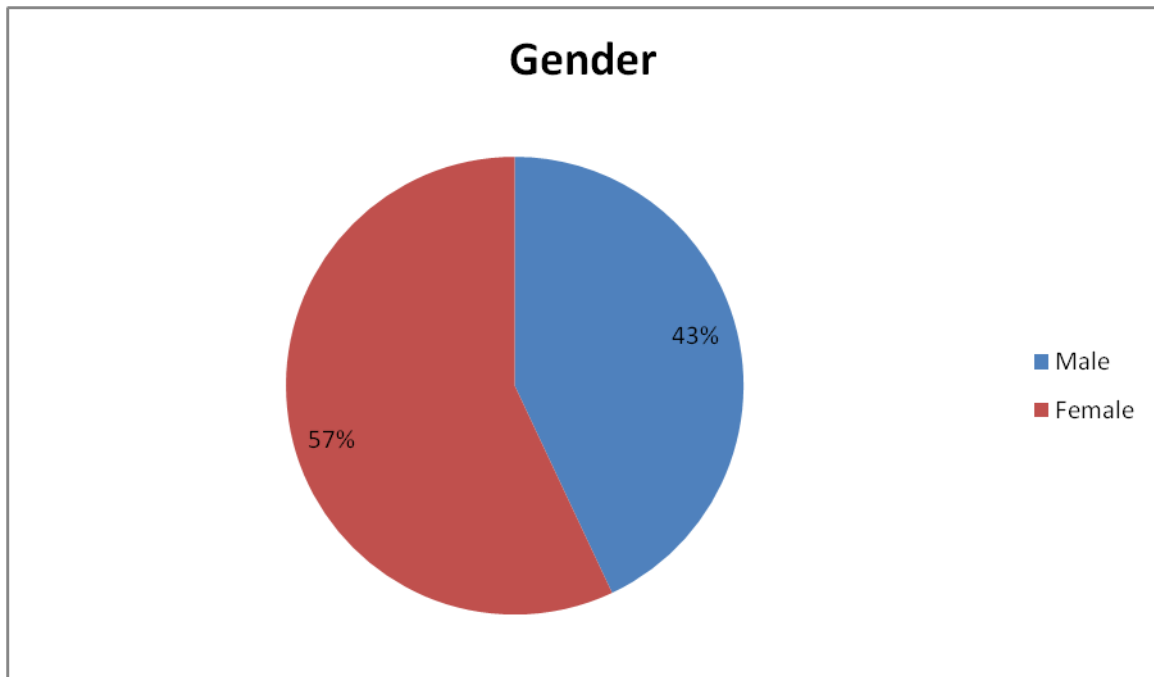
#### 4.8.2 Age



**Figure 4.8.2** Age analysis of Godidi participants

The age analysis of Godidi respondents is presented in three (3) age brackets: (30-39), (40-49) and (50-59). The first age bracket (30-39) is linked to the younger age group. The second age bracket (40-49) is linked to middle age group, while the third age bracket (50-59) is linked to an advanced age group. In terms of percentages, the younger age bracket was rated at sixteen percent (16%). The middle age bracket was rated at sixty percent (60%), while the advanced age bracket was rated at twenty-four percent (24%). In terms of statistics, the younger age bracket was made up of six (6) respondents. The middle age group was made up of twenty-two (22) respondents, while the advanced age group was made up of nine (9) respondents. The grand total therefore is made up of thirty-seven (37) respondents. Respondents at the middle age bracket were a convincing majority; however, this did not pose any challenges for this process. In this section, the researcher presented age analysis of the respondents. In the next section, the researcher will focus on the gender analysis of the respondents.

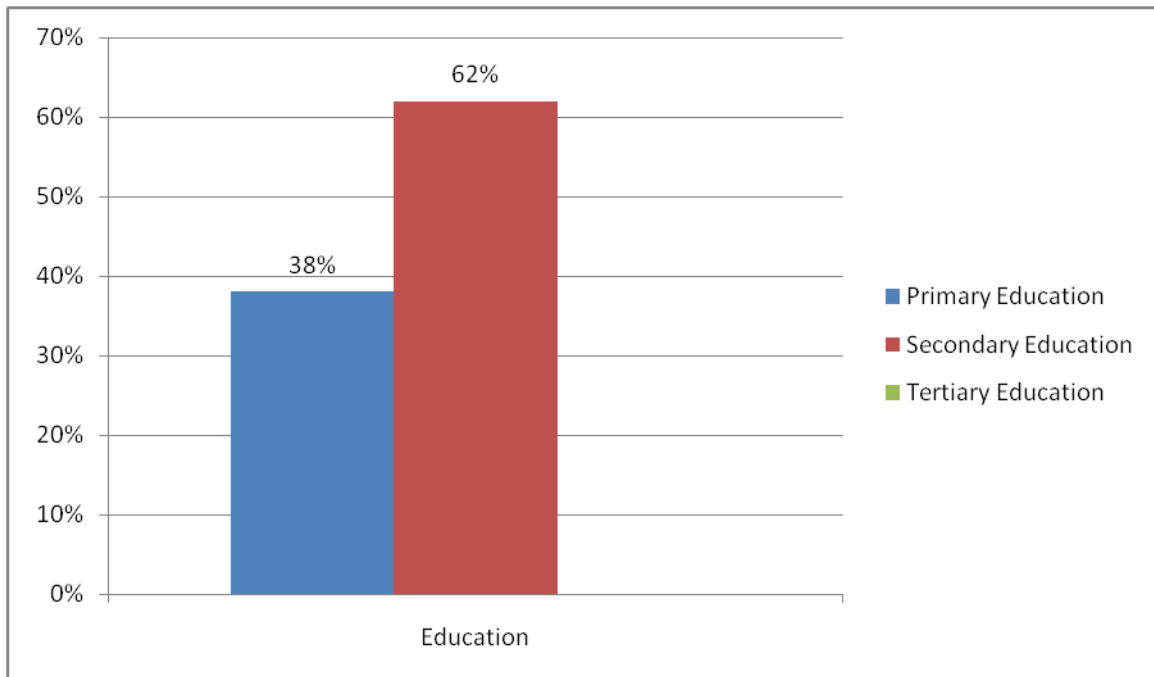
### 4.8.3 Gender



**Figure 4.8.3** Gender analysis of Godidi participants

The gender analysis for this particular congregation was made up of males and females. Males were rated at forty-three percent (43%) while females were rated at fifty-seven percent (57%). In terms of statistics, there were sixteen males (16) and twenty-one (21) females. The grand total therefore was made up of thirty-seven (37) respondents. Females were in the majority; however, this did not pose any challenges. Instead, there was a reasonable amount of co-operation and a high level of mutual understanding. Here the researcher dealt with gender analysis of the respondents. In the next section, the researcher presents the analysis of educational status of the respondents.

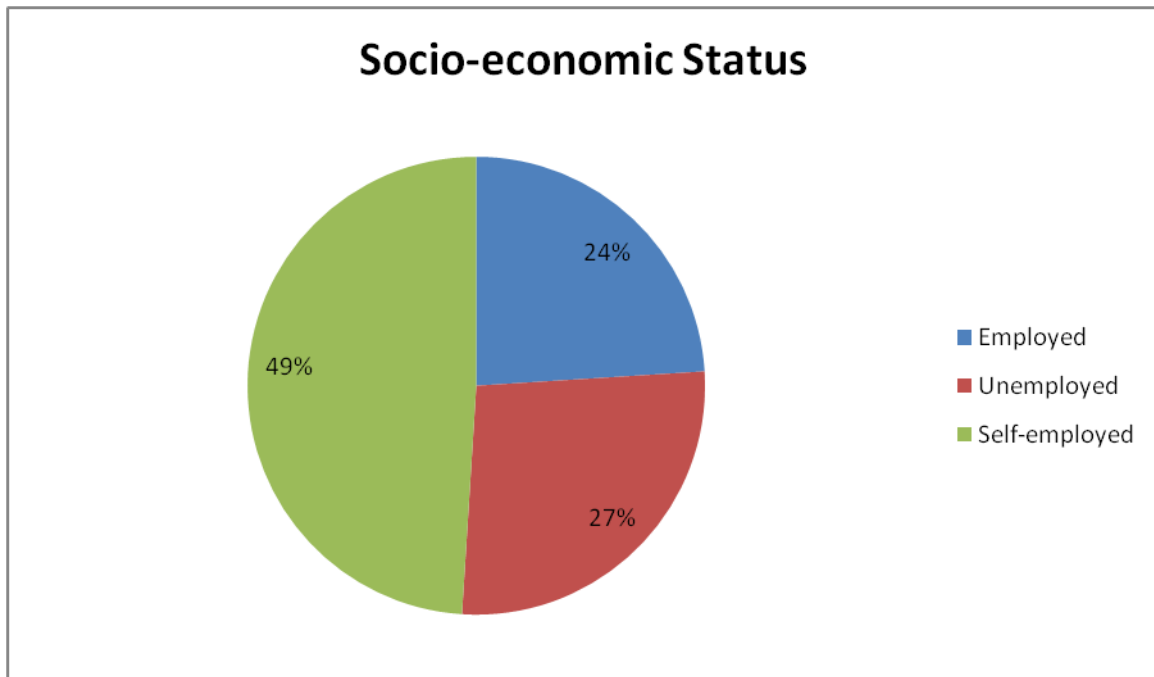
#### 4.8.4 Education status



**Figure 4.8.4** Education Status for Godidi participants

The education analysis is presented in two levels: primary and secondary education levels respectively. Primary education was rated at thirty-eight percent (38%), while secondary education was rated at sixty-two percent (62%). The grand total for all these respondents is thirty-seven (37). There is a big gap between these two (2) education levels. Even though this is the case, this aspect (education) was helpful for the data collection process. Respondents with some form of education tend to have a unique contribution. This was the case with this congregation and several other congregations in this process. This however is not meant to undermine church members who have no education at all. Each and every person is unique and the contribution thereof. In this section the researcher presented analysis of educational status of the respondents. In the next section the researcher will deal with analysis of socio economic status of the respondents.

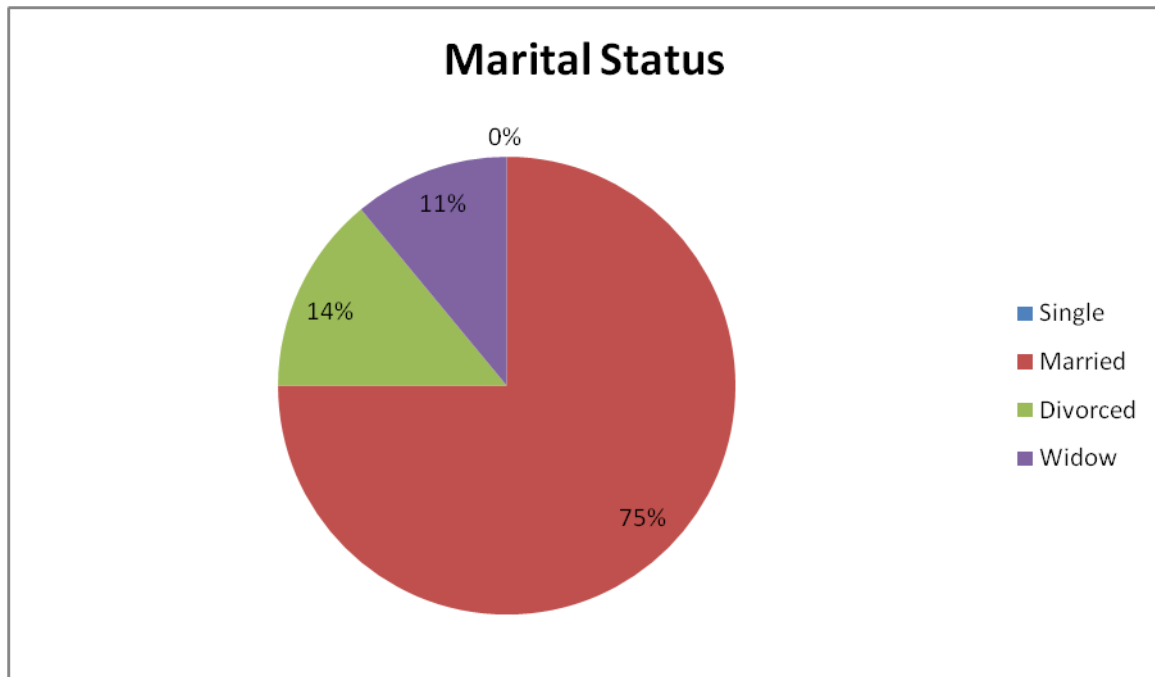
#### 4.8.5 Socio-economic status



**Figure 4.8.5** Socio-economic status of Godidi participants

The socio-economic status is presented in three categories: employed, unemployed and self-employed. The employed were rated at twenty-four percent (24%). The unemployed were rated at twenty-seven percent (27%), while the self-employed were rated at forty-nine percent (49%). The employed reported that they work in different places. These places range from local shops, local petrol stations and Magistrate offices in *Centane* (small village town) which is the closest to them. Some of them work in Butterworth which is a small town approximately eighty (80) kilometres away from them while some reported that they work in local clinics. The unemployed reported that they do not have jobs and spend most of their time job hunting. The self-employed reported that they are involved in selling clothing items, wood and sour milk, which are in demand in these areas. In this section, the researcher dealt with the socio economic status analysis of the respondents. In the next section, the researcher will present marital status analysis of the respondents.

#### 4.8.6 Marital status



**Figure 4.8.6** Marital status of Godidi participants

The marital status is presented in three (3) categories: married, divorced and widowed. The married were rated at seventy-five percent (75%). The divorced were rated at fourteen percent (14%) while the widowed were rated at eleven percent (11%). There were no single (unmarried) respondents, and the married were in the majority; however, this did not pose any threats or challenges for the data collection process. There was mutual respect shared by respondents. In this section, the researcher presented marital status analysis of the respondents. In the next section, the researcher will present demographic information of *Godidi* grandparents.

#### 4.9 Demographic information of *Godidi* Grandparents

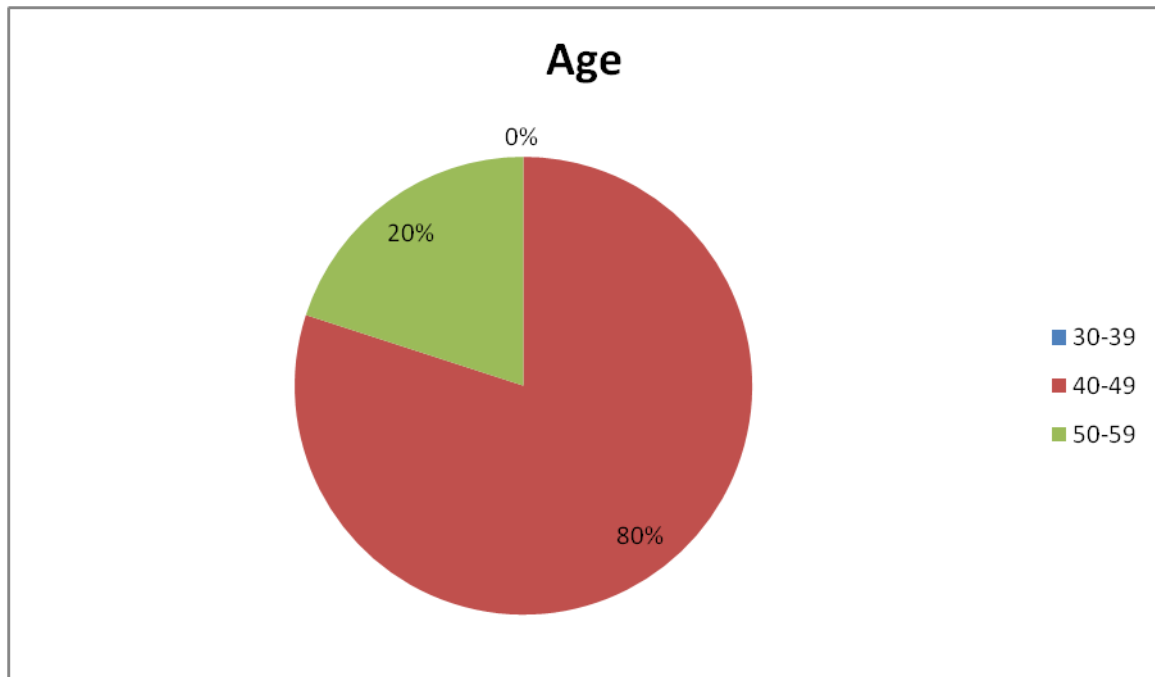
The total number of *Godidi* grandparent participants was ten (10), with four (4) males and six (6) females. The respondents were proactive and willing to provide information with regards to their grandchildren.

#### 4.9.1 Table of Godidi Grandparents

<b>Pseudonyms of participants</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Education</b>	<b>Socio economic status</b>	<b>Marital status</b>
Gola	50	male	Grade 6	Unemployed	widower
Mthunzi	48	male	Grade 5	Self employed	married
Zamile	44	male	Grade 8	Employed	married
Thembinkosi	48	male	Grade 6	Self employed	divorced
Mntase	47	female	Grade 7	Unemployed	married
Nolizwi	55	female	Grade 6	Unemployed	married
Nobuzwe	45	female	Grade 6	Self employed	divorced
Nokulunga	41	female	Grade 9	Unemployed	divorced
Masimini	49	female	Grade 8	Unemployed	married
Sinomzi	47	female	Grade 12	Self employed	married

*Figure 4.9.1 Table of Godidi Grandparents*

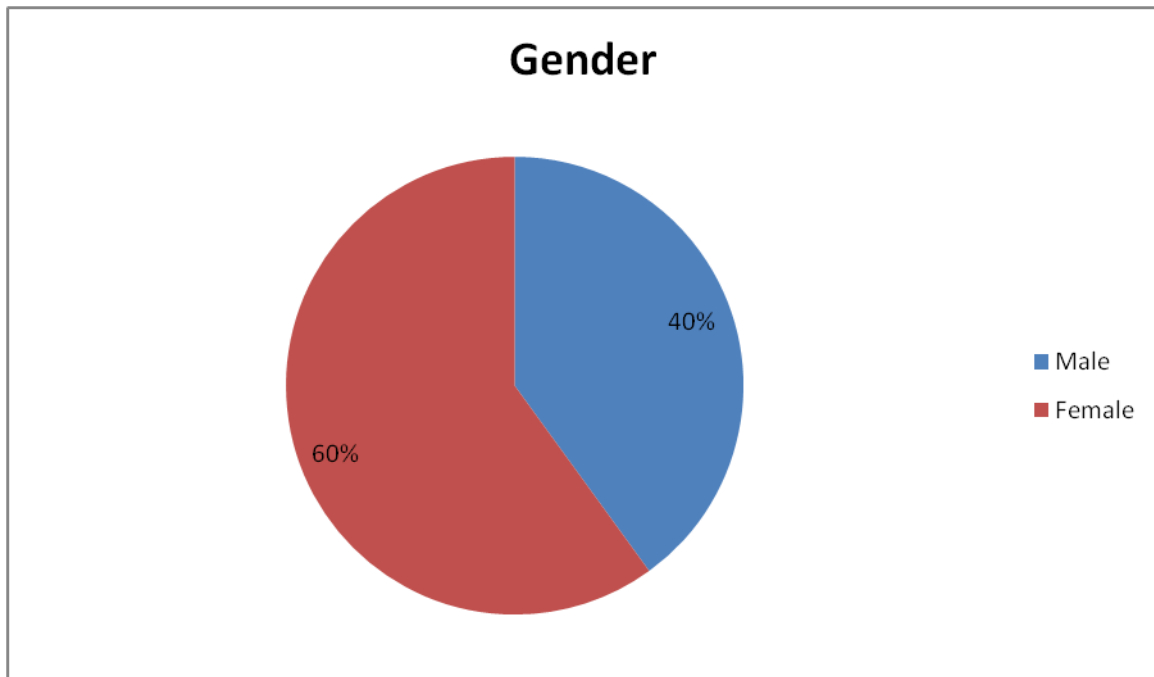
## 4.9.2 Age



**Figure 4.9.2** Age analysis of Godidi Grandparents

The age analysis for these grandparents is presented in two (2) brackets: (40-49) and (50-59). The first age bracket (40-49) was rated at eighty percent (80%), while the second age bracket (50-59) was rated at twenty percent (20%). There were eight (8) respondents who formed the first age bracket while there were only two (2) respondents who formed the second age bracket. The grand total therefore is made up ten (10) respondents. These age brackets represent a middle age group (40-49) and an advanced age group (50-59). Respondents for the middle age group were in the majority while those in the advanced age group were a minority. This, however, did not have a negative influence on the data collection process. In this regard, there were no respondents from a younger age bracket (30-39). Here, the researcher focused on the age analysis for respondents. In the next section, the researcher will then delve into gender analysis of the respondents.

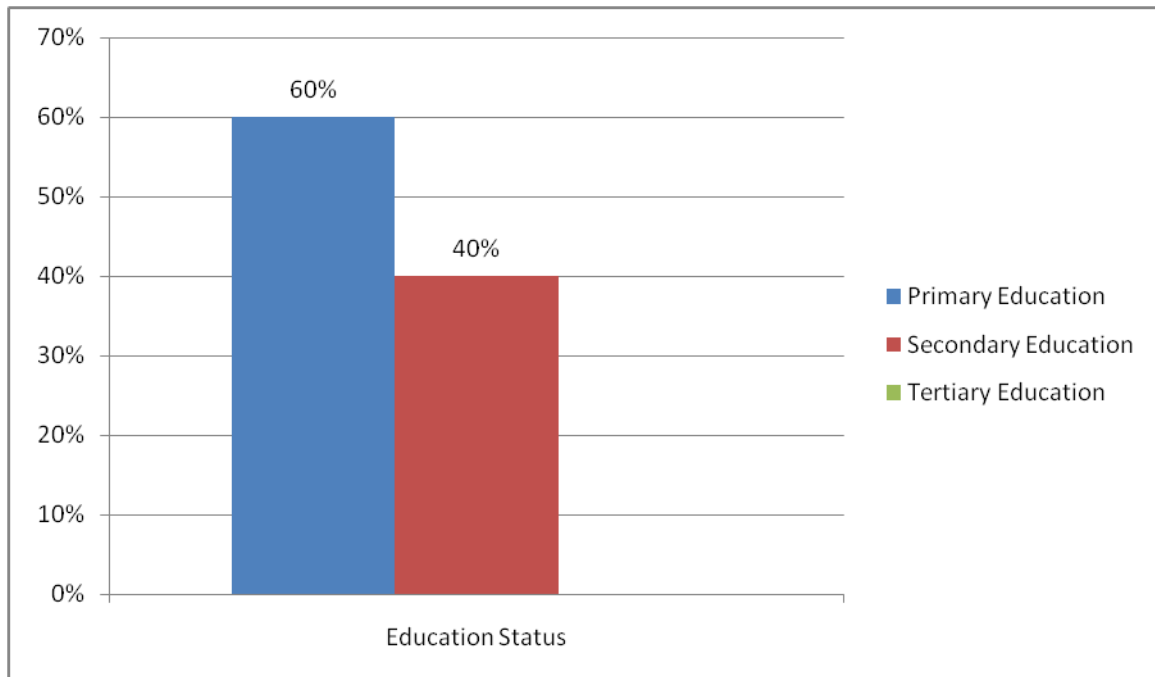
### 4.9.3 Gender



**Figure 4.9.3** Gender analysis of Godidi Grandparents

This gender analysis is made up of both males and females. Males were rated at forty percent (40%) while females were rated at sixty percent (60%). There were four (4) males and six (6) females. The grand total therefore was made up of ten (10) respondents, and females were in the majority. This did not pose any challenges in this regard since each group fitted well in the picture. There was a reasonable amount of co-operation and commitment on their part, and they were spontaneous in providing information. In this particular section, the researcher dealt with gender analysis of the respondents. In the next section, the researcher will deal with the analysis of the educational status of the respondents.

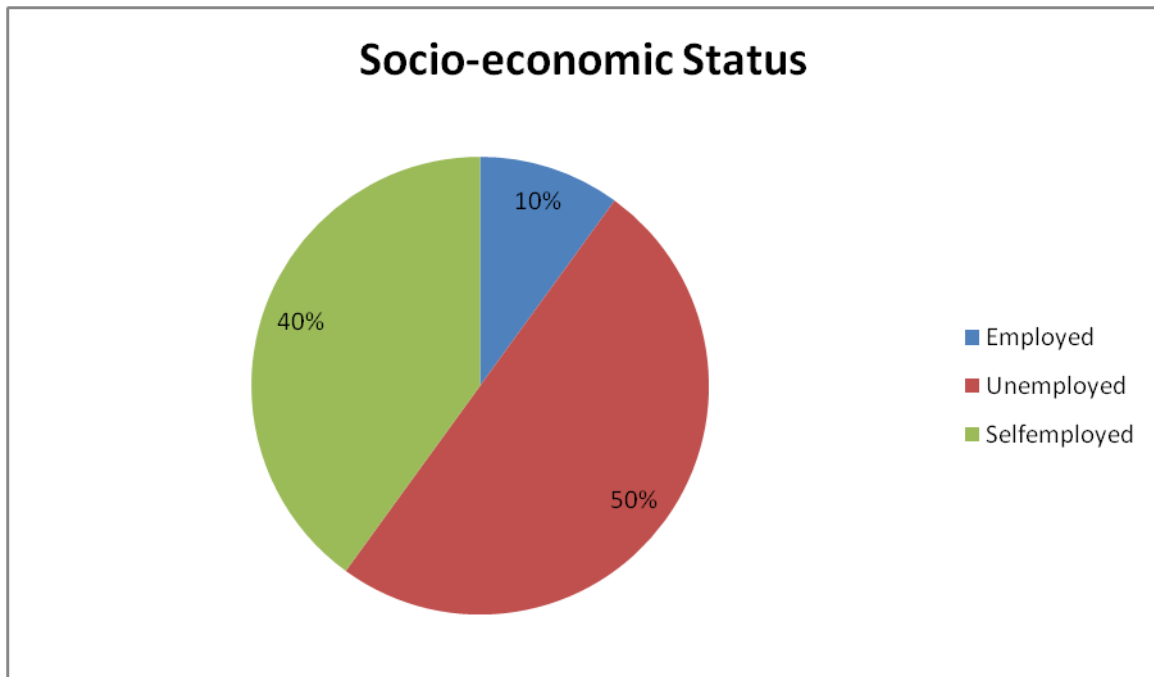
#### 4.9.4 Education status



**Figure 4.9.4** Education status of Godidi Grandparents

Education analysis is presented in two (2) education levels: primary and secondary levels. The primary education level was rated at sixty percent (60%) while the secondary education level was rated at forty percent (40%). There were six (6) respondents with primary education level, while there were four (4) respondents with secondary education level. The grand total therefore was made up of ten (10) respondents. There were no respondents with tertiary qualifications. Once again, these basic education levels were helpful for the data collection process. In this section, the researcher dealt with analysis of educational status of the respondents. In the next section, the researcher will look into the analysis of socio- economic status of the respondents.

#### 4.9.5 Socio-economic status

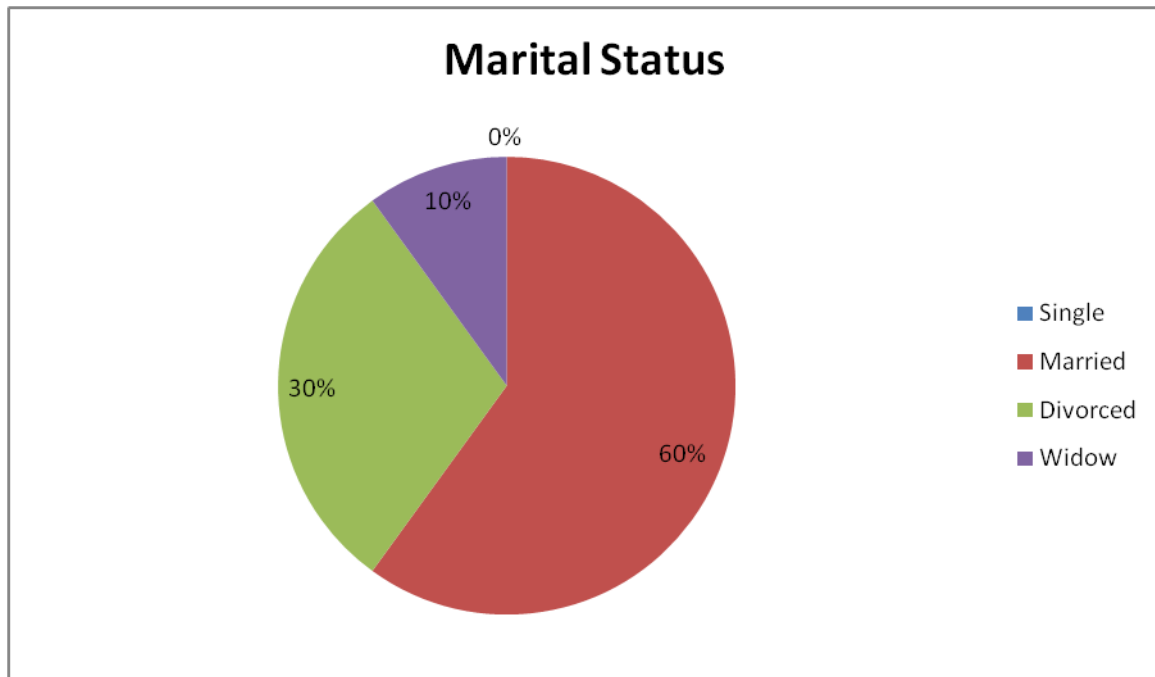


**Figure 4.9.5** Socio-economic status of Godidi Grandparents

The socio-economic status is presented in three categories: employed, unemployed and self-employed. The employed were rated at ten percent (10%). The unemployed were rated at fifty percent (50%) while the self-employed were rated at forty percent (40%) respectively. There was only one (1) respondent who represented the employed. There were five (5) respondents who reported that they are not employed, while there were four (4) who reported that they are self-employed. The grand total therefore was made up of ten (10) respondents.

The one respondent who is employed reported that he is working at the Magistrate`s court as a grounds-man (yard maintenance). The unemployed reported that they do not have jobs but have been promised jobs in different places. The self-employed reported that they sell common things such as clothes, paraffin, sour milk, beans, blankets and bags. The researcher has taken note of the fact that throughout these congregations, the self-employed are not genuinely self-employed. They sell whatever is within their reach to make ends meet and are not business people in this regard. They sell just enough to have something to eat. Here, the researcher looked into the analysis of the socio-economic status of respondents. In the next section, the researcher will present the analysis of marital status of the respondents.

#### 4.9.6 Marital status



**Figure 4.9.6** Marital status of Godidi Grandparents

The marital status analysis is presented in three (3) categories: married, divorced and the widowed. The married were rated at sixty percent (60%). The divorced were rated at thirty percent (30%), while the widowed were rated at ten (10) percent. The married were made up of six (6) respondents. The divorced were made up of three (3) respondents, while the widowed were made up of only one (1) respondent. The grand total therefore is made up of ten (10) respondents, and there were no single (unmarried) respondents. In this section, the researcher looked into the analysis of marital status of the respondents. In the next section, the researcher will focus on the presentation of themes and findings of the study.

#### 4.10 Presentation of themes as findings

The findings are in the form of themes or concepts that have been identified from the responses. These themes were identified during the data collection process. Expanding on the concept of a theme, Braun and Clarke (2006:10) explain that “A theme captures something important about the data in relation to the research question and represents some level patterned response or meaning within the data set.”

Another important concept in qualitative research is coding. This is also part of thematic analysis. Defining this concept, Saldana (2008:3) concedes that “A code in qualitative inquiry

is most often a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative salient essence capturing and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language based on visual data.” The author continues to affirm that “The data can consist of interview transcripts, participant observation field notes, journals, documents, literature, art-facts, photographs, videos and websites...” In this study, themes were collected by means of a questionnaire that was designed for this purpose. In this same context, the researcher would like to reflect briefly on the theories that form theoretical frame work section in this research.

These theories have been presented and discussed fully in section 1.7 of Chapter one (1). For that reason, the researcher will not discuss these theories in this section but will rather indicate their usefulness in child care during bereavement. It is also important to note that themes and theories interlink, that is, theories will be taken into consideration when themes are being analyzed. There are two theories that form the theoretical framework section, namely, those of Clinebell (1984) and Gustavo (1970). Even though these authors move and emphasize different points of departure, they contribute significantly in this study. Clinebell moves from a Pastoral care point of view while Gustavo moves from a political point of departure. Clinebell maintains that Pastoral care is liberative and presents five key concepts:

- Healing;
- Sustaining;
- Guidance;
- Reconciliation; and
- Nurturing.

Gustavo maintains that Theology is liberative and emphasizes concepts such as:

- Political liberation;
- Social liberation;
- Elimination of immediate causes of poverty and injustices; and
- Emancipation of the poor.

It is critical to ascertain the contribution of these theories to child care during bereavement. Clinebell, among other things, argues that “Pastoral care brings healing.” This healing is necessary for bereaved *Xhosa* children who need to be “Sustained, guided, reconciled and nurtured.” In terms of reconciliation, the researcher believes that these children need to be reconciled to their pain of loss and need to be healed from the trauma of bereavement. All other concepts presented by the author in this regard, culminate in child support during bereavement. All the recommendations that will be presented in chapter five (5) are, thus, aligned to child healing during bereavement.

Liberative theology, as advocated by Gustavo, is also applicable in this study. Among other concepts, it underlines “Liberation from selfishness and sin” and further endorses “Re-establishment of relationship with God and other people.” In this study’s context, *Xhosa* children are not any exception and need to be liberated from their exclusion from theological guidance and support during bereavement. They further need to be liberated from cultural exclusion during bereavement and be made part of this process. The minds of those who do not believe in child care and support during bereavement also need to be liberated. Liberation theology should then influence and change their mind-set towards new life, and they should begin to see things differently in this respect. This is embedded in the recommendations presented in chapter five (5).

There are several theories that complement Clinebell and Gustavo in this regard, but the researcher undertakes to present these theories without discussing them because they are discussed in detail in section 2.3.1 of chapter two (2). These are listed below as the:

- Stage theory by Crabb (1977:148) in Louw (2004:311-312);
- Directive and confrontational theory by Adams (1977:45) in Louw (2004);
- Reformed theory by Furet and Heitink in Louw (2004:25-28);
- Hermeneutical theory by Louw (2004:256);
- Self-actualization theory by De la Porte and Herbst (2003);
- Narrative theory by Boje (1999) in De la Porte and Herbst (2003); and
- Existential theory of Frankel in De la Porte and Herbst (2003).

These are theories that overarched and informed this study and stand out as a solid foundation on which the researcher built, in terms of this study. They have one thing in common, and that is the empowerment and the upliftment of the bereaved, including children. The next section focuses on the presentation of data analysis in terms of themes.

Themes presented as findings in this process are the product of the processes mentioned by Braun and Clarke (2006), including Saldana (2008), as mentioned earlier. The researcher identified themes established from the data collected by means of questionnaires. These themes are not only presented by the researcher, but will also be analyzed accordingly. In this section, the researcher briefly presented theories that are part of this study. In the following section, the researcher will then focus on the data analysis of this particular study.

#### **4.11 Data analysis**

This section discusses research findings from both focus group discussions and individual interviews. The views of the respondents are singled out and discussed in the form of themes, hence the data analysis. The researcher explains the meaning of these findings and makes use of other scholarly writings as an attempt to simplify responses with regards to issues around child bereavement and loss. Some participants reported challenges, and these are discussed with the hope of finding solutions and making recommendations. The next section deals with communality among *Xhosa* speakers.

##### **4.11.1 Communality among Xhosa speakers**

Findings from the majority of the respondents reveal that there is communality among *Xhosa* people during the mourning process. A bereaved person does not suffer alone in his or her own space. People in the neighbourhood, relatives and friends do come and give support. This act of coming together in *isiXhosa* is called *ukukhunga*; this means that people do not leave you alone when you are in pain. They suffer with the one who is suffering from loss until the burial takes place. They sometimes even do this after the burial has taken place. A person who suffers from loss goes through a painful process which might be a lonely journey that makes one to suffer emotionally and, to some extent, physically. It is clear that from what the respondents are saying, this communality also goes beyond cultural celebrations even when people are experiencing loss in their lives. During the time of loss, one loses his or her sense of being and needs people at this time to help keep composure. This kind of togetherness helps when welcoming and receiving those who are coming to visit the family.

In explaining the cause of loss or death, it is believed in the *Xhosa* culture that a person who is bereaved should not talk too much. This then means that there should be a family speaker.

The researcher, therefore, wants to believe that this act of love and compassion comes from the saying: *umntu ngumuntu ngabantu*; this means that a person exists because of others. The researcher takes note of the contribution made by *Rashe* (2007) in his unpublished Doctoral thesis as he explains the importance of togetherness in the context of family violence “There is none that can actually solve his or her problem without the assistance of the other. It is here where the notion of `umntu ngumuntu ngabantu` comes in.” The author further explains that “This literally means that a person is not a person if he or she is in isolation; we need one another whether in sorrow or joy, suffering or wealth or in times of conflict or peace.”

*Rashe* further refers to *Setiloane* (1976) as he explores this concept further. He explains it by looking at the origin of man (person) and argues that “Man is never considered in the African context as having come into being, singly.” The author further advises that “Man (person) is represented as having come into visible existence in the company of others.” The argument also explains that “Other people, wives, children and animals, for that matter are in community.” The author qualifies this by affirming that “This gives a basis for the African view that a person is within a community “*Motho ka batho*” a person is a person through other people.” This is also confirmed by *Mbiti* in *Mbethe* in a personal communication with Van Heerden (May 21, 2001) “As life in the *Xhosa* tradition is communal, grieving is also a communal activity. One finds this very helpful in the processes of healing from loss and during the grieving period.” This section focused on communality among *Xhosa* speakers; the next section focuses on exclusion of children from grieving.

#### **4.11.2 Exclusion of children from grieving**

The majority of respondents expressed the feeling that children are excluded from the grieving process. This, according to the respondents, is due to the fact that children should not be exposed to bereavement trauma. It is feared that they may not cope with such a trauma as they are young. This seems to be in contradiction with the aspect of communality that has been expressed by the respondents and discussed earlier. In other words, if there is communality in the *Xhosa* culture, why then are children excluded from grieving processes? The concept of *Ubuntu*, which means, “One is a human being because of others.” *Mandela* (2005:82) upholds the notion of communality. According to this *Ubuntu* concept, there

should be no exclusion for children in bereavement processes. In the olden days, children were excluded and were taken to family members homes and brought back after the funeral. Now that this practice was stopped, they stay with their families; however, the gap is still there, but in some urban areas, children become part of the grieving process.

In some families, children offer speeches in funeral programmes, so this means that this phenomenon of excluding children in funerals has, to some degree, changed. This, however, does not mean that this gap has been closed; to a larger extent, children are still excluded from grieving processes especially in the traditional rural areas. In terms of this gap, the researcher therefore is of the opinion that the exclusion of children from the grieving processes is not so much cultural, but is rather based on ignorance. It is also true to say that this phenomenon is also based on the reluctance to expose children to grief trauma and lack of information in this regard. This practice was also meant to keep children clean and pure from contamination by the bad omen of death (*isithunzi sokufa*). This means that this phenomenon is not only based on lack of knowledge but also on shielding children from death.

It is interesting to examine some of the issues mentioned in the narrative from a *Xhosa* grandmother to her grandchild “Maybe we did not tell you because we were thinking that you do not feel this deep pain. We also thought that you were young enough to forget, hoping that in forgetting, there will be your healing. But we are learning that there is deep pain in your heart too. There is sadness that needs to be seen and spoken about openly so that we can heal together.” In this narrative, the question of ignorance with regards to the grieving of children is highlighted. It is made clear that there was a lack of knowledge in this area. It is also explained that new knowledge has now been obtained in this regard.

This narrative forms part of the appendix list in chapter five (5) and speaks to the gap the researcher sought to close in undertaking this study. This is discussed in the next chapter on how to respond to this challenge. In this section, the researcher focused on exclusion of children from grieving; in the following section, the researcher`s focus is on children`s difficulties with language used in preaching during bereavement.

### 4.11.3 Children`s difficulties with language used during preaching

The research findings also revealed that children have difficulties with the language used by preachers when they visit bereaved families. The respondents further reported that when there is bereavement in the home, there are usually devotions that are usually held prior to the funeral usually conducted by lay preachers (not trained in preaching). These preachers do their best in rendering spiritual support to bereaved families even though they are lay preachers and are not even therapists. Most unfortunately, this process, according to the respondents, does not seem to be helpful for *Xhosa* children. This is due to the fact that the language used in this undertaking does not accommodate children and is far above their expected level. Defining language, the Oxford Dictionary (2007:312) notes that, “Language is human communication through the structured use of words.” In this regard, the respondents expressed that the use of words such as (*tutwini, imela igobele esandleni, akuhlanga lungehliyo, ibingu Thixo obenikile, ikwanguye nothabathileyo, sisebomini nje, sikwasekufeni*) does not accommodate children.

There is no doubt in one`s mind that these are good expressions. What they actually mean in a nutshell is that God is the giver of life. He also takes life. We are surrounded by death and must be familiar with that concept. In death, we are not alone. However, these expressions, according to the respondents, need to be explained to children, needless to mention that they are not usually explained as it is usually assumed that children understand them. The researcher believes that children should be considered and put in the picture with regards to loss and death (sharing). Kroen (1996:16) in Jackson (2007:22-23) believes that “Sharing emotions with young children is healthier than hiding them as the former encourages children to express feelings.” The researcher is of the opinion that preaching during bereavement should then be designed as a sharing moment that embraces children as well. It is further explained that “Children should learn that no one is happy all the time, and sadness is a necessary adjustment to life” Kroen (1996:16) in Jackson (2007:23). The researcher maintains that it is imperative that these should be communicated in a language that children will understand. In this section, the researcher looked into children`s difficulties with language that is commonly used in preaching during bereavement. In the next section, the focus will be on grandparents who struggle in supporting their grandchildren during bereavement.

#### **4.11.4 Grandparents struggling to support their grieving grandchildren**

The research findings revealed that grandparents are struggling in supporting their bereaved grandchildren. This is due to the fact that the parents of these children are no more because of HIV/AIDS pandemic and other related causes of death, including car accidents. These grandparents struggle in taking care of their grandchildren and this even becomes more difficult when they cannot provide answers to their grandchildren. They are sometimes confronted with statements such as `you are not my mother/father` and sometimes are asked `where are my parents`? This is a painful process for these grandparents as it reminds them of their own losses over their own children.

This is an overwhelming role for grandparents to have to take care of emotional, spiritual and physical needs of their grandchildren. This is not easy for them due to poor living conditions and low levels of employment, thus these children are not adequately taken care of, to say the least. This has a potential to add to their bereavement trauma. In other words, these children/grand children can easily say that `if my mom/dad was here, things would be different`. This can also lead to some behavioural problems for these children. Commenting about such problems in the context of bereaved children, Sweeney (2001:216) advises that “As many as four (4) to ten (10) percent % of all children exhibit behavioural problems serious enough to warrant intervention.” The author goes on to mention specific aspects that emerge from conduct related problems, namely: “Physical violence, cruelty toward peers, assault, hostility, verbal abuse, impatience, defiance and negativism” (2001:216). This warrants that something must be done for these children. In this section, the researcher looked into the issue of grandparents who struggle to support their grandchildren during bereavement. In the next section, the researcher will look into parents giving false information to bereaved children.

#### **4.11.5 Remaining parents giving false information to bereaved children**

The findings from this study indicated that the remaining parents give false information to the bereaved children. Some respondents believe that most remaining parents do not want to bring the pain of bereavement to these children, so instead of telling them that their mothers/fathers/caretakers have died, they tell them that they went to a faraway country and will never come back again. This is because they do not have answers and skills to support these children. For these parents, this is an easy way out, which impacts negatively on

children because they are not taken through the bereavement process and are not given the support they need. This is detrimental for bereaved children as they await parents that will never return because they are no more. Blom (2006:191) offers some guidelines to parents and people who deal with bereaved children below:

- Show genuine concern and caring by allowing the child to express emotions;
- Reinforce ideas of safety and security for the child;
- Answer the questions that children ask, even though they may sound strange;
- Be honest with regards to answers that you provide;
- Do not become upset over regression or difficult behaviour on the part of the child;
- Allow children to express their feelings and create opportunities for discussing how feelings can be handled; and
- Protect the child from explicit pictures with regard to specific loss or trauma occurrences that might be shown on television.

The researcher believes that these guidelines have a potential to equip parents and caretakers to guide their children instead of misleading them. Jackson (2007:50) mentions the role of families in supporting bereaved children as: “Families have a duty to ensure that bereaved children are not alone with worries and fears. This is because children who feel safe will discuss issues pertaining to their experiences with people they can trust.” It is further argued that “Children will also determine how they want to remember their loved one, thereby preventing complicated grief.”

According to the researcher, this then rules out the concept of giving false information to bereaved children. Parents and families are rather encouraged to support their bereaved children as much as they can. They must also be as honest as possible in this regard. Specific recommendations are then presented in the final chapter (chapter five [5]). In this section, the researcher looked into the question of parents giving false information to bereaved children. In the next section, the researcher will focus on parents who protect and shield their children from experiencing the pain of grief.

#### **4.11.6 Parents protecting bereaved children from grief**

The majority of respondents expressed the view that parents are protecting bereaved children from experiencing grief. The respondents made it clear that most remaining parents do not want to allow their children to experience the pain of loss. They shield these children from experiencing the pain that is associated with grief. In this regard, *Yawa* (2010:55) explains that “When there is bereavement, children are taken to the neighbourhood so that they are shielded from the pain of loss.” The researcher can attest to this as it commonly happens, especially when the conveying of death messages takes place. It is believed that children must not hear such death related news directly and must not be allowed to see people crying and sobbing as it is believed that this will confuse and frustrate them. In this process, the researcher believes that more damage is caused on the part of children. De Klerk and Le Roux (2003) cited in Jackson (2007:22) maintain that “Caregivers must develop a level of emotional intelligence in children so that children are better prepared to face these challenges.” The emotional intelligence in this regard entails “Ability to identify, understand and to control thoughts and feelings and communicate them appropriately to others” De Klerk & Le Roux (2003) in Jackson (2007). On this same note, Collins (2007:480) argues that “In the midst of their grieving, relatives sometimes try to protect children from the realities and sadness of death, especially the death of a parent.” One believes that what is being argued by these authors is contrary to the notion of protecting and shielding children from experiencing the pain of bereavement. Children must be prepared for these kinds of circumstances around death and bereavement and must be exposed in a meaningful and reasonable way. In this section, the researcher looked into the notion of parents protecting children from experiencing grief. In the next section, the researcher will then look into the notion of grieving being limited to adults only.

#### **4.11.7 Grieving limited to adults only**

Research findings revealed that grieving is limited to adults only. Respondents believe that this is based on the ignorance of the *Xhosa* people in this regard. In this regard, concepts such as *Ubuntu* and African Renaissance, which are also presented in this work, show clearly that Africans do things together. This means that the exclusion of children in cultural grieving processes and the shielding thereof needs to be corrected. There may be a lack of knowledge in this regard. It could be argued that *Xhosa* people do not seem to know that children also need to be taken care of during bereavement. Commenting on the way in which children feel

about death, Blom (2006:5-9) affirms that “For most children, death is a new experience and like all new experiences, the unknown can be confusing and frightening.”

The author further asserts that “Most children do not know what to expect following the loss of a family member or friend” (2006:5-9). What has been affirmed by the author here warrants that children need help during the loss of their loved ones. In other words, grieving is not confined to adults, and children also grieve. This phenomenon is addressed as per the recommendations presented in the final chapter (chapter five) of this work. In this section, the researcher focused on the fact that grieving is limited to adults only. In the following section, the researcher will look into the lack of support for bereaved children.

#### **4.11.8 Lack of support for bereaved children**

The majority of respondents reported that there is lack of support for bereaved children. It was further reported that the lack of support for bereaved *Xhosa* children might be linked to the lack of understanding with regards to child grief and the shielding thereof. This, according to the respondents means that, if children are shielded from experiencing the pain of bereavement, they cannot be supported accordingly. It further means that if it is believed that grieving is only meant for adults, it would then be also believed that children do not need support during bereavement. This then concludes that *Xhosa* children suffer the pain of loss without support.

On the contrary, Sweeney (2001:198) maintains that “Children need significant support during times of loss...” In this same context, Collins (2007:225) asserts that “Children need to be treated with sensitivity, empathy, warmth, consideration and respect that does not treat them with disdain or convey a smug adult superiority.” This, for the researcher, entails child support and care during bereavement. Even though this chapter does not present recommendations, the researcher deems it fit to highlight some suggestions with regards to child support during child bereavement.

#### **4.11.9 Impact of bereavement on children`s academic performance**

The respondents expressed their feeling that most children struggle at school due to bereavement trauma. It was further reported that this is caused by the effects of grief. Collins (2007:472-474) specifically refers to these as “Emotional and cognitive effects.” The author maintains that “Grief also affects both how a person feels and how he or she thinks.” Collins

goes on to say that “For many, there is a loss of energy, disorganization of routines and realization that even simple activities require considerable energy.” The researcher argues that children are not any exception to this rule. In other words, they are not immune to emotional and cognitive effects of grief. This then has a potential to affect their performance at school. In this same context, Jackson (2007:31) discusses the issue of grieving children within the school environment and how such an environment can contribute for the upliftment of such children. The author maintains that “Schools are public places in which bereaved children may grieve.” It is further argued that “Schools cannot compensate for children’s severe losses, and teachers cannot ease children’s grief alone.” Jackson further argues that “Schools must become aware that children living through bereavement may experience various emotional reactions to grief during the school day.” According to Woo and Woo (2003) in Jackson (2007:31), “Children may become preoccupied with thoughts of their deceased parent or primary caregiver during lessons.” In this section, the researcher discussed the impact of bereavement on children’s academic performance. In the following section, the researcher will look into the Therapeutic Theological support and guidance for bereaved *Xhosa* children.

#### **4.11.10 Therapeutic Theological support and guidance for bereaved children.**

The vast majority of respondents expressed their feeling that theological guidance for bereaved *Xhosa* children is indeed a resounding requirement. They further expressed that these children need to be supported during bereavement and need to be shown love and care during loss and bereavement. Collins (2007:215) concurs “Young people are to be loved, honoured and respected as persons and not be harmed.” This is a point of departure for this study. Respondents confirmed the need for theological guidance for bereaved *Xhosa* children. The respondents further confirmed that even the core doctrines of this particular Denomination do not have any provision for bereaved *Xhosa* children. These doctrines have been presented as articles in Chapter three (3), section 3.2.7 of this study as follows:

The first article deals with the connection between the knowledge of God and the knowledge of our selves. The second article focuses on issues around the fall of Adam. The curse of the human race due to Adam’s fall is also dealt with. The third article deals with the benefits of being in Christ. These benefits are made available to us through the spirit of God. The fourth article explains the nature of the true church and her duty. Calvin (1989). According to the respondents, these doctrines fail to address the issue of bereaved *Xhosa* children and are

viewed as silent on this issue. In the light of what the respondents have expressed, Clinebell's liberative theory has something to contribute in this regard. Clinebell (1984), in his liberative theory, suggests five concepts with regards to theological support. These are no doubt, also applicable to children, hence application of this theory in this study. The concepts are presented as follows: Healing, sustaining, guiding, reconciling and nurturing. The researcher believes that all the five (5) concepts presented by the author are also applicable to young grieving children. The main aim of applying theological guidance to young children during bereavement is to bring healing to them since they must be healed from their trauma of bereavement and loss. The author also speaks of sustaining since sustaining covers consoling; this is deemed relevant for grieving children. They need to be consoled from their bereavement; this may then take the form of theological guidance through African theology as the overarching concept of this study. In other words, these concepts do not replace African theology as a tool but are rather present as guides for those who apply African theology as means of guidance for bereaved *Xhosa* children. The researcher also notes the relevance of guidance as it translates into giving advice and listening. Grieving children need to be advised and listened to during their loss and bereavement; they also need to be reconciled to their remaining parents and to themselves. It is a proven fact that young children tend to easily blame themselves when there is crisis in the home, including death. With regards to this assertion, Blom (2006:151) concurs "Children blame themselves for the trauma in their life, despite the amount of support they receive from their therapists or parents." This means that young children also need nurturing so that they can grow out of their crisis of bereavement and be able to stand on their own and stop blaming themselves. In dealing with this phenomenon, the researcher believes that the five steps of the liberative Theory by Clinebell can also be linked to the three main dimensions of Liberation Theology, as advocated by Gustavo (1970:6-22): Liberation theology involves political and social liberation; elimination of the immediate causes of poverty and injustice; the emancipation of the poor, the marginalized, the down trodden and the oppressed from things that limit their capacity to develop themselves freely and in dignity; liberation from selfishness and sin and endorses re-establishment of a relationship with God and with other people. In the light of these dimensions by Gustavo, the researcher strongly believes that young grieving *Xhosa* children should be liberated from their exclusion in the grieving and mourning cultural processes. The minds of those who do not believe that young children need theological guidance during bereavement also need to be liberated. They also need to be liberated from exclusion by religious community in this regard. In this section, the researcher looked into

theological support for children during bereavement. In the next section, the researcher will look into the empowerment of remaining parents and grandparents.

#### **4.11.11 Empowerment of remaining parents and grandparents**

The research findings revealed that most remaining parents, guardians and grandparents need theological guidance themselves. This, according to the respondents, is due to the fact that most remaining parents and grandparents struggle to support these children and grandchildren. The respondents further said that these remaining parents and grandparents need motivation and support due to the nature of their responsibilities. It is, however; also true to note that this particular research was not directed at parents, guardians and grandparents. It was rather focused on bereaved *Xhosa* children. Having said that the researcher takes note of this as a topic for another study. Specific recommendations regarding this particular aspect also form part of recommendations in chapter five of this research project. This section dealt with thematic analysis in which all the identified themes were analyzed accordingly. The next section presents the conclusion.

#### **4.12 Conclusion**

With regards to the issue of child bereavement among *Xhosa* speakers, the researcher is convinced that this chapter has done justice to its central concerns. The chapter has dealt with issues that are of great importance in this phenomenon, and the researcher believes that it has brought new knowledge and has helped to achieve the study's aim and objectives. It has also helped in addressing the challenges faced by both children and parents/guardians including grandparents, with regards to traumatic challenges associated with bereavement and grief. The following chapter focuses on the discussion of study findings, study conclusions, study recommendations as well as the implications of the study on African theology as part of liberation theology, thereby liberating the mind and souls.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 Introduction

This particular chapter focuses on the presentation of research recommendations. The chapter builds on what has been accomplished in chapter four (4) wherein the researcher presented data analysis, interpretation and presentation of findings. The findings confirmed that, *Xhosa* children need theological guidance during bereavement. This is something that is currently not part of their lives. The fact that *Xhosa* children need theological guidance during bereavement is addressed in this chapter. In an attempt to address this, the researcher first discusses the responses of other disciplines, namely, Psychologists and Social workers. The researcher thereafter delves into the ecclesiastical response (the role of the church) as an attempt to bring about solutions for the identified problem since the church needs to play a leading role in this regard. This is based on the fact that this research is focused on a religious community (the church). In this section, the researcher has introduced this chapter. The following section focuses on other possible responses.

#### 5.2 Other Possible Responses

In this section, the researcher undertakes to look briefly at some several responses in this regard. This is important for exploring and evaluating what has already been done in these fields with regards to child bereavement. In this section, the researcher discusses two disciplines, namely, Psychologists and Social workers. The researcher takes note that these are unique disciplines, and their contributions are also unique in this regard and also believes that Theology is also unique discipline. This then means that those who do Theology can learn from these other disciplines and close a theological gap. Collins (2007:44) advocates for the importance of collaboration between those who do Theology and those who do Psychology. The author concedes that “The most effective collaboration occurs when the Pastor and the Psychologist trust and respect each other as equals.” The author further declares that “They must view each other as professionals.” It is also affirmed that “They must value the expertise that the other brings.” The researcher views this as an important contribution as it does not only involve Pastors and Psychologists but also Social workers, by

virtue and nature of their work as part of this collaboration. The first response to be discussed is by Psychologists.

### **5.2.1 Responses by Psychologists**

Yawa (2010:105) researched, from a Psychologist's point of view, a psycho-analysis of bereavement in *Xhosa*, *Zulu* and *Tswana* cultures. The author's recommendations are presented here because of the *Xhosa* element that forms part thereof. This means that the researcher only focused his attention in *Xhosa* related recommendations; researcher has nothing against these other cultures but that this is only meant for research purposes. The research at hand is focused on theological guidance for *Xhosa* bereaved children. Yawa's recommendations are inclusive of all these cultures mentioned here. In her first point, the author is interested in the "Broadening of the scope." Other points that are presented as recommendations by the author are also presented below:

- ❖ It would be interesting and valuable to conduct a study similar to this one. The study would include other ethnic groups like *Tshivenda*, *San* and *Xitsonga* in order to find out about their bereavement processes and how these differ from the *Nguni* and Sotho speaking peoples if they do. This broadening of the scope would help in giving a total picture of bereavement in the traditional African cultures of South Africa;
- ❖ A study providing guidelines to the Department of Education guiding Educators and Psychologists on how to deal with bereaved learners from traditional black ethnic groups might be worthwhile. This is applicable in the South African context with diverse cultural backgrounds; and
- ❖ A study looking at the relationship between psychotherapy and the act of telling a child about the death of a parent, by whispering at his or her ear when he or she is in deep sleep, is critically necessary.

What the researcher can deduct from these recommendations is that the author (Yawa) feels that there is a lot that must still be unearthed and discovered in this field. There is a lot involved in bereavement issues, including child bereavement. This is clear in the author mentioning the need to explore other cultures, and the researcher concurs with the author in this regard. One is of the opinion that even among *Xhosa* speakers, this might be the case. This is a critical subject that needs undivided efforts. Haine, Ayers, Sander and Wolchik

(2008) researched factors that have been shown to contribute to or protect children from mental health problems following the death of a parent. These authors made the following recommendations:

“Both mental health specialists (e.g., clinical Psychologists, Social workers) and other professionals, who work closely with children, need to be educated in specific parenting practices. These practices include warmth, open communication and effective discipline.” The authors further recommend that “A safe environment should be created for parentally bereaved children to mourn; this is aimed at behavioural skill-building.”

The researcher takes note of the fact that child support during bereavement is a team effort, and professionals should join hands in supporting bereaved children. The researcher also believes that theological guidance could be part of this process. This does not mean that those who do Theology must become Social workers and Psychologists in this regard as these are different disciplines and unique in their nature. Theologians should be able to refer to these other disciplines; thus, if a bereaved child is psychologically affected, the one who applies theological guidance should be able to refer such a child to a psychologist. This is how the researcher understands and upholds team work in this regard. In this section, the researcher briefly looked at responses by Psychologists. The next section focuses on contributions and responses by Social workers in this regard.

### **5.2.2 Responses by Social workers**

Jackson (2007:128-132) presented some recommendations from a Social worker`s point of view. Even though the author focused on bereaved children in the school environment, the recommendations the author presents are also applicable in any situation bereaved children find themselves. This is irrespective of culture, gender and creed. In all cultures, nothing should stop bereaved children from going to school; the *Xhosa* culture is not any exception in this regard. This then means that these recommendations by Jackson are applicable in any process of child therapy. The author thus presents the following recommendations:

- ❖ It should be mandatory for the school principal and/or class teacher to be informed of the loss (not necessarily the cause of death) and any significant changes resulting from that to the child`s life;

- ❖ Bereaved children should never be forced to discuss their experiences. This can only be done after the bereaved child has given permission to the teachers to inform class members about the loss;
- ❖ During the initial stages of the mourning process, bereaved children should be allowed to leave the classroom when experiencing overwhelming feelings;
- ❖ Teachers should not pressurize or instruct bereaved children to get over the death as there is no specific grieving time period but should assist children with catching up with work missed as a result of the bereavement;
- ❖ Bereaved children should be informed by school personnel of the school's support services. This includes bereavement support organizations in the community (if available) and how to access such services if necessary;
- ❖ Given the fact that death and bereavement are generally seen as controversial issues, the school personnel should engage in open and honest communication with the child's relatives in determining the support services in place and if there is a need to offer the child support. If the school personnel cannot offer such services, then it is necessary to network with outside organizations such as Faith-based, Community, or NGOs which offer such services for bereaved children; and
- ❖ Greater collaboration between the various Departments is necessary for designing a National Death Education Curriculum (NDEC). This would be aimed at reaching the target population.

Corr (1999) cited by Wimpenny, Dempster, Grundy, Works, and Brown (2006:26-27) maintains that "All children grieve, although this may be in a different way to adults and may not be understood." It is further argued that "Children should, wherever possible, be included in experiences related to death. They should participate in rituals and commemorations after a death." The argument goes on that "Schools should have a role to play in supporting children who have been bereaved and also in the provision of education about death, dying and bereavement." McCarthy and Jessop (2006:27) in Wimpenny, Dempster, Grundy, Works and Brow (2006:27) highlight "How significant bereavement is in young people's lives and how it can affect them well into the future." Black (1996:27), also cited by these scholars, says that "Bereaved children benefit from

involvement and discussion and not exclusion and denial.” As the researcher has already indicated, those who do theology do not need to become Social workers and Psychologists in this regard as these two disciplines (Social work and Psychology) are unique in their nature and approach. Their common ground is the well-being of bereaved children, and those who do theology can rather learn from these disciplines. These disciplines are also applicable in that referrals can always be made by those who do theology. This means that there are no contradictions in this regard. The researcher is convinced that theological guidance is needed for bereaved *Xhosa* children. It is a unique discipline in itself, hence this research project and its focus on the religious community. In the previous section, the researcher presented responses by Psychologists and Social workers, and the next section deals with the Ecclesiastical response (the role of the church).

### **5.3 Ecclesiastical response: calling of the Church**

Commenting on the calling of the church, Collins (2007:40) mentions a number of concepts that the church should embark on in fulfilling their calling. The author reflects on the ministry that was initiated by Christ and passed down to his disciples and concedes that “It was this church of Jesus Christ that continued his ministry of teaching, evangelizing, ministering and care giving.” The author further contributes that “These activities were not seen as the special responsibility of Pastors and other church leaders; they were done by ordinary believers...” The researcher’s attention is particularly drawn to the concept of “Care giving” as highlighted as one of the aspects of the church’s ministry. Care giving in this regard connects the ministry of the church and the phenomenon of child bereavement. In a nutshell, this virtually means that the church must take care of bereaved children. In doing this the church will be fulfilling their role as per their calling. The specific role of the church in this regard will be presented in the section that deals with recommendations later in this chapter. In the following section other aspects in this regard are highlighted by Hendriks (2004).

Hendriks (2004:19) explicates that “God called the church to proclaim the Gospel.” The author further affirms that “...Congregations are faith communities that endeavour to be faithful effective witnesses and God’s servants in this world where they proclaim the good news in word and deed...” The concept of “Proclaiming the gospel in word and deed” cannot be divorced from care giving. This then means that care giving is part of the proclamation of the gospel. In the following section, Milner (1991) endorses the concept of the calling of the

church and highlights the ministry of the church in terms of what the church should offer in this regard.

Contributing in this regard, Milner (1991:226) advocates for the ministry of the church. The author affirms that “The service that the church offers is directed first to those within the brotherhood.” The author also acknowledges that the work of the church is not confined within the brotherhood. In this regard, the author endorses that “The church must glorify God by being the salt and the light of the Society.” (1991:226). Concepts mentioned by the author are applicable in taking care of grieving children. Concepts of being the salt and the light of the Society need to be applied to bereaved children, and the church must bring light to these children by taking care of them during their grieving period. This is in line with what the author refers to as “Brotherhood.” In a nutshell, the author affirms that the church must first take care of its own people before reaching out to those who are outside the church. The researcher concurs in this regard that bereaved children are part of the “Brotherhood” (those who are inside the church). Kuiper (1967:209) points out the place of belonging for children of believers thus: “The church consists of those with whom God has established the covenant of grace, and the Scripture is most insistent that this number includes not only believers, but also their children.” The author argues here that children of believers belong to the church; this would mean that the church has a responsibility towards children, not only for their spirituality but should include their support during their bereavement as well.

In this regard, the researcher notes that the calling of the church is to render ministry with all its different components, as mentioned by Collins, Hendriks, Milne and Kuiper. One of these components is “Caregiving.” This, in a nutshell, connects the ministry of the church with the researcher’s point of departure in this study which is - caregiving for bereaved *Xhosa* children. The researcher believes that the church should render ministry to bereaved *Xhosa* children. In doing this, the church will then be fulfilling their God-given role of a caring community. As this research project is focused on a religious community, it centres on the Ecclesiastical response (*indima yecawe*). This means that the church has a unique role to play in supporting bereaved *Xhosa* children.

Hughes (2015:12), when advocating for the role of the church, includes the concept of discipline. When the author addresses this concept, it becomes clear that the theological guidance concept is also included in the author’s definition. In the exact words of the author, it is endorsed that “Discipline can be defined in a broad sense in that everything the church

does for a believer is discipline.” It is further conceded that “This definition includes preaching, training, correction, encouragement and counselling.” The author specifically affirms the role of the church during bereavement that “The ministry of helping people through bereavement is perhaps one of the most significant ministries a church can provide. This must be for both members and those in the community.” According to the author, this entails that “The church is prepared to lead the family during bereavement.” The author further argues that “The church can play a vital role in this regard through support and recovery groups; these groups can serve as types of group counselling and care” (2015:64).

On the same note, Affiku (2015:121), addressing the issue of the church involvement as per support during bereavement, affirms that “People need to be empowered by the church. This empowerment is meant for them to utilize their individual gifts.” It is further argued that “The church must seek to train lay care givers to assist in providing support to those that are within their social, political and economic classes” (2015: 121). Lartey (2003:27) in Affiku (2015:121) in his theory of incorporation concedes that “No single person can really provide the necessary support or assistance required by the individuals or groups in a crisis situation to regain their wholeness, unless other personalities are incorporated.” Kelly (2008:43) in Affiku (2015:122) argues “For the need for the church to offer solace and support to the bereaved.” affirming that “This must not only be in the form of rituals...but also through individual and communal care and attention.”

Collins (2007:35) contributes with regards to the role of the church in theological guidance by affirming that “While every Christian has a responsibility to help and counsel others, it is probable that counselling (theological guidance) is one of the spiritual gifts given for building up the church and strengthening individual believers.” The author further concedes that “As described in Romans twelve (12), 1 Corinthians twelve (12) and Ephesians four (4), these gifts are more than natural abilities; they are something extra given to believers by the Holy Spirit.” The author then concludes this point by asserting that “In Romans twelve (12), we read about the gift of exhortation. The Greek word is *paraklesis*, which means coming alongside to help, implies admonishing, confronting, supporting and encouraging people to face the future.”

The author also refers to the church as `a caring community.` In this regard it is argued that “In the years that followed after Christ rendered his ministry, it was the church that continued the ministry as a caring community.” The author also presents the characteristics of the ministry of the church as: “Teaching, evangelizing, ministering and caregiving.” It is further

confirmed that “These activities were done by ordinary believers, working, sharing and caring for one another and for non-believers who were outside the body of Christ.” (2007:41).

In this same context, Reyneke (2005:75-76) in Affiku argues with regards to the specific role the church should play towards vulnerable children, in this case vulnerable children include bereaved children. The author affirms that “The church has an enormous role to play in the lives of bereaved children and that the church should reach out, touch, help and serve.” The author further argues that “The church must also empower families and households to provide for all the needs of their children.”

Based on this argument, Reyneke recommends that:

- The church should make conscious decisions to provide care to all vulnerable children;
- The church should follow a holistic approach; and
- The church must prioritize the type of care that will support and develop children.

(2005:76).

In this same context, it is worth taking note of how Louw (2004:70) defines the role of the church “The congregation forms the unique context in which the gospel can be mediated and realized.” The author further argues that “As an embodiment of *koinonia* (fellowship of believers), the congregation forms the context in which the Pastoral encounter can take place.”

For the researcher, these comments by the cited scholars specifically show that in the whole process of theological guidance, the church should play a critical role. The researcher further believes that these contributions have made the role of the church clear to any reader at this stage. In a nutshell, the role of the church is to render caring ministry and to uplift the downhearted, namely, the bereaved *Xhosa* children. The recommendations made in this chapter are actually pointers to what the church should achieve in the context of bereaved *Xhosa* children. In this section, aspects concerning the ecclesiastical response (*indima yecawe*) were duly presented by the researcher. The next section focuses on the recommendations of the study.

## **5.5 Recommendations**

In this section, the researcher presents practical recommendations deemed relevant to the General Assembly (a higher governing body) of the Free Church in Southern Africa. Under this governing body, there is a specific committee (Ministry committee), and these recommendations will be handled by this committee to make sure that they are duly

implemented. Secondly, this highlights the fact that this research is aimed at solving the identified problem on practical terms. Recommendations are therefore presented as follows:

### **5.5.1 Children`s ministry**

As it has been pointed out in the study findings that there is no children`s ministry that addresses child bereavement in this Denomination; this section looks into the applicability of children`s ministry in child bereavement. This section further employs the healing concept as suggested by Clinebell (1984:43) in his liberative theory. In this regard, the researcher endorses that those who are involved in children`s ministry in other religious circles known as Sunday school teachers from the affected congregations of the Free Church in Southern Africa (FSA), should be sent to courses that will orientate them into the world of children. This is meant to equip them with basic skills to be able to see signs of trauma in children as they interact with children on weekly basis. These children include those that are bereaved. The advantage of this undertaking is that, these Sunday school teachers will then be able to refer such children for theological guidance.

To qualify this, the concept of child bereavement should be included in the current children`s ministry curriculum since the current Sunday school curriculum does not speak to this phenomenon. A Sunday school manual entitled “The work of the Sunday school Teacher” designed for all the congregations of this particular Denomination provides topics such as: what the bible says about children, the place of the Sunday school, starting a Sunday school and running a Sunday school. These, according to the researcher, are good programmes. However, these programmes only cater for the spirituality of these children, and there is no aspect that addresses child bereavement. This also means that this Denomination does not have programmes aimed at empowering children during bereavement. Topics dealing with child bereavement should be made part of the Sunday school curriculum. In the same Sunday school context, Rashe (2007) mentions catechism and Sunday school classes in connection with “Socio-ethical and moral issues that are challenging the church and the society.” The author is of the view that “The church should emphasize in their teaching on how to practice within the relationship or marriage reconciliation, forgiveness, love, understanding, tolerance, patience, *ubulungisa* (caring) and *ukukhathala*.”

Even though the author uses these concepts in a different context (addressing family violence issues), the researcher believes that there are connections in this regard. Concepts such as “Love, tolerance, patience and caring” mentioned by the author are also applicable in the phenomenon of child care during bereavement. This must be cultivated in the minds of those

who conduct children`s ministry in this particular Denomination. They should show love, tolerance, patience and caring for bereaved *Xhosa* children.

Another useful contribution is based on the liberative theory by Clinebell (1984:40-43). In this theory, there are guiding elements such as healing, sustaining, guiding, reconciling and nurturing. All these elements are applicable to bereaved *Xhosa* children, as they need healing from the trauma of bereavement and need to be sustained and consoled. Guidance is crucial since they should be guided on regular basis. These children should also be reconciled to both themselves and the concept of death. “Children tend to blame themselves when there is crisis in their immediate environment...” Blom (2006:151). This means that, nurturing is a requirement for bereaved children. They need to be nurtured and trained in coping skills. In this section, the researcher looked at children`s ministry contribution as a recommendation; in the next section, the focus will be on child welfare organizations.

### **5.1.2 Child Welfare Organizations**

One of the findings that came up during the data analysis process was that bereavement has an impact on children`s performance at school. The researcher therefore infers that child welfare organizations can play a useful role in this regard since their work exposes them to a whole world of different children with different situations and backgrounds. They might be even dealing with children who struggle at school because of their experiences of loss and bereavement and may have skills and methods in dealing with such children. This concept is covered by what Clinebell refers to as “Nurturing” in his liberative theory. Nurturing covers “Training for new members in the Christian life and religious education” (1984:43). Children who struggle at school due to their trauma of loss and bereavement should be nurtured and be redirected to their core business (schooling). Child welfare organisations should be made part of this process. For instance, they can be invited to speak at church conferences. Some of these children have experienced grief, one way or the other. These organizations should be able to raise the awareness in this regard. In this section, the researcher recommended child welfare organizations; in the next section, the focus is on parent training workshops.

### **5.1.3 Parenting training workshops**

As it reflected as one of the findings in chapter four that parents and grandparents should be empowered in taking care of their bereaved children, parent training workshops are necessary. The nurturing concept in the liberative theory of Clinebell (1984:40-43) becomes important in this regard. This nurturing concept entails training for new members in the

Christian life and religious education. This concept is applicable for the training of parents including grandparents. In the light of this, the researcher advises that there should be workshops where parents can be addressed on this issue in the absence of their children. Trained child therapists can play a pivotal role in facilitating this process. This is meant to provide training to parents so that they will be able to look after their bereaved children on continuous basis. In running this programme, therapists should be proactive and not reactive. This means that they should not wait until there is an occurrence of death. Sweeney (2001:163) speaks of the role that can be played by parents in caregiving for bereaved children. The author maintains that “Parent training is one of the most powerful tools to minister to the needs of children.” This is applicable for bereaved children and parents, including grandparents who look after these children.

Rashe (2007) also refers to workshops and seminars. The author is of the view that “Education is one of the most powerful tools that can be used to assist members of the church to understand the extent of family violence.” It is clear that the author raises this affirmation in the context of dealing with family violence. The researcher strongly believes that this education is also a requirement for the remaining, guardians in order for them to be able to deal with their bereaved children. Grandparents should also form part of this phenomenon. In this section, the researcher presented parent training workshops as a recommendation; in the following section, the focus will be on church messages to affected families.

#### **5.1.4 The church as the worshipping community: sermons as means of healing**

Lack of support for bereaved *Xhosa* children has been identified as one of the findings in this study. This means that children need support during their bereavement; this support should be directed at bringing healing to these children. Clinebell, in his liberative theory, makes a contribution with regards to healing. This concept entails: “Spiritual healing, marriage counselling and therapy.” Clinebell (1984:43). The church should approach this phenomenon as a worshipping community. What the researcher means by this is that Pastors, in their Sunday sermons, should touch on issues such as the impact of death on bereaved individuals and families including children. Rashe (2007), in his unpublished Doctoral thesis in the context of family violence, asserts that “In Sunday services, there is always a sermon that is preached to the congregation. The sermon is regarded as the message of the day in the church.” The author emphasizes questions that are underlined in such a sermon “...What is God saying to us? What must we do about our lives?” The researcher is of the view that even

in the context of bereaved *Xhosa* children, sermons can be effective. The researcher also believes that this has a potential to yield good results in this respect.

With regards to preaching, Martin (1982:109-112) in Rashe (2007) presents six (6) main areas that the sermon embraces, namely: teaching, training of new converts (which he refers to as catechism), comfort, (he uses a Greek word *paraenesis*, meaning `it speaks to`) and moral reconstruction. The focus is on two aspects of the sermon: the sermon as the message of *ithemba* (hope) (3.2.1) and the sermon reflecting a theology of *ukukhululeka* - liberation theology (3.2.2). The researcher is convinced that preaching can also be a healing process for the bereaved including children and can bring hope to bereaved children and to those who look after these children.

As Rashe (2007) goes on to speak about the “Message of *ithemba* (hope)” for the victims of family violence. The researcher believes that this message is also needed for bereaved *Xhosa* children. Unpacking this concept of hope, the author advises that “Hope is a gift from God, and it has an element of faith and trust that some change will happen in our lives.” In this particular section, the researcher looked at the church message as a recommendation to affected families; the next section focuses on child care.

#### **5.1.4.1 Child care**

As findings proved beyond doubt that there is no child care during bereavement for *Xhosa* children, it is therefore critical that something is done in this regard. Child care in this regard can be dealt with through what Clinebell in his liberative theory refers to as “Guidance.” The author maintains that “Guidance involves giving advice and listening.” (1984:40). This means that children should be guided and listened to during bereavement. In this regard, guidance takes the form of theological guidance as the overarching concept of this particular study. Due to the critical nature and the importance of this concept, the researcher advises that child care during bereavement should be made part of the curriculum for those who are studying to become Pastors in the Free Church in Southern Africa (FSA). This can be submitted to *Dumisani* Theological Institute (DTI) in King Williamstown. This Institute is responsible for the training of Pastors and is run under the auspices of the Free Church in Southern Africa (FSA). Commenting in this regard, *Rashe* (2007) speaks of Theological Institutions with regards to curricula. The author maintains that “Theological Institutions are places where candidates are being trained and prepared for the ministry.” The author further argues that “It is important for them to note the fact that their curriculum, to a certain extent, must be influenced by what is happening in society.” The author concludes by affirming that

“That alone will help the Institutions to shape their courses in such a way that they are able to equip their students for their future ministry...” Once again even though *Rashe* speaks in the context of family violence, the researcher is of the view that this shaping of the curriculum for such phenomenon is also applicable in this regard.

Those who are being trained as Pastors should be introduced to child care programmes during bereavement to equip them for taking care of bereaved children. Collins (2007:480) spends sometime on the issue of children who are affected by grief. The author advocates that “It should be remembered that children also have a need to grieve and understand as best they can.” The author further affirms that “It is important to reassure children repeatedly and by actions that they are loved and will be cared for.” This then confirms the reality that children need to be taken care of during bereavement. In this section, the researcher explored child care; in the following section, the researcher will present, as a recommendation, the issue of a church committee on child care.

#### **5.1.4.2 Church committee on child care**

As findings dictate in this study, there is no provision of a church committee that is responsible for child care during bereavement. In the light of this, the researcher then endorses that there should be a church bereavement committee that is responsible for taking care of bereaved children. This committee should be given a clear mandate by the church to cater for the support of the bereaved *Xhosa* children. The work of such a committee is also endorsed by Clinebell’s concept of “Sustaining”. This concept involves “Preserving, consoling and consolidating.” This committee, according to the researcher, should be responsible in making sure that all these processes do take place.

The same committee should be able to design support programmes for the support of not only the bereaved children. Rashe (2007) speaks of “Gender issues committee.” The author affirms that “This committee must be elected with clear terms of reference so that they know exactly what to do...” The only difference is about the context in which the author speaks (family violence) and the fact that he refers to the “Gender issues committee.” The idea of forming a committee is the common ground with the suggestion that is proposed by the researcher. In the researcher’s context, this committee will not deal with gender issues, but with child bereavement issues and care giving to such children. In this section, the researcher looked at church committee on child care, in the following section the focus will then be on education programmes.

#### 5.1.4.3 Education programmes

According to the findings as presented in chapter four (4) of this study, it became clear that there is no therapeutic theological support and guidance for bereaved children in this particular Denomination. The concept of educational programmes in this regard responds to this phenomenon. In the light of this the researcher therefore advises that educational programmes should be planned in order to educate the congregations who fall under this Denomination. These programmes should be based on imparting skills for handling and dealing with bereaved children in *Xhosa* culture. Commenting about education, *Rashe* (2007) advocates that “Education is the most important tool of empowerment.” Also commenting with regards to education *Nasimiyu-Wasike* (2000:133) in *Ncube* (2015:82) defines education and advises that “Education may be considered in two senses, one broad the other one technical.” The author elaborates on the broad aspect of education as “Any act of experience that has a formative effect on the mind, character or physical ability of an individual.” The author further affirms that “Education, in this sense, never ends; we truly learn from experience throughout our lives.” With regards to technical aspect of education, the author notes that “In its technical sense, education is the process by which society through schools, Colleges, Universities and other Institutions transmit its cultural heritage, accumulated knowledge, values and skills from one generation to another.” The researcher concurs that people in this culture need to be empowered with education in taking care of their bereaved children. This does not necessarily mean that they must be trained as therapists; they can simply be empowered to be able to refer their children when they go through the trauma of loss. This then should mean that, they should be equipped with basic skills to see signs of trauma in their children. This however does not prevent those who may have a desire to be trained as child therapists.

They should be empowered in treating and working with such children and in supporting one another (*ukuncedana*) in this regard. This then should mean that, those who are not yet bereaved should be able to support those who are bereaved. Reflecting on the concept of supporting each other (*ukuncedana*), *Rashe* (2007) explains that “*Ukuncedana* as understood by African *Xhosa*-speaking people cannot be compared to helping or assisting a person, because the two words mean to do part of the work.” The author spells out the concept of *ukuncedana* more explicitly “*Ukuncedana* means being with the person from the beginning until the end of the process.” The author further affirms that “...In an African context...when a certain family is bereaved, those who are residing within the area will give support by

physically being with that family; this can go to the extent of staying with that family until the funeral is over.” The researcher believes that this education and empowerment process can make a vast difference in enlightening the bereaved families. The researcher further affirms that there should also be pro-activity in this regard. This means that people should be educated even prior to the death incident. In this section, the researcher spent time on education programmes; the next section focuses counselling and normal grief.

### **5.1.5 Counselling and normal grief**

The research findings revealed that there is a lack of counselling for normal grieving of bereaved children in this study’s Denomination. This falls under Clinebell’s concept of healing who affirms that this healing entails “Spiritual healing, marriage counselling and therapy” Clinebell (1984:40). These aspects according to the researcher are also applicable to bereaved children as they need spiritual healing and counselling, which is theological guidance in this context.

Theological guidance during normal grieving is also endorsed by Collins (2007:477). The following aspects are presented: Encourage discussion about death or other losses before they occur; be present and available...As a counsellor, try and be present after the funeral. If the mourner is a special friend, phone periodically to touch base and be alert to giving support; make it known that expressing emotions is good and acceptable, even when the loss does not involve the death of a loved one, but do not pressure the grieving person to show feelings; be a careful listener; recognise that grieving people need, in their own time, to talk about issues, such as the feelings and thoughts that are being experienced.

These are important and key aspects the church should embark on in establishing their key role as a caring church. This means that this process should be facilitated by the church in any approach deemed relevant. The Hermeneutical theory, as presented by Louw (2004:256), also becomes helpful in this process. This theory focuses on the following key concepts:

- Probing: The art of questioning;
- Comfort: The art of supporting;
- Interpretation: The art of assessing and understanding;
- Empathy: The art of listening and unconditional acceptance; and
- Edification: The art of directing and communicating the gospel.

These concepts are deemed helpful by the researcher in the process of child care during bereavement and contribute to the well-being of bereaved children. In the next section, the researcher focuses on counselling and complicated grief.

### **5.1.6 Counselling and complicated grief**

This concept also falls under Clinebell's notion of "Healing." Counselling and theological guidance should bring healing to those who suffer from the loss of their loved ones; this includes children who are the focal point of this study (1984:43).

This is another process in which the church should be involved. This can be facilitated through the bereavement committee that has been recommended in this study. Collins (2007:478-479) highlights few important points in this regard:

- Try to determine if there are risk factors that would make healing more difficult. Better assessments can help the counsellor understand the behaviours and attitudes that need to be changed;
- Encourage the expression of feelings and attitudes. As you listen, try to avoid the exhortation and insensitive quoting of Bible verses that may have come previously from friends. None of these are wrong, and the scripture certainly can be very comforting. However, grieving people tend to prefer the presence of caring listeners rather than a counsellor who talks a lot using clichés and routine phrases;
- Try to discover how people dealt with loss in the past and encourage counselees to return to these or similar methods again; and
- Encourage talks about the future. After there has been time to talk about the emotions, gently challenge irrational thoughts or plans that appear to be unrealistic or made in haste.

Once again, the researcher strongly believes that the church should uphold and implement these concepts. This will help in creating a conducive atmosphere for the bereaved children and those who look after them, including grandparents. The following section deals with guidelines for parents.

### **5.1.7 Guidelines for parents**

With regards to parents the findings have established that some remaining parents protect and shield their children from experiencing the pain of bereavement. This is detrimental for these children. They need healing from their pain of loss, when they are shielded they will not get

any healing. One of the things emphasized by Clinebell in his liberative theory with regards to healing is “Therapy.” (1984:43). Bereaved children need therapy that will result in their healing. It became obvious that these parents shield their children out of ignorance. Due to such ignorance, the researcher is of the opinion that the church should generate some guidelines for parents and people who deal with bereaved children. Blom (2006:191) presents some useful guidelines in this regard: Show genuine concern and caring by allowing the child to express emotions; reinforce ideas of safety and security by ensuring the child that he/she will be taken care of; answer the questions children ask even though they may sound strange. Ask them what led them to ask that particular question; retain the routine as far as possible since this is what gives them a measure of security; be available for the child. A hug or friendly smile is often all the child needs at a particular moment; Allow children to express their feelings and create opportunities for discussing how feelings can be handled.

These are important guidelines for remaining parents and people who deal with bereaved children including grandparents. The duty of the church is to create a friendly and conducive environment for the application of these guidelines, and there should also be pro-activity in this regard. This means that these guidelines should be implemented prior to any death occurrence. In this section, the researcher dealt with guidelines for parents. In the next section the researcher presents the conclusion.

## **5.8 Conclusion**

In this section, it is worth reflecting on the premise that prompted this whole research process. This is captured in the research background of this particular study. The background to this study highlights the fact that *Xhosa* children are not being taken care of during bereavement. There is no theological guidance applied to them, to say the least. There are devotions that are usually conducted by lay preachers (Preachers that are not trained as Pastors/Therapists) who do their utmost best to support bereaved families, and this is done out of love. The challenge, however, is that the language mostly used by these preachers does not seem to accommodate children, as there are expressions that do not make any sense to children such as: *tutwini, imela igobele esandleni*.

These are good and relevant concepts as they underpin the reality of death and the need for comfort during bereavement. However, these need to be communicated in a language that can be understood by children. Due to this identified problem, the researcher deemed it necessary to undertake this study. This study comprises five (5) chapters. In chapter one (1), the

researcher focused on the research background and introduction. Chapter two (2) dealt with the literature review of this study. The chapter comprises three sections: generic literature review section, theory base section and primary literature review section. In chapter three (3), the focus is on research methodology and its components. Concepts such as sampling procedures, research instrument and research design are dealt with. In chapter four (4), the researcher dealt with concepts such as data analysis, interpretation and presentation of findings. Chapter five dealt with the research recommendations as per the role of the church (Free Church in Southern Africa [FSA]). The researcher is convinced that this work has done justice in addressing the identified gap in caregiving for bereaved *Xhosa* children. The need for theological guidance for bereaved *Xhosa* children has been highlighted; findings and practical recommendations have also been presented to meet such a need. These confirmed the need for theological guidance for bereaved *Xhosa* children. The next section contains the appendix list, namely: appendix one (1), two (2) and three (3).

#### **Appendix 1 (Questionnaire for bereaved Xhosa children)**

**Design:** *Parent-reported questionnaire: asking a parent on behalf of the child. This is applicable where there is a remaining parent or guardian.*

**Question 1:** *Have you noticed or picked up any change in behaviour in the child, since the passing away of the mother/father?*

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**Question 2:** *In your opinion, are the child's playing habits still the way they used*

*to be?*

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**Question 3:** *Have you observed any aggression in the child, which was not there before?*

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**Question 4:** *Can you describe the general behaviour of the child since the passing of the mother/father?*

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**Question 5:** *Have you received any complaints from his/her teachers with regards to poor performance at school?*

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**Question 6:** *Are the eating habits of the child still pleasing since the passing on of the mother/father?*

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**Question 7:** *Usually children tend to blame themselves, when there is crisis in the home. Do you think this is the case with your child?*

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**Question 8:** *Children are spontaneous when it comes to drawing. Have you observed any specific themes in the child's drawings? Can these themes be related to the passing away of the child's parent?*

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**Question 9:** *Have you received negative reports about the child's behaviour from Sunday school teachers?*

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**Question 10:** *Are there any specific questions that the child keeps on asking about the deceased?*

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*Question 11: Has the child ever complained to you about seeing the deceased at night, during bed time?*

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**Appendix 2 (A narrative from a Xhosa Grandmother to her grandchild)**

To my dear grandchild,

We do not like to speak about death to our children. We do not like to burden them with such things. But it has become necessary to speak of death to you and how we bury our dead, so that you can feel at home in our traditions and rituals, so that they can be a container for your grief and sadness too. This is meant to make you feel the sense of this and that, it is not foreign to you. By the time you read this letter, you will have witnessed many funerals. Many times, you will have been there when we slaughtered the cow and made beer for the Ancestors. Many times you would have heard us weeping and singing. We have forgotten to tell you why we do the things we do. Maybe we were too upset to tell you everything and forgotten that you are grieving too. Maybe we never told you because we wanted you to be happy and not know about such painful things. Maybe we did not tell you because we were thinking that you do not feel this deep pain. We also thought that you were young enough to forget - hoping that in forgetting, there would be your healing. But we are learning that there is deep pain in your heart too. There is sadness that needs to be seen and spoken about

openly, so that we can heal together. So today, I want to tell you about how we bury the dead and why we do this. You will have seen us empty the house and making space for all the family members coming from all over. We have to feed them, and they sit with us mourning. As you know, most of the time the funeral is on the second Saturday after the death, and the body will be brought to the house just before the funeral. Everybody must come to the funeral, and many people give speeches. On the day of the funeral or sometimes soon after the funeral, you have seen our elders go out and buy the cow and slaughter it very early in the morning.

The men cook the cow in big pots full of boiling water, and they do not add any spice. Then we all eat the meat outside the house. All the meat must be eaten before any other food is served. Our elders speak to the Ancestors, and we are all serious during this time. The dead person carries our messages to the Ancestors so that they remember us and do not forget to forgive us. In this way, we send the dead person to their new home so that they can become a true Ancestor. Our prayers help them find the way. We put beer and meat, including flowers, and a white candle in the corner of the house. The beer and the meat are for the Ancestors to taste. The burning candle keeps the bad spirits who like to come to funerals away. That is why we like to burn *impepho* (traditional incense that is believed to chase away the evil spirits). We must never burn our dead; we must always bring them back to the place they belong to, so that they can be re-united with the Ancestors and sleep in the ground they were taken from. We put them in the grave; we also put food for them and their walking stick, including other things that they may need. On the day after the funeral, we like to sprinkle you and the adults as well with water and herbs to cleanse you from any shadows you may have picked up. The clan decides together how long the process of *ukuzila* (mourning) should take. Women have to wear black dresses during the mourning period and stay home, while men wear a black button or black scarf. My grandchild, I have written a letter today about how we bury our dead. The important thing to remember is that they are just in hiding, they cannot be seen. They watch over us. *Sala kakuhle* (stay well). *Umakhulu wakho* (your grandmother). [www.khululeka.org](http://www.khululeka.org)

Appendix 3 (A letter from Free Church in Southern Africa)

# FREE CHURCH IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

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No.18 Leopold Street



P. O. BOX 681  
KING WILLIAM'S TOWN  
5600  
043 6424737

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November 17, 2014

THE REGISTRAR (ACADEMIC)  
C/O THE ETHICAL COMMITTEE  
UNIVERSITY OF FORT HARE

Re: Rev/Chaplain P.M. DINISO (Student No. 200703693)

Cell no. 082 9630 164

ID. No. 5510145755081

Dear Sir/Madam

This is to confirm that the above mentioned student is an ordained Minister of the Free Church in Southern Africa. He is in good standing with no pending disciplinary actions against him, whatsoever.

The Church is aware that he is set to undertake a Research for Doctoral Thesis purposes. To that end, it has no objection to him interviewing the church members and children for the said research purposes.

Further queries, if any, may be directed to the undersigned. I hope you find this information useful.

Yours Sincerely

D.M. MNQABA

(Elder and Senior Clerk of the General Assembly)

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