

**A PRACTICAL THEOLOGICAL STUDY OF COMMUNITY PASTORAL WORK: AN
ECOSYSTEMIC PERSPECTIVE**

by

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JUNE 1996

I declare that, *A practical theological study of community pastoral work: An ecosystemic perspective*, is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete reference.

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TITLE: A Practical Theological study of community pastoral work: An ecosystemic perspective

STUDENT: FBO Nel

DEGREE: Doctor of Theology (DTh)

SUBJECT: Practical Theology

PROMOTER: Prof J T De Jongh van Arkel

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SUMMARY: Chapter 1 describes practical theology as a communicative operational science and stresses how important it is that a hermeneutical and narrative approach compliments it. It is shown that pastoral work must be launched from the church community. The premise is that the Enlightenment paradigm causes a reductionistic, individualistic and denominational approach to pastoral work. A holistic, comprehensive and ecologically orientated approach is proposed.

Chapter 2 discusses the need for an ecosystemic approach as a metaparadigm for practical theology in terms of the move away from the Newtonian view of science and the post-modern critiques of a technocratic society. This is supported by developments in systemic family therapy, constructionism and community psychology.

Chapter 3 describes an interrelated ecclesiology as a base theory for practical theology and pastoral work with reference to the church's interrelation with society and the need to include an anthropology as part of an ecclesiology. This interrelationship implies that the serving (*diakonia*) and caring (*koinonia*) functions of the church should converge, forming a diaconal pastorate.

In chapter 4 the secularised modern world-view and the traditional African world-view, both functioning in South Africa, are employed to shed light upon the importance of the concept community for the church's pastoral work. The term community is broadened to include the idea of *networking*, emphasising that community is more than geographical proximity.

Chapter 5 is a quantitative investigation, by means of a questionnaire, of the views (ecosystemic/ non-ecosystemic) of pastoral workers regarding the church and of pastoral work.

Chapter 6 discusses the implications of a community pastoral work approach. Pastoral work has a serving-caring role, but should also function prophetically, to conscientise, sensitise and empower people. The church as a healing community must become the springboard from which pastoral actions can face the challenge of AIDS (chapter 7). This will require the church to shift its paradigm from the reductionist, individualist approach, presently prevalent in society and church pastoral actions, to an all-encompassing, holistic one.

KEY TERMS: Pastoral work; ecosystems; community pastoral work; systemic; pastoral workers views; narrative; challenge of AIDS; general systems theory; systemic family therapy; community psychology; interrelated ecclesiology; *koinonia*; world-view; metaparadigm; empowering; diaconal pastorate; scientific paradigm; prophetic care; paradoxicality; holistic approach.

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This is not really an end of a journey. It is an end of a specific phase of a journey. I do not offer this as a definite text, it is purely seminal. When you read it, accompany me on this journey, and may you find a community where you are at peace.

Bobby Nel

(June 1996)

1. PRACTICAL THEOLOGY CHALLENGED

Wij zien pastoraat als een vorm van dienstverlening, die niet de kerk maar de sameleving als horizon heeft. Mensen binnen en buiten de sfeer van de christelike gemeente mogen, wanneer zij willen een beroep doen op een pastor (Heitink 1979:15).

1.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE CHALLENGE

Practical theology is a scientific study of the encounter between God and human beings, and pastoral work is the study of the caring actions of the Christian community stemming from practical theology. Practical theology concentrates on people's religious actions, particularly those religious actions designed to mediate God's coming to humankind (Heyns & Pieterse 1990:6, 10). This description of practical theology differs from the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century understanding of practical theology. In the eighteenth century practical theology was associated with moral theology (ethics) (issues of social and individual moral life) and later on with the activities of the minister. Practical theology was narrowed down to a discipline of churchly and ministerial activities. Campbell (1972:219) describes it as follows:

Most unfortunate of all, was the total identification of the discipline (practical theology - FN) with church-directed functions of ministry ... this meant the imprisoning of practical theology in the world of the religiously minded. Since the clergyman had become a kind of chaplain to the godly-minded, his relationship (and the relationship of the church he served) to the world outside became of secondary concern ... This type of definition of the scope of the subject meant that it was quite ill-equipped to cope with the radical questioning of the place of the church in the world ...

This also influenced the relation between practical theology and the other theological disciplines (Campbell 1972:219). Practical theology was understood to be the practice or the applied side of theology. These understandings of practical theology have put practical theology in a subservient position to the rest of theology. Further, practical theology was understood in a purely kerygmatic¹ and church-centred context and in no position to heal and serve the needy, the poor, the oppressed, the stigmatised and the outcast.

The struggle of the Protestant churches in the 16th and 17th centuries centred on dogmatic and confessional questions (cf Louw 1980:1). In this century, and especially the last few decades, the churches (Protestant, Catholic, charismatic, and so on) have a new type of struggle. The challenge for the church is how to communicate² the gospel of love to a modern and postmodern world. The challenge for a great part of the church in South Africa is how to communicate the gospel of love and care to a society in the process

1. Thurneysen (1962:52) is reminiscent in some respects of this view when he says "... this means that in regard to its content pastoral care can be nothing else than a communication of the word of God in a particular form. Hence pastoral care can be concerned with nothing else than the proclamation of forgiveness and the sanctification of man for God".

2. "Die vraag na die kommunikasie van die evangelie is 'n soeke na die bestaanswyse van gelowiges as die gemeente van die Here" (Louw 1980:2). Louw's purpose is to look for an evangelisation model for the church. This study looks for an all-encompassing pastoral work approach.

of change,³ democratisation and liberation, but also a society growing towards differentiation, pluralism and specialisation. According to Heitink (1993:46-48), these are also the features of a modern society.⁴ Although every generation in the church inherits a religious tradition, each generation must learn faith anew (cf Fishburn 1991:168).

This will bring new challenges to the caring actions of the church. Browning (1983b:16) says: "Under the pressures of pluralism the very goal of our care often comes under question". How should the pastoral work of the church function in the few remaining years of the twentieth century? How should the pastoral work of the church reach people who are becoming less and less interested in the church and can be described as marginal to the church, beyond the church and indifferent to the church (cf Dekker 1975)?

At an international ecumenical symposium held at the University of Tübingen and attended by theologians, sociologists of religion and philosophers, Jürgen Moltmann read a paper titled *Theology in transition - to what?* Moltmann (1989a) mentions the following transitions which he sees as of immediate importance for theology today:

- a) Theology's transition from the denominational to the ecumenical age (1989a:220-221). This means discovering a more open identity and ending particularistic thinking and moving into more universal thinking. It also means involvement in one another and a movement away for churches and theologians from their denominational small world.
- b) Theology's transition from the Eurocentric age to the age of humanity as a whole (1989a:221-223). For Moltmann, this means a moving out from your own to become part of a world-wide community. The world is much bigger than just the Western world. It also implies a theological sensitivity to the issues (e.g. political, social, economic, gender) of the world.
- c) A transition from the age of mechanistic domination of the world to the age of ecological world-wide community (1989a:223-225). The world is in a crisis and theology should respond to it. Moltmann also refers to the fact that mechanistic thinking is visible in all fields, but specifically the medical field where human beings are often viewed in a mechanistic way.

The researcher understands Moltmann's challenge as a challenge to think anew about the role of theology, the church and the actions of the people in the church. This challenge of Moltmann, directed to the theological world, is also a challenge directed to practical theology and pastoral work. Practical theology is challenged to be truly theological and truly practical. It cannot ignore the challenges directed to theology in general or the practical implications of these challenges. It is the task of practical theology as "a

3 . According to Couture (1995:11): "Pastoral care and counseling of the twentieth century was born in social change".

4 . The sociologist, Peter Berger (1977:49) argues that the prevalence of counselling is intimately connected with the growth of modernity. Berger (1977) makes use of the sociologist Max Weber to explain how industrialization changed the social organisation of society.

communicative theological operational science" (Heyns & Pieterse 1990:46) to give special attention to the theoretical and practical doing of theology. The "workplace" of practical theologians is the church. Moltmann's challenge to theology should be interpreted by practical theologians as a challenge to the church to be truly church in this world.

The relationship between theology and science is a complex issue dealt with by other researchers (cf Van Huyssteen 1986; Fourie 1989; Peters 1989). The researcher, as a theologian, is concerned with the broad parameters of the contemporary scientific picture of reality because it tells us about the world we live in and how this world is viewed by many people. For instance, science is theology's partner in the hermeneutical process, when it tells us about the ecological disaster which faces the earth. This study, however, is not about shaping theology to science, although it is clear that there is often a tight fit⁵ between different disciplines on particular issues.

This calls for a new look at the church, its structures and the theology underlying those structures. In South Africa the challenge to the church and theology is even greater. During the last fifty years the church's struggle has been to overcome or to defend a repressive political system (cf De Gruchy 1982). Many church denominations were divided in this struggle along racial lines. Not only is South Africa a pluralistic society, the church as such is deeply divided;⁶ even within churches with the same confessions there are very big differences in practice, because the churches often function in totally different societies with different cultures,⁷ languages and traditions. This differentiation is also visible in the theological discourses in South Africa (Nolan 1988; Smit 1991; Deist 1991).

At political level there is some consensus in South Africa. This will definitely influence theological discussions. Now is the time for theologians and the church in general to think anew and to give attention to other issues. The change in political climate to a more open and democratic society will have an influence on the church.⁸ The reality is that South Africa will become more and more part of the rest of the world.

5. "Fit" is not the same as "match". Things may "fit" because they fall within the same domain, but that does not mean that they "match" (cf Hoffman 1985).

6. Cf. Snyman (1988:66-75) on the role of pastoral work in bringing about unity in the church.

7. By culture we understand the sum total of ways of living "developed" by a group of human beings and handed on from generation to generation (cf Newbign 1986:3). Culture also includes things like language, arts, technologies, social and political organizations and laws. "And one must also include in culture, and as fundamental to any culture, a set of beliefs, experiences, and practices that seek to grasp and express the ultimate nature of things, that which gives shape and meaning to life, that which claims final loyalty" (Newbign 1986:3). Newbign includes religion as part of culture.

8. Apartheid and its undemocratic and autocratic approach has isolated South Africa to a certain extent from influences from outside economically, socially, culturally and morally. Because of the pass laws and the policy of *homelands*, urbanization did not take place as fast as in the rest of the Western and developing world. Pornography, for example, was banned, casinos were limited to a few in the *homelands*. Democracy brings with it more freedom of speech and expression and thus also gives more momentum to secularization and modernity.

The door is open - to Africa, but also to the West and the East. It is difficult to predict the future, but the researcher has a strong suspicion, that one of the strongest influences in this country will be the Western (American?) capitalistic, individualistic and reductionistic spirit.⁹ It is already a cliché to say that South Africa is the junction point between the First and the Third Worlds,¹⁰ or between the North and the South. It is also the conjunction between the East and the West.

Pastoral work, one of the sub-disciplines of practical theology, should take into account developments in social theory and on socio-economic and political level and how they influence the caring task of the church. Gerkin (1986:11) observes that pastoral work as a discipline is no longer at the "cutting edge of ministry" although it is one of the disciplines which nearly all theological schools offer. One of the reasons for this is that people outside the field believe that pastoral work is not "equipped to encounter prophetically the larger public issues of the day".¹¹ Gerkin (1986:14-16) makes it clear that the pastoral work field is now confronted by changed social realities, which complicates the task of pastoral work. Msomi (1993), rightly so, also criticises practical theology for not doing enough to take society seriously. The church also has a prophetic task, which should not be separated from its priestly one (Hulme 1973).

Gerkin (1986:60) says that practical theology has the character that it wants to be a theology that takes society seriously, therefore it is a theology that "is always 'in process', never finalised". The growing awareness in practical theology of the need to take society more seriously is part of the exciting recent developments in practical theology as subject.

This study takes place in the broader context of practical theology. Van der Ven (1993a:9) describes three phases (so far) in the history of the subject practical theology.¹² The beginning of practical theology can be related to the "pastoraaltheologie" phase around 1774 at the University of Wenen. The second phase was in the 19th century when pastoral activities were placed in the context of the church. The third phase can be related to the appearance of the book, *Praktische theologie heute* in 1974, which broadened the scope of practical theology. Practical theology and the church were placed, in this third phase, within the broader

9. Democracy brings with it a new ethos, namely that of the individual. Gerkin (1991:33) puts it as follows (from an American perspective): "American individualism in the twentieth century has undoubtedly taken a strong psychological turn. Consensually held boundaries to govern individual and corporate behavior have been powerfully countered by equally consensually held expectations of self-actualization and self-expression".

10. This terminology is questionable.

11. "Many persons outside the field began to think that pastoral care, while perhaps important for the day to day work of the parish pastor, was not equipped to encounter prophetically the larger public issues of the day" (Gerkin 1986:11).

12. Cf also Pieterse (1993c:41-44) and Pieterse and Dreyer (1995:32-33). Pieterse and Dreyer describe the second phase as emerging only after World War II.

context of society.¹³ This study, specifically, relates to this third phase of practical theology and emphasises the importance of the interaction between practical theology, the church and society.

This thesis wishes to emphasise that pastoral care is not limited only to caring acts within the Christian religious community or to individuals, but that pastoral care takes it upon itself to involve itself "... in social and political questions in a very direct and active way as being the most important way of exercising pastoral care" (Pattison 1988:15). This means that this study wants to emphasise the "social character" of pastoral work.

No man is an island (John Donne).¹⁴ People are in different relationships and this study intends to take this into account. The researcher believes that the pastoral work of the church should be an all-encompassing work. Therefore this study takes an ecosystemic approach to practical theology and pastoral work as its point of departure (cf De Jongh van Arkel 1991a; Müller 1991c:77). In terms of the systemic approach, every individual is part of a greater system. Because people are part of greater systems, their needs should be seen, understood and taken care of in the broader context, namely the community and society they live and work in.¹⁵ The range of the pastoral work of the church will be investigated and broadened by exploring the possibilities of a *community orientated pastoral work* approach.¹⁶

There is a danger of misunderstanding the term *community*. It could give the impression that the researcher

13. "De kerk werd in de context van de maatschappij geplaatst teneinde door haar evangelische praxis tot de bevrijding van mens en maatschappij bij te dragen. Als voorwerp van de praktische theologie fungeerde sederdien: de praxis van de kerk in de context van de hedendaagse maatschappij" (Van der Ven 1993a:9).

14. "No man is an island entire on itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main" quoted by Alan Storkey (1979:31).

15. In this study the researcher distinguishes between traditional and modern communities. This distinction should not be interpreted as exclusive, but should be seen as two points on a continuum. Just as people change in their understanding, appreciation and attitudes so, too, do communities. This study is done from the background where the researcher is part of a community which is neither really traditional nor really modern. The premise of this study is that communities tend to evolve. Some communities may even see themselves as postmodern communities.

16. Gerkin (1984:17) writes that the two issues that become more and more important are (a) care in the community and (b) the theological roots of pastoral counselling. Gerkin understands community as the community of faith and expresses himself as follows on care in the community: "No direction offers more promise for the years ahead than does this recovery of the meaning of community, of corporate care and its relationship to liturgy, worship and the recovery of context."

is working with an "old-world"¹⁷ or premodern concept "community" and does not take into account the modern (or postmodern)¹⁸ world we live in.¹⁹ Hopefully, this is not the case. There can be no wholesale return to the ancient world-view. We simply cannot go behind the modern era. This study represents the supposition that the church as an interconnecting and serving community will be able to reach people (cf. Louw 1980:141; Brister 1964:83).²⁰ This study accepts that communicative actions are the responsibility of the entire congregation (church community) and not just of pastors, elders and those in leadership positions. The main thrust of this study is the emphasis on the church as serving community as part of a much bigger community. In this study some attention will be given to the distinction between the caring task (pastoral work) and the material services (diaconal task) of the church [cf p 220].²¹ The premise is that these tasks should co-unite to form the charitable care of the church.

Pastoral work is understood as care going out from the church or Christian community directed at all communities and not only to the "church community". This may, indeed, raise certain questions about what is meant by the word *community*. In this study, "community" refers to the community of believers or church community but also to the wider social and geographical community the church is involved with.²² This differs from, for instance, the approach of, say, T F J Dreyer. Dreyer (1981a:11) describes pastoral work as:²³ "dié besondere gestalte van die kerklike verkondiging as geheel, wat binnegemeentelik van aard is en daarom gerig is tot diegene wat reeds doop- en belydende lidmate van die kerk is". The researcher agrees with Alastair Campbell (1985:66) when he says:

17 . "There is nostalgia for a communal life that is passing or has already passed under the conditions of a high-tech world" (Winter 1989:2).

18 . The researcher agrees with Bosch (1991:349) who says that the postmodern paradigm is an emerging paradigm and at the moment we think and work in terms of both the modern and the postmodern paradigms.

19 . It is dangerous to idealise a "community approach" especially the homogenic character of communities and in the process try to escape the realities of a modern world. This danger exists especially in a country like South Africa where about 50% of people live in rural areas, and many people long for the "community atmosphere" of the rural areas. This situation is changing rapidly. The pass laws, which prohibited black people from moving freely to the cities, kept urbanization artificially low. This has changed with the scrapping of the pass laws in 1986 (cf Kok & Gelderblom 1988; Kok 1990; Simkins 1990:139). Many people are coming to the cities and people who used to live in pre-modern communities are becoming part of modern or even postmodern social contexts.

20 . Brister (1964:16-19) discusses in detail the servant motif as a foundation for pastoral care. Cf Lk 22:27; Mt 20:28; Jh 13:4-11; Phlp 2:7-8; Mt 10:1-39; 1 Pt 2:5,9; 2 Cor 5:18; Col 1:7; 1 Cor 16:15.

21 . References in square brackets ([]) refer to a page in **this study/ thesis**.

22 . Cf chapter 4 of this study for a more in-depth discussion of the concept *community* [cf p 261].

23 . "Consequently, pastoral care occurs within the realm of the church ... It presupposes membership in the body of Christ, or it has this membership as its purpose" (Thurneysen 1962:53).

Pastoral care dissolves the boundary between the church and the world, since it mediates a love that knows no bounds. It is the opening of the body to the world, with all the danger of hurt that that implies, so that what is good within it may be shared by others. Thus the context of pastoral care is neither the Christian community exclusively, nor merely the society within which that community is established.

The term *community pastoral work* may sound strange because traditionally the pastoral care of the church is directed to individuals. This is not an attempt to add another field to practical theology, but rather to broaden the scope of the pastoral work field, though the church has a long tradition which held that individual pastoral care is the typical pastoral care. (cf Becker 1965:33, 36). Becker (1965:36), describes what he calls *congregational care* as an important approach to caring.²⁴ Community pastoral work is a further extension of Becker's congregational care.

This study will investigate the possibility of a community pastoral care in the 90's, realising that the modern trend seem to be that of self-fulfilment (self-realisation) that comes from the pursuit of self-(individual) interest rather than through community involvement. But this does not per se exclude a community pastoral approach, depending on how the word "community" is understood. Pityana (1989:108), in referring to the African world-view of community, writes:

But community is also a means of self-realization when, in the African idiom, we are who we are because of others. A community expresses the common will, realizes and dispenses the common wealth.

The importance of the theory of communicative actions as described by Pieterse (1993c) and others is accepted as a metatheory for practical theology. The study itself will put more emphasis on ecosystemic thinking not in opposition to communicative operational theory, but as a complementary paradigm (cf Pieterse 1993c:49).

One of the issues related to this study, which will not be discussed in detail, is the role of the state and of the church as far as support for the needy is concerned (cf Du Toit 1982). Change in the political climate and policies in South Africa may lead to an expectation that care for those in need will come from the state.²⁵ This is the attitude of (church) people in the Netherlands, for example (Van der Ven 1993a:285).²⁶ The state has a certain responsibility; but so has the church.

24. Becker (1965) describes the care of individuals as "extraordinary pastoral care". He sees congregational care as a form of care in which lay people are involved and which is specifically organised. "*Congregational care* means many small units of a congregation entered upon a discipline of life together".

25. Cf Plant et al (1989). Plant argues that the question of pastoral care to the poor in the inner cities in England is an invitation to think theologically about some of the fundamental political realities of the day, e.g. the lack of social support from the state.

26. "De zorg voor de maatschappelijk gedepriveerden is niet langer in handen van individuele personen (*caritas*). Het stelsel van de sociale rechtstaat neem deze zorg waar. Dit heeft gevolgen voor de alledaagse levensvoering..." (Van der Ven 1993a:285). De Swaan (1988:255) puts it as follows:

This study takes place at a time in the history of the world (and especially all countries in Africa south of the Sahara) where the whole world is facing an AIDS pandemic. The church and the pastoral work of the church cannot ignore it. There is a growing need for the church to become involved. The reality is that person-to-person counselling requires specialised training and takes a lot of time, money and effort. For the pastor to provide adequate support to all those in need is virtually impossible. Customarily, pastoral work is seen as the peculiar province of the pastor. It may well be that the structure of the parish reinforces this attitude. It is clear that in the years to come the pastoral workload will increase manifold because of the social phenomenon of AIDS.²⁷ This study takes it as a point of departure that pastoral work is not a focus on the ministry of the clergy only, but includes the whole Christian community. Recently the Protestant churches rediscovered the important role of the priesthood of the believer.²⁸

A comprehensive model for pastoral work has not been explored in detail because it is a task too great for a study like this and it is also not the main aim of this study. In the light of the changing and pluralistic society we live in and of the challenges posed to practical theology and pastoral work, this study is interested in reframing²⁹ the approach to pastoral work. This study only offers a broad framework (or paradigm) for the development of a more community orientated pastoral work approach and should be seen as a springboard for further exploration.

Humanitarian and proletarian sensibilities have increasingly made way for a social consciousness: an awareness of interdependency and a sense of responsibility for the plight of others is combined with the conviction that these others ought to be helped, but not anymore by anyone in particular: "Something ought to be done about it." If there is misery, "it must be taken care of" - not by the beholder, but by something else, by "it", by the hidden subject of all these phrases in the passive mode: the state. The state is the abstract, universal and anonymous caretaker of all members of society.

27 . It is necessary to provide an approach to pastoral work that will make it possible to equip and enable the church to handle an increasing workload.

28 . In a certain sense, it is fashionable nowadays to say that the whole congregation must be involved and that church members must assume their role as part of the body of Christ. Cf Heyns' (1991) article about the priesthood of all believers. The importance of the church's laity is not something new in our time. Brister (1964:18) makes out a case for the involvement of all Christians in the caring activities of the church. Brister (1964:92) quotes from the *Christian Century* (October 1962) where the involvement of the laity in the church was called "the greatest new Christian fact of our time". See also Becker (1965).

29 . "That reframing therefore demands high priority among those called to the church's work of ministry with, among, and by God's people in our time" (Gerkin 1991:12).

1.2 METHODOLOGICAL POINT OF DEPARTURE

The nature of practical theology in South Africa lies partly in the history of practical theology itself and partly in the peculiarities of academic theology in South Africa (Ackermann 1996:37).

The study (and doing) of theology is not an objective activity. For instance, the division of theology into the study of the Bible, systematic theology, church history and practical theology already reflects something of the spirit of the Enlightenment. Ackermann (1996:37) relates this divisional approach to theology to the German *Aufklärung*. This section will discuss the broad point of departure of this study, namely practical theology [1.2.1] as a communicative operational science [1.2.2]. It also discusses the word "pastoral" in more detail [1.2.3].

1.2.1 Practical theology or diaconology

This study makes use of the term "practical theology". It is important to elaborate on the differences between practical theology and diaconology because it is more than just a difference in terminology.³⁰ It implies a certain point of departure and a certain understanding of theology.

Kuyper (at the end of the nineteenth century) rejected the name practical theology proposing diaconological or "official subjects" instead. There is a school of thought, also in South Africa (W D Jonker; J J de Klerk), who follows in the footsteps of Abraham Kuyper in using the term diaconology.³¹ According to Jonker (1981a:34), if human communication, with its emphasis on the subjective knowledge of human experience, becomes the object of practical theology instead of the knowledge of God, then practical theology will become a theological supplementary subject and not really a full theological subject in its own right (cf Van Wyk 1989:28).

Diaconology is understood to be the theological subject which studies the service aspect (*diakonia*) of the church (Pieterse 1981:144). Pieterse (1981:144) is of the opinion that the word "diaconology" reduces the subject of study to the theological field. It becomes the theological study of the offices of the church.

There is a need for more than just the theological study of the Word. The pastoral acts of the church must also take cognisance of an empirical analysis and study the social sciences.³² These are the "twin horns"

30. The spelling of the word "diaconology" in English gives some problems. "Diaconology" seems to be the best English translation, although it may be argued that the Greek word *diakonia* should be translated as "diaconiology" (this spelling is followed by the South African Journal *Practical Theology in South Africa*). But then it could also be argued that the spelling should be "diakoniology".

31. See Van Wyk (1989). He discusses some of the main theologians in the field of practical theology/ diaconology in South Africa.

32. The concept *empirical* refers to a process. Pieterse (1993c:26-27) describes it as follows:

Empiriese ondersoek geskied deur distansiëring, objectivering en deur beskrywing, verkenning en verklaring... Navorsingsdata word volgens 'n vaste en sistematiese metode ingesamel. Die gegewens

(König 1982a:21) of the "dilemma" of practical theology. The term "practical theology" with its emphasis on both practical and theology makes it clear that the object is the Word of God and the empirical study of human communication. Heyns and Pieterse (1990:1) put it clearly: "The object of practical theology is people's religious actions."

God cannot be the object of empirical research and scientific study. Therefore it is very clear that God is not the object of empirical research as far as practical theology is concerned (Pieterse 1993c:25).³³ Scientific methods can be used only in studying God's revelation as witnessed in the Bible and by studying people's faithful actions and the actions of the community of faith (the church) (Heyns & Pieterse 1990:67). Van der Ven (1993b:30) agrees with Schleiermacher and R R Niebuhr that the "direct object of theology must be our experiential knowledge of God".

In the beginning the scientific character of practical theology was queried³⁴ because it sets out to be practical. Fortunately, practical theology has proven to be scientific in its approach and empirical in its study.³⁵ Recently the theological character of practical theology has been questioned (Jonker). This questioning comes from theologians with a specific approach to theology. They are known to be from the school of thought which prefers to speak of diaconology in imitation of Kuyper.

Barnard's (1981:45) evaluation of the Kuyperian understanding is that it puts the emphasis on the offices of the church. The offices of the church then become the main thrust of diaconology: "Kuyper sien wel reg in

wat ingesamel word, is gegewens wat in die werklikheid bestaan - daarom heet dit empiriese gegewens. Die doel van die navorsing is om die empiriese gegewens te verstaan - daarom vind daar veralgemening van bevindinge plaas aan die einde van 'n navorsingsprojek.

33. "Daar is konsensus in die teologie dat God onkenbaar is vir wetenskaplike ondersoek (Dingemans, 1990:100). God is alleen kenbaar in die beoefening van die christelike geloof,... Teologiese ondersoek en refleksie is 'n ander aktiwiteit. Teologiese ondersoek en refleksie bestudeer menslike getuienisse omtrent hul ervaring met God" (Pieterse 1993c:25).

34. A person like Lillienfeld (1988:ix, xiv) questions the idea of a "social science". It obviously depends on how the concept "science" is understood. König (1989a) discusses the move away from a positivistic view of science and defines (1989a:14) theology as a science as follows:

Like natural science, the theological community has a 'normal science' with its classical authors, textbooks and teachers, which is characterized by a cumulative growth of knowledge, by a solution of remaining problems ('puzzles'), and by resistance to everything that might result in a changing or replacement of the established paradigm.

35. Habermas has broadened the understanding of the notion "science" with his communicative rationality theory. Pieterse (1993a:197-203) discusses Habermas's ontological supposition. Rationality cannot be described just in terms of object-subject relations. Rationality must be analyzed in terms of the communicative quality of the subject-object relation.

dat dit in hierdie vakgebied gaan om die diakonia van die kerk, maar sy fout is dat hy diakonia nie vertaal met 'diens' nie, maar met 'amp'.³⁶

According to Barnard (1981:45), Kuyper also limits the service of the church to the church as institution and neglects the task of the church in the world. Hendriks (1992:199) has great respect for Kuyper's emphasis on "the word of God" as point of departure, but is of the opinion that Kuyper's definition of theology is very narrow and means that no theology other than systematic theology is possible. Diaconology becomes the systematic theology of the offices and service aspects of the church. Hendriks (1992:199-200) goes on to say that the clerical paradigm of being church is central to Kuyper's model. Kuyper's understanding may lead to a form of orthodoxism where the church and society are separated. Theology becomes an academic study of the word of God.

Van Wyk (1989:16) makes it clear that the underlying question is: What is theology? The question of theology is closely related to the question of the object of theology. Firet (1970:325) writes as follows:

Als b.v. Kuyper - en in aansluiting aan hem onlangs W.D. Jonker en Trimp - van 'diakoniologie' spreken, is dat niet alleen en niet in de eerste plaats omdat zij voorkeur hebben voor een naam die het objekt wat duidelijker aanduidt, maar dan is dat omdat hun conceptie van wat theologie is en van wat de kerk en haar praxis is een andere is dan de opvattingen die gangbaar zijn in die kringen waar de naam praktische theologie ingang vond.

Jonker (1981a:29) agrees with Firet's evaluation. For Jonker, God is the subject of all theology and the Scriptures the only way to know God. The study of Scripture should be the basis of all theological actions, also in diaconology. God's revelation in Scripture is the object of study for those who study diaconology (Afrikaans: diakonioloë) (Van Wyk 1989:155). Within this understanding of theology and the task of diaconology it is impossible to be busy with theory forming as proposed by practical theologians (Van Wyk 1989:37).

Van Wyk (1989) makes a thorough analysis of Jonker and De Klerk's theology and comes to the conclusion that they work with a particular understanding of revelation which influences their view of Scripture. In their view, theology is the attempted systematisation of the truths written in Scripture. This obviously influences their anthropology and ecclesiology.

They make use of normative-deductive thinking when they approach practical problems. From a set of dogmatic values they move to the problem (Van Wyk 1989:110).³⁷ Pieterse (1981:145; 1993c:171) is

36. Jonker (1968:17-19), who follows very closely in the footsteps of Kuyper, criticises Kuyper for this view (cf Van Wyk 1989:132). Trimp (1988:180-181), who agrees with Kuyper and Jonker that the term "diaconology" should be used, says: "Daarom zullen wij niet kunnen volstaan met de simpele omschrijving dat diakonia 'ambt' is of het ambt 'diakonia' is. Er is méér diakonia dan ambt en er is meer dan diakonia in het ambt."

37. Van Wyk (1989:114) says: "Die diakonioloë (Jonker en De Klerk) beoefen 'n bepaalde gereformeerde teologie wat beslissend is vir hulle beskouing oor die diakoniologie".

critical of this deductive method of theologising where the starting point of any investigation is theology, and principles for pastoral action are deduced from this theology. He argues that this is the result of Neo-Scholastic thought which prevents practical theology from becoming an independent theological discipline, but keeps practical theology in the shadow of systematic theology.³⁸ Furniss (1994:102-103) comes out very strongly against what he calls a neo-orthodox style of ministering from a deductive perspective. Furniss (1994:103) believes that pastoral workers³⁹ who work with a deductive approach should be confined to people with direct affiliation to their congregations. A deductive approach is not suitable when working in institutions like hospitals where people of different religious backgrounds are in need of care.

The criticism of diaconology is that it is related to a specific view of what theology is. That view is very exclusively and narrowly defined as "the study of the Word of God". According to Wolfaardt (1978:270), it is not scientifically critical enough. The contributions of other subjects are viewed as only auxiliary sciences⁴⁰ and true interaction and cross-fertilisation between sciences are not taken seriously. Theology remains the "queen of the sciences".

Heitink (1983b:17) describes practical theology as follows:

Praktische Theologie is niet 'praktisch' in die zin, dat het zou gaan om een louter technologische benadering, bestaande uit aanwijzingen voor toepassing van de theologie in de praktijk. Binnen de theologie heeft de Praktische Theologie voor alles een hermeneutische funktie.

The interpretation (hermeneutics)⁴¹ of the "word of God" has become a study field on its own in this century. Hermeneutics opened a totally new understanding of the study of "the word of God". Hermeneutics makes it clear that numerous factors influence the understanding of "the word of God". Together with these developments in hermeneutics there are also the developments that take place as far as the positivistic view of science is concerned (cf Fiske & Shweden 1986). Pieterse (1993c:62ff) maintains that we may even

38. This does not mean that deductive reasoning *per se* is unacceptable. Heyns and Pieterse (1990:26) make it clear that "practical theology uses both methods of reasoning". The problem is when only one way of reasoning is accepted.

39. This study makes use of the word *pastoral worker* to refer to the person who is doing pastoral work. It may be a minister of religion or a lay worker.

40. According to Thumeyen (1962:202), practical theology may use psychology as an auxiliary science as long as the Word of God remains supreme. "True pastoral counsellors have always been true psychologists" (Thumeyen 1962:202). All that practical theology can say about pastoral care must be deduced from theology (Hawkes 1984:40-41).

41. Müller (1991a:92) has the following explanation for the origin of the word "hermeneutics": "The term hermeneutic is closely associated etymologically with Hermes in Greek mythology. Hermes, the messenger of the gods, had the task of transmitting divine communication into a form which can be grasped by human intelligence."

speak of a paradigm shift⁴² in the social sciences. These developments in hermeneutics and in science are important for our understanding of theology.

Diaconology concentrates too much on the offices of the church. Although Jonker criticises Kuyper for his narrow definition, he himself does not succeed in totally breaking out of that frame of thought. Van Wyk (1989:138) is convinced that Jonker and De Klerk do not succeed in breaking away from what is known as the pastoral-theological approach.⁴³ In this approach the main focus is the pastor and the proclamation of the gospel.

D Louw (1992:124) asks whether there really is a difference between the different approaches.⁴⁴ He does not answer that question directly, but suggests that practical theology should be more theological and diaconology more practical. Burger (1991a:85) feels that it is unnecessary to choose between what he calls a phenomenological (or empirical) and theological approach.⁴⁵

42. A paradigm shift could be described as a radical transformation of the scientific imagination (Barbour 1990:34). According to Kuhn (1970), paradigms are the products of particular historical communities.

43. This should not be confused with the term *pastoral theology*. Caldwell (1978:91) defines pastoral theology as:

theology done from a pastoral perspective of responsible concern for the proclamation of the gospel, the mission of the church in the world, the cure of souls, and the worship of God; that it uses a hermeneutic method of relating the case and the tradition; in order to provide an interpretation or understanding of the word of God which is true to the tradition and for the pastoral case.

In an attempt to distinguish between practical theology and pastoral theology, Caldwell (1978:222) struggles with the question of the method of pastoral theology. He (1978:86) understands pastoral theology to be a type of practical theology useful for the pastoral task of the church. Hawkes (1984:38) points out that the terms "pastoral theology" and "practical theology" have been used with a variety of meanings. Practical theology tends to be used in a wider sense and pastoral theology in a narrower sense, restricted to the study of ordained ministry or to pastoral work.

Graham (1992:20) defines pastoral theology as "the branch of theology which develops theoretical understandings of and practical guidelines for the ministry of care". Graham (1992:20) is convinced that pastoral theology has an "individualistic bias". He tries to correct it by broadening the scope of pastoral theology by bringing "theory and practice of care into realtionship with the larger systemic realities impacting the psyches of those providing and receiving care".

44. Louw (1993:xii) is of the opinion that what he calls the "kerygmatic approach" and the "empirical approach" have moved closer to each other.

45. It is not clear exactly what Burger (1991a:85) understands by the "fenomenologiese benadering". Cf Pieterse (1993c: 73-78) for a discussion of the phenomenological approach in practical theology.

To summarise: It is clear from this discussion, that, in their historical sense both "diaconology" and "practical theology" are sources of controversy. The word "practical theology", however, is acceptable to the wider community of theologians and is identified with an empirical-critical methodology. This makes it the best phrase to use for those who identify themselves with this method of theologising. It is also clear that even theologians who work in a university department known as the "Department of Diaconology" use the term "practical theology" when they refer to the scientific study which focuses on people's religious and communicative actions (cf Louw 1992; Hendriks 1990; Burger 1995a).

Theology more and more is understood as a hermeneutical process (Hendriks 1992:202).⁴⁶ Gerkin (1984:19ff; 1986:22, 59ff) understands practical theology in terms of hermeneutical theory and develops a narrative hermeneutical practical theology. What is needed in our time is not only exegesis of the Biblical text, but also analysis of the situation. An empirical study of the situation is often necessary. Nowadays it is not possible to make absolute interpretations of Scripture or find simple answers. Both the questions and answers are fundamentally influenced by the intellectual formation and current situation of the theologian/researcher.

This study favours the term "practical theology", which also fits in with this researcher's understanding of theology as an activity in which theory and praxis⁴⁷ are hermeneutically interrelated, and where church and society are contextually interrelated (cf Cochrane ea. 1991).

1.2.2 Practical theology as a communicative operational science

Practical theology is an operational science, which is busy with communicative actions. The term "operational science" refers to the German word *Humanwissenschaften* or human science or even behavioural science. Heitink (1993:124) is of the opinion that the latter term may have a limited scope in the sense that it refers to a descriptive-analytical approach, while operational science refers to both a descriptive-analytical approach (which describes and explains) and an approach which influences and changes reality. An approach which influences and changes reality should be seen as an anthropological approach where human beings are seen as being able to choose, to intervene and to take responsibility (Heitink 1993:125; cf Furet 1987:261). The emphasis in practical theology is on the "communicative" aspect of actions (Furet 1987:260-261).

Practical theologians like Heyns and Pieterse (1990:7-10) maintain that practical theology is a science in its own right because it is engaged in theological theorising and applies scientific methods. Practical theology "analyses praxis scientifically" (Heyns & Pieterse 1990:10). This change came in this century, especially

46. Louw (1993:xiii, 82) uses a hermeneutical approach to describe pastoral work and describes practical theology as a "hermeneutical science".

47. According to Heitink (1983b:17), the term "praxis" refers to "handelen, waarop die PT als handelingswetenschap zich richt, is meer dan het pastoraal optreden of het kerkelijk handelen. God kan ook langs andere wegen tot mensen komen".

since the Second World War. Pieterse (1988b:63) mentions the emphasis of hermeneutical theology on the historical situation and the important role which "experience" started to play as factors which play a role in practical theology becoming a subject in its own right.⁴⁸

In a sense, practical theology introduces a new method to theological research, namely the empirical method of research (Van der Ven 1988; 1993b; Pieterse 1986b). The empirical method should complement the exegetical and the hermeneutical method already used in theology. Some criticism against the empirical method is that God cannot be measured empirically. For practical theologians, this is not a valid argument because the same can be said about the other methods already mentioned. Practical theology is basically directed at the visible actions of Christians and the church as such and not specifically at God. The actions of Christians, in service of the Word of God, are visible and measurable (Pieterse 1986b:65).

A method alone is not enough. There is a need for theories to be developed. It is necessary for practical theologians to develop their own theological theories and not to just go on using the theories of the other subjects in human sciences. One theory which practical theologians have adapted for use in practical theology is a dialogical communicative operational theory. Pieterse (1988:181) describes communicative actions as the object of practical theology. For that reason, well-developed communication theories are very important for the subject practical theology.

Hawkes (1984:42-43), who favours the critical engagement between theology and praxis, is of the opinion that for the practical theologian, H J C Pieterse, theology still remains normative and above his social analysis, although a back and forth movement between theology and social analysis is evident. Hawkes (1984:46) is of the opinion that the role of theology is very difficult to define because of the nature of theology. The dialogue between theology and practice is an exercise in creative imagination with all the ambiguity and inconclusiveness which this implies (Hawkes 1984:47 referring to Campbell 1972).

Pieterse (1993c:108-113) summarises the benefits for practical theology of working with an operational science approach and mentions the following: (a) It gives to practical theology a clear theoretical basis and methodology from where to operate and confirms practical theology's position as an independent discipline and not only the application side of theology. (b) The theory-praxis relationship is taken very seriously. Praxis could be critically investigated with the help of the critical theory perspective, underlying the operational science approach, and empirically investigated. (c) Practical theology's relationship with other theological disciplines became more creative because practical theology could serve could serve theology now much better. (d) Practical theology's relationship with the other social sciences improves, and a truly interdisciplinary relationship is busy developing. (e) The object of practical theology has broadened. Practical theology's focus is now much broader than the traditional focus on the offices of the church and is directed to all the actions of the church. (f) Over the last few years it has broadened even more to include not only the actions of the church, but human actions in the light of the gospel.

48. cf Slabbert (1992:50): "Die eksistensiële, fenomenologiese en hermeneutiese benaderinge kon al drie ook vir religieuse kommunikasie as vertrekpunt gedien het".

This study places less emphasis on the "scientific character" and "independent character" of practical theology activated by the operational science approach. For this study, the "communicative aspect" and the "praxis-theory" aspect are particularly important. The broadening of the object of practical theology by the operational science approach is taken as a basis for this study as well as the interdisciplinary aspect. This study accepts as a point of departure a communicative theological operational science approach. This point of departure is understood within a broader framework, namely an ecosystemic metaparadigm.

1.2.2.1 Communicative operational theory

A well-known word in our time is "communication". Rousseau (1988:410, cf 415) sees the need for a "communication paradigm for theology" because it will bring theology into line with recent trends in philosophy of science and help to challenge the one-dimensional approach in Bible interpretation. According to Rousseau (1988:416):

... the challenge is to capture the simplicity of a multidimensional⁴⁹ communication paradigm and turn it into a meaningful and workable model. In this way one will be able to do justice to the fact that the Bible is part of everyday human communication.

Heyns and Pieterse (1990:50) describe communication as the base⁵⁰ theory underlying all actions of the church and practical theology. This communicative praxis⁵¹ takes place in the context of God's kingdom and should be understood in the light of God's communicative actions in the Bible. He sent his Son and He is still continuing to speak to us through his Spirit (Jn 16:7-8). People in the church community communicate with one another and with people outside the church community to serve the cause of the gospel.

According to Pieterse (1993c:2), consensus already exists that practical theology as a subject is busy with communicative actions in service of the gospel (cf Fiet 1987:260). Practical theologians study the communicative actions⁵² between God and human beings and between human beings and human beings in service of the gospel. To study these communicative actions also means to study the dynamic events that go with them (cf Pieterse 1993c:2). Pieterse (1993c:7) says that fundamental to communicative actions

49. "Die werklikheid word in die postmoderne benadering gesien as veelduidig, meerdimensioneel" (Pieterse 1993c:16).

50. Heyns and Pieterse (1990) use the term "basic theory" for "basisteorie", the term "base theory" is preferable according to UNISA's Editorial Department.

51. Hawkes (1984:42) remarks that Pieterse uses the words "praxis" and "practice" interchangeably.

52. "Handelen is niet per se *communicatief handelen*; daarvan spreken we, als het handelen geschiedt in een interactie-situatie, meer bepaald: in een relatie tussen subjecten. Bij 'communicatie' denken we aan het process van het zenden en ontvangen van berichten tussen de subjecten over en weer... In een tussen-persoonlijke relatie vindt altijd communicatie plaats - 'men kan niet nie *kommuniseren*', luidt één van de metacommunicatieve axiomas van Watzlawick ..." (Fiet 1987:261).

in service of the gospel is the *community of new people*.⁵³ The congregation is involved in communicative actions with God, with each other and with society. These communicative acts cannot take place in a vacuum. It is thus necessary to acknowledge the importance and influence of the context of the society in which they take place (Pieterse 1993c:8). It is necessary to take the local context as well as the world context seriously because the world has become a "global village" (Pieterse 1993c:13).

Habermas's critical communicative action⁵⁴ theory is the inspiration behind the communications operational theory in practical theology (Pieterse 1993c; Heitink 1993; Van der Ven 1993b). Habermas is known for his project on a critical theory of society (Pieterse 1993c:90). He understands society as a network of communicative action patterns. According to Pieterse (1993c:94), communicative actions can be understood as "die ideale omgang van mense met mekaar".

Habermas (1929) can be connected⁵⁵ with the group of neo-Marxists in Germany known as the Frankfurt School.⁵⁶ Dissatisfied with the state of Marxian theory, they started with what is known as "critical theory". Inspired by Marx's work, they criticised society, but they were critical of the deterministic and mechanistic Marxists and the deterministic tendencies in Marx's work. They felt, for instance, that focusing just on the economic level is not enough. They were also very concerned about positivism⁵⁷ and its influence on scientific inquiry. Siebert (1985:6) analyses Habermas's theories and says of Habermas and positivism:

53. "Grondliggend aan kommunikatiewe handeling in diens van die evangelie is die *gemeenskap van nuwe mense in die gemeente*" (Pieterse 1993c:7).

54. According to Bernstein (1991:203), Habermas first spoke of "symbolic interaction" and later called it "communicative action".

55. Pieterse (1993c:90) quotes Bernstein, who believes that, although Habermas became professor in Frankfurt in 1965 and although he worked as an assistant to Adorno, it is not possible to classify him as one of the Frankfurt School. Nel (1988:152) also makes a distinction between Habermas and the Frankfurt School. This is interesting because Habermas is often described, in literature, as one of the Frankfurt School (cf Siebert 1985).

56. In 1923 a group of intellectuals decided, as a reaction against the "reactionary conservatism" of the German universities, to create an "independent socialist intellectual institution" and founded the *Institut für Sozialforschung* in Frankfurt. The first director, Carl Grünberg was a Marxist, although Lenin was very critical of the "Frankfurt German Lefts". In 1931 Horkheimer became the next director. He was more interested in critical history than Marxism as such. Later Adorno and Marcuse became known as representatives of the Institute. They were involved in the development of "a critical theory of society" (De Sousa 1975:99).

57. Positivism refers to a belief that the methods and principles of Newtonian science apply to human beings. Logical positivism refers to the Wiener Kreiss (Weense Sirkel) view that only the Newtonian approach to science is really science and that this is the only framework for human reality. If something cannot be understood or proved in terms of Newtonian science, it does not exist. Reality is seen as an objective premise with an unchangeable structure, which exists independently of human knowledge. Human knowledge can also be acquired objectively through systematic empirical observation. Logical positivism is much more radical than positivism (cf De Lange 1990:30-31; Pieterse 1993c:55-56). Most of the time when people refer to positivism, they are, in effect, referring to logical positivism as described above.

It is therefore the very anti-positivism of the critical theory in general and of Habermas's theory of communicative praxis in particular which can gain new space for messianic religion and theology as, e.g., described by the critical theorist Benjamin, or the critical political theologian Metz.

One of the problems with positivism is that it tends to reify the social world (and existing social order) and see that as a natural process and forgets about human activity. It is important that theory and praxis be related to each other. The critical school also opposes scientific approaches which make the scientific method an end in itself and accept the social order uncritically. It criticises modern society and the technocratic thinking in modern society, especially modern technology which often appeals to absolute rationality as justification for its actions. Technology is not necessarily rational, neutral and objective as it pretends to be, and can be used to oppress people and societies. Siebert (1994:3) gives an account of an interview with Max Horkheimer a year before his death. Horkheimer expresses his concern with late modern society where romantic love as well as all things spiritual and emotional are disappearing. All that remains are things that are purposive and utilitarian and which can be proven to be scientifically true. Sorrow, for example, which belongs to emotions is also disappearing. (Horkheimer's concern is also the concern of this study.) Habermas believes that there is a relationship between knowledge and interest; positivism denies this by erecting models of objective scientific knowledge (Ackermann 1993:24).

In a sense it is possible to speak of the end of the Frankfurt School of thought (Ritzer 1988). Gergen (1994:197) is of the opinion that the critical theory "has been hybridized and absorbed into various intellectual pursuits, and can no longer be associated with any single economic, political, or psychological orientation." At present Jürgen Habermas is the most known person from the critical theory school, although some scholars find it difficult to definitely define him within that category (Ritzer 1988:256). Broadly speaking, Habermas can also be placed in the tradition known as subjectivism (Johnson et al. 1984:205) with the rest of the hermeneutical tradition, like Ricoeur and Gadamer.⁵⁸

Habermas (1979:95) describes his theoretical goal as a programme to develop a reconstruction of historical materialism. Habermas makes a distinction between work (labour/ purposive-rational action) and social interaction (communicative action). The end of purposive rational action is to achieve a goal, the objective of communicative action is to achieve communicative understanding (cf Habermas 1989:286). That is the most pervasive human phenomenon. While Marx concentrates on work, Habermas focuses on communication.

Habermas wants a rational society. Rationality means the removal of the barriers that distort communication. More than that, it means a communication system in which ideas are openly presented and defended against criticism. He distinguishes between communication and discourse. Communication happens in everyday life. Discourse is communication that takes place in an ideal situation where force and power do not determine which arguments win, but the best argument wins on the grounds of its evidence and argumentation. Such an argument will be valid because it is based on consensus. In theory, consensus

58 . Cf Pieterse (1993c:79-88), who discusses Ricoeur and Gadamer in detail.

refers to something that is understandable; reliable knowledge is offered; the speaker is reliable; the speaker has the right to utter such claims. Society is not only busy with communication, it is also busy with material reproduction, which Habermas calls "systems". Examples of systems are the state and the economy⁵⁹ (Heitink 1993:135).⁶⁰

Communication is central to pastoral work and to pastoral care and counselling. In the communications process distortions may, for example, be caused by racism and sexism. It is especially important for the pastoral work situation in South Africa (cf Müller 1991a; Msomi 1993) where the separation of societies for so many years has resulted in stereotypical perceptions of each other and where ideologies play such an important role. A critical communication theory for pastoral work should help us to become consciously aware of these distortions (cf Müller 1991a:189). Within a systems paradigm, communication is just as important because of the importance of communication between systems. Auerwald (1968:204) puts it very aptly:

It (the systems approach - FN) focuses precisely on the interface and communication processes taking place there. It begins with an analysis of the *structure* of the field, using the common structural and operational properties of systems as criteria for identifying the systems and sub-systems within it. And by tracing the **communications within and between systems** (my emphasis - FN), it insists that the structure, sources, pathways, repository sites and integrative functions of messages become clear in addition to their content. In my opinion, this plus the holistic nonexclusive nature of the approach, minimizes the dangers of excessive selectivity in the collection of data and allows for much more clarity in the contextual contributions to its analysis.

Habermas⁶¹ is not only important for his theories about communication. His dialectic approach emphasises a circular hermeneutical process (Lazarus 1988:125). This circular process is also central to cybernetics, which could be used to explain the relationship between theory and praxis; church and society and between individuals and their community. Habermas's (1992:240) communicative action presupposes the idea of undistorted intersubjectivity. He is "guardian of reason" (Bernstein 1991:218), but the reason he stands for is dialogical, communicative and intersubjective. According to Siebert (1994:26), the principle of communicative action as unfolded by Jürgen Habermas lies embedded in "an eminently ecclesiological connection".

59. Cf Remenyi (1991:1), who describes poverty in Third World Countries as "systemic poverty".

60. The term "systems" is not the same as ecosystems, which will be discussed in the next chapter. Habermas got the term from the sociologist Parsons. It will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter [cf p 89].

61. It is important that future researchers investigate the importance of people like Helmut Peukert for practical theology. Siebert (1994:18) puts it as follows:

Helmut Peukert tries to build a new foundation for comparative religiology and theology by starting from the aporia (a-poria - no way; dead end street), in which every theory of communicative action must necessarily come to an end - be it Talcott Parsons's, Nicolas Luhmann's, Joachim Wach's or Thomas Luckmann's structural-functional system theory, Karl-Otto Apel's formal pragmatic, or Jürgen Habermas's universal pragmatic.

To summarise: Habermas's critical communication operational theory helps practical theologians to (a) discover and develop the role communication plays in pastoral work; (b) be aware of the critical relationship between praxis and theory; (c) Habermas, with his view of rationality, broadens the scope of the concept "science"⁶² and, with his understanding of truth, breaks through the subject-object scheme of thought and replaces it with a subject-subject relation (cf Pieterse 1993c:181, 187). Habermas is not a naive *Aufklärer*, but he is profoundly aware of the ambiguities and conflicts of the Enlightenment legacy (Bernstein 1991:218). Ackermann (1993:26) believes that critical theory, as formulated by Habermas, "provides practical theology done in the South African context with a finely-honed scalpel to analyze and excise oppressive ideologies and structures while holding out the vision of an ideal situation of free communication in a liberated society consonant with the values of the reign of God". According to Ackermann (1993:27), for a critical theology to promote a liberating reflection should lead to conscientisation.

At the same time it must be kept in mind that there is a turning point away from the talk about praxis and action.⁶³ The new current of thought is more interested in the otherness and in the fuzzy world that exists than in specific actions. Although Habermas and communicative action theories still play an important role and are still accepted and used by many scholars, it is important that practical theologians be aware of the postmodern tendency away from certain of the concepts of the modern movement, for example, object and subject (cf Van Niekerk & Van Aarde 1991). An ecosystemic approach is not against the critical theories of Habermas and accepts the role Habermas and communication action theories play in moving away from positivism (cf Pieterse 1993c:13). An ecosystemic approach may help pastoral workers to move beyond Habermas and not in opposition to Habermas.

1.2.2.2 An empirical and hermeneutical science

Practical theology is known as a **theological operational science** because it focuses on religious actions (motivated by the love of Christ), performed in operational fields (cf Heyns & Pieterse 1990:38-39). It is not just actualising and transforming the theories of other theological disciplines for application in practice.⁶⁴ It

62. "Met sy kommunikatiewe rasionaliteitsopvatting het Habermas die begrip 'wetenskap' op 'n onomkeerbare wyse verbreed" (Pieterse 1993a:200).

63. The terms "praxis" and "action" have "...become the dominant concern of the most influential philosophic movements that have emerged since Hegel... *Praxis* is associated with the metaphysical humanism that Heidegger so devastatingly attacks. The entire thrust of Heidegger's thinking is to displace the question of *praxis* with a far more 'fundamental' question - the question of Being (*Seinsfrage*). Furthermore in much of the French poststructuralist writings there is scarcely even the mention of '*praxis*' - except as an object of suspicion" (Bernstein 1991:4)

64. This misunderstanding is because of the name *practical theology*, according to Jonker (1981a:11), who prefers the name *diaconology*. Heyns and Pieterse (1990:9) disagree with Jonker and believe the reason for the misunderstanding is the custom at universities and seminaries of including practical training as part of practical theology curricula. The main reason for the confusion is thus the history of practical theology. Practical theology clearly started historically as the "practical training department" of seminaries and theological colleges.

takes the praxis seriously, but so should all disciplines in theology (Van der Ven 1988:27). This implies that practical theology is not merely the application of theological insights, but that praxis is a factor in the theorising of practical theologians.⁶⁵

Praxis refers to concrete actions "by individuals or groups in the church or society aimed at furthering the kingdom of God" (Heyns & Pieterse 1990:26). The praxis of the church is not identical to the church practice (cf Van der Ven 1993a:10).⁶⁶ The concept of praxis in practical theology must be understood in its context, namely as hermeneutic-communicative praxis (Van der Ven 1993b:41). Van der Ven (1993b:46) believes that hermeneutic-communicative praxis is the basis of all praxis in practical theology. The term "hermeneutic-communicative" also refers to the fact that communication (written and spoken texts) can be verbal and non-verbal.

Human interaction can be understood in terms of communication. One of the most basic actions all pastors and lay people do all the time, while they are proclaiming the gospel, is to communicate. Communication is basic to all actions like preaching, caring, celebration, service and instruction (Heyns & Pieterse 1990:48).

"Hermeneutic" implies the decoding of the text; in the process a new text is created. This does not mean that only a single interpretation is possible. A plurality of interpretations is possible, influenced by the understanding of the interpreter of the present situation. Van der Ven (1993b:49) calls for a critical-practical hermeneutic which applies an ideology-critical paradigm.

Accepting the pluralistic character of hermeneutics and communication, a researcher could be prompted to appeal to traditional and doctrinal interpretations (Van der Ven 1993b:50). This and many other factors (cf. Van der Ven 1993b:49-59) suggest that the concept "praxis" as an act of communication in practical theology cannot be seen as a normatively free concept. Van der Ven (1993b:60-65) proposes four principles underlying hermeneutic-communicative praxis: freedom, equality, universality and solidarity. It must be kept in mind that all reflection takes place in the context of a wider world. Van der Ven (1993b:66) says: "Human communication cannot be defined exhaustively in normative reflection, because the meaning of human life transcends any normative considerations".

Heyns and Pieterse (1990:31) describe the relationship between theory and praxis as a bi-polar tension which can best be described by an ellipse. In such a relationship, both theory and praxis are autonomous while they remain interdependent. In the relationship theory-praxis, theory is critical of praxis, in this case

65 . Browning (1983a:13), says: "the difference between practice and praxis is that in the latter the theory has been made self-conscious and reflected upon critically". Pieterse (1993c:53) also makes use of this explanation of Browning in his description of the praxis moment in practical theology.

66 . "Deze contextuele ecclesiologie wordt ontwikkeld in praktisch-theologisch perspectief. Daarin wordt de nadruk gelegd op de praxis van de kerk. De praxis van de kerk is niet identiek aan haar praktijk. De praxis kan worden omschreven als die praktijk, waarin een transformatische oriëntatie werkzaam is. Deze oriëntatie kan naar twee aspecten worden onderscheiden, een cultureel en een structureel aspect" (Van der Ven 1993a:10).

church praxis, and praxis is critical of the underlying theory. This critical element is very important because this is the basis of a critical approach and will prevent uncritical adherence to either praxis or theory.

Our knowledge of the Bible is interpreted knowledge; interpreted mainly by exegetes and dogmaticians. From this interpretation of the Bible, certain beliefs are constructed. These interpretations and beliefs form the basis of the ecclesiastic and religious praxis. Experience teaches us that there is a disparity between the theory and the execution of religious praxis. Therefore there is a dynamic tension between the theory of praxis and its operation in the religious community.

Practical theology discovers, describes and explains this interaction between praxis and the Biblical ideal (Heyns & Pieterse 1990:73). It is important to keep in mind that this ideal is also the result of an interpretation of the Bible. Burger (1991a:21) sees it as a necessity that practical theologians have some knowledge of the new hermeneutics of Bible interpretation.⁶⁷

It is important to realise that there is no praxis without an underlying theory, even if the practitioner is not consciously aware of the underlying theory. Abstract theories are often bad theories. It is necessary to test theories in practice. The result is better theories and better practice.

To investigate the actions of the church community scientifically, this study makes use of an empirical methodology. Heyns and Pieterse (1990:69-70) discuss the value of an empirical methodology for practical theology and mention the following points:

- It enables practical theologians to define trends, associations and the like in exact terms.
- It has an explanatory value which helps practical theologians to develop theories.

The advantage of this is that theories can be related to praxis and praxis to theories. It helps in improving praxis and theories and helps the church to understand how the gospel should be communicated in real-life situations. One of the aims of practical theology is also to establish theories of the praxis of religious actions that can be tested in real-life situations. These theories must be evaluated, improved and refined on a continuing basis.

According to Van der Ven (1993b:77), the empirical approach is a method to describe and explain the hermeneutic-communicative praxis as it occurs in reality. At the same time it is also concerned with examining and modifying the praxis with a view to transcending its limits. The empirical results obtained in this process must be re-evaluated in the light of the hermeneutical-communicative praxis.

It is not the intention of practical theology, as an empirical theology, to formulate fixed laws (Van der Ven 1993b:31). It can at best only formulate probabilities also called hypotheses. This is all the more so if practical theology is using an ecosystemic approach where systems are not seen as fixed and finite, but as

67 . There is also another form of hermeneutics in question, namely hermeneutics of the social and political situation, which needs to be interpreted (cf De Gruchy 1994b: 9-11).

complementary, interactive, dynamic and with equifinal⁶⁸ dimensions (De Jongh van Arkel 1988b:225-235).

Practical theology should also be aware that the empirical without the hermeneutical dimension will lead to a reductionistic approach to theology. In chapter 5 of this study an empirical research project is discussed. This project is done within the context of practical theology as a hermeneutical science. Practical theology as a communicative praxis should be a liberating and renewing praxis.

Pastoral work as one field of practical theology is concerned with the therapeutic and caring actions of the church community. Browning points to the need to broaden the scope of practical theology to take the ethical implications into account. Ackermann (1993) emphasises the importance of taking the feminist critique seriously which would lead to a new understanding of what it means to be human (cf Ackermann 1993:21). It is the conviction of this study that the empirical approach should be broadened to become more contextual, therefore it is necessary to highlight the narrative character of theology.

1.2.2.3 The narrative structure of practical theology

Gerkin (1986:60), in referring to Fowler, understands practical theology to be "critical and constructive reflection on the praxis of the Christian community's life and work in its various dimensions". The individual and the community are involved in varying contextual arenas in this world thus it is possible to think of a "dispersed Christian community", says Gerkin (1986:61). He understands practical theology to be involved in a process of interpreting the Christian narrative in the context⁶⁹ of a wider world. The task of practical theology and the Christian community is to be involved in this fusion of horizons⁷⁰ of meaning.

The fusion of horizons is not a simple synthesis of perspectives.⁷¹ Horizons will be in conflict and contradict one another because of the pluralistic society in which we live. The individual and the community can be involved in this process. According to Gerkin (1986), practical theology is being done whenever one or another of those horizons of meaning is critically correlated with the horizon of the Christian story.

68 . "The teleological character of open systems is called equifinality" (De Jongh van Arkel 1988b:233). "While the final state is unequivocally determined by the initial conditions in closed systems, we find that the same final state may be reached from different initial conditions and in different ways in open systems. This is called equifinality. The final state has a value equifinal or independent of initial conditions" (De Jongh van Arkel 1988b:235).

69 . "Context" should not be understood as a closed system. It refers to the placing (of something) at a particular moment - that moment is shaped by the past and looks to the future (cf Newbigin 1986:2).

70 . The term "fusion of horizons" became known through the writings of G-H Gadamer. Bemstein (1991:10) quotes Gadamer who says: "... in a conversation, when we have discovered the other person's standpoint and horizon, his ideas become intelligible without our necessarily having to agree with him"

71 . Gerkin makes use of Gadamer in this respect.

What will the result be of such a fusion of horizons of meaning? Gerkin (1986:61ff) mentions the following: hopefully a new and more comprehensive way of seeing the activity under consideration may emerge; it can also lead to respect for other horizons; it may also lead to the rejection of one horizon by another; it may make those involved more critical and reveal blind spots in their horizons.

Gerkin describes the task of practical theology in unconventional terms. The essence of his understanding of the task of practical theology in this modern and pluralistic society is that practical theology is moving beyond the narrow limits of theology itself for its understanding (it is inherently interdisciplinary). Practical theology thus takes human activity seriously and should be contextual. Wherever individual Christians or the Christian community are involved in this world they will make contact with different horizons of meaning, and there will be the need for a fusion of horizons. Practical theology becomes a process of hermeneutical retrieval of the Christian tradition and its narrative images within an attitude of openness to the present and the future, knowing that God's redemptive activity is working through different contexts. The following quotation explains it in Gerkin's (1986:67) own words:

The two narrative structures, that of the human activity about which we seek greater clarity and that of the Christian story, begin to feed back upon one another..., the two horizons of the two narratives begin to fuse with one another, with the result that both are subject to transformation. The truth of the Gospel story impacts the interpreted human reality of the activity. In that mutual abrasion the movement of both our appropriation of the Christian story through time and of human activity is broken open and made vulnerable to reinterpreted meaning and transformed activity.

Gerkin's understanding of the task of practical theology is specifically relevant for this study. Because this study also wants to broaden the horizons of the ecclesiology of practical theology to fuse with the horizons of the modern world. It becomes even more clear when Gerkin explains how his understanding of practical theology works in practice. In his treatment of a case study, Gerkin (1986:81) says the following:

The report also illustrates my earlier emphasis on the multiple action perspectives that make up the Christian community's life and work. When we think about the actions in the life and work of Christians involved in this case study, we must think about not only what they do together within the gathered community of the church, but also what they do separately and in various groups outside and beyond the church. Christian praxis permeates every arena of life where people called Christians are involved.

Gerkin's narrative approach, which emphasises the importance of the fusion of horizons between theology and society, and the empirical approach to practical theology (cf Van der Ven 1993c; Pieterse 1993c), which developed within the school of thought of the critical theory of Habermas, could be combined in research. In both approaches the idea of intersubjectivity plays an important role. Pieterse (1993c:186-187) refers to a combination of the quantitative and qualitative methods of research and calls it an *interpretative paradigm*. The researcher is of the opinion that a combination of the empirical approach and the narrative approach should benefit practical theology. This would also promote interaction between the more operational and communicative approach and the more contextual approach of practical theology (cf Pieterse 1993c:107-127; Ackermann 1996:39).

1.2.3 Pastoral work

This study makes use of the term "pastoral work"⁷² to describe the caring activities of the church. It can be seen as a blanket term for all the pastoral (caring) activities of the church. Pastoral work can be described as one of the sub-disciplines, of practical theology (cf Heitink 1983b:17).

The term "pastoral work" can be described as God's caring activity expressed through people (cf De Jongh van Arkel 1991b:96, 112). Pastoral work is thus the caring activity and actions that take place when church people start to care for one another and for the wider community.⁷³ Sometimes care will be spontaneous and basic (mutual care); sometimes it will be more organised and be known as pastoral care; at other times it will be provided on a more specialised basis and be known as pastoral counselling. It is thus possible to distinguish between different forms of pastoral work, namely mutual care, pastoral care and pastoral counselling (De Jongh van Arkel 1988a; 1987:9; 1991b:102-106).⁷⁴ The different forms of pastoral work can be seen as the subject of pastoral work - referring to who does the pastoral work.

Although it is possible to distinguish between mutual care and pastoral care (cf De Jongh van Arkel 1988a), scholars do not always do so. Mutual care includes the spontaneous caring action of people while pastoral care is a more organised and structured form of care which also requires people who are selected and preferably given some basic training. It is important to keep in mind that pastoral care is not such a specialised activity that ordinary church members cannot become part of it. Pastoral care is based on mutual care and can be seen as the interim stage⁷⁵ between mutual care and pastoral counselling, which is a much more specialised field of care. Pastoral counselling calls for more professional training and also more strict selection criteria of the care-giver than pastoral care. Gerkin (1986:19) understands pastoral care to be more informal than and "differently structured" to pastoral counselling.⁷⁶ In *A history of pastoral care in America*, Brooks Holifield (1983:12) makes a distinction between pastoral care and pastoral

72 . The Afrikaans translation is *pastoraat* .

73 . "Biblically and practically, pastoral care is the mutual concern of Christians for each other and for those in the world (my emphasis - FN) for whom Christ died" (Brisler 1984:xxiii).

74 . Bridger and Atkinson (1994:26) describe four levels of care: level 1 can be given by any caring person without any training; level 2 involves a deeper understanding and certain training is necessary; for level 3 considerable expertise on the part of the counsellor is necessary; level 4 expects a skilled and trained psychotherapist.

75 . De Jongh Van Arkel (1988b:7) expresses concern because pastoral care is neglected in favour of pastoral counselling. Cf also Campbell (1981 and 1983).

76 . "First and most obviously, I am shifting the immediate context to be considered from the formally structured *counseling* relationship between the pastoral counselor and one or a few persons to the more informal and differently structured context of *pastoral care* in the parish and its surrounding community" (Gerkin 1986:19).

counselling.⁷⁷

It has become common within Protestantism to distinguish between pastoral counseling and pastoral care. The latter term often designates the whole range of clerical activity aimed at guiding and sustaining a congregation; the former specifies a more narrowly defined relationship between a pastor and a person in need.

In this study the terms "pastoral work" and "pastoral care" will be used to mean all the caring activities going out from the people who make up the church community.⁷⁸ It should not be seen as the actions of the full-time pastor or minister.⁷⁹ The term "pastor" (*poimen*) refers in the New Testament to a function performed and not to an office held in church life (Brister 1964:90).

The researcher would like to go a step further and suggest that the term "pastoral work" should be understood in the broadest sense possible to include those caring activities that are often described as diaconal activities.⁸⁰ Campbell (1981:xii) says it is not possible to confine pastoral care within narrowly defined borders because at one point or another pastoral care overlaps with virtually all the other theological disciplines. The word "care" is used for all types of caring activities (Gerkin 1986).⁸¹ It gives expression to people's concern for one another.

1.2.3.1 The use of the word "pastoral"

It is necessary to examine⁸² the word "pastoral", which refers to the shepherd motif in the Bible (Ps 80, Is 40:11; 49:9; 63:14; Jr 23:3). The word is used very loosely to identify care.⁸³ The word "pastoral" is used

77. Holifield (1983:345) discusses Frederick Kuether's view, who makes a very definite distinction between pastoral counselling and pastoral care. Kuether sees pastoral counselling as a way to help people to come to terms with themselves. Pastoral care "referred to activities that brought people closer to the church" and "was devoted to building institutions". For Kuether, the purpose of pastoral counselling and pastoral care can be in tension because "counselling might well be a means to free individuals from the constraints of institutions".

78. "Pastoral care is grounded in mutuality, not in expertise; it is possible because we share a common humanity with all the splendour and all the fallibility which that implies" (Campbell 1981:15; cf also Campbell 1985).

79. The terms 'pastor' and 'pastoral worker' include all who have a recognised pastoral role within a local church or Christian community.

80. This is not an attempt to monopolise all the caring activities under one denominator. It just wants to broaden the scope of pastoral work.

81. According to De Jongh van Arkel (1991b:96): "Care occurs whenever one person listens to another and responds in a way that might be helpful". But care also occurs when one person responds to the perceived need of another. For example, a person can respond to the needs of an unconscious person.

82. Cf also Greeves (1960:8-10).

83. Breytenbach (1992:400) says "die herder-beeld het baie te doen met meegevoel en medelye".

as an alternative for the words *sielsorg* (German: *Seelsorg*) (E Thurneysen) or *herderlike sorg* (shepherding) (S Hiltner), which were used previously (cf Du Toit 1952).⁸⁴ Heitink (1979:68) makes a distinction between the words "pastoral" and "zielsorg". He admits that a clear distinction is not possible and that scholars use both words intermittently.⁸⁵ Firet (1977:24) understands the word pastoral as referring to the "pastor": "Met de term 'pastoraal optreden' bedoelen we aan te duiden: de amptelijke aktiviteit van iemand die geroepen is pastor te zijn in actuele betrokkenheid op anderen of een ander voor wie hij pastor heeft te zijn."

Dreyer (1981b:13) uses the word *poimeniek* which, since the 19th century, refers to the scientific study of pastoral work.⁸⁶ Louw (1993:3-5) discusses both the terms *poimeniek* and "shepherding" and comes to the conclusion that both are too limiting to give an accurate description of what pastoral work entails.⁸⁷

The role of the shepherd in the Bible is well known (Jr 13:17; Is 40:11; Ezk 34:31; Ps 23; 79:13; 100:3; Lk 15:4-6; Mt 9:36, 10:6; 26:11; Jn 10:11; Ac 20:28; 1 Pt 2:24-25).⁸⁸ The word "pastoral" emphasises that it is an action from the church done by the church on behalf of the Christian community in obedience to the Lord who calls the church community to care for others (Gl 6:2; Is 10:1; 1 Th 5:14; Rm 15:1). The word "pastoral" specifically refers to care from a Christian perspective. It reflects on the shepherding function of the church and believers.

Gerkin (1986:21) says that the word "pastoral" has two main connotations. It says something about the origin of the care and something of the response. The origin can be "found in a particular community of which the pastoral person is a representative". This community is shaped by the specific way they see the

84 . Cf. Bolkenstein, M H (1964). *Zielsorg in het NT*; Riess, R (1973). *Seelsorg*, Brillenburg Wurth, G *Christelike Zielsorg*. Firet (1977:136) quotes Du Boeuff and Kuiper who say: "Zielsorg, ... is een individualiserende Woordverkondiging, waarbij de nadruk ligt op de innerlijke verhouding van de mens tot God en die op het hele bestaan van die mens gericht is".

85 . Louw (1993:3) is of the opinion that Heitink's distinction is artificial.

86 . Dreyer (1981b:11) defines *poimeniek* as:

... dié prakties-teologiese dissipline wat hom besig hou met die wetenskaplike bestudering van die pastoraat as die paraliturgiese gestalte van die kerklike verkondiging, wat gerig is tot die individuele gelowige, of gelowige huisgesin, in die vorm van 'n persoonlike gesprek, tot opbouing van die liggaam van Christus.

87 . See Heyns and Jonker (1974:300). They see *poimeniek* as a subsection of diaconology.

Afgelei van *poimén*, herder, dui die benaming van hierdie vak daarop dat dit hier gaan om die wetenskap van die herderlike optrede teen die gemeentelid. Hierdie benaming is nie heeltemal adekwaat aan die vakgebied waarvoor dit gebruik geword het nie, ... Dit sal egter een van die belangrikste take van die poimeniek bly om duidelik te maak dat die teologiese karakter van die poimeniek en van die sielsorg self nie deur die gebruikmaking van dergelike tegniese hulpmiddels (psigologie, psigiatrie en sosiologie - FN) in die gedrang gebring mag word nie.

88 . See Louw (1993:23-25) and Breytenbach (1992) for further discussion of the role of the shepherd.

world. According to Gerkin (1986:102), "the word (pastoral - FN) connotes a particular source or origin for the care that is given, its origin within the community, and its tradition, which the pastor represents".

The response connotation refers to attention to the particularity⁸⁹ of the human situation directed to particular persons in particular situations. The word "pastoral" has behind it a narrative structure, because to understand the word requires an understanding of the stories of the people behind the word.⁹⁰ Gerkin (1986:25) adds a third dimension to the word "pastoral": the eschatological dimension. Pastoral care has an eschatological goal, a look towards the future. Gerkin (1986:25) summarises his own argument as follows:

Thus the pastoral task lies not only in the tension between the community's way of seeing the world and the particularity of present human need, but also in the tension between particular present human needs and the possibilities of fulfillment of human needs that the community's story envisions.

For this study, Gerkin's view that the origin of the care is one of the factors which makes it "pastoral" care and also identifies that origin as a particular community is important. **The researcher is of the opinion that the Christian community as the origin of the care makes it *pastoral* care.** Heitink (1979:352) confirms this when he says that "pastoraat als hulpverlening gaat *uit van die gemeente*".

The researcher understands the word "pastoral", as care going out from the church community⁹¹ (cf Browning 1978:116-120).⁹² This means that the researcher would even go so far as to suggest that the term *pastoral* does not refer to the pastor as such or the method that is used or the content of the care, but the basis from where it is done. The fact that it goes out from the church community means that it is done from a Christian perspective. This will not say what technique is used.⁹³ Pastoral counselling is thus counselling done from the Christian community. If the same counsellor works outside the Christian

89 . This particularity can be connected with what Gerkin (1986:21) calls "the historical process in which it is imbedded". This means, on the one hand, that pastoral actions will differ from time to time because the time and place in which they occur will not always be the same. On the other hand, Gerkin (1986:21) insists there should be a "continuity of meaning at its core".

90 . Gerkin's (1986:26) whole understanding of society and humankind is based on the concept "narrative". All communities and all people are rooted in a narrative or story of some kind. This is true of Christian communities as well as all other communities.

91 . Furniss (1994:135) says "from the theologically oriented point of view, the locus of pastoral care is the congregation, not the one-to-one relationship between caregiver and careseeker".

92 . What is important for Browning is the fact that the church has certain norms, which means that pastoral work is done from a certain moral point of departure.

93 . Henderson, Gartner and Chambers (1991:41) quoted Worthington (Religious counseling: a review of published empirical research. *Journal of Counseling and Development* 1986(64):429), who writes as follows:

No support has been found that religious counseling has been any more beneficial than secular counseling in working with religious clients. In fact, little is known about what really makes religious counseling distinct from secular counseling, although theory abounds.

community, say for instance in his/ her own private practice, it will be just counselling (cf De Jongh van Arkel 1988a:8-9). This may help solve the problem of the so-called pastoral psychologist.⁹⁴ A social worker, for example, called by the church community and in the service of the church community will then be a *pastoral social worker*. It also takes away the idea that the word *pastoral* refers only to the pastor.⁹⁵

Again, it is important to emphasise that pastoral work is not done only by the pastor or minister or leader of a congregation, but is caring actions going out from the whole religious community. It must be noted that in the past pastoral activities very much revolved around the activities of the officers of the church, e.g. deacons, elders, ministers.

An appropriate way to describe the person or persons who is/ are on the receiving end of pastoral work (patient, client, parishioner, congregants, counselee) depends on the context and is also subject to dispute. Graham (1992) uses the word *careseeker*.⁹⁶ This study will also make use of the term *careseeker* or *careseekers*⁹⁷. This implies that the so-called recipients of pastoral care are involved and not passive receivers of care, which goes against the main thrust of this study.

1.3 WHAT THIS STUDY IS ABOUT (PROBLEM FORMULATION)

The previous sections have described the context and point of departure of this study. This section will describe the background to the research problem and the research problem itself.

94 . Browning (1976:22) says:

Some - although by no means all - of these pastoral counseling specialists refer to themselves as "pastoral psychotherapists". They appear to mean that they are psychotherapists who are also Christians... With considerable interest I have watched the leaders of the specialized pastoral counseling movement scramble for accreditation with various private and public health insurance plans. Such accreditation would add greatly to the public legitimation of specialized pastoral counseling, not to mention the financial benefits that such recognition almost automatically confers on the profession. But to receive this level of public verification presents the movement with a severe identity crisis. On the one hand, these specialists must demonstrate that as pastors they are not narrowly provincial, evangelistic, or confessional. Yet to build the case that they have something to offer not already found in the established helping professions, they have to demonstrate what is unique about their services.

95 . Gerkin (1986:102) sometimes gives the impression that pastoral care is done by the pastor. Reading his book as a whole, however, makes it clear that all members of the community should be involved in pastoral care (Gerkin 1986:68-74).

96 . Graham (1992:243 note 6) prefers the term *careseeker*, above the word *parishioner*, because "religious care is provided to many nonparishioners, or outside the parish context altogether". The term *shepherding* is also problematic, because it creates an image of power, where the pastoral worker becomes the "shepherd" and the careseeker the "sheep". The terms often used namely *patient* or *client* are also problematic. They do not reflect the "care" aspect very well, but do reflect the medical and psycho-therapeutic paradigms of helping. These paradigms strongly mirror a power relationship between the person who comes for help (powerless) and the person who offers help (powerful). It differs from the ecosystemic paradigm proposed in this study.

97 . Furniss (1994:viii), in following Graham (1992), believes that this is the best word to use.

This section should be understood in the context of Moltmann's challenge to theology in general and the researcher's belief that practical theology should respond to it [cf p 2]. According to the researcher, **pastoral work is caring actions going out from the church community**. The implication of this, according to the researcher, is that it is impossible to speak of pastoral work without referring to the church.

The church does not exist in isolation or in a vacuum. To study the pastoral actions of the church regarding the AIDS crisis, more about the **paradigms of society** in which the church functions should be understood. This study does not investigate a "problem" as such, but is responding to a social crisis (AIDS) which will have a tremendous impact on society and on the church's pastoral task. The pastoral actions of the church are challenged not to merely look at its praxis but to be critical about the underlying paradigms, which form the basis of its actions. To do this, an understanding of the philosophical, theological and sociological dimensions of society is necessary.

1.3.1 Background to the research problem

Pastoral care and counseling must be holistic,⁹⁸ seeking to enable healing and growth in all dimensions of human wholeness (Clinebell 1984:26).

Historically, the pastoral help a person could expect from the church was in the form of confession - the forgiveness of sins (cf Heitink 1990:118). Pastoral care was about the same as caring for souls.⁹⁹ From the 1960's pastoral care and counselling went through a stage heavily influenced by psychodynamic theory and personality theories - an intrapsychic approach to care and counselling.¹⁰⁰ The theories centred on the individual's intrapersonal experiences. The person and his/her self-actualisation play a major role. These theories were heavily based on psychiatric diagnostic categories based on the medical model.

In the theological world another trend has developed since the 1960's, namely an awareness of the church's social task in society. This leads to a closer understanding of the pastoral role of the church in situations of oppression and discrimination and takes pastoral work out of the closed individualistic sphere

98 . The term "holistic" comes from the Greek *holos*. The word is used philosophically to give expression to the idea that the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. It is an understanding of reality in terms of integrated wholes.

99 . Clebsch and Jaekle (1964:4) define pastoral care as follow: "The ministry of the cure of souls, or pastoral care, consists of helping acts, done by *representative Christian persons*, directed toward the *healing, sustaining, guiding and reconciling of troubled persons whose troubles arise in the context of ultimate meanings and concerns*".

The first three functions of pastoral care mentioned come from Seward Hiltner's *Preface to Pastoral theology*. Hiltner's three main pastoral activities were shepherding, communicating and organizing. The above-mentioned functions are functioning within the shepherding sphere (cf Van der Ven & Gerwen 1990:30).

100 . Holifield (1983:12) describes the history of Protestant pastoral care in America as "an ideal of self-denial to one of self-love, from self-love to self-culture..."

(cf Kotzé 1990). Theologians are starting to talk about political theology¹⁰¹ and political pastoral work (Heitink 1979). Unfortunately, there is a limited understanding of political pastoral work in the sense that it often only includes contentious issues. But this study wants to go a step further and include broader social issues within the context of the twentieth century.

1.3.1.1 Pastoral work faces a crisis

When the researcher started this study, the aim was a pastoral work model that would make the church and congregations of the church actively involved in the looming AIDS crisis. The researcher wants to investigate the AIDS crisis in the light of a political and social transforming world.

The world and South Africa are facing a crisis, namely AIDS. Even if the worst scenarios projected do not come true, AIDS will still have a major impact on society as a whole and on every community, also on the church¹⁰². It will play a role in politics, economics and social structures. In the medical field, some changes brought about by AIDS are already visible. The church and especially the church's pastoral activities will also be affected more and more. HIV positive people and people with full-blown AIDS will be in need of pastoral care and counselling.¹⁰³ Their families and loved ones will also need support and care. They also have legal, medical, social, welfare and religious needs. How will the church prepare itself for this growing crisis in terms of its pastoral work? Further, what about the prevention¹⁰⁴ of the spread of AIDS? Is it part of the pastoral task of the church to be involved in preventing the spread of the disease? These and many other questions need to be answered.

In the course of researching, however, it became increasingly clear that the questions about the AIDS crisis should not be seen in isolation (although every situation will have its own peculiarities) from other issues in our time. People who need care and counselling, for whatever reason, are interacting with a wider (external) context. Both care and prevention¹⁰⁵ should occur within the same community and society.

101 . Political theology is not a politization of the church as some may suspect, but is sharpening Christians' awareness of the social and political context, and is in service of of the church's public testimony in the light of God's righteousness (cf Moltmann 1989b:7).

102 . Although the researcher often only refer to AIDS it should always be understood in the context namely that the majority of people at this stage do not have AIDS but are HIV+ and have, as far as we know at this stage, a 100% chance of developing full-blown AIDS. For more details see chapter 7.

103 . This does not mean that the HIV virus will inevitably lead to psychosocial or religious problems for every person or family who is affected (cf Bor, Miller and Goldman 1992:5). Problems may arise at different stages for different people.

104 . Brister (1964:xiii) said that pastoral care should be *preventive* and *therapeutic*. Cf Maton and Pargament (1987).

105 . The emphasis on prevention caused some severe criticism. Rappaport (1981:15) puts it as follows: "Many of us have placed our bets on the ideology of prevention. It is my contention that this ideology has outlived its usefulness and is one-sided at its core."

Pastoral care and counselling are intermeshed with other needs and services in a community or society at large. It is conceptually unwise to use separate models of care and counselling for separate issues (e.g. AIDS crisis; substance abuse; child abuse; political oppression; poverty; sexual assault; marriage problems; alcoholism).¹⁰⁶ Individuals in dire need of pastoral help often have problems which can be related to other people and to society as a whole. To give attention to the AIDS crisis as if it is an independent issue will further isolate the challenge the AIDS crisis raises and will further isolate people living with AIDS. In the following chapter (Chapter 2) the importance of an ecosystemic approach is emphasised.¹⁰⁷

1.3.1.2 An individualistic or holistic approach

According to Gerkin (1984:73), there is a tension in the field of pastoral care and counselling about the primary point of departure: should this be the individual or his/her wider church community? Gerkin (1984:73) describes it as follows:

One of the current controversies in the field of pastoral care and counseling has to do with whether the pastor in his or her caring function should be primarily concerned with the facilitation of a climate or ethos of care within the corporate community of faith and life or be primarily engaged in relating on a one-to-one basis with persons who have particular problems of living. Is the ecology of the particularity of human care and suffering to be the primary focus of ministry? This controversy is, of course, only one aspect of a much larger tension that is manifested all through Western society at both theoretical and practical levels. It is at the root of the controversy between psychoanalytic and systems psychologies. It lies beneath the tension between social and political ethics, on the one hand, and an ethic of character and responsibility, on the other. The tension between an existentialist and a political-liberationist theological stance likewise contains this controversy of perspectives.

Gerkin (1984) himself develops his pastoral counselling along individualistic lines in the first eight chapters of *The living human document*.¹⁰⁸ In the last chapter Gerkin (1984:177) puts his pastoral counselling model in the context of the Christian community because he believes that the Christian community supports pastoral counselling and provides the context of care for the person. In *Widening the horizons*,

106. Many other societal issues can be mentioned, such as that about 50% of South Africans live below the breadline. At this stage about 7 million people live in shanty towns. It can confidently be said that in such a situation many basic values will break down. What is the role of the church? What is the role of her pastoral work?

107. "A systemic view of an AIDS problem may help the family and health care system to become rearranged around a new view of the problem... AIDS may, in time, no longer be the main problem, but rather the metaphor or symptom which brings into focus other problems" (Bor 1989:318).

108. The concept *living human document* originated from Anton Boisen (psychologist and sociologist), who was a colleague of Gerkin at Elgin State Hospital (Couture & Hunter 1995:7; cf also Furniss 1994:vii).

Gerkin (1986:36) describes the tension between the individual, on the one hand, and the group or the family, on the other as "a central underlying problematic theme for pastoral care".¹⁰⁹

Although this controversy is at the centre of this study, the researcher is not going to discuss this debate in detail. The reason for this is the researcher's belief that the underlying metaparadigm (reductionistic or ecosystemic) influences people's view and approach to theology, ecclesiology and society. What should be discussed is these underlying metaparadigms.

It would seem that pastoral workers often work with a very limited and individualistic approach to pastoral problems. Browning (1978:22ff) has accused pastoral work of being more interested in counselling than in pastoral care. Bridger and Atkinson (1994:8-9) put it as follows:

One of the most disturbing features of Christian counselling is its preoccupation with individuals. Christians have swallowed, more or less without question, the assumption that counselling should be primarily concerned with repairing individuals so that they can become better adjusted to cope with life's difficulties... At its worst it has merely endorsed the narcissistic selfism represented in the psychobabble of the affluent and self-indulgent middle classes of the Western world. Even at its best it has reinforced the Western view that ultimately it is the autonomous, abstract individual rather than the individual-in-community who counts most. ... (and) the way in which it has engendered a therapeutic method which leaves largely unanalysed the impact of social forces and structures upon individual psychology.

Van den Blink (1984:77-78) describes the individualistic approach to pastoral work in the Western world as follows:

Ik heb het gevoel, dat er een uitgesproken individualistische trek is in de mij meeste vertrouwde theologie (die in het spoor liep van existentieel-filosofische en neo-orthodoxe anthropologieën) en dat deze voorkeur, die het individu en zijn redding centraal stelt, in vele opzichten pastorale zorg en counseling doordringt en bestempelt.

Furniss (1994:38) confirms this in his criticism against the individualistic approach in pastoral work:

A strong criticism of contemporary pastoral care concerns its alleged encouragement of individualism. This critique applies broadly to pastoral care, psychology, and modern therapeutic counseling in general. According to the critics, these therapeutic modalities, by emphasizing the self, personal growth, and self-actualization, undermine commitment to others, social bonds and community involvement.

This study wants to investigate how holistic our pastoral work approach in the church is and will discuss and investigate the reasons for a holistic approach to pastoral work. What this study proposes, is a way of thinking about pastoral work, namely a holistic or ecosystemic way of thinking. This should form the basis of new ways of doing pastoral work. At the same time the importance of existing models of care and counselling should also be recognised.

109. Gerkin (1986:36) says this tension is described by the different disciplines as autonomy and heteronomy (philosophy); self-fulfilment and conformity (psychology); narcissism and group solidarity (social psychology). "To state that in theological terms, it is a tension between authority and obedience, on the one hand, and individual self-determination on the other" (Gerkin 1986:40).

The original research question has broadened so that the question under investigation is not about the pastoral work of the church and AIDS *per se*, but how pastoral workers¹¹⁰ think about the direction, intention and relationship between pastoral work, the church and society. The main question is thus about how **pastoral workers understand and see the nature and range of pastoral work and the church**. The context in which pastoral work takes place is crucial. Pastoral work never takes place in a vacuum. It is not an activity abstracted from real life, but is always rooted in it. Everyday life does not comprise merely one context but is a series of overlapping contexts (home, work, leisure, family, political, social). The pastoral worker has to take account of all these and more.

The previous section already determined that pastoral work goes out from the church community. This generates all sorts of related questions about the ecclesiology underlying pastoral work [cf p 146]. Does the pastoral work of the church take place in isolation, or is pastoral work part of a much bigger programme of activities in the church and of caring activities in society? In other words, what is the place of pastoral work in the congregation and is it accepted that pastoral work also deals with social issues [cf p 162]?

How much emphasis in pastoral work is on the broader context and community in which pastoral problems occur and how much is on the individual only and the individual problem? Are people seen in relation to the community and the bigger society in which they live? Thus, what type of **anthropology** underlies the ecclesiology [cf p 196]?

1.3.1.3 Enlightenment thinking challenged

The previous sections [cf p 2] already refers to the challenge which Moltmann (1989a) poses to theology to be relevant in future. Moltmann's challenge is, in essence, a challenge to the influence of the Enlightenment on the Western world. It is a challenge to the particularistic-reductionistic (denominational) and mechanistic thinking of the Western (Eurocentric) world.

As human beings, we all work with certain assumptions and we all have a certain world-view that influences us when we interpret society and the Bible. Undeniably, subjectivity and presumption lurk in every form of theological discourse and are even "unavoidable". Clarity in understanding the nature of one's presuppositions is very important. The researcher is part of society and also of a community and at the same time part of a specific church congregation. All these factors are influences, not only on my daily life, but also on the way I see and interpret the world and eventually the Bible. The researcher realises more and more the impact this underlying world-view has on his understanding of practical theology and eventually of the church. The one factor which influences all people and also all researchers is the spirit of the times we live in. The Western world-view, and thus also the church, are tremendously influenced by the Enlightenment. Bosch (1991), in his magnificent work *Transforming mission*, discusses different paradigms for missionary work. In referring to Protestantism, Bosch (1991:262) says: "... virtually everything that

110. The term "pastoral worker(s)" refers to the full-time pastor(s), but also to the rest of the church community involved in caring actions.

happened since the eighteenth century was, in one way or another, profoundly influenced by the Enlightenment.”

Bosch (1991) challenges the church to move beyond its Enlightenment thinking. The intention is not to say that everything which develops in the modern spirit is bad or negative. The Enlightenment thought is consistent with the Newtonian (linear) and Cartesian (dualistic) way of thinking. In this study this way of thinking is described as non-ecosystemic thinking. J Traphagan (1994:154) puts it as follows:

Given that since the Enlightenment Western religious ethics has developed philosophically and theologically in a context largely shaped by an understanding of reality based on the Newtonian/ Cartesian worldview, one that constitutes only a part of the picture accepted by physicists, it will be instructive to begin by briefly examining how physicists approached reality in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and, in contrast, how they approach it today.

The next chapter [cf p 44] will discuss the Newtonian world-view and the changes in paradigm since the beginning of this century in detail. To be aware of the relationship between Newtonian thinking and the Enlightenment thinking and to put the rest of the study in perspective, this chapter discusses the features of Enlightenment thinking. As we move into the postmodern era, many voices are crying for a revision of the modern world-view. We are increasingly hearing loud calls for a new understanding of ourselves that would see humans not as separate and above, but as an integral part of the environment in which we live.

Bosch (1991:264-267) investigates paradigm shifts in theology of mission and discusses Enlightenment thinking in detail. He describes the following characteristic of the Enlightenment to which the church has adhered in one way or another and which have influenced theological thinking profoundly¹¹¹

The Enlightenment can be described as the Age of Reason. Descartes' *Cogito, ergo sum* summarises it aptly. The mind was the point of departure. The importance of "objective reasoning" was overwhelming. The Christian religion responded to it in more than one way (Bosch 1991:269). Schleiermacher's theology could be seen as a response to the emphasis on reason. Pietism and evangelical awakening were attempts to divorce religion from reason and locate religion in human feelings and experiences. Religion was privatised, which means that religion belongs to a certain domain (private life) and should not be bothered with in public life. The opposite response was to declare theology itself a science. Another response, according to Bosch (1991:27), was for "religion to attempt to establish its hegemony by creating a Christian society in which Christianity would be official religion and public officers as well as government would have to adhere to religious principles and precepts". Yet another response was to accept the reality of a secular

111. When Bosch (1991:262) refers to the Enlightenment, he includes the modern era which began in the seventeenth century, although there are indications that the medieval world-view was beginning to disintegrate as early as the fourteenth century. In the medieval era God and the church were at the top of the cosmological structure, followed by kings and nobles. The Renaissance and the Protestant Reformation gradually eliminated the church's position in society. In the eighteenth century the power of the kings and nobles was destroyed. Developments in the scientific world eliminated God from society from the seventeenth century, but especially in the nineteenth and twentieth century.

society and to embrace this society. Protestant orthodoxy attempted to protect the objective truth and pure doctrine and emphasised the inerrancy of the Bible.

Enlightenment thinking operates very much with a subject-object scheme. It separated humans from their environment. Nature ceased to be creation, but became the object of human research and analysis. Human beings were no longer regarded as whole entities but were divided into spiritual and physical parts and thus also the object of analysis. The emphasis was on the parts, which were assigned priority over the whole. When people and nature become physical objects depleted from any spiritual dimension, the danger arises that they could be manipulated and exploited without any matter of conscious. Bosch (1991:270-271) says that the subject-object approach became specifically evident in the field of biblical scholarship. The preoccupation with hermeneutics underlined the distance between the ancient biblical text and the interpretation now in an Enlightenment context. Although many positive developments came to the fore from the historical-critical exegetical approach, there is also the negative side that the text could be examined in an objective way, without the need from the scholar's side to be examined by the text. The object-subject scheme also gives rise to fundamentalism where the Bible is applied in a mechanical way.

A third element of Enlightenment thinking is the belief that the cause determines the effect. This eliminates all purpose from science and introduces the idea of direct causality. The dimension of teleology, which was vital to the ancients, was dismissed. In the Newtonian paradigm not purpose but the closed cycle of cause and effect governed the world. Science becomes deterministic and a theory of unchanging and mathematically stable laws of cause and effect.

The cause and effect way of thinking manifests itself in a fourth element of the Enlightenment, namely the belief in progress. This belief let the Western nations take possession of the earth and let them take over colonies. It is still visible in so-called development programmes which are founded in the idea that where there is material possession, consumerism and economic advancement - there is progress. People still talk about "developed"; "undeveloped"; "underdeveloped" and "developing" countries. The development criteria is normally economic and technological criteria. Moltmann (1989b:53) criticises Western civilisation which is one-sidedly programmed for development, growth, expansion and conquest. The problem is that growth and progress are always measured by an increase in economic, financial and military power. Bruwer (1994a:14-15) criticises the idea of development as a solution to poverty. According to Bruwer (1994a:15), "the values and philosophy underlying it go back to ancient Greek philosophy and the European Enlightenment ...".

It also means that all problems are in principle solvable. Everything will eventually be explained. There is no room for the unexplainable and the mysterious. Again, all trust is in a positivistic science in which growth is seen as ever onwards and upwards. Bosch (1991:271) believes that the philosophy of progress is incorporated very deeply in modern theology and the contemporary church. This philosophy can be found in the idea of the global triumph of Christianity. The belief that the entire world would soon be converted to the Christian faith or the Christian faith as an irresistible power in the process of reforming the world, restoring justice and eradicating poverty. In this philosophy, God's kingdom became aligned with the

Western culture and civilisation.

The Enlightenment way of thinking believes that knowledge and truth are factual, value-free and neutral. A clear distinction is made between fact and value.¹¹² Values are based on belief and opinion and are relegated to the private world, divorced from the public world of facts. Religion was assigned to the realm of values since it rested on subjective notions and could not be proved correct. Bosch (1991:271) refers to Newbigin (1986:271), who says that the student learns facts in the physics classroom and must believe them as the truth. In the religious education classroom the student learns values and can choose what values he/ she likes the best. There is more than one value that can coexist, but there is only one factual truth. Religion can exist alongside science but should under no circumstances challenge the dominant world-view and never impinge on science. Religion responded in different ways to this approach.

One reaction was to "prove" that the Christian faith belongs to the category of facts and not values. Another reaction was to accept this dichotomy. This latter response accepted the modern world-view that faith has nothing to do with science or history. In true Platonic fashion, this approach ascribed supremacy to the transcendent, spiritual and eternal reality over and against the natural and the tangible. Faith becomes other worldly. God's kingdom becomes purely religious and spiritual and has nothing to do with politics or poverty or justice.

The Enlightenment considers all people as emancipated, autonomous individuals. Central is the belief in humankind and the idea of absolute freedom of people to make their own choices and live as they please. Although there are many positives in this development, there is also the idea that people only care for themselves and their needs and do not have any social responsibility. Newbigin (1986:118) says that both capitalism and Marxism make use of this Enlightenment view of human beings. Bosch (1991:273) says that individualism has pervaded Protestantism in particular. The church specifically became peripheral because people are independent and can make their own decisions. It also gives rise to the idea that God and humans were felt to be rivals, which gives rise to the Armenians in Protestantism (Bosch 1991:343).

According to Bosch (1991:262-267), the Christian church has responded to the foregoing features of modern society very positively. So positively, in fact, that all these features have also become features of the church and the actions of the church and of nineteenth and twentieth century theology. "Even where it resisted the Enlightenment mentality it was profoundly influenced by it", says Bosch (1991:269). This study

112. Ted Peters (1989) is not a supporter of what he calls the "two-language theory" which, from the outset, separates by definition God and creation, religion and science. Peters (1989) believes that the lines between ultimate and proximate questions and causes are much more blurred than what many people assume. Peters (1989:16) gives an example of those who support a dualistic thinking between facts and values:

..., many scholars in the twentieth century have argued that scientific theory and religious faith represent two separate and distinct domains of knowing. Albert Einstein, for example, distinguished between the language of fact and the language of value. "Science can only ascertain what is, but not what *should be*," he once told an audience at Princeton; "religion, on the other hand, deals only with evaluations of human thought and action."

describes these Enlightenment traits in the church and theology as the non-systemic characteristics of the church and theology [cf p 287].

The challenge to the church is to move beyond these features of being church. In his book Bosch describes a new paradigm of being church in a postmodern society. This postmodern understanding of the church has many similarities with what this study describes as an ecosystemic approach to ecclesiology [cf p 151]. The ecosystemic approach connects with the non-positivistic approach to science and the contextual approach to hermeneutics. It also connects with the holistic approach in postmodern thinking.¹¹³ Peters (1985:193) puts it as follows:

Postmodernity is defined primarily as advocacy for wholistic thinking over against the alleged fragmentation characteristic of the modern mind since René Descartes and Isaac Newton.... In short, the thirst for postmodernity is the thirst for a renewed sense of the whole.

Naturally the pastoral work of the church takes place within a certain context and framework of thinking.¹¹⁴ In an emerging postmodern society the way people think about the world is changing. This study works with an ecosystemic world-view, realising that viewing the individual and society in an interactive context is not an easy task. This also influences the way the research problem is formulated. Because of the systems approach of this study, the research process will not be linear but circular. The formulation of the problem will also suggest the so-called "solution". The reason for this is that the literature study involved in the research broadened the original research idea and led the researcher to opt for an ecosystemic approach to pastoral work, before formulating the research statement.

1.3.2 Research proposal

This brings us to the point this study is all about. This study emphasises an all-encompassing pastoral care which takes the individual as well as society and the influence of society on the individual seriously. It is, perhaps, strange to find a "proposed solution"¹¹⁵ in the form of a statement at the beginning of a thesis. But this is the result of the circular way of thinking proposed in this study. It is also not a solution in the normal sense of the word, but more a proposal of an evolving, dynamic and ecological way of thinking.¹¹⁶

113. "Postmoderneit het die propagering van holistiese denke ten doel, teenoor die fragmentering en atomisme van die denke in lyn met Newton en Descartes" (Van Niekerk & Van Aarde 1991:1046).

114. Cf Louw (1995c:43-44) who says that practical theology in South Africa should be aware of its captivity to: (a) the rationalistic and analytical approach to life issues and problems (b) the denominationalistic approach of the mother churches in Southern Africa (c) the individualistic view of life (d) the obsession of the church with achievement (e) the abstract and ideological feature of Western thought.

115. A solution could be understood as a specific answer, but also as "the act or process of forming a solution" (*New Collins Concise Dictionary* 1985:1103).

116. The last chapter of this study describes this study as just the beginning of a process [cf p 424 of this study].

The complexity of the individualistic¹¹⁷ society we live in as well as the static and linear paradigms we grow up with have made our pastoral work focus on individual persons to the exclusion of the rest of the environment and the interactions between individuals and the environment. The **research problem** is described in terms of a statement (cf Dreyer 1992a:372) which describes a certain pattern¹¹⁸ of pastoral work which the researcher believes is clearly visible in many pastoral work actions:

The pastoral work of the church is mostly individualistic, reductionistic, denominational and directed mainly to the individual psychological needs of church people and seems unable to respond properly to pastoral needs in a wider social context.

The researcher proposes an ecosystemic epistemology¹¹⁹ as metatheory, which considers the world in terms of systems and their surrounding ecology.¹²⁰ The underlying patterns and interactions between people and between people and their environment are important. The researcher believes that the pastoral work of the church must be community and society orientated. Therefore the researcher believes that the following pattern¹²¹ for a pastoral work approach should emerge more and more:

Pastoral work must be ecologically¹²² orientated, holistic and a comprehensive and all-encompassing activity which interacts with the underlying patterns, connections and relationships between individuals, their community and the broader society.

This does not mean that the individual is of no importance or that collectivism, which sometimes leads to totalitarianism, is the preferred pattern. It only means that the individual should not be understood independently and unrelated from the rest of the cosmos. Greeves (1960:27-28) describes it very aptly when he says:

117. "Individualisme en subjectivering vormen een recent verschijnsel in de geschiedenis van de mensheid en beperken zich tot één cultuurkring, de Westerse, ..." (Heitink 1993:41).

118. "Patrone en kwaliteite dui volgens die holistiese model, meer as die analise van die meganistiese model, op 'n eenheid onderliggend aan die aard van die objek" (Van Niekerk & Van Aarde 1991:1046). According to Martin (1987:371) patterns are not static, but forms a 'dance'.

119. Epistemology in this context should be understood to indicate not only what one thinks, perceives and decides, but also how one thinks, perceives and decides (Lifschitz 1986:vi).

120. Several years ago Müller (1991b:94) suggested that we should talk about an "eko-hermeneutiese pastoraat" (eco-hermeneutical pastoral work). Müller (1991b:94) explains it as follows:

Met die invoer van hierdie begrip word gepleit vir die beëindiging van individualistiese pastoraat en die invoer van 'n nuwe benadering waarin die klem val op die kerk as geheel wat 'n versorgingstaak het teenoor mense in hulle konteks. Pastoraat kan nie langer geïsoleer word tot die marginale taak van die versorging van die individu in sy of haar emosionele ervaringe nie.

121. "Die pastoraat ly dalk ook aan te veel losstaande elemente. Om te kan vorder sal ons moet leer om patrone uit te ken, patrone wat sinvolle verbande tussen verskillende sake aanlê" (De Jongh van Arkel 1989:18).

122. Ecology is the study of the relationships between living organisms and their environment (*New Collins Concise Dictionary* 1985:352).

If pastoral work involved, as to many it seems to involve, the deliverance of individuals from the society of which they are part, the guidance of them to a self-centred religious 'experience' in this world and to a private enjoyment of God in the next world, then it would indeed compare unfavourably with the self-forgetting service of those who toil and suffer and die for what they believe to be the good of mankind as a whole.

1.3.2.1 Research approach

This study gives attention to the research problem as formulated and the researcher's suggested pattern of the church's pastoral work. Pastoral work is placed within the broader context of ecosystemic thinking as a practical theological attempt to take Moltmann's challenge to theology seriously. The approach followed in this study is influenced by the ecosystemic way of thinking. The ecosystemic metaparadigm proposed is an all-encompassing perspective. Ecosystems thinking is a way of thinking, it should also be reflected in the way people write about it. Our linear language often defies all attempts at circular writing.¹²³ Systemic thinking not only deals with dynamic systems, but is in itself also dynamic.

What makes research even more difficult is the realisation that you cannot stand completely outside or objective of what you are writing about: the writer is part of the ecology and is thus also part of the subject being written about. In this process the subject may become the object and the object, the subject. In the understanding of systems, there was a move from "action systems" to "meaning systems". According to De Jongh van Arkel (1991a:71), this move is vital to practical theology. It means that practical theology can make use of meanings to describe certain communicative actions because human systems are creating language and thus also meaning. It emphasises the need for an intersubjective approach to pastoral work.

This ecosystemic perspective is described as a metaparadigm in Chapter 2. This metaparadigm is the perspective from where things are perceived and evaluated and described. The ecosystemic perspective is not something tangible or that is "a given". It is a pattern which develops with time. Elements of this ecosystemic perspective are visible in many different subjects. In its totality it could be more than just a perspective. In this study it is described as a metaparadigm for practical theology.

Underlying all practical theological actions is a practical theological ecclesiology. To include the wider community as part of the task of practical theology means that we need to describe existing ecclesiologies, or interpret them, in a broader sense. This study has as its purpose to develop such a broad interactional and interrelated ecclesiology for community pastoral work. One of the tasks set out in this study will be to investigate the ecclesiological foundation of a community pastoral work approach, done from an

123. Steier (1991a:9-10), in *Research and Reflexivity*, admits that it is difficult to move away from the traditional style of writing. Steier (1991:10) puts it as follows:

How this happened I am not sure, as many spoke with me, and I with myself, of writing something in a less traditional style. This is not an apology, but rather an acknowledgement that alternative forms are useful, but happen when they happen, and do not in any way, by their alternativeness, guarantee a 'reflexive and constructionist reading' which is up to you, the reader. [Editor's note to author: I'm not sure this non-apology should go in here - it doesn't really work. Author's note to editor: I agree, perhaps it doesn't, but why don't I include your comment?].

ecosystemic perspective (chapter 3). The idea of a *community* approach as a broadening of the individualistic approach is developed further in Chapter 4. This is also done in terms of the ecosystemic perspective.

This study wants to combine the empirical and narrative elements in research. One of the elements of the empirical research is the testing of ideas, attitudes, suppositions and surmises. Chapter 5 discusses the operationalization of a survey done by the researcher. The research question under investigation flows from the qualitative research done. This leads to a quantitative investigation into pastoral workers' view of pastoral work and the church, and how ecosystemic/ non-ecosystemic pastoral workers think (chapter 5). Chapter 6 discusses a community pastoral work approach developed from an ecosystemic perspective. Chapter 7 deals with the challenge AIDS poses to pastoral work from an ecosystemic perspective.

2. IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF ECOSYSTEMIC THINKING AS METAPARADIGM

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This study begins [cf p 2] with Moltmann's challenge to theology in general to be ecumenically, holistically and ecologically orientated. Moltmann (1985:319-320) is convinced that the messianic images and eschatological symbols in the Bible should lead to an ecological world-view.¹

... we should seek to replace the modern mechanistic world picture; for it is a view of the world that is one-sidedly patriarchal. The transition to an ecological world view is more fully in accord, not merely with the reality of the natural environments of the world of human beings, but also with the natural character of this human world itself - the world of women and men. This means that this ecological world view is bound up with new egalitarian forms of society, in which patriarchal rule is ended and co-operative communities are built up. The centrations of the mechanistic world picture give way to concurrences in the network of reciprocal relationships. On this path from the mechanistic domination of the world to an ecological world community, the earlier matrifocal symbols of the world are pregnant with promise for the future, because they once 'give us something to think about' (Moltmann 1985:320).

It is in this context that practical theology is discussed as a communicative operational science [cf p 16] and as empirical and hermeneutical [cf p 21] with a narrative structure [cf p 23].

The previous chapter identified as research problem the notion that pastoral work (as a subdiscipline of practical theology) is individualistic, reductionistic and denominational. Pastoral work is caring actions going out from the church community. The individualistic, reductionistic and denominational nature of pastoral work as assumed by the researcher, is described in relationship with Bosch's challenge to the church to move beyond the Enlightenment paradigm.

In the previous chapter an ecosystemic approach to pastoral work is suggested. This means that pastoral work should be an all-encompassing and holistic activity which relates to the interactions between underlying patterns, connections, relationships and systems. A system could be defined as "objects in relation to one another", or as "a set of mutually interdependent units". A system refers to interacting or related elements of any kind (Bor 1989:55).

1. The concepts *paradigm* (metaparadigm) and *world-view* are often used interchangeably. It is possible to make technically a distinction. The researcher understands a meta-paradigm to be the perspective from where something is looked at. A world-view is our perception of the total life reality as we experience it (cf Van Zyl 1993:89). Our metaparadigm will most probably influence our world-view, and our world-view will most probably influence our metaparadigm. Our perspective and perception is in a relation to one another. World-view has more of a personal and emotional dimension to it, while metaparadigm is more an abstract, technical and overall concept. World-view is not a fixed entity and is in constant flux. Metaparadigm is also not an absolute concept, people make use of different paradigms all the time, but paradigms themselves do not change instantly, different situations and contact with other paradigms will influence a paradigm over time. People from different cultural background with different world-views, could share the same metaparadigm, but also only to an extent. Total different world-views would make it very difficult to share the same metaparadigm.

This chapter discusses an ecosystemic perspective as a metaparadigm. Certain traces (pockets) of ecosystemic patterns is discussed as they unfold to the researcher. The researcher is deeply aware that the whole is more than the parts and that what follows is nothing more than a discussion of a few parts.

Ecosystemic thinking will be contrasted with Newtonian thinking. Barbour (1990:218-221) makes a distinction between Medieval thinking and Newtonian thinking and compares it with what he calls twentieth-century thinking - which this study calls ecosystemic thinking. Barbour's Newtonian thinking is what Bosch calls Enlightenment thinking. Barbour's (1990:219) table looks as follows:

	Medieval	Newtonian	Twentieth-century
1	Fixed order	Change as rearrangement	Evolutionary, historical, emergent
2	Teleological	Deterministic	Law and chance, structure and openness.
3	Substantive	Atomistic	Relational, ecological, interdependent
4	Hierarchical, anthropocentric	Reductionistic	Systems and wholes, organismic
5	Dualistic (spirit-matter)	Dualistic (mind/body)	Multilevelled
6	Kingdom	Machine	Community

Barbour (1990:218-221) explains his table as follows:

1. In medieval times nature was a fixed order with little change. In the Newtonian view more change was possible, but only as a rearrangement of the unchanging components and fundamental particles of nature. In the twentieth century nature is understood to be evolutionary and dynamic. New phenomena appeared.
2. In the medieval view nature was purposeful and every creature expressed both the divine purpose and its own built-in goals. Phenomena were explained in terms of purpose. Newtonian view sees nature as deterministic. Mechanical causes not purpose determine natural events. It is important to explain the natural causes. The future can be predicted if we have complete knowledge of the past. The twentieth century view is that there is a complex combination of law and chance in all fields. Nature is characterised by both structure and openness. The future cannot be predicted in detail.
3. In the medieval view components could be separated as independent substances which require nothing but themselves and God in order to be. The Newtonian understanding is that everything is made up of separate particles. An object can objectively be analysed by an objective observer. This is paralleled by an individualistic view of society. In the twentieth century view, nature is understood to be relational, interdependent and ecological. Reality is constituted by events and relationships. The classical realism of the Newtonian view is replaced by a critical realism.²

2. Realism is an approach which accepts that things exist independently of our observation. Reality is not limited to what we can measure and what is visible to us (Spangenberg 1995:193).

4. Nature was a single whole, but in a hierarchical order, with the lower forms serving the higher forms. All parts worked together according to the divine plan. It was anthropocentric in that everything was created for the benefit of humanity. An absolute distinction was made between humanity and creatures. The earth was seen as the centre of the cosmos.³ In the Newtonian world things are seen from a mechanistic and reductionistic view. Laws determine events. In the twentieth century approach things are seen as systems and wholes. Reduction continues to be fruitful in the analysis of the separate components of systems.

5. Categories were dualistic in the medieval view, with a fundamental contrast between spirit and matter. The purpose of matter was to serve the spiritual. The Newtonian view accepted the Cartesian dualism of mind and body. God and human minds are different from a mechanistic world including nature which is, in effect, just a machine. There is not much room for the subjective except as a subjective illusion. Although human beings are acknowledged, humanity is actually also part of an all-encompassing world machine, whose operation could be explained without reference to God. In the twentieth century's view dualistic thinking finds little support. There is a multilevelled approach which accepts that not all things are on the same level, but are part of processes going on. Not only humans but the whole of nature is valuable. Humans are psychosomatic beings - a biological organism but also a responsible self.

6. According to the medieval view, nature is an ordered society, a kingdom with a sovereign Lord as ruler. The Newtonian view sees nature as a machine which runs according to the natural laws. The twentieth century view sees nature as a community of interdependent beings.

This summary of Barbour's view may create the impression of fixed categories. That would be a wrong impression. The characteristics of the medieval view or the Newtonian view (also known as the Enlightenment view) and twentieth century view (in this study referred to as the systems, the ecosystemic or the postmodern view) could be found somewhere on a continuum and not in fixed categories as described by Ian Barbour.

2.1.1 Metaparadigm

Practical theologians are aware of the importance of a metatheory for practical theology. Metatheories describe the point of departure and provide an overall theory in which the rest of the scientific theory is embedded. Pieterse (1993c:51) uses a metatheory as a paradigm.⁴ A metatheory provides the frame-work

3. The development of the term "cosmos" is described by Wildiers (1982). The term initially (in the Greek world) refers to order, organisation and regulation and was the opposite of *akosmia* which means disorder and chaos. From the texts of Plato it becomes clear that the word cosmos gradually changed to designate the universe. The universe was seen as an example of perfect order and became the model for all human activity. Wildiers (1982:9) says: "One cannot really understand the medieval mind, characterized by its pursuit of a perfect hierarchical order, if one does not take into account the underlying cosmology."

4. JCR Liebenberg makes me aware of the article of Gouws about paradigms.

A S Gouws (1990) writes an article about the use of the word paradigm. He refers to the various ways the word is used by scientists. Gouws suggests that we use the term "digm" as an umbrella term. He explains a "digm" as a concept which is more open and functions in a more heterogeneous environment than Kuhn's paradigms. The communication between

for a base theory. This section refers to a *metaparadigm*. By paradigm there is understood a set of patterns or a constellation of beliefs (cf Kuhn 1970:175),⁵ which can also be described with the concept "world-view", which has a more preconscious meaning, according to Lines (1987:37). In this study a *metaparadigm* will function as the overall paradigm within which the metatheory will function.⁶ A *metaparadigm* is thus used as a more encompassing concept than a *metatheory*. Kuhn⁷ (1970:43-44) understands a paradigm as something that does not necessarily imply a set of rules.⁸ Kuhn (1970:175) says: "A paradigm is not a theory or a leading idea. It is an entire constellation of beliefs, values, techniques and so on shared by the members of a given community".

Earlier reference was made to the communication operational theory [cf p 7] as the central theory for practical theology. It functions as a *metatheory* for practical theology.⁹ The obvious question is whether an operational science theory as *metatheory* and an ecosystemic perspective as *metaparadigm* can be used together. De Jongh van Arkel (1991a) has suggested that we see it as a bifocal way of looking at things. This seems to be a very apt way of describing it. Bifocal refers to "two focuses" especially for distant vision and near vision. This is also the context in which this ecosystemic world-view as *metaparadigm* should be understood. As a *metaparadigm* it refers to the distant vision or the overall paradigm. The researcher believes that practical theology as an operational science can function within an ecosystemic paradigm,

digms is not necessarily more precarious than communication within digms. There is no dichotomy between digms and non-digms, or between scheme and content. Gouws (1990:214-215) further describes a "digm" as anti-empiricism, anti-individualistic and constructivistic: "Digms therefore do not constitute a unique own object for philosophy (or epistemology), which would allow the philosopher to suspend judgement on all matters empirical (Gouws 1990:220)."

5. According to Kuhn (1970:viii), one of the features of a paradigm is that it provides a model "for a time", it is thus more flexible than a model. It is also part of a circular process (Kuhn 1970:176) says that "the term 'paradigm' enters the preceding pages early, and its manner of entry is intrinsically circular. A paradigm is what the members of a scientific community share, and, conversely, a scientific community consists of men who share a paradigm."

6. "*Metateorie* is 'n teorie waarin wetenskaplike vertrekpunte uitgespel word, wat ons met ander vakke universeel deel - vakke wat objekte van dieselfde aard bestudeer" (Pieterse 1991c:51).

7. Thomas Kuhn is a theoretical physicist by training, who turned into a historian of science (Mooney 1981:294). His book focused on those rare moments when major changes occur in the world-views (paradigms) of scientists.

8. Kuhn (1970:181) is well aware that people are confused about the meaning of the term "paradigm" (twenty-six possible interpretations for the word "paradigm" are identified in his original book). He said (1970:182) that he would be happy if the term is used in the sense of "a theory", but because of the limited understanding of theory as something which connotes a structure, it would be better to understand the word in terms of what he called a "disciplinary matrix". A matrix means ordered elements which require further specification and "disciplinary" refers to the "common possession of the practitioners of a particular discipline".

9. Blom (1981) refers to family therapist, Paul Watzlawick to develop the concept of *metacommunication*. For Blom (1981), the term "meta" refers to communication about communication. See second-order cybernetics [p 77].

especially if an ecosystemic approach is seen as a paradigm or a world-view¹⁰ and not as a theory, as such.

There was a time in the history of science when a so-called objective approach to research was propagated. Modern philosophy of science began its journey with the positivists who insisted that anything that could not be tested by recourse to observation was a meaningless statement. This was followed by Karl Popper, who argued for a theory of deduction in which, he contends, we test a theory by way of observing empirical applications of the conclusions which can be derived from the theory. Ultimately, a theory is tested by an experience of falsifiability. Popper believes in scientific objectivity though he was not, strictly speaking, a positivist.

Thomas Kuhn brings a new dimension when he describes scientific discoveries as the product of a new way of seeing and understanding things. The acceptance of new discoveries (or new paradigms as he called it) depends not just on logic and experiment, but also on the opinions of the scientific community (1970:viii; 8; 47, 176). For Kuhn all data is paradigm dependent. In later debates it was a question whether data plays any role at all. It would seem that most people agree that data does play a role, but that it is not the only contributor to new theories. On a philosophical level, scientists are aware that an ahistorical¹¹ approach is not possible. This chapter will also explain how changes in physical science help to convince people that an objective approach is not possible. Kuhn (1970:48) refers to the fact that scientific revolutions are conjugated with heavy debate and difference of opinion, and says that "transition from Newtonian to quantum mechanics evoked many debates about both the nature and the standards of physics, some of which still continue".

Another point, Kuhn (1970:49-50) makes, which is also important for this study, is that what may constitute a scientific revolution for some may not be a revolution for others. Although the discovery of new paradigms depends on the opinion of others of the scientific community, it is not necessary for everybody to agree to make a new paradigm acceptable. In referring to quantum mechanics, Kuhn (1970:50) says that "though quantum mechanics (or Newtonian dynamics, or electromagnetic theory) is a paradigm for many scientific groups, it is not the same paradigm for them all... A revolution produced within one of these traditions will not necessarily extend to the others as well".

The important point is that both the operational science theory and the ecosystemic perspective have moved away from a positivistic view of science as described earlier. This is very important, because Propst

10. Fensham (1990) uses the word "realvision" in place of world-view. He believes that realvision better expresses the fact that people not only have a view of the world, but also of the universe (1990:8).

11. Dueck is critical of some psychologists and says (1987:241): "Evangelical psychologists have, however, tended to assume that theory and practice occur beyond history".

(1988:109) is of the opinion that contemporary theology may indeed still be relying on positivism more than it realises.¹²

No paradigm can be totally inclusive of the whole of reality. For practical theology to be understood in all its richness, variety and complexity, the domains of anthropology, sociology, philosophy and psychology must be taken into account. The rest of this chapter will describe the background to and the reasons for the choice of ecosystemic thinking as a metaparadigm for pastoral work. The next section will explain briefly what is meant by "ecosystems" and the rest of the chapter will elaborate on it.¹³

2.1.2 Ecosystems

... thinking "ecologically" is radically different from the way we traditionally and habitually encounter the world. The movement toward a congruent ecological understanding of our world signifies a dramatic change in paradigm (Keeney 1984:25).

The origin of the term "ecosystem" is not that important. What is important is how the term is understood.¹⁴ The term "ecosystems" originated in biology long ago and refers to any "organisational unit or interactive system composed of populations and their related environment". (cf Introduction:1, in O'Connor & Lubin (eds) 1984). According to Stachowiak and Briggs (1984:7), ecosystems refer to the principles of human ecology and systems theory. According to De Jongh van Arkel, the ecosystemic approach grows out of the most recent developments of the General Systems Theory (GST), but goes further than GST.¹⁵

The term "ecosystem" has been used in family therapy for quite a time and for very good reasons [cf p99]. Auerswald (1987) refers to Bateson as one of the people who coined the idea of "ecosystems". Auerswald (1987:322) understands ecosystems to be "rooted in an emerging alternative reality system". He (1987:324)

12. Propst (1988:112) is of the opinion that "a new paradigm for relevant pastoral training and theologizing has not yet emerged".

13. Something of a circular movement will become visible. Although the next heading will discuss the concept "ecosystems", the content of the concept will be explained and broadened throughout the rest of the chapter.

14. The fact that the meaning of the term "ecosystem" is dealt with before the discussion of "systems" is an example of the circularity involved when dealing with systems thinking.

15. Ludwig Von Bertalanffy is the father of the General Systems Theory (GST). He developed the idea in the 1930's and 1940's as an interdisciplinary doctrine. The GST was an attempt to develop a body of systematic theoretical constructs which would explain the general relation between sciences (De Jongh van Arkel 1991a:67). It emphasises the importance of the whole and is a move from the parts to the whole. This does not mean that the parts are no longer important. De Jongh van Arkel (1991a:67-69) makes it clear that, for many different reasons, systems theory has moved beyond the General Systems theory. "Ons kan nou sê dat die AST nie meer die sisteemteorie is waarby die praktiese teologie op meta-teoretiese vlak aansluit nie" (De Jongh van Arkel 1991a:68). It must still be kept in mind that the GST played an important role in the development of systemic thinking (De Jongh van Arkel 1991a:68).

16. Auerswald refers to the use of the systems approach in the economy and by the (USA) Pentagon, which is not the same as ecosystems.

is not convinced that all the systems approaches, even in family therapy, for example, are consistent with ecosystemic thinking.¹⁶

The word "ecosystemic" describes systemic thinking better. It also helps to prevent any misunderstanding between the so-called hard systems and soft systems. **Ecosystems refers to a non-Cartesian paradigm of thinking.** At its basis it is not so much a new theory (against another theory) than a **new way of thinking** (De Jongh van Arkel 1991a:72). To speak of ecosystems is to connect a systems way of thinking about the world (world-view) with the world (living systems) itself. Van Staden (1989:50) explains ecology as "the study of the complex **interrelatedness** of all things in nature, including humans" (my emphasis - FN) (cf Keeney 1984). The term "ecosystem" refers to more than just nature, although it includes a sensitivity to nature. According to De Jongh van Arkel (1991a:69-70), the basic principle of ecology is that a surviving unit never consists only of an individual organism in a static environment. An ecological system is a whole of organisms in reciprocal relations with each other and with their natural environment.

An ecosystemic approach is radically anti-reductionist in principle (De Jongh van Arkel 1991a:70). An ecosystemic approach means that the whole of things get attention. An ecosystemic metaparadigm should prevent practical theology from doing research in an atomised way. Practical theologians who make use of an ecosystemic approach will be aware of the dangers in objectifying research material in such a way that the interrelatedness between systems is ignored. Systems and the relationships between systems will be understood in the widest possible terms (De Jongh van Arkel 1991a:70).

It is important to emphasise that the ecosystemic perspective does not take away the individual's responsibility and autonomy. Every person is still to be held responsible for his/her own behaviour. From an ecosystemic perspective both the individual and the environment can exert powerful influences, but they are always interactive (Introduction:3, in O'Connor & Lubin (eds) 1984).

De Jongh van Arkel (1991a) suggests an ecosystemic approach and Howard Clinebell (1992)¹⁷ an ecological-systems model for pastoral work. **"Ecosystems" refers to a move away from a mechanistic way of thinking,** it is thus a nonpositivistic understanding of the world and critical of modern society. In the

17. In *Toward an ecological-systems model for pastoral care and counselling*, Howard Clinebell (1992) gives an overview of the development of pastoral care and counselling since World War II. He is very positive about the psychodynamic and systemic approach. He believes that the "liberation model" with its emphasis on "social-systemic-institutional causes" for human brokenness adds an important dimension to pastoral care. He pleads for a holistic approach, which also takes the ecology into account. Clinebell (1992:266) puts it as follows:

To respond to the new world of the 1990's we need to add an ecological-systems model focusing on the interaction of natural and human ecological systems.

Clinebell's ecological systems model may not be exactly the same as De Jongh van Arkel's ecosystemic approach. Clinebell specifically emphasises the importance of nature. It is clear that what Clinebell proposes falls within the same framework of thinking as what the ecosystemic approach wants to generate, namely a more open, holistic and integrated way of thinking. Müller (1991b:93) says about Clinebell's holistic pastoral care, "hoewel Clinebell nie die woord gebruik nie, is dit duidelik dat wat hy ingedagte het, beskryf sou kon word met 'n ekosistemiese benadering".

words of Auerswald (1987:321) an ecosystemic perspective means "an epistemological shift" away from Newtonian and Cartesian thinking. Ecosystemic thinking is a shift away from a Platonic ontology to an intersubjectivity and relativism. All phenomena are understood to be in a certain context and the endeavours of the scientist/ theologian/ researcher are not value-free, but he/ she becomes a participant in the research process.

"Systems" will be described later in more detail [cf p 50]. At this stage suffice it to say that in this study a system can also be seen as a mental construction, which means it is not something static.¹⁸ A system is not a structure, but a pattern of communication which is identified as a system by for example the researcher of a study. "Ecosystem" is a concept which refers to the interaction and interrelatedness between all systems as properties of the whole. The "whole" can be the total universe. Ecosystems refers to the widest possible network of interrelatedness which can be described within any given context (Le Roux 1987:1).¹⁹ It can be a relatedness of ideas (Bateson) or of living systems. This view implies that we cannot decompose the world into independently existing smaller units, but that all is a complex web of relations between the various parts of the dynamic inseparable whole. But this does not mean that smaller parts are of no importance at all. It is possible to study, or analyse or change or communicate with a "small ecology" rather than a "wider ecology"; especially if the smaller ecology does not seem to realise that it is part of a wider ecology.

Capra (Audio cassette 1985b) understands ecosystems to refer to:

... an awareness of the fundamental interconnectedness and interdependence of all phenomena and also the imbeddedness of individuals and society in the cyclical processes of nature.

Before further discussion of why an ecosystemic approach is preferable to an atomistic approach, it may be necessary to explain in more detail what is meant by ecosystemic thinking, by making use of one of the exponents of systemic/ ecosystemic thinking. In *Criteria of systems thinking* (1985a), Fritjof Capra explains the three key aspects of systems thinking that are characteristics of all the sciences. These three aspects of systems thinking are interdependent and interconnected.

In the first place, systems thinking is concerned with the relationship between the part and the whole. In the classical scientific paradigm it was believed that a complex system could be understood by understanding the properties of the parts (Descartes). The parts were understood to be the building blocks of the whole. According to Capra (1985a:475), this understanding of the parts as building blocks comes from

18 . It differs from Hall and Fagan's (1968:81) definition, for example: "A system is a set of objects together with relationships between the objects and between the attributes."

19 . Keeney (1983:135) defines ecology as "the broadest possible view for looking at all systems, orders of systems, and interrelations among systems".

20 . Cf De Jongh van Arkel (1987:61-67), who elaborates on it.

Democritus (460-370 BC) in Ancient Greece and was further developed by Descartes and Newton and was the accepted scientific view until this century.²⁰

Early in this century with the development of quantum theory, this classical model was questioned. In systems thinking the relationship between the part and the whole is exactly the opposite. The whole is primary in the sense that you cannot understand the parts if you do not understand the whole. To speak of a part is not correct, because what we see as parts are stable **patterns** which capture our attention. The universe does not consist of building blocks, but of a **network** of relations (Capra 1985a:476).

A linear theory gives you the whole from the parts: if you add up the parts you will get the whole. A nonlinear theory would not give you the whole from the parts. It means that the parts do not add up to the whole (Kosko 1994:108).

Systems thinking, in the second place, is **process thinking** (Capra 1985a:476). This paradigm (systems thinking) moves away from thinking in terms of structures. What we describe as structures are the manifestations of underlying processes. According to Capra, (1985a:476) this is especially important when people deal with living systems.

Capra (1985a:476-477) describes the third characteristic of systems thinking as the most difficult one for scientists to get used to, namely that there **are no basic or fundamental principles or constant laws of knowledge**. What we know is part of a network of knowledge. "The material universe is seen as a dynamic web of interrelated events" (Capra 1985a:477).

If everything is interrelated and connected, how is it possible to understand anything, because to understand the part you need to understand the whole, which means that we need to understand all the other networks and relations, which is impossible. There is something like approximate knowledge. It is possible to describe selected groups and phenomena and explain some of their relations, and develop this into a scientific theory. To summarise it in the words of Capra (1985a:478):

Scientific theories, then, are approximate descriptions of natural phenomena. They can never provide any complete and definitive understanding. To put it bluntly, scientists do not deal with truth; they deal with limited and approximate descriptions of reality.

In this study an ecosystemic way of thinking is proposed as a metaparadigm for pastoral work. Ecosystemic thinking can be summarised as follows:

- It is a move away from atomistic, mechanistic, reductionistic, Cartesian, linear, and static thinking to dynamic, evolving thinking.
- It means to look at the whole and to know it is more than the parts.
- It is a way of thinking and a way of looking at the universe.
- It means to look for the interrelatedness in and between systems.

- It refers to a new epistemology (intersubjectivity) and ontology (relativism) away from objectivism and absolutism.
- The distinction between a system and its environment is in the mind of the observer who is also part of a system.
- The term *ecosystems* refers to dynamic and open systems and not to closed systems.

2.2 THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN ECOSYSTEMIC PERSPECTIVE

All of us are aware of ourselves as beings in a very complex world, on the one hand. On the other hand, many things are quite simple and take place regularly. Our views of this world may differ greatly, but most people expect the sun to rise tomorrow at the same place as today. This world thus shows certain regularities on which we all rely to a certain extent. Checkland (1981:3) puts it as follows: "coherent life on this planet is possible for us because the world outside ourselves does appear to be regular, not capricious".

Plato believed in a heaven of unchanging, universal, pure ideas. The Platonic way of thinking was that knowledge is contemplation of the perfect forms of eternal truth. God was seen as the supreme force and "man" the centre of the created order (Barbour 1972:18, 22). The Greek philosophers saw nature as a fixed and well-ordered body of eternal entities and their relationships (Du Toit 1995:35). Nature was seen in Newtonian times as a "law-abiding machine" (Barbour 1972:36), following immutable laws with every detail precisely predictable. This forms the basis of philosophies of determinism in the later ages.

This form of thinking is challenged by ecosystemic philosophies. Ecosystemic thinking is a recognisable entity of a collection of concerns and methods which developed and which gives attention to the complexity of this world and the influences of different subjects and objects on each other. Its concern is not a particular discipline or area of problem; it brings together different streams of knowledge.

There are world-wide indications that people are looking at the world in a much more ecological way. Environmental issues are no longer the chip on the shoulder of a few "greenies". The world is aware of the Green House Effect and the theories about the depletion of the ozone layer. People are becoming aware increasingly that the economies of the world are linked and that no country can exist on its own.²¹ The interconnectedness and interdependence of economic structures, overpopulation, malnutrition, disease, pollution, acid rain, droughts, floods, politics, religion, and even the animal and plant²² domains are

21. Many examples can be mentioned, e.g. an economic crisis in Mexico influenced the stock exchange in Johannesburg badly, according to a commentator on SABC Radio on 13/01/95. Both Mexico and South Africa are part of the upcoming markets of the world. What happens in the one has a ripple effect on the other.

22. Van der Hoven (1984) describes how plants produce high quantities of tannin-C to protect themselves. The tannin makes the protein indigestible. It seems as if plants have the ability to "communicate". When a plant's leaves are injured they released aromatic compounds to which other plants of the same species are sensitive to. They apparently react to this "message" by producing more tannin-C. This results in bad tasting leaves,

described by many scientists. Fensham (1990:30) puts it as follows: "All these factors are bringing an awareness into the public consciousness that everything in the world and even the Universe is interrelated".

This opens new avenues of research and new relationships. The relationship between the social sciences and physical sciences is an important point of discussion.²³ This may be a legitimate discussion, but the discussion itself may actually say something of a dichotomised²⁴ world-view.

The dualism visible in society can be traced back to Plato, a disciple of Socrates. This was taken further in theology by Augustine, a fountainhead of Protestant and Catholic theology in the Western world. Augustine took a drastic turn from what he saw as the evil of this world to the good of the spiritual soul and became an ascetic. He believed that the spiritual and physical should be separated.

The world is divided into all sorts of divisions such as physical and spiritual; physical science and social science; physics, chemistry and biology. This carving up of the world is our way of trying to understand our complex world and to identify some "fixed" regularities. Unfortunately, it also becomes the way we see (understand) the world. One of the best examples of the dualistic nature of our thoughts is the division of the world in the realms of the "spiritual" and the "physical". In theological language people think in terms of "soul" and "body" as two distinct parts of human beings.²⁵ It is interesting the remark of the West African sociologist Max Assimeng (1989:13) that: "The traditional African, for instance, did not establish a sharp distinction between sacred and secular spheres of human activity... religion is 'danced out, rather than thought out'. The metaphysic of the traditional religionist enjoined an inseparable relationship between man and the cosmos ..."

which is the signal to animals to move on, if they persist to eat the plants, the leaves will become indigestible. There are examples of animals that have died because of the reduction in nutritional value of indigestible leaves. After about 100 hours the plant's tannin-C levels drop and it can be eaten again. This is a defence cycle which defends the plant and may lead to the death of animals if too many animals are kept in too small an area, which give the plants no opportunity to recover and thus to last for many more years. Experiments confirmed that if, for example, a hook thorn tree was threshed, other hook thorn trees several metres away showed an increase of up to 87% in tannin-C.

23 . This study does not wish to enter into any kind of debate about the relationship theology and science. Tracy (1973:135) summarises it as follows:

Neither theology nor science, then, has anything to fear from a future collaboration which recognizes the autonomy and the mutual interrelatedness of these two sorely needed conversation partners for our critical present and future. All they have to lose by such dialogue is the memory of their past tragic history and the unpromising spectre of a future non-conversation between a dehumanized science and a ghettoized theology.

24 . Du Toit (1995:39) puts it as follows: "The unfortunate distinctions between natural science/ human science can be attributed to the Cartesian division: *res extensa* - *res cogitans*. These distinctions are no longer functional. A prerequisite for any significant dialogue is that a change from a Cartesian to a post-Cartesian perception or reality is acknowledged."

25 . This ideas emerges in many different ways. Degenaar (1963:31) makes it clear that in the earliest primitive thinking of human beings there was no dualistic distinction between "soul" and "body". Degenaar (1963) defends his position from a phenomenological point of view.

This division between mind and matter, especially Descartes' method of reasoning, has had a profound effect on Western thought.²⁶ Its importance for modern science must not be underestimated. It leads on the one side to many discoveries. It makes it possible for people to put a human being on the moon, to transplant hearts.²⁷ On the other hand, it limits the direction of scientific research. Scientists, encouraged by their success, often treat all living organisms as machines and tend to believe that everything works like a machine. Unfortunately, this is basically reductionistic and leads to much fragmentation in thought and life (cf Schindler 1986:7; Capra 1983).

Schindler (1986:10-12) is of the opinion that this mechanistic understanding of nature has had a definite influence on the way immaterial things were and still are understood. The existence of the immanent is eliminated and in the process God becomes something private; values become very arbitrary and also a very private matter; the only real knowledge has to do with knowledge of nature. Theology and metaphysics are not seen as real knowledge.²⁸ Schindler (1986:12) describes it as follows:

It is interesting of course in this context to note how physics - in its mechanistic understanding - came to be called science (that is, *scientia*, knowledge); physics and its method - of observation/ quantification (sic) - become the only way to acquire positive knowledge in the proper sense, all other endeavors - such as philosophy and theology - becoming at best second order/ derivative enterprises.

It is also interesting that the Christian religion accepted the reductionist world-view, because it rules out as a matter of fact anything whose existence cannot be proved.²⁹ What happened, is that religion (especially the Christian religion in Western society) has accepted this dichotomy of the Enlightenment and the Newtonian science and withdrew itself to the world of values. From time to time theologians try to prove that religion itself can be understood in terms of facts and in doing so secured for the (Western) Christian religion a place in the scientific world.

26. Von Bertalanffy (1967:93-97) sees the mind-matter debate as part of the Cartesian dualism and as

... conceptualizations which became inadequate with the progress of science. Thus the construction of the world as consisting of these two components, clear enough at the time of classical physics and rationalistic psychology, has become insufficient at the levels of both phenomenology of immediate experience, and of scientific construct. Again, it appears as a "perspective", which has a definite place in history; but it would be overbearing and naive to consider it a true representation of ultimate reality (Von Bertalanffy 1967:97).

27. The despiritualization of "the heart" or "the moon" opens up new possibilities for science and medicine.

28. According to Von Bertalanffy (1972: xix), knowledge is not simply the same as truth or reality, because all truth and reality and knowledge is an interaction between knower and known which leads to a perspective philosophy.

29. "If we continue to operate in terms of a Cartesian dualism of mind versus matter, we shall probably also continue to see the world in terms of God versus man; elite versus people; and man versus environment. It is doubtful whether a species having both an advanced technology and this strange way of looking at its world can endure" (Bateson 1972:337).

Newbiggin (1986:16-17) describes how in this modern pluralistic world people have the freedom to believe whatever they want to. Value systems are not right or wrong, true or false. They are matters of personal choice. Then there is the "world" of facts, which many people distinguish from the world of values.³⁰ In our Western culture the world of facts is a world where things are either true or false. There is very little room for a pluralistic and fragmented society. Newbiggin (1986:16) puts it as follows:

We argue, experiment, carry out tests, and compare results, until we finally agree on what the facts are; and we expect all reasonable people to accept them. The one who does not accept them is the real heretic. Of course, he will not be burned at the stake, but his views will not be published in the scientific journals or in the university lecture rooms.

The two scientists, LeShan and Margenau (1982), tell the story of their experience in 1979 with the well-known journal *Science*. They sent a letter to the journal after research on telepathy and certain findings. After numerous letters to the editor it was clear that their findings were not going to be published. Their conclusion is (1982:208) that because of reductionistic thinking most scientists are not willing to believe that something exists if it cannot be reduced to physical terms.

The problem with the modern world is not rationality, especially not critical rationality. In any case, it is not possible to return to a pre-Enlightenment world-view of the Middle Ages. Bosch (1991:273) says it is "not possible to 'unknow' what we have learned". The problem with the type of rationality of the modern age is its reductionistic tendencies and its mechanistic and linear understanding of the world. We have to take the best of modern science and philosophy and rethink it in terms of a new paradigm with a broader understanding of reality. This implies an ontological move.

The last few decades have seen a change in world-view. The importance of a more holistic view of the world and universe becomes apparent. This is the result of a new way of thinking about the universe and about reality. Not only does it lead to a new scientific methodology, but it also leads to an expanding concept of science. This may also lead to a new recognition of the importance of what is usually called the "spiritual dimension". The divisions between human science and physical science became less stringent.³¹ Bosch (1991:353) puts it as follows:

A fundamental reason lies in the fact that the narrow Enlightenment perception of rationality has, at long last, been found to be an inadequate cornerstone on which to build one's life. The objectivist framework imposed on rationality has had a crippling effect on human inquiry; it has led to disastrous reductionism and hence to stunted human growth.

30. The separation of value from fact is reflected in the separation of private from public life that is one of the characteristics of modern society. Is that not one of the root causes for the many examples of corruption in public and private sectors, in South Africa?

31. "Buitendien is die ou teenstelling tussen natuurwetenskaplike en geesteswetenskaplike metodes agterhaal. Vandag word ingesien dat elke territorium van die wetenskap van alle metodes gebruik maak" (Pieterse 1986b:66).

What causes such a change would justify a study on its own. In this study changes in what is generally known as the physical sciences are given as one of the reasons as well as the role of the General Systems Theory and developments in the social sciences - philosophy, sociology and psychology. Surely it is more complex than that.³²

2.2.1 Development and changes in the sciences

Contemporary developments in science challenge theology far more deeply than did the introduction of Aristotle into Western Europe in the thirteenth century ... Christians will inevitably assimilate the prevailing ideas about the world, and today these are deeply shaped by science (Pope John Paul II 1988 as cited by Mooney 1991:289).

Many people see science and religion as strongly contrasting enterprises which essentially have nothing to do with each other (Barbour 1972:1). Barbour (1972:2) believes that the separation of the spheres of science and religion has been reinforced by the view that science provides technical knowledge rather than a philosophy of life. Du Toit (1995:34) refers to the following quote by Mooney (1991: 310, 327):

The epistemology of science differs from that of theology, but, as we have seen, a common sociology of knowledge, arising from the dynamics of history and culture, can both critique and illumine the efforts of each... the thought processes of each group have nevertheless undergone a remarkably similar development in recent decades... Their epistemologies may differ because of the different types of human experience they investigate, but there is a common sociology of knowledge available to both ...

De Jongh van Arkel (1987) gives a brief overview of the history of physical science from the time of Aristotle (384-322 BC), medieval times and the Copernican and Cartesian revolution.³³ He (1987:64) sees the Newtonian mechanistic methodology as a culmination of centuries of scientific reasoning. This mechanistic world-view was further developed in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. At the beginning of the twentieth century Max Planck (1858-1947) and later Albert Einstein (1879-1955), Niels Bohr (1885-1962) and others realised that a mechanistic interpretation does not succeed in explaining everything. Today we know that scientifically, the Newtonian laws and concepts do not "apply to the realm of the very small (the subatomic realm)" (De Jongh van Arkel 1988b:225; cf 1987:71).³⁴ The following passage from De Jongh van Arkel (1988b:224) aptly summarises it: "The classical science worldview was mechanistic in analogy, reductionistic in method, disciplinary in research, deterministic in outlook, static in perception, entropic in direction, dualistic in practice and positivistic in determination of truth".

32. James Martin (1987:371) writes as follows:

The hypothesis underlying the (sic) paper is that the twentieth century revolutions in physics, cosmology, theology and biblical hermeneutics, to name only a few fields, together signify a basic shift from Mechanical (critical) to a Holistic (post-critical) Paradigm.

33. For an in-depth discussion about the history of science and religion, see Barbour (1972).

34. Auerswald (1987:323) understands Newtonian reality as a "paradigm within the new science epistemology". He (1987:322-324) understands these developments in terms of a "strange loop", where new science is the child of Newtonian science (thus born from Newtonian science), but becomes the parent and Newtonian science the child.

This does not mean that earlier theories are irrelevant, but that life is more complicated than acknowledged. Some things can only be understood in a relational sense. The observer himself/ herself plays an important role in this process. "According to quantum theory something can be two things at the same time" (De Jongh van Arkel 1987:76). At the same time the Cartesian distinction between mind and matter (mind-body) is also challenged (cf De Jongh van Arkel 1987:78).

Colin Russell (1983) investigates the relationship between changes in society and changes in science. The obvious question is which comes first - do changes in society lead to changes in science or do changes in science lead to changes in society? Russell (1983:10) concludes that the relationship is much more complex and that "all kinds of mutual influences are possible, and a complex feedback situation can arise". Factors like technology and ideology, for instance, play a role as well as the influence of the philosophies of the time.

We live in a fragmented and pluralistic society; the concepts we use and the way we understand and interpret the world around us often reflect this fragmentation.³⁵ The Western way of thinking is heavily influenced by the Platonian and the Newtonian³⁶ way of thinking. The Western world-view has changed drastically since the Middle Ages. The result of the Enlightenment, the Industrial Revolution³⁷ and the Scientific Revolution was a world-view where the scientific method was seen as the only valid approach to knowledge. The universe was seen as a mechanical system composed of elementary material building blocks. Capra (1983:xvii) says that scientists became "painfully aware" that their basic concepts, their language and their whole way of thinking were inadequate to describe atomic phenomena.

Before 1500 the dominant world-view in Europe was what could be called "organic" (Capra 1983:37). The medieval theory of society thus stressed the whole before the parts.³⁸ The connection between the parts was integrated through a harmony pervading the whole. People lived in cohesive communities and were in a special relationship with nature. There was an interdependence between the spiritual and the material world "and a subordination of individual needs to those of the community" (cf Fourie 1991:16; Merchant 1980:73 ff). Platonic thinking, which divides the spiritual and physical worlds, was also very much alive. Russell (1983:15) describes the earlier view of the universe "as something more akin to an *organism* than a

35 . De Jongh van Arkel (1987:83) describes fragmentation as follows: "Fragmentation is an attitude which disposes the mind to regard divisions between things as absolute and final. It leads to a general tendency to break things up in an irrelevant and inappropriate way, and so it is inherently destructive".

36 . Russell (1983:16) warns that "Newtonianism" is a complex term and that all the ideas associated with Newtonianism are not straightforward.

37 . Russell (1983:97) says the Industrial Revolution started in the decades following 1760 and refers to the mechanisation of industrial processes previously performed by individual human beings or by animals.

38 . Checkland (1981:75) says the following: "Aristotle argued that a whole was more than the sum of its parts, but when Aristotle's picture of the world was overthrown by the Scientific Revolution of the 17th century, this seemed an unnecessary doctrine".

*mechanism*³⁹ According to Capra (1983:38), Nicholas Copernicus (a Polish priest) overthrew accepted dogma of the understanding of the universe. The earth was no longer the centre of the universe, but the sun. The period in history, known later as the time of the Scientific Revolution, had begun.⁴⁰ Russell (1983:15) believes that Copernicus (1473-1543) showed signs in his thinking of the old view of the universe. Copernicus published his hypothesis in 1543, the year of his death.⁴¹ For Russell, the fundamental change in thinking came with Newton (1642-1727). Merchant (1980:194) believes the Reformation and Luther's (1483-1546) emphasis on the right of the individual to determine religious truth, not the old standards for faith set by the church hierarchy, was a turning point.

Johannes Kepler,⁴² a theological student at the University of Tübingen, born nearly one hundred years after Copernicus (1571-1630), gave further support to Copernican ideas. He also studied astronomy and physics. According to Fourie (1988:38), Kepler played an enormous role in making empirical observation and measurement valid criteria for the formulation of all theories on nature. Mathematics and observation in physics became the foundation of science. Fourie (1988:38) quotes Rhombi who called Kepler the father of the exact science. Kepler made no secret of his choice in favour of Copernican theory (Fourie 1988:40).

According to Fourie (1988:40), the response from Protestantism against Kepler was harsher than from the Catholic Church. For Protestants, who were in a struggle about the authority of the Bible, Kepler's theories were another example of a serious attack on the authority of the Bible.⁴³ Kepler causes a breakdown in the ontological bond between theology and science, although in his own mind he still shared the old idea of universality as represented in classical medieval philosophy and theology (Fourie 1988:43-45). Kepler laid the foundation for a closed mechanistic world-view (Fourie 1988:45). Checkland (1981:39) calls Kepler a prophet of the scientific revolution and Galileo, a contemporary of Kepler, the first revolutionary.

39 . Mechanism refers to a world-view which recorded the world in terms of the machine. The cosmos is operated from the outside by God and the body by the human soul.

40 . The Scientific Revolution is a phrase used to encapsulate the train of events from the appearance of Copernicus (1543) until Newton (1687) (Russell 1983:13).

41 . In 1616 Rome declared Copernicanism false. Checkland (1981:38) says that this may be seen as an indication of how indifferent people and the church were in the beginning to so-called new scientific views. It was so unacceptable that they just did not take it seriously.

42 . His name is spelled in five different ways (Checkland 1981:38).

43 . Fourie (1988:40) quotes Luther who said in reference to Copernicus: "So it goes now. Whoever wants to be clever must agree with nothing that others esteem. He must do something of his own. Even in these things that are thrown into disorder, I believe the Holy Scriptures, for Joshua commanded the sun to stand still and not the earth."

Pannenberg (1989:153) refers to the above-mentioned quotation of Luther. Pannenberg sees it as an example of Luther and others' reliance on a literal understanding of the Bible. Pannenberg is of the opinion that this type of reasoning is responsible for the alienation between science and theology. Many German theologians had withdrawn in the late eighteenth hundreds from any conversation with scientists claiming an incompatibility of the theological and the scientific descriptions of the world (Pannenberg 1989:156). Karl Barth, for example, was of the opinion that, in principle, a theological doctrine of creation should not concern itself with scientific descriptions and results.

Galileo Galilei (1564-1642) established the Copernican hypothesis as a fact. His empirical approach became the dominant feature of science in the seventeenth century (Capra 1983:39). Galilei postulated that scientist should not study properties like colour, sound, touch, taste or smell because they were subjective mental projections and should be excluded from the domain of science. This resulted in what Capra (1983:40) calls an "obsession" of scientists with measurement and quantification. Theologically, the ideas of Copernicus and Galileo had challenged the understanding of Scripture in both Roman Catholic⁴⁴ and Protestant traditions (cf Spangenberg 1994:148).⁴⁵

This way of understanding science was taken further by the brilliant mathematician, René Descartes (1596-1650). He is to be compared with Plato (472-347 BC) and Aristotles (Capra).⁴⁶ Wildiers (1982:149) describes Descartes as the father of modern philosophy. According to Capra (1983:42), Descartes says:⁴⁷ "We reject all knowledge which is merely probable and judge that only those things should be believed which are perfectly known and about which there can be no doubts."

Descartes develops his own scientific method which he believes to include all knowledge of the principles of physics. Descartes' method was analytical - he broke up thoughts and problems into pieces and arranged them in logical order. In his attempt to build a complete natural science, Descartes' mechanistic views were extended to include living organisms. Descartes believes "there is nothing included in the concept of body that belongs to the mind; and nothing in that of mind that belongs to the body" (Capra 1983:45; cf Rothschuh 1973:874 ff).⁴⁸ It also results in an understanding of nature, not as a living organism, but as a machine. Schindler (1986:4-6) understands Descartes' belief that the wholeness of nature is exactly the sum of its parts, as mechanistic. This mechanistic view influences people's attitudes towards the natural environment (Capra 1983). The physicist, Werner Heisenberg discusses the role of Descartes' philosophy in the history of humankind and concludes (1989:67): "The influence of the Cartesian division on human

44 . Wildiers (1982:140) describes it as follows:

The Copernican theory undoubtedly contained a challenge for Catholic theology. But instead of accepting the challenge and reflecting on faith in a new perspective, the Church opted for an easy conservatism, keeping the enemy at bay by means of its anathemas. this failure to accept the challenge of a new world picture was a great loss to the Church and to Christianity.

In 1984, a Vatican commission acknowledged that church officials had erred in condemning Galileo.

45 . See Spangenberg (1994:148) who quotes Luther: "Der Narr [Copernicus] will uns die ganze Kunst Astronomia umkehren. Aber die Heilige Schrift sagt uns, dass Josua die Sonne still stehen lies und nicht die Erde." See also Checkland (1981:38), who refers to the same quote. This is probably the same quotation Fourie (1988:40) refers to.

47 . Capra quoted: Garber, D 1978. Science and Certainty in Descartes, in Hooker, M (ed). *Descartes*.

48 . Cf Schindler (1986:4) "The heart of Descartes's (sic) understanding of matter, then, unfolds like this: matter is something which can be clearly distinguished from mind".

thought in the following centuries can hardly be overestimated, but it is just this division which we have to criticize later from the development of physics in our time".

Descartes was aware of what happened with Galileo and wanted to be obedient to the church and was even willing not to make known some of his works if it would offend the church (Wildiers 1982:150).⁴⁹ Descartes opted for a complete separation of religion and science. Descartes believed that in this way the church would not interfere with the natural sciences. This created new problems like the relationship between God and the world and the relation between body and soul.

Heisenberg is of the opinion that Descartes did not give a new direction to human thought, he only formulated a trend in human thinking for the first time that could already be seen during the Renaissance and the Reformation. Merchant (1980:194) maintains that the freedom of conscience started by Martin Luther led to social uncertainty in the years after the Reformation. Sceptical ideas became widely known and made a search for certainty in knowledge a priority. Descartes and others presented a solution to the problem of uncertainty, in the form of a mechanical philosophy. They reinstated moral and intellectual order by reviving the philosophies of the ancient atomists, placed them in a Christian context and devised criteria for certainty and social stability.

Isaac Newton (1642-1727), born in the year of Galileo's death, accomplished a synthesis of Copernicus, Kepler, Bacon,⁵⁰ Galileo and Descartes (Capra 1983). Isaac Newton was an interesting person. He was not only a scientist, but also a historian, lawyer and theologian. Newton's theories of physics provided a solid foundation for scientists well into the twentieth century. His laws of movement are universally true. He succeeded in combining the empirical inductive method of Bacon and the rational deductive method of Descartes (Capra 1983). The mechanics of Newton started from the assumption that one can describe the world without speaking about God or ourselves (Heisenberg 1989:69).

The world as a perfect machine as explained by Descartes was proved by Newton. His theories were later used to explain the continuous motion of fluids and the vibrations of elastic bodies. It helped John Dalton to formulate the hypothesis about atoms and helped to develop theories in chemistry (Capra 1983).

These theories and their underlying philosophies influenced a philosopher like John Locke (1632-1704), whose philosophies were strongly influenced by Descartes and Newton (cf Bridger & Atkinson 1994:100ff). He himself had a decisive impact on eighteenth-century thought (Capra 1983:55). In his research he studied individuals' behaviour and then applied it to economic and political problems. His theories influenced some of the major schools in psychology like behaviourism⁵¹ and psychoanalysis. Political philosophers also built

49. Wildiers (1982:150) quotes Descartes who said: "But for nothing in the world would I wish to be responsible for a discourse containing the slightest word that was disapproved of by the Church, and so I prefer to suppress it than to make it appear lame".

50. Francis Bacon (1561-1626).

51. According to Grenz (1994:199), Behaviourism is deterministic in essence, B F Skinner is one of the most well-known representatives of behaviourism.

some of their theories on Locke's research. According to Capra (1983:56), Locke contributed tremendously to the value systems of the Enlightenment.⁵² He had a strong influence on ideals like individualism, property rights, free markets and representative government. Thomas Jefferson's ideas again were heavily influenced by Locke's philosophies (Capra 1983).

In the nineteenth century the mechanistic view of the world was still very popular, but some new developments and discoveries slowly helped to bring about a change in attitude. The discovery of electric and magnetic phenomena (by Michael Faraday and Clerk Maxwell (1831-1879)), for example, played an important role. Everything could not be explained completely in terms of the knowledge known up to then. But it was Albert Einstein (1879-1955) who eventually succeeded in acknowledging that everything could not be explained mechanically, when he constructed the theory of relativity.

In 1905 Einstein formulated his first theory of relativity. A new direction, namely thermodynamics, began to develop. This led to new laws in physics, like the "law of the conservation of energy" and later the "law of the dissipation of energy". According to Capra (1983), at the end Einstein did not accept the consequences of his quantum theory. He believed that hidden variables would be found to explain some of his findings. According to Davies (1989:6), Einstein said: "God does not play dice with the universe."⁵³ Einstein tried to formulate a unified field theory along Cartesian lines, but did not succeed. The problem was that the laws could not be explained in terms of Newtonian mechanics (cf Van Erkelens 1988:106-127). Ludwig Boltzmann clarified the situation by introducing the concept "probability".

Another philosophical-scientific concept was born in the nineteenth century, namely the idea of "evolution". This concept was part of the ideas of Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) and also of the political philosophers Hegel (1770-1831) and Engels. Jean Baptist Lamarck, a biologist, proposed a theory of evolution to explain developments in living beings. Later Charles Darwin developed these ideas further. The idea started to develop that the world does not function exactly like a machine, but that there are also changes going on in this world.

The above developments led to two different scenarios. According to the theory of probability, the world is moving in the direction of a total collapse: from order to disorder, while the ideas of the biologists are just the opposite: the world is moving from disorder to order (cf Hawking 1988).

In his description of the Newtonian world-view, Von Bertalanffy (1968a:186ff) is of the opinion that the twentieth century has experienced what he calls the *Organismic Revolution*.⁵⁴ At its core is the notion of

52 . Cf Bosch's (1991:264-267) description of the characteristics of the Enlightenment [p 36].

53 . Cf also Van Erkelens (1988:17). He calls the first part of his book "God dobbel niet". Van Erkelens (1988:20-21) believes that Einstein was influenced by the philosophers of nature (natuurfilosofen) who believe that God acts like an architect and has a plan for all of creation. Van Erkelens (1988:23-37) explains the relativity theory and its implications in detail. See also Kosko (1994) for relativity theory.

54 . Organismic is the opposite of the term "mechanistic". Included is the idea of the earth as a living organism (cf Lines 1987:105 ff; Capra 1983:80).

system. The systems approach sees the world as organisation and wholes, that change the basic categories upon which scientific thought rests and influence attitudes.

According to Capra (1983:62), most people still believe the basic ideas underlying Newtonian physics. Scientists wrestle with many questions they just cannot answer. There are so many paradoxes. It took scientists, especially physicists a long time to accept that these paradoxes are an essential part of atomic physics. A group of physicists, including Max Planck; Niels Bohr; Louis De Broglie, Erwin Schrödinger (1887-1961), Wolfgang Pauli, Werner Heisenberg, Paul Dirac and Albert Einstein, worked for about thirty years to formulate the quantum theory (Capra 1983:65). They found that atoms are not specific solid particles as first thought. Atoms consist of vast regions of space in which small particles (electrons) move around a nucleus. These subatomic particles (electrons, protons and neutrons) are units of matter, but are abstract entities with dual characteristics. Sometimes they are particles and sometimes they are waves. Capra (1983:68-69) puts it as follows:

While it acts like a particle, it is capable of developing its wave nature at the expense of its particle nature, and vice versa, thus undergoing continual transformations from particle to wave and from wave to particle. This means that neither the electron nor any other atomic 'object' has any intrinsic properties independent of its environment. The properties it shows - particle-like or wave-like - will depend on the experimental situation, that is, on the apparatus it is forced to interact with.

The formulation of the theory of relativity and the quantum theory necessitated profound changes in concepts of space, time, matter, object and cause and effect. The foundations of physics started to move. Capra (1983:66) describes it as follows:

In contrast to the mechanistic Cartesian view of the world, the world view emerging from modern physics can be characterized by words like organic, holistic, and ecological. It might also be called a systems view, in the sense of general systems theory. The universe is no longer seen as a machine, made up of a multitude of objects, but has to be pictured as one indivisible, dynamic whole whose parts are essentially interrelated and can be understood only as patterns of a cosmic process.

2.2.1.1 The theory of relativity and quantum theory

Changes in thinking about science and scientific research are also prompted by the discovery of the subatomic world. Davies (1989:3) is of the opinion that although the theory of relativity proposes "strange ideas", it is more easily accommodated and much more uncontroversial than the quantum theory, which causes much greater conceptual and philosophical problems. Heisenberg (1989:98) sees the theory of relativity as very important because of its influence on scientists to recognise the need for change in the fundamental principles of physics.

Hawking (1988:11) describes the general theory of relativity and quantum mechanics as the "great intellectual achievements of the first half of this century". The general theory of relativity describes the force of gravity and the large-scale structure of the universe while quantum mechanics deals with phenomena on extremely small scales.

Einstein published his first paper on the theory of relativity in 1905 and a general theory of relativity in 1916. With these theories Einstein broke away from the Newtonian way of thinking about space and time. The

Newtonian way of thinking is an absolutist way of thinking and did not see things in relation to each other. Time and space are not independent dimensions according to Einstein's laws. Brown (1987:89) explains the interdependent aspect of Einstein's general theory of relativity as follows: "... (it) has told us a lot about the structure of the space-time in which we live; it has shown us, for example, how space, time, mass, inertia, gravitation, the paths of light rays and many other things, are related in this space-time".

To understand quantum mechanics is not easy at all. Many years ago Werner Heisenberg⁵⁵ (1930:preface) wrote: "But even today the physicist more often has a kind of faith in the correctness of the new principles than a clear understanding of them".

Heisenberg (1989:18) traces the origin of the quantum theory back to a very well-known everyday phenomenon, which actually has nothing to do with atomic physics. According to Heisenberg (1989), there was a problem in explaining the quite common observation, that when a piece of metal is heated it gets red hot and later on white hot at higher temperatures in terms of the known laws of radiation and heat. Planck did a lot of research on it and came up with his law of heat radiation. This led to more research and Planck became aware that certain parts of his formula did not agree with Newtonian physics. In December of 1900 he published his quantum hypothesis. Planck told his son at that stage that he thought he had possibly made a discovery comparable to Newton's discoveries. His hypothesis did not make any sense and was largely ignored by scientists.

In 1905 Planck's hypothesis was used for the first time by Albert Einstein. It became clear that light could either be interpreted as electromagnetic waves or as energy packets (quanta) travelling through space with high velocity. According to Heisenberg (1989:21), Einstein did accept this contradiction and believed that it was only because of a lack of more knowledge that it could not be explained. In 1913 Bohr explained some of Rutherford's findings about the characteristics of atoms in terms of Planck's quantum hypothesis. Bohr realised that the quantum theory spoils the consistency of Newtonian mechanics in some way. Researchers increasingly became used to the fact that there were a lot of contradictions, in terms of traditional physics, in the describing of atomic events. Heisenberg (1989:24) describes it as follows: "The strangest experience of those years was that the paradoxes of quantum theory did not disappear during the process of clarification; on the contrary, they became even more marked and more exciting".

55. The researcher makes use of Werner Heisenberg's interpretation of quantum mechanics. Heisenberg (1901-1976) is a very interesting figure because not only was he a brilliant physicist, but was also very interested in philosophy and tried to combine physics and philosophy. Fritjof Capra mentions Heisenberg as one of the people who influenced him the most and intellectually supported him in his attempts to bring physics and philosophy together. It was Heisenberg's comments on his drafts which gave Capra the self-confidence to publish his first book, *The Tao of physics* (Capra 1988). Heisenberg was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1932. He was also actively involved in opposing a move to equip the West German army with nuclear weapons. He wrote his first internationally acclaimed paper where he proposed a reinterpretation of the basic concepts of mechanics at the age of 24 and became professor in physics at 26.

56. "The primary significance of Heisenberg's principle is, that 'what we observe is not nature itself but nature exposed to our method of questioning'" (Lifschitz 1986:61).

In the summer of 1925 quantum mechanics theory was formulated. The paradoxes of the dualism between wave picture and particle picture were not solved. In the spring of 1927 a consistent interpretation of quantum theory, generally known as the Copenhagen interpretation of the quantum theory, was formulated. Heisenberg (1989:31) explains it as follows:

It should be emphasized at this point that it has taken more than a quarter of a century to get from the first idea of the existence of energy quanta to a real understanding of the quantum theoretical laws. This indicates the great change that had to take place in the fundamental concepts concerning reality before one could understand the new situation.

An important part of the Copenhagen interpretation of the quantum theory is the fact that the term "paradox" was taken as a starting point. It was accepted that experiments could be described in terms of classical Newtonian physics and at the same time in terms of quantum theories. "The tension between these two starting points is the root of the statistical character of quantum theory" (Heisenberg 1989:44). The Copenhagen formulation makes the sharp separation between the world and human beings impossible. It becomes clear that natural science does not simply describe nature, it describes nature as exposed to our method of questioning.⁵⁶ It was not easy for the scientists involved to accept that the sharp distinction between the physical world and the spiritual is artificial. According to Heisenberg (1989:117), all the critics of the Copenhagen theory (including Einstein) had one thing in common, namely that they "prefer to come back to the idea of an objective real world whose smallest parts exist objectively ...".⁵⁷ Heisenberg (1989:69) puts it as follows: "If one follows the great difficulty which even eminent scientists like Einstein had in understanding and accepting the Copenhagen interpretation of quantum theory, one can trace the roots of this difficulty to the Cartesian partition".

Heisenberg himself was responsible for the formulation of the "uncertainty principle" in quantum mechanics. According to this principle, all physical quantities that can be observed are subject to unpredictable fluctuations. This uncertainty is inherent in nature. This leads to an inherent indeterminism in the behaviour of quantum systems. This does not imply anarchy, because there still are certain probabilities. But it does imply that all predictions have an element of uncertainty in (Davies 1989:5). Heisenberg's uncertainty principle means that even in physics the truth of statements is a matter of degree. Heisenberg has made doubt scientifically acceptable, says Kosko (1994:103). The linear way of thinking and looking at the world is questioned in essence. According to Kosko (1994:106), it is a mistake to think that Heisenberg's uncertainty principle is unique to quantum mechanics.

David Bohm takes the work of Heisenberg and others like Bohr further and extends his criticism of fragmentation of the universe. Bohm emphasises the inexhaustibility of nature and warns us against assuming that any theory could be final or complete. "Nature's complexity and the infinitude of her levels makes final analysis impossible" (R J Russell 1985:149). For Bohm reality consists at different levels, which

57 . According to R J Russell (1985:137), Einstein, Louis de Broglie and Max Planck believe that natural processes are objective and deterministic in character and that the indeterminacy principle of Heisenberg is an indication of the incompleteness of quantum theory.

he calls implicate and explicate orders. Our everyday experience is often at the explicate order and we often experience the world to be fragmentary and the aggregate of separate parts. At an implicate level things are holistically orientated. Quantum mechanics exposed something of this implicated holistic order.

2.2.1.1.1 Implications

What are the implications of all the developments in science and these phenomena highlighted above for a study in pastoral work? In the first instance it is necessary to say that these developments, just as all other developments, influence people's frame of reference and the way people think and understand the universe and ultimately the way people understand Scripture. These developments have an effect on our theology and finally on the pastoral work actions of the church. Buckley (1990:317-318) explains it as follows:

Human beings of a particular culture think in a certain way, within a certain frame of reference or intelligibility that makes some things plausible and others absurd. Olympian gods or a flat earth or the values to be obtained through sacrifice do not claim credibility ... So also, touching closer to home, the heliocentric universe and the evolutionary development of all physical reality are part of our intellectual culture. They have altered our understanding of Scripture and of theology - not totally, but perhaps in some places significantly. What Davies urges is that contemporary relativity theory and quantum mechanics will play or do already play a similar role. This insight bears crucially upon theology.

Quantum theory helps us to understand that what we are looking at is not "things", but interconnections. All "things" are in relation to other "things". If we investigate matter we find it does not consist of isolated building blocks, but of a complicated web of relations between various parts of a unified whole. According to quantum theory, something can, in a paradoxical way, be two things at the same time. In the Cartesian/Newtonian way of thinking, truth is seen as absolute and certainty is accepted and uncertainty is unacceptable.⁵⁸ In the new physics, certainty is discarded and truth is seen as heuristic.⁵⁹ This may lead to a total relativism, but that is not the idea. Relativism born out of nihilism is something totally different from a relativism which is the opposite of absolutism and fundamentalism. It is possible to relativize things and still hold strong convictions. To be convinced is not the same as being certain about something.⁶⁰

The division between mind and matter can no longer be maintained. That becomes evident when it becomes clear that if a researcher wants an electron to be a wave, it acts like a wave and when a researcher wants an electron to be a particle, it becomes a particle. Capra (1983:83) summarises it as follows:

58 . It would be interesting to investigate in what way the Newtonian way of thinking influenced our theological view of terms like "doubt" (twyfel) and "certainty" (sekerheid). To be certain about our salvation (geloofssekerheid) implies no doubt at all. Often pastors say to people - if you doubt something, that thing is wrong.

59 . You discover the truth all the time, it is an ongoing process.

60 . Certainty of faith is not the same as being convinced of one's faith. It is possible to be convinced without being certain.

The image of the universe as a machine has been transcended by a view of it as one indivisible, dynamic whole whose parts are essentially interrelated and can only be understood as patterns of a cosmic process.

Matter is a form of energy. Scientists come to realise that matter is dynamic. Nothing is static, although there is stability, because of a sort of dynamic balance. In the Newtonian concept, space and time are treated separately. Einstein helps us to think about space and time in a new way. Both are relative concepts which are inseparably connected. Concepts like "before" and "after" do not exist in quantum physics. For us it is difficult to understand and talk without referring to time in terms of "before" and "after".⁶¹

How do these changes in the sciences influence our understanding of the world and what difference does it make? Brown (1987) mentions the following prominent implications (a and b and c) that evolve out of these discoveries. (The different implications overlap.)

a) Idea of complementarity: The description of matter as both wave and particle is called complementary. We now accept the fact that both light and matter behave either as particles or as waves. It depends on how we observe them. This is against Newtonian thinking where there is an objective world independent from how we observe it. It also means that paradoxes are not a problem, because they are the result of the way we perceive things (De Jongh van Arkel 1987:77).

b) It questions linear thinking about cause and effect: The law of causality is no longer applied in quantum theory (Heisenberg 1989:76). Heisenberg's uncertainty principle teaches us that everything cannot be predicted precisely in the microphysical world. A is not always followed by B. The important thing is that the reason why we cannot predict with certainty has nothing to do with our lack of knowledge, but something to do with particles itself. Uncertainty is inherent in nature (Davies 1989:4). The more measures the researcher takes to make sure that he/she is able to predict the outcome, the more he/she may influence the outcome. The deterministic idea of certainty is replaced by the idea of probability.

c) Interaction and Wholeness: From the research of Einstein and of Podolsky and Rosen (also known as the EPR), it becomes clear that photons communicate with each other. According to the Cartesian and reductionistic approaches the best way to understand something is to break it into pieces and analyse every piece (known as reductionism). This approach is challenged.⁶² From quantum mechanics it becomes clear that you cannot explain the way a system behaves by reducing it to its independent properties, because these properties are in interaction and the properties and their interaction are more than the properties on their own. Brown (1987:86) puts it as follows:

61 . The understanding of time in a linear way is a big problem in the Bible, especially when it comes to the interpretation of the Book of Revelations, cf König 1980:111; 202; 252ff; Schmitz 1986:99-119; Kraft 1983:1-19, or the understanding of creation as something that happened "in the beginning" (Hawking 1988).

62 . Because of certain limits of time and space, we will always divide things into smaller units to study them. But we must be aware that in the process we lose something. The ideal is to limit division as far as possible.

The moral of the story is that 'reductionism' has limits. One of the central assumptions of the Mechanical Philosophy was that nature could be understood by taking it to pieces, and that the operation of any system could be understood in terms of component parts with intrinsic properties which were independent of the rest of the system. What we have now found out is that this idea has limits. We have discovered that there are some things in nature which cannot be understood in this way, they must be treated as a whole.

d) Duality replaces dualism⁶³ : Another consequence of this interaction is that the dualism between mind and body and organic and inorganic cannot be defended anymore. It seems as if subatomic particles communicate with each other, which makes it difficult to keep on believing that mind and matter have nothing to do with each other.

e) Time relativity: Time is seen as dynamic and not absolute (De Jongh van Arkel 1987:81-82). Time is also not independent from other influences. Space and time are very closely interwoven. Hawking (1988:173-174) is of the opinion that when we combine quantum mechanics with general relativity a new possibility arise namely that time and space might form a finite, four-dimensional space without boundaries.

f) Paradoxes⁶⁴ : One other point which we can learn from the change in scientific thinking, is the importance of paradoxes (Capra 1988:28-29). It is important to understand that many solutions lie in paradoxes. There are many things which cannot be explained by only one premise. Heisenberg (1989:30) tells the fascinating story how many evenings he went for a walk and that the one question which he often reflected on was: "Can nature possibly be as absurd as it seemed to us in these atomic experiments?"

Quantum mechanics theory and the general theory of relativity are known to be inconsistent with each other. According to Hawking (1988:12) is one of the major endeavours in physics today the search for a new theory that will incorporate both theories.⁶⁵

To summarise: In the scientific world a paradigm shift has taken place in the last few decades, although it is still not always very visible. The way this shift has influenced practical scientific research is still not very clear. Quantum physics has made people aware that the world is more complicated than we thought. For example: to prove something as true is not so easy, because the importance of interrelations between, for example, the observer and the item being observed gives a total new meaning to the word "objective." The implications for research in the so-called social sciences are also tremendous. At the same time it makes us aware how important it is to interpret all phenomena in a holistic way and to be aware of the influence of

63 . De Jongh van Arkel (1987:71-82) mentions implication (d) and (e).

64 . The researcher adds this phenomenon not mentioned by others.

65 . Hawking (1988:12) says "if there really is a complete unified theory, it would also presumably determine our actions. And so the theory itself would determine the outcome of our search for it! And why should it determine that we come to the right conclusions from the evidence? Might it not equally well determine that we draw the wrong conclusion? Or no conclusion at all?"

"interconnections" on all research data. This paradigm shift can be described in many different ways. In this study we describe this new way of thinking as ecosystemic thinking.

De Jongh van Arkel (1987:85) comes to the conclusion that the helping professions and theology responded well to the Newtonian phase of history. Bosch (1991:350) confirms this when he says:

Rationalism made such superb sense, particularly since its achievements in science and technology were so manifest, that it appeared absurd to question it. Small wonder then that its presuppositions were soon adopted by the human sciences as well (including theology). ... Theologians and other scholars of the humanities embraced this vision and applied it meticulously to their discipline - as much of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century theology, in all subdisciplines, attests.

The question is: are the human sciences (to make a distinction once again) going to respond positively to the movement away from mechanistic thinking? The movement from Newtonian/ Cartesian thinking to ecosystemic thinking fused the boundaries between the physical sciences and human sciences. This shift is important for practical theology, that is why ecosystemic thinking is used in this study as a metaparadigm. It is an attempt to overcome the dualism so deeply integrated (entrenched) in our thinking, also in theology as a science. Ecosystemic thinking promotes synthetic thinking. An ecosystemic perspective is, by implication, a move to more integration. For practical theology it implies an integration between people and their social and natural environment; an emphasis on the connectedness between people, their needs and feelings, and society.

We referred earlier on to Von Bertalanffy [cf p 62] and the General Systems Theory (GST) [cf p 48]. The role he played in making the scientific community aware of the importance of a move away from mechanistic thinking justifies a more detailed description of his thoughts and the development of GST. It shows again how a certain approach influences the results of research. It is important to remember that ecosystemic thinking is not as well-defined and developed a theory as communications operational theory, for example. This study is not built on the theories of GST as such, but more on ecosystemic thinking in general. General Systems Theory is just one point in the development of ecosystemic thinking.

2.2.1.2 General systems theory (Ludwig Von Bertalanffy)

General Systems Theory ... attempts to overcome the limitations of traditional positivism ... It is not a new theory, but a paradigm shift, and it can be applied to the sciences generally (Ball 1978:65).

This lengthy discussion of GST is important because it provides the background to the understanding of "systems thinking". GST questions the way classical science thinks about things. According to Lazlo (1972:12), Von Bertalanffy created a new paradigm for the development of theories.⁶⁶ Lifschitz (1986:66-

66 . Checkland (1981:92) puts it as follows:

That the systems movement is, even on a jaundiced view, at least a loose federation of similar concerns - linked by the concept "system"- is the main achievement of Ludwig von Bertalanffy ... it was Von Bertalanffy who insisted that the emerging ideas in the various fields could be generalized in systems thinking; hence it is he who is recognized as the movement's founder.

67) remarks that "systems thinking demands a new epistemology" and that the "general systems theory is, in the final analysis, a new perspective or paradigm. It is not confined to one single discipline, but transdisciplinary". Although ecosystemic thinking today differs considerably from the GST approach of Von Bertalanffy, it is GST that paved the way for a new way of thinking, a new epistemology and ontology. Many new theories make use of concepts developed by the supporters of GST, like "open systems", "wholes", "interaction", "equifinality" and "summativity". At a later stage more attention will be given to "systems theories" in psychology [cf p 99] and Parsons' understanding of systems in sociology [cf p 86].

Ludwig Von Bertalanffy (1968a:11, 90) a renowned biologist, presented the idea of a general systems theory for the first time in 1937 in the Charles Morris Philosophy Seminar at the University of Chicago. The concept of a systems theory was not worked out completely in one work. It was an evolving process which became clearer with time.⁶⁷ His own development in the direction of systems theory was prompted in the 1920s by the incapability of the mechanistic way of thinking to provide answers in his field of research, namely biology.⁶⁸ The concept *open systems*, just as the concept *wholeness* remains central in the thinking of Von Bertalanffy. Von Bertalanffy (1972:xvii) emphasises the necessity of regarding living organisms as an organised system and sees the fundamental task of biology as being to discover the laws of biological systems at all levels of organisation. In his research the fact of open systems became a reality even before he had any theory to explain it. In 1940 he published an article about the importance of open systems in organisms. He understands open systems as a theoretical concept which could integrate different theories and formulations (Von Bertalanffy 1968a:138).⁶⁹ With time further generalisation became apparent.

Although Von Bertalanffy is known as the father of the General Systems Theory, the idea of systems was not totally new. Von Bertalanffy (1968a:11) believes that the systems concept has a long history of people, who in their writings carried ideas that are consistent with the systems concept.⁷⁰ In the beginning there was not much support for his theories. With the outbreak of World War II it was difficult to publish much. It was only after the war that he really started to publish his ideas. The person who gave him self-confidence to go ahead and publish his theories was Professor Otto Pötzl, a well-known psychiatrist in Vienna.

In an address Von Bertalanffy (1968a:259) delivered in 1947, he emphasised the importance of a new field in science that he calls the General System Theory and which works with a "unity" world-view. This speech followed an article Von Bertalanffy published in 1945 Zu einer allgemeinen Systemlehre in the *Deutsche*

67. In 1968 Ludwig Von Bertalanffy published the revised edition of his book, *General System Theory*. The book consists of articles and speeches he made earlier in his life.

68. Cf also Von Bertalanffy's comment on the development of GST in *Robots, men and minds*, (1967:126).

69. The article was first written in German in *Der Organismus als physikalisches System betrachtet*. Von Bertalanffy (1968a:viii) describes it as the original concept of *open systems* which led to further development.

70. He refers to Leibniz (philosopher); Nicholas of Cusa, Vico's and ibn-Khaldun's vision of history, and the dialectic of Marx and Hegel. Especially the work of Köler (1924) and Lotka (1925) a statistician, played an important role in his theory. Cf Barbour (1990:197) about Leibniz's theory of parallelism.

Zeitschrift für Philosophie (Vol 18 No 3/4).⁷¹ In this article Von Bertalanffy defines a system "as a set of elements standing in interrelations" (Von Bertalanffy 1968a:55; 36). The implication was that this interrelationship influenced the behaviour of an element (cf Ball 1978:66). He emphasises the importance of what he calls "the somewhat mystical expression", namely that "the whole is more than the sum of parts". This means that the behaviour of a system may differ from the behaviour of the parts. In the same article he also says that if we are speaking of "systems," we mean "wholes" or "unities" (Von Bertalanffy 1968a:66). It should be kept in mind that systems are very simple and that the expression that the whole is the sum of independent parts can become more complex, because systems that are open take energy from their environment. Although an organism may be partly mechanised, it remains part of a bigger unitary system which may undergo some changes in its environment.

In the years after World War II it turned out that the intellectual climate had changed and people were open to model building and abstract generalisation. It became clear that other scientists had also come to the conclusion that there should be a move away from the mechanistic way of thinking (Von Bertalanffy 1968a:91). Other people who supported Von Bertalanffy (1968a:14) were Boulding (an economist); Rapoport (a biomathematician) and Gerard (a physiologist). They started the Society for General System Research⁷² in 1954 (Von Bertalanffy 1967:126). The General System Theory became a discipline concerned with the general properties and laws of "systems". Von Bertalanffy comes to the conclusion that there is a certain uniformity in nature, and that there is a sort of general system which connects things in nature. But there is also competition in a system (physico-chemical or social).

In 1972 Von Bertalanffy described GST as a scientific exploration of "wholes" and "wholeness" transcending the boundaries of science. Conceptions had been developed to provide a basis for the unification of science and mathematical fields to deal with these conceptions. Several theories were developed in the process, like the dynamic system theory, the automata theory, the systems analysis theory and the graph theory. In the technological world cybernetics and control engineering developed (cf Von Bertalanffy 1972:xviii). The social sciences also started to make use of the idea of systems.

Other developments also supported the idea of a general systems theory. Von Bertalanffy (1968a:15) mentioned the development by Norbert Wiener known as cybernetics in 1948 ; information theory (1949) and game theory (1947). Von Bertalanffy (1968a:28) disagrees with those who identify cybernetics and control theory as identical to systems theory. Cybernetics is a part of a general theory of systems "cybernetic systems are a special case, however important, of systems showing self-regulation" (Von Bertalanffy 1967:56-69).

Von Bertalanffy (1968a:xix) understands systems theory as an introduction of a new paradigm and not a fixed term which refers to a specific theory. The system problem is essentially the problem of the limitations of analytical procedures in science. (Von Bertalanffy 1968a:18). The analytical approach depends on two

71 . It was also published in 1950 in the *British Journal of the Philosophy of Science*.

72 . It was initially known as the Society for the Advancement of General Systems Theory (Checkland 1981:77).

conditions, namely that the interaction between parts be non-existent or so weak that it could be ignored and secondly, that the relations describing the behaviour of parts be linear, which means that the equation describing the behaviour of the total is the same as the equation describing the behaviour of the parts (Von Bertalanffy 1968a:19).

Von Bertalanffy (1968a:70) says: "In this contrast between wholeness and sum lies the tragical tension in any biological, psychological and sociological evolution." Von Bertalanffy stood for the unity of sciences, but in the sense that the expression of unity of science does not imply that all science are reduced to physics or chemistry, for example. He criticises the mechanistic world-view which works with the conception that ultimately all phenomena can be reduced to elementary physical units, which means that no science exists outside the field of physics. He (1968:87) believes that the general systems theory diminished the gap between the natural and social sciences by accepting different levels and structures but agreeing that there are similarities.

Von Bertalanffy (1968a:88) came to the conclusion that "the future elaboration of general system theory will prove to be a major step towards unification of science." He predicted that as in the past "classification" was the central problem in science, so in the future of modern science "dynamic interaction appears to be the central problem in all fields of reality". Von Bertalanffy (1968a:30) encountered what he calls a "remarkable aspect", namely that in all fields of modern science, independently of each other without any knowledge of work and research in other fields, similar problems and conceptions have evolved in widely different fields, like physics, biology, psychology and social or behavioural sciences. According to Von Bertalanffy (1968a:33), there are many instances where identical principles were discovered by several people in different countries and different disciplines while workers in one field were unaware that the specific theoretical structure was already developed in some other field or other country. Thus models principles and laws exist that apply to generalised systems.

Von Bertalanffy's way of expressing the unity of sciences was through the mathematical approach. He (1968a:35) realised that this is a strong point against him and the GST. Von Bertalanffy (1968a:35) defends himself with the argument that $2+2=4$, irrespective of whether apples, atoms, galaxies or people are counted and that he had no problem if another approach was followed, although he believed that the mathematical approach works the best.⁷³ The underlying principle should always be the notion of wholeness.

According to Von Bertalanffy, GST does not want to become involved in vague, superficial and meaningless analogies. Analogies as such are of little value since similarities and dissimilarities can always be detected.

73. "The mathematical approach followed in general systems theory is not the only possible or most general one. There are a number of related modern approaches, such as information theory, cybernetics, game, decision, and net theories, stochastic models, operations research, to mention only the most important ones. However, the fact that differential equations cover extensive fields in the physical, biological, economical, and probably also the behavioral sciences makes them a suitable access to the study of generalized systems" (Von Bertalanffy 1968a:38). Stochastic characteristics describe the surprise element in open systems - it refers to the random probability. In deterministic science there is no room for surprises because everything proceeds in a logical, accurately and predetermined order (cf Lines 1987:109).

What is important is the possibility that certain conceptual models can be applied to different phenomena. Just as the law of gravity applies to apples, planetary systems and tidal phenomena, without discussing all the similarities and dissimilarities between the phenomena.

For Von Bertalanffy (1968a:32), it is just logical to ask for a theory of universal principles applying to systems in all fields. He (1968a:32, 37) described the General Systems Theory in 1955 as a new discipline which had as subject matter the formulation and derivation of universal principles which are valid for systems in general, whatever the nature of their component elements and the relations of the forces between them. The importance of the concept "wholeness" as the central subject of GST comes up every time in the writings of Von Bertalanffy. He (1967:70) describes GST as a science of wholeness which includes entities which were excluded under the mechanistic bias as "unscientific, vitalistic or meta-physical".

Von Bertalanffy (1967:39-52) wrestles with the problem of values. He sees the lack of values in modern life as one of the main problems of the world. There is a desperate need for a new conception of human beings because human beings have become so inhuman (1967:16-18). It seems as if the Ten Commandments just give directions for people in their personal life, but that people cannot relate them to their corporate life (1967:48, 50). He relates the problem of values to the reductionism in science. A more unified approach to scientific problems is necessary. Von Bertalanffy (1968a:52) sees the unity in science as very important for the future of the world.

Von Bertalanffy (1968a:49) describes his understanding of sciences as a unity with the term "perspectivism" against "reductionism". Developments in the natural sciences must relate to the social sciences otherwise we will have well-developed technology without a corresponding developed human behaviour. This will lead to chaos. "Scientific control of society is no highway to Utopia" (Von Bertalanffy 1968a:52). Von Bertalanffy (1968a:88) believes that a reductionistic and divisive world-view, where technology develops without the social and behavioural sciences, will be fatal for our civilisation because it leads to the mechanisation of mankind (humankind - FN) and the devaluation of higher values.⁷⁴

Moreover, the problem is that the behavioural sciences have taken over this reductionistic and Cartesian world-view. In 1967 Von Bertalanffy wrote a book *Robots, men and minds* in which he discussed the role psychology plays to support technology. While physical technology tries to control nature, psychological technology tries to control human beings' minds. Von Bertalanffy (1967:6) describes the problem of the

74. Cf especially his lengthy discussion in *Robots, men and minds* (1967:18-56). A new world-view (against the mechanistic world-view) is necessary not only because the old world-view cannot accommodate all the questions of physics, but also because the values of the old world-view must be renewed. The old world-view leads to an unhuman society. There is a need for "a new image of man" in the words of Von Bertalanffy.

75. According to McCarthy (1979:xi), Habermas is not positive about the idea of unity in scientific method. "One of his (Habermas - FN) principal targets in both books was the neopositivist thesis of the unity of scientific method, the thesis, in particular, that the logic of scientific inquiry in the human sciences is basically the same as that in the natural sciences".

world as follows: "Science has conquered the universe but forgotten or even actively suppressed human nature. This is at least part of our trouble".

Von Bertalanffy's (1967:5-8) problem with modern psychology is that it was what he calls "sterile" and "pompous scholasticism". He criticised psychology for not moving beyond the American positivist philosophy and existentialism. He sees psychology as dominated by the positivistic-mechanistic-reductionistic approach, which Von Bertalanffy (1967:7) calls "*the robot model of man*". Von Bertalanffy (1967:18) acknowledged that there is a new movement in psychology to move away from the mechanistic view of human beings. He (1967:24) is convinced that symbolism is the one factor which makes human beings different from any other animal species. The most important feature of symbols is that they are freely chosen by people (1967:25).

A very important part of Von Bertalanffy's thinking is the fact that he believes that the human being is an individual (1968a:52-53). Human beings are unique and not just cogs in a social machine. This belief must supplement the idea of organisation at all levels and the idea of organisation must not swallow the individual.

It is necessary to remember that the GST is only one development in terms of a systems theory. Many other developments have followed. Several of them refer to the concepts described by the GST. The many "systems theories" developed over the years have a few things in common, which Von Bertalanffy (1968b:14) mentions:

- * They agree that something should be done in the behavioural and biological sciences, because conventional physical theory is too limited for use in these sciences.
- * These theories are all concerned with multivariable problems.
- * These theories introduce new concepts and models (earlier concepts were all taken from conventional physics).
- * These theories are interdisciplinary and transcend the conventional fields of science.
- * Concepts like "wholeness" and "teleology" appeared in mechanistic science to be unscientific or metaphysical. Now these concepts are taken seriously.

The role that Von Bertalanffy and General Systems Theories play in making the scientific world aware of the importance of a new way of thinking and perceiving of the world should not be underestimated. It can be summarised as follows:

- The GST develops a broader and more realistic world-view than the mechanistic philosophy (cf Von Bertalanffy 1967:71).
- The importance of the whole which is more than the aggregate of the parts was highlighted.
- GST emphasises the importance of interaction between all entities..

- Each world-view is a certain perspective of an unknown reality (Von Bertalanffy 1967:96). The organismic view is at the same time perspectivistic - that means it is aware of its limitations, tolerant of other philosophies and experiences (Von Bertalanffy 1967:112-113).
- GST supporters and Von Bertalanffy have helped to develop unifying concepts which will bridge fields traditionally defined as belonging to either the "physical sciences" or the "human sciences" (cf Von Bertalanffy 1967:114-115).⁷⁵ They were not unaware of the differences that do exist but believe that there are many examples of similarities that could be explored.
- Von Bertalanffy hoped that science would become much more human in its endeavours and believed that his theories would contribute to the humanisation of science (cf Von Bertalanffy 1968a).

What the researcher suggests as a metaparadigm is not specifically General Systems Theory but ecosystemic thinking. To think systemically means a switch from an atomistic type of thinking. General Systems Theory, although not a well-developed theory, is a very specific development and one of the pillars of an even broader approach, namely ecosystemic thinking.

To summarise:

- GST plays a historical, but major, role in modern systemic thinking.
- It makes people aware of holistic thinking and the important role of relational and process thinking.
- The GST is only one step, although a very important one in the movement away from a positivistic outlook on science.
- The GST helps to make people aware of new horizons. It helps to stimulate thinking in a new direction.
- Its idea of one united scientific approach proves to be unrealistic, but it helps to promote an interdisciplinary attitude under many scientists.
- Many protagonists of systems theories and ecosystemic thinking have their roots in the General Systems Theory, which can be seen as the forerunner of ecosystemic thinking.
- It moves away from reductionism and linearity.
- It moves beyond homeostasis.
- It challenges the idea of dualism.

2.2.1.3 Cybernetics and second-order cybernetics

The first book on cybernetics was written by Hanz Wiener in 1948 with the title *Cybernetics*.⁷⁶ According to Von Bertalanffy (1967:64, 126; cf Keeney & Ross 1992:6), the term was first used by André Ampère early in the eighteenth century.⁷⁷

In the last few decades the importance of cybernetics⁷⁸ has been emphasized. According to Wiener (1968:31), cybernetics is the science of communication and control in man and machine. It has to do with the organisation of communication systems and addresses both change and stability. Von Bertalanffy (1967:57-58) believes that previously while the world-view was one of one-way causality and cause followed by effect, it was easy to understand things in terms of *unorganised complexity* (Von Bertalanffy's term). In a more complex world-view and scientific world, where things are not understood in a linear way anymore, a quest for organisational laws became apparent. Against the idea of the world as chaos the conception of the world as organisation seems to emerge (Von Bertalanffy 1967:63).

For Von Bertalanffy (1967:65), it is very important that people understand that "cybernetics" and "systems theory" cannot be equated. Although cybernetics moves away from the linear model and suggests a feedback model, which means a break with the old linear causality model of thinking, this does not mean that it is the same as the systems model. *Cybernetics works mostly with closed systems while systems theory works with open systems* (Von Bertalanffy 1967:68). This does not mean that cybernetics is not of any importance for Von Bertalanffy (1967:69). He calls it "a somewhat special case of general systems" (Von Bertalanffy 1967:69).

After the war a series of cross-disciplinary meetings, attended by researchers from the physical and social sciences, was held. Most of the research done in the field of cybernetics was connected with experiments begun during World War II. Developments in the computer industry and artificial intelligence have promoted the idea of cybernetics.⁷⁹

76. Cybernetics is closely connected to GST, while second-order cybernetics comes from the family therapy movement.

77. Keeney and Ross (1992:5-6) refer to Plato, who made use of the term "cybernetics". He used the word in *Euthydemus* and *Cleitophon* to denote "the art of steering men" and in *The Republic* to specify the idea of "governability".

78. The term "cybernetics" comes from the Greek *kybernan*, which means to govern. Cybernetics is the study of control and self-regulation in machines and living organisms. Cybernetics refers to the theory of control systems and the comparison between man-made and biological systems. It also refers, in church spheres, to the academic study of church government through the agency of church officials.

79. In reading Wiener (1968) the following things about Wiener's understanding of the cybernetica emerged very prominently: a) the importance of communication and control, b) the important role of the shift in physics since Einstein (Wiener followed Gibbs, whom he believed is less rigid than Einstein and more "probabilistic from the very start" while "Einstein like Newton, is still talking primarily in terms of an absolute rigid dynamics not introducing the idea of probability" [Wiener 1968:33]), c) the importance of entropy, d) the importance of patterns - messages are themselves a form of pattern and organisation, e) feedback (to control entropy).

Cybernetics also refers to the study of guidance and control within the system itself. It is a process of feedback and monitoring of the system. An open system has a self-monitoring teleology which operates through feedback called cybernetics. Teleology has a totally different meaning than in the positivistic world-view (Lines 1987:113), where the future was determined by laws of nature and science. In systemic terms teleology is redefined in terms of internal guidance and the idea of randomness and self-organisation.⁸⁰ For Lines (1987:11-114), cybernetics is a move away from a positivistic science, where the future is determined by the laws of nature. In cybernetics a living system is a self-organising system. It implies a limited determinism in reality (Fensham 1990:91). Cybernetics refers to the fact that the parts and the wholes of phenomena (physical and mental) are examined in terms of their patterns of organisation.⁸¹

The practical theologian, De Jongh van Arkel is positive about cybernetics because it shifts the focus from objects to patterns (De Jongh van Arkel 1987:250; 1991a:69) and thus goes a step further than GST, which is primarily concerned with changing the focus from parts to wholes. Van Staden (1989:37), a psychologist, makes use of the term "feedback loop" to describe cybernetics and the spiralling (circular) process involved in cybernetics. It means that "living systems continually adjust to internal and external changes in order to conserve their essential structure" (Van Staden 1989:37). According to Van Staden (1989:39), stability and change are inseparable, and part of a cybernetic approach. This means that problems cannot just be fixed from the outside - a therapist does not just have an answer to a client's problems. De Jongh van Arkel (1991a:68) suggests that an ecosystem should be understood cybernetically and systemically. Both the particular and the whole will then receive attention.

Therapists have started to make a distinction between what they call first-order cybernetics and second-order cybernetics. First-order cybernetics is concerned with questions relating to the way in which systems a) maintain their organisation (morphostasis, stability, negative feedback, restraint and rule systems) and b) change their organisation (morphogenesis, positive feedback, amplification, escalation and adaption).

While first-order cybernetic family therapy emphasises the system of relationships between elements, second-order cybernetic family therapy emphasises the elements themselves (Brownlee 1994:15). Although first-order cybernetics was an advance over previous models of therapy because of its understanding of the larger social context, it nevertheless remained mechanistic in the sense that it still described systems in terms of pathology or as functional or dysfunctional. The therapist "knows" what a functional structure should be and should change the family accordingly (Brownlee 1994:15; Hoffman 1990:5). This led to therapeutic strategies that were manipulative and controlling with the therapist as the (superior) expert.

We have already referred to persons like Lines, Fensham, De Jongh van Arkel and Van Staden's views of cybernetics. All of them are involved in the human sciences. Second-order cybernetics is used especially by family therapists. In the late seventies people like the anthropologist Gregory Bateson and others (cf

80 . Cf also Rosenblueth, Wiener and Bigelow (1968: 221-225).

81 . Cf also: Keeney, B P 1982. What is an epistemology of family therapy? *Family process* 21: 153 - 168.

Hoffman 1990:5) broke away from the engineers and robot builders. They emphasised the importance of a second-order cybernetics where all living systems are included in the change or stability. This helps family therapists to understand the organisation of patterns in families and also the phenomenon of recursiveness within systems. For the well-known family therapist, Lynn Hoffman (1990), the move to second-order cybernetics is very important as it helps to develop the idea of ideas of ideas. She (1990:5) goes so far as to speak of a second-order family therapy against a first-order family therapy.⁸² The assumption in cybernetics is that the observer (or therapist) stands outside the system and is thus objective in his/her observation and judgements and can thus intervene objectively. In second-order cybernetics, the observer is much more aware that there are recursive connections between systems and that the observer is also a system and part of the cybernetic process of change and maintenance (Griffith ea. 1990:26). The observer is thus part of what is being observed and influences it. The focus is thus much more one of recursiveness, reflexivity⁸³ and the autonomy of systems. According to Hoffman (1990:5-6), second-order cybernetics helps her to discover that it is not the system that creates the problem, it may be that the problem creates the system. It also means that problems do not have an objective existence in themselves, but exist through conversation with others. Griffith, Griffith and Slovik (1990:23) describe the difference in therapy between first-order cybernetics and second-order cybernetics as follows:

In a first-order cybernetics approach the therapist attempts to analyze the mind-body symptom in terms of patterns of symptom generation that are stable within and across levels of a biological hierarchy. In a second-order cybernetics approach, the work of the therapist is to foster **dialogue** (my emphasis - FN.).

The importance of dialogue or conversation or understanding⁸⁴ in second-order cybernetics is clear from the way in which the results of counselling are interpreted. Unsatisfactory results in first-order cybernetics are described by Griffith et al (1990:24) as *errors*, in second-order cybernetics unsatisfactory results will be described as a *breach in understanding*. It is also a situation where the therapist sheds authoritarian power and enters the conversation as a participant, and later on becomes a facilitator.

An important aspect of second-order cybernetics is the place of "dialogue" or "language" thus communication. From an ecosystemic perspective, pastoral work is not only interested in the systems involved, but also in the communication between the systems.

82 . De Jongh van Arkel (1987:253) is of the opinion that the move from simple cybernetics to cybernetics of cybernetics may not necessarily mean such a dramatic change. There remains a need to dissect the wholeness of systems into parts.

83 . Woolgar and Ashmore (1988:6-7) discuss the difficulties involved in distinguishing between reflexivity in texts and unreflexive texts: "Apparently unreflexive texts may in fact be reflexive and vice versa ... that should provide a salutary reminder of the pointlessness of debates whether or not X is actually being reflexive".

84 . All these terms refer to modes of communication.

The role of language is emphasised by Hoffman (1980) and Griffith et al (1990). There is no consensus on the importance of second-order cybernetics. It is an ongoing debate.⁸⁵ It is important to take the suggestions of Atkinson and Heath (1990a) seriously that second-order cybernetics must be aware of the role of "control", and explore the proposal of Anderson and Goolishian (1990) about the role of conversation and communication, which correlates with the ideas of Griffith et al (1990) and Hoffman (1990).

To summarise what supporters of second-order cybernetics believe they have learned from cybernetics:

- A cybernetic approach emphasises the notion that life is interconnected. This means that all actions or ideas must be understood in the context of interaction with the rest of the world.
- Cybernetics opens the whole debate about therapists' preoccupation with conscious control in the therapeutic situation.
- Cybernetics takes language and communication within the system and with other systems seriously.
- Cybernetics emphasises the fact that the observer cannot observe objectively from outside the system.
- The family (or individual) is not the system in terms of this focus anymore. The focus is on the conversational domain, so we can talk about a "meaning system" (Hoffman 1985:387). The problem becomes an ecology of ideas (Hoffman 1985:387).

85. Atkinson and Heath (1990a) have problems with the fact that even in second-order cybernetics the therapist or counsellor has a lot of control. They developed a second-order cybernetics of nonattachment, where the therapist takes a pragmatic stance by being aware of his or her own wishes, but where the therapist tries not to influence the outcome and where the therapist's satisfaction does not depend on success. Anderson and Goolishian (1990) share Atkinson and Heath's criticism on second-order cybernetics. They differ from them in the way they want to solve the problem. They (1990:159) criticise Atkinson and Heath for working with Bateson's and Parsons ideas that a system will correct itself and move to a condition of systemic health and balance.

According to Anderson and Goolishian (1990:160), it must be accepted that "mechanical control is the underlying metaphor of cybernetic epistemology". They (1990:160) put it very strongly as follow:

However, we would agree with Golann that in too many ways the so-called second-order cybernetic therapists deceive themselves when they assume that they hold a position that makes it possible to assume a nonhierarchical position and to abandon the use of therapist power... Cybernetics, first- or second-order, is at its base a theory of ordered control.

Anderson and Goolishian go further and move to systems of discourse, language, communication and meaning. They believe the solution can be found in the domains of semantics (1990:161). Dialogue and shared understanding should form the basis of therapy. They emphasize the importance of meaning as an intersubjective phenomena. Atkinson and Heath (1990b) challenge the reasoning of Anderson and Goolishian at certain points. The problem of power and control is not a problem because of cybernetics. Reality does not only exist in the realm of shared ideas, according to Atkinson and Heath (1990b:168). They (1990b) are of the opinion that Anderson and Goolishian's ideas are "not representative of contemporary cybernetics".

- The medical concept of diagnosis is abandoned (cf Keeney 1979).

It is important for pastoral work and for this study to take note of these insights of second-order cybernetics. Cybernetics can help us to understand the processes in for instance a church community, as a system, better. Second-order cybernetics also makes us aware of the difficulty of doing research on a community because of the influence of the researcher on the community as a system. Practical theology, which is also concerned with the organisational aspect of the church, can also make use of the insights of second-order cybernetics for the organisation of the church. In the next section further developments, namely, systemic family therapy and a constructivistic approach, will receive attention.

2.2.1.4 Review

It is not possible to say whether new developments in the sciences led to new types of thinking, or whether new ways of thinking led to new discoveries in the sciences. What is important is that certain changes took place which resulted in new ways of thinking or new paradigms. Science plays a very important role in the way modern people think, because of the achievements of science which provide for most of our physical needs and entertainment. Mooney (1991:291) describes it as follows:

...it is not surprising that scientific attitudes and methods should have become integral to the thinking of most contemporary men and woman, many of whom conclude, not unreasonably, that these attitudes and methods are so all-encompassing and reliable as to constitute a sufficient foundation upon which to build their lives.

In the scientific paradigm most accepted in Western society, namely the Newtonian or Cartesian paradigm, reality was interpreted in a linear way in terms of cause and effect. The purpose of research in the Newtonian paradigm is mostly to determine what the cause of something is and also predict the outcome of an event and retrodict (predict backward in time) the history of a given object. This implies a one-way traffic from A to B. The Newtonian paradigm also functions reductionistically in the sense that the way to explain complex objects is to divide them into smaller parts and then to explain the smaller parts. In this paradigm, the whole is seen as the sum of the parts. In the Newtonian paradigm objectivity plays an important role. It is possible to identify absolute truths, something could be either true or false.

The rise of mechanism and a mechanical philosophy, built on order and dualism, laid the foundation for a way of thinking about nature and human beings (cf Bohm 1980). Mechanism effectively rendered nature dead by functioning as a justification for power and dominion over nature. Human beings are seen as a rational self with a soul housed in a machinelike body. This view replaced the idea of human beings as part of and united to the cosmos and society. Science could explain how the mechanisms work and became the controller of society. There is little doubt that this mechanistic model helps to guide and accelerate technological and industrial development.

The paradigm of new physics teaches us that reality is more complicated and that the **either-or thinking** of reality is not the only paradigm possible. New physics makes us aware of a **both-and perspective**.

For some people the term *systems* may have an off-putting connotation of a mechanistic dehumanised entity. While it is true that systems theory has very wide application and encompasses the study of

mechanical systems, the move has been away from a mechanistic outlook. Von Bertalanffy and others put this new way of thinking about our world and how our world functions into practice in their systems approach, with its emphasis on the whole. One of the "by-products" of the systems approach is the development of cybernetics with its emphasis on feedback. Insights from cybernetics forms one of the basics of what Checkland calls "hard systems", such as computers. In the social sciences cybernetics was used especially by family therapists with an emphasis on the whole and on feedback. There is a need especially in the social sciences to go further and break even more with the Newtonian way of thinking. Certain aspects of cybernetics and its influence in family therapy are also greatly criticised. Family therapists came up with what became known as *second-order cybernetics* which is an attempt to move beyond the closed system idea created by cybernetics. The role of power and dominance which may develop in a system also questions the cybernetic model of thinking.

These developments in science have influenced the social sciences. A circular movement between sciences began to develop, with the result that the traditional physical sciences and the traditional social sciences became aware that they were in the process of influencing each other. The influence of systemic thinking became clear in psychology and specifically in the family therapy movement. Traditionally, pastoral work is in close interaction with psychology for various reasons. An ecosystemic approach could help to foster dialogue between the sciences and reveal the interdependent and collaborative interaction necessary to "understand" something of life, cosmos and human beings.⁸⁶

Mooney (1991) describes developments in both science and theology which make both physical scientists and theologians more careful to make absolutistic statements and claims to objective knowledge and truth. Mooney (1991:310) sums it up as follows:

A skeptical and qualified realism, moreover, has become the working assumption of by far the majority of scientists and theologians... It would seem, then, that dialogue between these two intellectual enterprises should not only be possible but even welcomed... The interaction of the two should be consequently reveal a certain complementarity rather than conflict. For both are concerned with nature and the cosmos, the one as lawful structure, the other as related to God and to humankind.

Practical theology and its sub-disciplines are serious about the development of theological theories for the discipline. But theories are influenced by the paradigms of the time. The move away from a Newtonian approach to science and reality opens new possibilities for the helping sciences as demonstrated by psychology. The question is **what new possibilities does it open for the caring task of the church?** Before this can be discussed it is necessary to understand what this move from mechanistic, reductionistic, atomistic, linear, dichotomised thinking to holistic, integrated, ecosystemic, interrelated, recursive, contextual thinking is and how it relates to social sciences in general. Eventually an ecosystemic approach should produce, over time, changes in how the human phenomenon is regarded by scientists, psychologists, sociologists, philosophers and theologians. For practical theology and pastoral work this view of human beings and its relationship with God, is important.

86. One way ecosystemic thinking can foster dialogue is by emphasising that science and theology do not confront each other as closed but as open systems.

2.2.2 Ecosystemic thinking and the social sciences

Christians have not been immune from the forces within society of which we have spoken. And in that the church itself constitutes a society of people who also are members of a wider society, it would be surprising whether the values and beliefs of this wider society had not entered the church. Counselling, whether Christian or not, can only be understood properly whether its social context is acknowledged and evaluated. The social context is thus crucial for an understanding of *all* types of counselling (Bridger & Atkinson 1994:91).

Pastoral care in the second half of the twentieth century has depended on the insights of psychology to help describe the human condition, and it has rarely been required to justify the use of this social science over against others. As theoreticians of pastoral care make increasing use of sociological analysis, they will need to choose the social science methods that best illumine the subject they are studying (Couture 1995:59)

According to Heitink (1993:46-48), the features of a modern society are differentiation, pluralism and specialisation. The idea of differentiation was already formulated long ago by the sociologists Durkheim and Weber and more recently by the philosopher Habermas (Heitink 1993:46). Differentiation is visible in the way people distinguish between the public domain and the private domain. The two domains are growing more and more separate and this has important implications for the church and the pastoral work of the church (cf Tracy 1981 & 1987). The pluralistic society we live in has a pluralism of values as a result. People live in different cultures with different values every day. This influences people's frame of mind and "mensen worden zelf pluraal" (Heitink 1993:47). The result of differentiation and pluralism is the specialisation and professionalization of work, which also influences the (pastoral) actions of the church. Another implication of differentiation and pluralism is that disciplines tend to functions in isolation.

Fundamental to GST is the question of unity between the physical, biological and social sciences. Von Bertalanffy (cf 1972:xvii) strives for an interdisciplinary doctrine. At the same time the unity just within the social sciences is also a point of discussion. Are subjects like theology, philosophy, sociology, anthropology, psychology, political science and economics different disciplines or are they different specialisations within the realm of social sciences? (Cf Mukherjee 1993:100 ff.) This may sound like an unusual question. The point is actually quite important. If it is disciplines in itself it would emphasise the differences between the subjects. It would mean that the subjects are only helpful toward a comprehensive understanding of society. If the subjects are specialisations within the social sciences it would convey a complete different idea. Then the emphasis is on the interrelatedness and not the distinctiveness.⁸⁷

Kenneth Boulding, a compatriot of Von Bertalanffy, wrote an article entitled *General systems as an integrating force in the social sciences*, in which he explains the need for unifying theories in science in more detail. According to Boulding (1973:952), it is impossible to study any empirical phenomenon and just be confined to conventional disciplinary limits. Unity between sciences also helps to arouse people's and especially students' interest to discover that things they have perceived as unrelated and disparate are related. Boulding (1973:955) argues that the whole empirical world (physical, chemical, biological and

87 . Cf Pieterse (1993c:40) and also van der Ven (1993b:117).

social) has one thing in common, namely space and time. Just like Von Bertalanffy, he connects the physical sciences and the social sciences.

What is also important for our study is the emphasis on unity in the social sciences. Divisions in social sciences, such as economics, political science, sociology, psychology, education and theology, should be understood as aspects of the total system (Boulding 1973:957). Boulding puts it as follows: "All the social sciences study the same social system, but from somewhat different points of view".

Mukherjee (1993:100, 111) suggests that we go even further in the social sciences than to speak of interdisciplinary studies, and start to speak of transdisciplinary orientation. According to Mukherjee (1993:114), religion is not the prerogative of the theologian anymore, but is also studied by social anthropologists, sociologists, economists, politicians, scientists, psychologists and physical scientist. On religion and philosophy Boulding (1973:966) says:

... (to) perceive these as an essential part of the total system in no way diminishes them but again makes for the deeper appreciation of their significance. The vision of the universe indeed as a total system extending magnificently through time and space and with equal magnificence towards the infinitesimal structure, and towards the immense complexity of the inner space of the human mind, is an experience which we need not be ashamed to call religious. We are capable indeed of perceiving and knowing only a small part of this magnificence, but he who has not sensed it however dimly as a totality is deprived of the greatest of human experiences.

What is the role of theology in the realm of social science? If the task of theology is to be involved in social actions in societies and communities, then its task is to also understand and appraise society. To do that theology must also discuss how it fits in with the rest of the social sciences. Therefore an overall metatheory is necessary. A systemic world-view and understanding of the interrelatedness cannot see theology or in this case practical theology as a subject indifferent to the other subjects in the social sciences.

Spangenberg (1994:174) says he does not think it is possible to speak of "the theological science" (my emphasis - FN) anymore, because the theological science is fragmented and consists of different sciences.⁸⁸ This statement can be understood in a positive sense. What makes Spangenberg's (1994:174) statement alarming is his opinion that the theologians in the different theological sciences find it difficult to have meaningful discussion with each other because of the different points of departure in the different theological subjects. Perhaps this emphasises the need for an ecosystemic approach to theology, in which theologians are more aware of the interrelatedness of all things.

Every individual, every family and every community are also part of other systems and groupings in society. Practical theology which takes the religious actions of people seriously should take into account these related systems the individual or the group are involved in. To understand all these systems requires the knowledge and help of other fields of science as well, especially the other social sciences, like psychology and sociology. This becomes clear in the way many situations are described as socio-economic or psycho-

88. "Na my mening kan ons tans nie meer praat van 'die Teologiese wetenskap' nie, want daar bestaan nie meer so 'n eenheid nie. Die 'Teologiese wetenskap' het versplinter en bestaan tans uit verskillende wetenskappe...."

social or socio-political. A theological-ecological description may be the way to describe the relationship between theology and the rest of society. People's or groups' religious experience and behaviour can be influenced by their socio-economic, psychological, geographical, political and cultural background factors, among other things.

This section will discuss very broadly sociology, philosophy and psychology, without discussing particularly ecosystemic thinking. It tries to give a very broad idea of how things are interrelated and how things are connected, without being specifically systemic in approach. There are so many patterns once we have learned to look for it, it can totally confused the mind. The question is how can all these connections and patterns help practical theology, and particularly, pastoral work? The answer is that we do not know before we start to explore.⁸⁹ The possibilities are legion. And that is specifically the point of an ecosystemic paradigm, namely that it wants to open up views. This is also what postmodernism is in another sense: it wants to question ideas so that new possibilities can be explored. Gergen (1994:viii) sums it up very aptly when he says that, "one steps away from the route well-travelled, the sense of direction rapidly erodes".

Bridger and Atkinson (1994:41-90) discuss how theology, psychology, philosophy and sociology interrelate. By discussing the historical roots, they show how theology and philosophy have developed as twins, although not identically (Bridger & Atkinson 1994:53). Bridger and Atkinson (1994:58) say that: "Everyone needs to know some philosophy in order to understand the major doctrines of Christianity or to read a great theologian intelligently". They believe that psychology grows out of philosophy.

The Newtonian influence since the eighteenth century plays a role in a gradual split between psychology and its root, philosophy. Psychology became an investigation of how the mental machine works. Psychologists have stopped to ask philosophical questions about the meaning and purpose of life (questions those who come for help still ask). Psychologists became more interested in looking for causes of mechanical breakdown and identifying mental disorders (Bridger & Atkinson 1994:57). What about the pastoral work of the church? Pastoral work can also become so technical minded that it loses its contact with the real problems with which people struggle. Although skills are very important, pastoral workers must also be taught to ask questions about life and death.

* Interestingly since 1995 the University of Stellenbosch is offering a BA course which combines Philosophy, Religious Studies, Political Studies, Sociology, Economics, Industrial Psychology, Business Administration and Development Studies as well as courses in language and communication skills. This course is advertised as a leadership course to develop competent decision makers for the public and private sector (Weekly Mail & Guardian January 6-12 1995:16). Is there not a need for such an integrated course in the training of pastoral workers?

89. Woolgar and Ashmore (1988:2) in their article about reflexivity write "many social scientists have tended to disregard arguments which appear to have little relevance to their empirical research".

2.2.2.1 Sociology and philosophy

This section wishes to give an idea of how interrelated knowledge is. This is important for practical theology and pastoral work, if it wants to work ecosystemically, to be aware of the underlying patterns and relationships in and between subjects. Practical theology, which work with Habermas's communication actions theories, should be aware of how his thinking relates to other patterns of thinking. Like all other practical theological actions, pastoral work does not take place in isolation. An ecosystemic community pastoral work raises certain questions about the community and society. In sociology, Talcott Parsons plays a very important role as far as thinking about society as a system is concerned. At the same time the philosopher, Jürgen Habermas, who is also the father of communication actions theory, is in discussion with Parsons. This study refers briefly to this discussion. This section also includes brief references to Habermas and Derrida, and Derrida and systems thinking. The importance of Derrida and the deconstruction movement for pastoral work and care and counselling will become clearer in the next section where social constructionism is discussed.

The discussion on postmodernism is also important, particularly because the idea of an ecosystemic community pastoral care could give rise to the idea that this is an attempt to go back to the organic roots of centuries ago. At the beginning of this study the researcher referred to a relationship between ecosystemic thinking and postmodernism [cf p 39].

Sociology is one of the fields in social sciences which makes use of systems theory (Mendoza & Napoli 1986). Sociology's original foundations are also strongly positivistic. Checkland (1981:270-283) discusses the different approaches in sociology and philosophy and how they differ from systems theories.

Auguste Comte (1798), a positivist, can be described as the father of sociology as a separate subject. Comte is also the person who introduces the concept "positivism" to philosophy and sociology. The Frenchman, Emile Durkheim (1858-1917), a structural functionalist, was one of the central figures in sociology.⁹⁰ Checkland (1981:271) disagrees with those who connect systems thinking with Durkheim's functionalism. Durkheim understands society as a reality with an existence apart from all individuals, this put him in conflict with sociologist like Gabriel Tarde who understands the individual as the alpha and the omega of society (Rhoads 1991:118).⁹¹

The German sociologist, Max Weber (1864-1920), was a remarkable person.⁹² He believed that social sciences were fundamentally different from natural sciences. Weber sees sociology's task as to analyse and

90. Functionalism refers to theories which see human society either as a mechanism devised to satisfy human needs or as an entity whose parts function interdependently to maintain the totality, so that disruption of one element may cause the whole system to change or collapse (cf Assimeng 1989:9).

91. Assimeng (1989:219) notes that: "Much of the modern discussion of secularization has been informed by the theoretical perspective of Emile Durkheim, especially in his basic distinction between spheres of the sacred and of the secular or profane".

92. Weber is best known for his study, *The Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism* which appeared in 1930 in English. He examined the implications of religious views for

explain social action by studying the subjective meanings by which individuals direct their conduct. He followed in the footsteps of William Dilthey (1833-1911)⁹³, who was very critical of Comte's positivistic direction. This does not mean that Weber totally abandoned positivistic science (Checkland 1981:270). Weber believed that as a social scientist he should be a morally neutral observer and believed in a value-free sociology (Spencer & Inkeles 1982:12). Rhoads (1991:40) is of the opinion that Weber was what he calls an "antipositivist".⁹⁴ Heitink (1993:51-52) discusses Weber because of his interest in religion and the importance of social actions. Weber believes that the Calvinistic world-view leads to a work ethic which stimulates the growth of capitalism.⁹⁵ Habermas makes use of Weber's concept "rationalising" to explain how the world people live in (life-world) changes all the time (Heitink 1993:135).

Later Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) developed Weber's theories on subjectivity further and also the phenomenological approach which is concerned with describing the essence of objects as they present themselves to human consciousness.⁹⁶ According to Sanders (1987:33), Husserl made use of Descartes, but questioned the distinction between *res cognitae* (thinking substance) and *res extensa* (extended substance). Husserl wants to avoid the subject-object dualism (Sanders 1987:39). Pieterse (1993c:74-75) says that Husserl was radical in his criticism of the objectivism which influences philosophy so intensely. The critique of the phenomenological is that it is still very much directed at the individual. It works with an atomistic and reductionistic view of reality. Although the phenomenological approach is critical of the logical positivism, it is more directed to understanding than to interpretation. The result is that it in effect ignores conflicts and ideologies in society and see it as a misunderstanding which could be resolved (Nel 1988: 151-152).

Philosophers like Gadamer, Ricoeur and Habermas followed in the footsteps of Dilthey. Subjectivism is a very broad school of thought and Husserl, Weber, Schutz and Habermas and others may all be called subjectivists in the sense that they place much priority on human experience of the world against the empiricists. According to Giddens, there are three subjectivist traditions: the phenomenology⁹⁷ of

economic growth and development as these took place in medieval and modern European societies.

93 . Dilthey is called the father of the hermeneutical method (Pieterse 1993c:72).

94 . "The sweep of Weber's thought includes many of the essentials of an antipositivist approach to social science" (Rhoads 1991:40).

95 . Cf Villa-Vicencio (1988) who uses Weber's theories to develop a prophetic theology.

96 "Phenomenologists assume that "mind" and "universe" are symbiotically related to one another" (Sanders 1987:194).

97 . Virtually all phenomenologists assign primacy to human consciousness and concern themselves with meaning, experience and constitution of the self (Ritzer 1988:324). Sanders (1987:39) is of the opinion that phenomenologists do not want to frame theories but rather examine and describe phenomena. For a good introduction to phenomenological theology see Laycock and Hart (1986).

Husserl,⁹⁸ Schutz and Merleau-Ponty; the philosophy of Wittgenstein, Austin and Winch and the hermeneutical school of Gadamer, Ricoeur and Habermas.

Habermas is an interesting person, because of his use of both psychology and sociology to formulate his own theories (McCarthy 1979:xiv-xxi). Habermas's critical social theory wants to be empirical and scientific without being reducible to empirical-analytical science. According to Rhoads (1991:60), Habermas classified the sciences into the empirical-analytical approach, the historical-hermeneutic approach and the critical approach.

The sociology of knowledge⁹⁹ emerged with important contributions to social theory. Some of its major protagonists were Marx, Weber, Durkheim and Mannheim. Among recent theorists in this field are Foucault, Gergen and Habermas. They view human thought as being partly conditioned by social substructures of human relationships (Lazarus 1988:135).

2.2.2.1.1 Parsons and Habermas

There is some confusion about the use of the word "systems". In the context of this study's emphasis on ecosystems and in the light of the important role Habermas's communication theories plays in practical theology, it is necessary to get more clarity on the use of the term "systems" in Habermas's works.

The philosopher, Jürgen Habermas is known for his critical discussion of the systems theory of the sociologist, Talcott Parsons (1902-1979), and his own use of the word "systems" [cf p 19]. Habermas is also in discussion with the sociologist, Niklas Luhmann,¹⁰⁰ who makes use of Parsons' systems idea.¹⁰¹ Siebert (1985:6) describes it as follows: "In his discussion with the German structural-functionalist, Luhmann, in the beginning of the 1970s, Habermas, following Hegel, asserted against system theory, that it sees the whole of society as a soulless mechanical system".

98. "Husserl's late phenomenology helps the theologian demonstrate that all understanding arises from systems of belief" (Sanders 1987:196).

99. The term *Wissenssoziologie* was coined by Max Scheler in the 1920's (Berger & Luckmann 1976:16).

100. The researcher wishes to acknowledge the input of Dr Pieter Duvenhage, previously of the HSRC and now lecturer in Philosophy at the University of the North, in making him aware of Habermas's discussion with Luhmann.

101. It is beyond the scope of this study to discuss Luhmann's systems theory in detail. Luhmann follows Parsons at many points. Holmes and Larmore (1982:xxxvi) say that Luhmann has a growing reputation as one of Germany's most outstanding sociologists, apparently in the same class as a person like Max Weber. In 1971 Luhmann and Habermas published a book together (*Theorie der Gesellschaft oder Sozialtechnologie: Was leistet die Systemforschung*) in which they criticise each other's positions and discuss what shape a theory of society should take. When Habermas (1989:155) discusses Parsons in his *Theory of communicative action*, he often refers to Luhmann's position on certain points (cf Habermas 1989:235, 283, 307, 311, 309, 377).

Habermas is very interested in Parsons' theories because of the possibility of using Parsons thinking in the formulation of social action theory for society. Parsons did not ignore the meaningfulness of social action and that attracts Habermas. In the second volume of his *The theory of communicative action*, Habermas (1989:204-283) discusses the systems theory of Talcott Parsons' in detail.¹⁰² He expresses his doubt that Parsons has shifted from the primacy of action theory to systems theory (Habermas 1989).

Another reason why Parsons is important for this study and practical theology in general, is that the practical theologian, J A van der Ven, in his practical theological ecclesiology (1993a) also makes use [cf p 150] of Parsons' sociological scheme for actions (van der Ven 1993a: 67ff). Parsons believes that there are four functional imperatives that are necessary for all systems: Adaption; Goal attainment; Integration; Latency or pattern maintenance (AGIL for short). For a system to survive, it must perform all four these functions (cf Ritzer 1988:208).

Parsons was a professor at Harvard University, but studied in Germany. He introduced European sociologists like Durkheim and Weber to the American scholars.¹⁰³ Parsons' approach which later became known as structural-functionalism¹⁰⁴ (or just functionalism), was based on the idea that society was a giant organism made up of many structures, all functioning together to maintain the whole system. If you want to understand any given structure, you must discover its function in a structure or society.¹⁰⁵ For Parsons, system refers in the first place to society. It assumes that everything in society is there because it is functional.

Functionalism, as such, draws severe criticism. The criticism against functionalism in general is that it is a model which indirectly supports the status quo. Whatever exists has a function and must stay.

Parsons also develops the equilibrium model, based on the idea of feedback. According to Parsons, living organisms have similar regulating mechanisms (1977:101). Society will move to equilibrium. Parsons understands "system" and "environment" as concepts which are in relation to each other. But there are boundaries between the two. According to Parsons, action cannot occur without a human organism as a supplier of energy. Parsons identifies four systems: organisms, personalities, societies and culture. He (Parsons 1977:177) distinguishes between theoretical systems and empirical systems. An empirical system,

102 . According to Rhoads (1991:50) Parsons was committed to positivist ideals for social theory. Interestingly enough, Rhoads does not discuss Parsons when he discusses the positivistic viewpoint, but discusses Parsons together with Weber as an antipositivist (1991:39-50). This again shows how difficult it is to define people's thinking.

103 . Before Parsons' time, Chicago was the main centre for sociology in the United States. Sociologists like Cooley, Mead, Dewey and Thomas were from Chicago where they developed the Chicago school of social psychology (cf Spencer & Inkeles 1982:12).

104 . Parsons (1977:100-102) has objections to the use of the term. One of the reasons is that the concepts "structure" and "function" are not parallel.

105 .The concepts "structure" and "function" were often used by Durkheim.

which is an observable object but not necessarily a totally concrete entity (solar system), can be analysed by means of a theoretical system.

Habermas criticises Parsons' systems concept on many aspects (Habermas 1980:1-7; Habermas 1989:374-404), but also makes use of Parsons' action theory (Habermas 1979:82, 111). For Parsons, actions become a system by virtue of their internal analytical structure (Habermas 1989:235). Habermas is of the opinion that Parsons' cybernetic control hierarchy as part of his human action system results in a loss of equal status between AGIL, which leads to a certain determinism, which Habermas understands as idealism (Siebert 1985:289-290). Habermas's (1989:374) criticism is that Parsons' media¹⁰⁶ theory leads to a point where "systemic imperatives force their way into the domains of cultural reproduction, social integration, and socialization", which is nothing other than an overstepping of boundaries.

The problem is that the systems concept of society works with a methodological objectification of the life-world (Habermas 1989:374).¹⁰⁷ This systems theoretical approach has established itself in economics and the science of administration, which have become subsystems, namely state and economy, which try to bring the whole of society under systems theoretical concepts. This brings Habermas (1989:377) to the point where he sees systems theories as functionalistic. Habermas (1989:403) puts it as follows:

At the same time, the systemic imperatives of autonomous subsystems penetrate into the lifeworld and, through monetarization and bureaucratization, force an assimilation of communicative action to formally organized domains of action - even in areas where the action-coordinating mechanism of reaching understanding is functionally necessary.

The problem is that the social system is conceived of as a functional complex of institutions within which cultural patterns or values are made binding for action. The significance of the objective connections within the system of social roles is latent; to grasp it we must discover the functions that specific elements fulfil for the self-maintenance of the social system. Habermas understands this as a subordination of the hermeneutic and critical moments of social inquiry, by adopting the assumption of a universal value schema. It also works on the presupposition that it is possible to specify empirically the boundaries of a system as well as the goal the system tends to achieve and maintain (cf Parsons 1977:112). For Habermas, that is something that is possible in biology, but not in social systems (cf Habermas 1979:170). Habermas understands society to be a self-regulating system and the media of this self-regulating system are money and power (Fiorenza 1992:68).

Habermas "invites" Parsons to move from a subject-object scheme to **an intersubjective understanding**. Individuals do not only speak and act instrumentally, but also communicatively (Siebert 1985:300). Widdershoven (1988:172) describes Habermas's position as follows:

106 . Media refers to things like "money" and "power". The problem, according to Habermas (1989:374-375), is that it replaces language as mechanism for the co-ordinating of action.

107 . For Habermas, life-world refers to the shared meanings that make ordinary interaction possible. It consists of the world of meanings into which we are born and in which we grow up. It also refers to knowledge and norms (cf Fiorenza 1992:68).

Het fundamentele probleem van iedere maatschappijtheorie bestaat volgens Habermas uit het verbinden van het binnen- en het buitenperspectief, van hermeneutiek en systeemtheorie. Habermas poogt beide benaderingen in *Theorie des kommunikativen Handelns* met elkaar te verenigen. In het volgende schets ik zijn voorstellen voor een integratie van hermeneutiek en systeemtheorie.

Rhoads (1991) who makes a very thorough analysis of social theory and of Parsons and Habermas describes Habermas's views as follows:

His (that is Habermas - FN) analysis of advanced capitalist societies reveals both continuities and discontinuities with Marx and both similarities to and differences from Parsons's theory of the social system. The continuities and similarities, however, carry with them structuralist assumptions that have left an impact on some of Habermas's theoretical formulations (Rhoads 1991:106).

Habermas further translated his own theory into Parsons's by identifying the system-integrative function of economy and state with Parsons's A and G functions" (Rhoads 1991:107).¹⁰⁸

It is clear that although Habermas does not agree with Parsons on many points, he does not reject Parsons totally. Ritzer (1988:489-490) is of the opinion that in his latest works Habermas has moved to a more integrative approach to social theorising, both at a theoretical and ontological level (cf Habermas 1989). This is visible in the way in which he integrates action theory and systems theory (Habermas 1989:343). Habermas is still convinced that it is necessary to make a distinction between life-world and social system otherwise a person may fall into the same pitfalls as Parsons (cf Habermas 1989: 154-150).¹⁰⁹ Habermas does not want macro-level systems theory to overwhelm action theory (Ritzer 1988:490).

It is clear from Habermas's (1989) description of Parsons and of Parsons' own description in his book, *The social system* (1991) that Parsons' systems theory is not exactly the same as the ecosystemic thinking of someone like Capra or the General System Theory of Von Bertalanffy.¹¹⁰ Although the word "systems" is used, it is a different understanding of systems.¹¹¹ This is exactly why this study agrees with Auerswald (1987) that **the word ecosystems should be used and not systems** and why the term *ecosystems* is used [cf p 49]. Parsons (1991:xiii) writes as follows about the origin of the word "system" in his book:¹¹²

108 . Cf also Habermas (1980:5-6).

109 . "The uncoupling of system and lifeworld cannot be conceived as a *second-order* differentiation process so long as we stick either to the system perspective or to the lifeworld perspective instead of transforming each into the other" (Habermas 1989:155). "At the same time, the lifeworld remains the subsystem that defines the pattern of the social system as a whole. Thus, systemic mechanisms need to be anchored in the lifeworld: they have to be institutionalized" (Habermas 1989:154).

110 . Cf Ball (1978:66) who discusses the role of GST in sociology and says that: "GST does not reject conventional functionalism, however, but recognizes it as a contribution limited by unnecessarily rigid categories".

111 . Cf De Jongh van Arkel (1991a:62) who says: "Al het Parsons ook sisteemteorieë ontwikkel, word hy gewoonlik nie by die gewone sisteemdenke gegroepier nie en as baie beperkend op teoretiese en praktiese vlak beskou."

112 . Parsons (1977:27) writes as follows:

The title, *The social system*, goes back, more than to any other source, to the insistence of the late Professor L J Henderson on the extreme importance of the concept of system in scientific theory, and his clear realization that the attempt to delineate the social system as a system was the most important contribution of Pareto's great work.

In the chapter *On building social system theory: a personal history* in Parsons' book (1977) it is very clear that it was people like Henderson, Emerson (a biologist), Cannon, and the writings of Pareto,¹¹³ Freud, Durkheim and Weber which influenced him as well as Norbert Wiener, who developed the idea of cybernetica (Parsons 1977:74-75). Robert Lilienfeld (1988:196), one of the harshest critics of systems theory, writes the following about Parsons:

In one sense the "social system" of Talcott Parsons should not be included under the general heading of systems theory, because Parsons developed his conception of the social system at least two decades before systems thinking as we have described it emerged as a significant movement. Parsonian sociology dates from the 1930s; cybernetics and the rest emerged in the 1950's and can be roughly correlated with the rise of the computer. In addition, advocates of the later systems movement claim that their approach differs significantly from Parsons' in several important dimensions. But in another sense there are definite affinities between the two..."

To put it more precisely: Habermas finds it interesting that Parsons makes use of the idea of systems actions. But Habermas is critical of the systems theories of Parsons and Luhmann.¹¹⁴ His problem with them is their functionalistic nature. **The systems theories of Parsons are not exactly the same as those of Capra and others, who support ecosystemic thinking.** Besides, the things Habermas criticises will also be things of which ecosystemic thinkers in general will be critical. It is not possible to say categorically that Habermas is against systemic thinking because of his critical comments about Parsons' systems theories.

Unfortunately, the use of the term "systems" is confusing. This confusion is already visible in practical theology. It becomes visible when the practical theologian, Heitink (1993) refers to "systems theory". Heitink (1993:210) comes to the conclusion:

Op het eerste gezicht lijkt er een spanning te bestaan tussen een communicatieve benadering vanuit hermeneutisch perspectief en het gebruik van een systeemtheorie, ...

As Henderson was never tired of pointing out, Pareto's model in this respect was the idea of system as used in the theory of mechanics, but he attempted to apply it both to economics and to sociology. Hence Henderson's statement that perhaps Pareto's most important contribution to sociology was his conception of the "social system", a dictum which I myself took so seriously that I used the phrase as the title of a book some years later.

Lilienfeld (1988:12) mentions Henderson (1878-1942) as a "forerunner of systems thinking". He first taught biochemistry and later in life turned to the philosophy of science and eventually taught sociology. He built his systems thinking on the physicist Josiah Willard Gibbs and on the sociology of Pareto. Lilienfeld (1988:13) describes it as follows:

What gives Henderson a place in the history of systems theory is his insistence on regarding social processes in systems terms; here he claims indebtedness especially to the French physiologist Claude Bernard as well as to Gibbs and to Pareto.

113 . Coetzee (1974:48) describes Vilfredo Pareto, Bronislaw Malinowski, Emile Durkheim and Max Weber as the people who laid the foundation for the Sociology of Religion.

114 . Siebert (1994:1) describes Nicholas Luhmann as a positivistic sociologist and as in the same class as Auguste Comte and Talcott Parsons.

Ook hier kan gedacht worden vanuit complementariteit.¹¹⁵ De systeemtheorie biedt een aanvulling op communicatieve strategieën en kan hierbinnen gebruikt worden om situaties te verhelderen en de diepstruktuur in het handelen bloot te leggen. Een systeemtheoretische benadering vooronderstelt een hermeneutische benadering.

Heitink (1993:210) refers to Widdershoven (1988). Widdershoven discusses Habermas's reaction to Parsons' systems theories. It seems as if this is an area which needs much more research and hopefully someone will do it in future. The interesting thing is how things connect with each other and how it is possible to see certain relationships even if they are very vague. The one point not further explored in this section is the influence of a person like Max Weber on both Habermas¹¹⁶ and Parsons and Luhmann. Both Parsons and Habermas make use of Freud in their writings. Although Habermas is, in essence, a philosopher, he is in serious conversation with sociologists like Parsons and Luhmann.

Ecosystemic thinking will be dealt with later in this study [cf 2.3]. At this stage it is important to know that ecosystemic thinking is not exactly the same as the "systemic theories" of Parsons or Luhmann. Habermas's criticism against systemic theories is directed at the theories of the sociologist, Parsons and the positivist, Luhmann. This does not mean that there is absolutely no relationship between the systemic theories and ecosystemic thinking. The very point ecosystemic thinking wants to make is that all things stand in relation to each other. Many ecosystemic thinkers read Parsons and other sociologists' systemic theories together with the works of Von Bertalanffy and other supporters of the General Systems Theory. Surely it influenced the thinking of ecosystemic supporters.

The sociologist Fumiss (1994:68) points at another implication of Parsons' functionalistic model, namely its ignorance in regards to the role *power* plays. According to Fumiss (1994:68) Parsons understood professional societies (i.e. society consisting out of doctors, psychologists or pastoral workers) as representing and upholding social values. Some sociologists describes such societies as nothing else than a way to mobilise for power and enhanced social prestige and economic power. These views are of importance for pastoral work and for an ecosystemic view of the relationship between the pastoral worker and careseeker.

2.2.2.1.2 Habermas and postmodernism

I would argue that postmodernism, through an interface with liberation (and enculturation and reception) hermeneutics, provides an opportunity for socially engaged intellectuals 'to do theology with' the poor and marginalized (West 1995:449).

This brings us to another debate in philosophy and that is the debate on postmodernism.¹¹⁷ It is necessary to be aware of this debate because this study proposes an ecclesiology and pastoral work approach which at

115. Van der Ven (1993a) also makes use of this term in his ecclesiology.

116. Ritzer (1988:257) says the following: "This brings us to the central issue of rationalization in Habermas's work. Here Habermas is influenced not only by Marx's work, but by Weber's as well."

117. "... there is the paradox that many thinkers who are labeled "postmodern" by others, do not think of themselves as "postmodern" or even use this expression. For example, when asked to name "postmodern" thinkers I suspect many would include Heidegger, Derrida,

points is critical of certain trends in the Enlightenment and modern world-view. An ecosystemic approach has many points of connection with what is often known as postmodernism. 118

Postmodernism is a well-known word, but its meaning is less known and certain. Thomas Docherty (1993:5) says the following about the term "postmodernism":

In the postmodern, it has become difficult to make the proposition 'I know the meaning of postmodernism' - not only because the postmodern is a fraught topic, but also because the 'I' who supposedly knows is itself the site of a postmodern problematic.

Bernstein (1991:200) confirms this when he says that the terms *modern* and *postmodern* are vague, ambiguous and slippery and have been used in conflicting and contradictory ways. Bernstein suggests that these terms should be dropped. Bernstein is of the opinion that it is better to discuss the thinkers, Habermas and Derrida, whose names are linked with modernism and postmodernism. Bernstein (1991:200-201) puts it as follows:

Habermas, for whom the concept of modernity is central, is frequently taken to be the boldest defender of the unfinished project of modernity, a forceful champion of the Enlightenment legacy. Derrida, who rarely even mentions "modernity" or "postmodernity", is nevertheless taken to be the "postmodern" thinker par excellence.

Arnold Toynbee coined the term "postmodern" in the 1930's in his *A study of history*. He refers to the last part of the eighteen hundreds as the postmodern era. In 1939 he wrote that the post First War (1914-1918) period can be described as the start of the postmodern world. According to Docherty (1993:35), a serious interest in postmodernism was taken place since 1968. One of the problems in defining the "postmodern" is specifically the prefix "post" because it gives the idea of a chronological move, while postmodernism is a way of thinking. For Lyotard (1993a:44) postmodern is undoubtedly part of the modern. It is a question of expression of thought in art, literature, philosophy and politics (Lyotard 1993b:49). 119

Foucault, and perhaps Nietzsche. But none of them ever rely on this term. For reasons that I set forth, I think it is best to use the expression "modern/postmodern" to signify what Heidegger calls a *Stimmung*, a mood - one which is amorphous, protean, and shifting but which nevertheless exerts a powerful influence on the ways in which we think, act, and experience" (Bernstein 1991:11).

118. Postmodern is a term originated by Peter Drucker in the late 1950's. The distinction between modern and postmodern is a philosophical difference. These are not at all clear-cut categories. The term postmodern does not mean "antimodern". Martin (1987:370) says of postmodern that it looks backwards and forward at the same time and "does not mean a simple return to precritical, premodern, preliberal discourse, but a 'pro-volution' toward an emerging new ... paradigm" (cf also Bosch 1991:531). Bernstein (1991:11) describes it as follows:

Anyone with even the most superficial acquaintance with recent debates can scarcely avoid noticing that the terms 'modernity' and 'postmodernity' are slippery, vague and ambiguous. They have wildly different meanings within different cultural disciplines and even within the same discipline. There is no consensus or agreement about the multiple meanings of these treacherous terms.

119. In an edited version of an article written by Malcolm Bradbury which appears in the *Mail & Guardian* (22/12/95) the statement is made that post-modernism is dead and that we are entering the post-post-modern era. The question is how to define the phase that follows. The author believes that the end of the Cold War is accompanied by fundamental cultural,

Lyotard (1993a) describes the spirit of postmodernism as a disappearance of the idea that rationality is the solution; a move away from linear thinking which is so much part of the modern. It is a protest against liberalism, capitalism and Marxism which all have a share in the bloodshed of the last centuries. Postmodernism is a decline in confidence in the principle of general progress in humanity and that technology, knowledge and freedom would, without exception, benefit humanity as a whole (Lyotard 1993b:48). Lyotard puts it: "Technoscientific development has become a means of deepening the malaise rather than allaying it. It is no longer possible to call development progress".

Bauman (1993:132-135) describes modernity¹²⁰ as a phenomenon with a rich pre-history, but nothing beyond it, it differs from pre-modern times which were almost devoid of history. The postmodern debate opens new perspectives for a world built on "objective ground" and a Cartesian tradition. Its open-endedness helps to ask questions about basic assumptions. Bauman (1993:135-136) mentions the following assumptions:

... that the West was superior to the East; white to black; civilized to crude; cultured to uneducated; sane to insane; healthy to sick; man to woman; normal to criminal; more to less; riches to austerity; high productivity to low productivity; high culture to low culture. All these 'evidences' are now gone. Not a single one remains unchallenged.

Postmodernism is thus critical of the modern Cartesian world-view. There is also an interesting debate going between Habermas and postmodernism. Habermas has an interesting position, in the sense that he himself is not a postmodernist, but the postmodernists are in a discussion with him and his position. He is taken so seriously that Docherty included two of Habermas's articles in his book, *Postmodernism: A reader*.

Docherty (1993:35-36) mentions several people whose writings play a role in postmodernism. He mentions Derrida's deconstruction, Habermas's criticism from within critical theory itself, Feyerabend, Capra's question to science and Thomas Kuhn's book, which was in itself a paradigm shift.

In his article *Modernity: an incomplete project*, Habermas (1993b) defends the importance of modernity. He is aware of the problems of modernity, but believes that modernity cannot be negated easily. To a large extent, Habermas accepts Lyotard's criticism of the role of reason in the Enlightenment/ modern world-view. He is aware of the danger of a system which claims reason for itself and stigmatises others of being unreasonable. Habermas believes that the counter to this lies in a theory of communicative action (Docherty 1993:25). Habermas believes that through communication a consensus can be reached between participants. Lyotard is sceptical of such a possibility and belief that can lead to "conversational imperialism" (Docherty 1993:25).

economic and political shifts. These shifts together with rapid changes in technology are the signs of a new era. Hallmarks of this new era are children who are surfing on the internet; "readers" who listen to books on tape or watch television rather than to read the printed original.

120 . Modern = a time periodisation varying with contexts; modernism = a term used to cover developments in the arts between 1880-1945; modernity = a condition or situation identifiable by attitudinal criteria like sociology, economics etc. (Hudson 1985:52-53). In the literature these concepts are often used exchangeable.

Norris (1992:134-136) says that Habermas has shifted from his earlier writings where language and speech-act did not play a prominent and active role. Postmodernists and structuralists should address this shift in Habermas. Norris (1992:135,137) calls these forms of postmodernism which exclude all truth claims except those endorsed by some existing interpretative community, "excesses" and states unequivocally that: "In fact it is a mark of the intellectual poverty of much post-structuralist theorizing that it has failed so conspicuously to address Habermas's arguments at a level anywhere near adequate to their range of philosophical and socio-political reference".

This does not mean that Norris (1992:144-146) agrees with Habermas on all points. Although he criticises Habermas strongly for his Kantian way of thinking Norris (1992:165) is very positive that through his theory of communicative action Habermas brings certain criteria like truth, reason, consistency, good faith and openness to public debate. Norris (1992) believes that Habermas has provided a philosophical basis for rejecting a relativist viewpoint.

Jacques Derrida is part of the post-structuralist movement, which is part of the postmodernist movement. Bernstein (1991:172) describes Derrida as "perhaps the most controversial writer of our time". He uses the term "deconstruct", which means to undo, which is not the same as destroy. The purpose of this deconstruction is to discover what opposites are within texts and language.¹²¹ Deconstruction can help people to become aware of the presence, for instance, of ideology (cf Berger and Luckmann 1976).

Norris further (1992; 1990:49, 52) believes that Habermas has misinterpreted Derrida when he puts Derrida in one group¹²² with all the other postmodernists. Norris (1990:52) says that: "Habermas goes along with the widely-held view that deconstruction is a matter of collapsing all genre distinctions".

Derrida is still in discussion with the Enlightenment. A criticism often levelled against postmodernists is that they believe in "everything goes". Norris (1992:17, 167) makes it clear that this is not true of Derrida, although certain passages of Derrida's works lay themselves open to criticism.¹²³ It is also clear from Norris (1992:34) that Derrida does not totally reject the critical thought of the Enlightenment, but is in dialogue with it. Norris (1990:52) argues that: "deconstruction, properly understood, belongs within that same 'philosophical discourse of modernity' that Habermas sets out to defend against its present-day detractors". Bernstein (1991:218-220) describes Habermas and Derrida as two people whose modes of thinking are different, but not incompatible:

121 . Cf the importance of deconstruction for the social constructionism in psychology [p 108].

122 . Bernstein (1991:173) says of Derrida that "every time one tries to pin down what he is or is not saying, his texts appear to change".

123 . Bernstein (1991:184) cites Staten (*Wittgenstein and Derrida* 1984) who says: "Deconstruction is not a defense of formlessness, but a regulated overflowing of established boundaries." Bernstein adds to this: "The point is *not* that we can get along without demarcating boundaries, but rather there is no 'boundary-fixing' that cannot itself be questioned".

When we place Habermas/ Derrida in a new constellation - view them as each other's other - then their strengths and weaknesses come into sharp relief. ... For Habermas, communicative action and rationality are the powerful magnetic poles of his work... Communicative action - action oriented to mutual reciprocal understanding - never becomes fully thematized in Derrida's writings. But his deconstructive practices bear on it.

Bernstein (1991:220-221) describes how difficult it is in an age of pluralism and heterogeneity to insist on any universal claims. He (1991:221) understands Habermas's criticism that everything too easily degenerates into a self-defeating relativism, contextualism and "bad historicism". Bernstein believes that Habermas and Derrida are caricatured by friends and foes who did not understand them correctly or in context.

Bernstein (1991:222-223) is convinced, however, that Derrida is not a relativist or an irrationalist. Derrida is critical and a constant reminder of how difficult it is to appeal to specific universal answers. Derrida differs from Habermas in the sense that one cannot find a specific social or political theory in Derrida as can be found in Habermas. For Derrida, even philosophy is not a well-defined discipline and neatly separable from other disciplines and discourses. Habermas also believes that there is no fixed boundary between philosophy and the critical social sciences, although they are not reducible to each other (Bernstein 1991:223). Bernstein (1991:224) believes that Habermas in his "subtle dialectical interplay between philosophical speculation and social scientific theoretical oriented empirical research" has practised what "one would think ought to be a consequence of Derrida's own deconstructive analyses". According to Bernstein (1991:225) there is nothing in Derrida's writings that seek to rule out the importance of critical theoretical and empirical research into the structural dynamics of society and politics.

To conclude: The way Bernstein (1991:225-226) very aptly summarises the modern/ postmodern debate is important for us. Bernstein (1991:225) puts it as follows:

I do not think there is a theoretical perspective from which we can reconcile their (Habermas & Derrida - FN) differences, their otherness to each other - not do I think we should smooth out their "aversions and attractions." The nasty questions that they raise about each other's project need to be relentlessly pursued... However, *together*, Habermas/ Derrida provide us with a force-field that constitutes "the dynamic transmutational structure of a complex phenomenon" - the phenomenon I have labeled "modernity/postmodernity". *Together* they form a new constellation - a "juxtaposed rather than an integrated cluster of changing elements that resist reduction to a common denominator, essential core, or generative first principle".

2.2.2.1.3 Derrida and systems

A recent book by C Johnson (1993) titled *System and writing in the philosophy of Jacques Derrida* is very interesting. Derrida is known as a deconstructionist and also as a postmodern thinker. It is clear from the work of Norris (1992:32-51) that Derrida is not rejecting critical reason in the same sense as Lyotard. Norris (1992) is convinced that Derrida is misunderstood and classified with other postmodernist from whom he actually differs a lot. Johnson (1993:9) sees Derrida as a philosopher and even one of the most significant contemporary philosophers. It is so that the literary critical community embraces Derrida much more than the philosophical community. Johnson (1993:9) cites Irene Harvey who says that perhaps the philosophical

community wants to avoid dealing with the writings of Derrida. Johnson (1993:10) describes the purpose of his book as follows:

..., I shall compare Derrida's scriptural model with some of the principal concepts of systems theory. The goal of this comparison will not be to *explain* Derrida's philosophy from the external standpoint of another discipline, nor to suggest any direct or specific channel of influence from the one to the other; it will be rather to draw attention to significant parallels between the two discourses, and to investigate how these might extend our understanding of Derrida's work.

Johnson (1993:143-144; 152) compares Derrida's writings with those of the biologist Von Bertalanffy. The idea of "open systems" in systems theory in particular compares with Derrida's writings. Johnson agrees with Wilden that the linguistic system as a subsystem of the social system is the most open system (Johnson 1993:147). Johnson (1993:7-8) puts it as follows:

Derrida's conception of writing, on the other hand, has a greater affinity with the metamorphic and adaptational¹²⁴ ('open system') models found in systems theory, models which were never properly assimilated and applied by structuralist theory.

Johnson (1993:146) believes that the idea of *equifinality* in systems theory can be compared with the idea of *play* in deconstruction. Johnson (1993:151) is of the opinion that although Derrida is aware of the systemic paradigm, he is not really in dialogue with this paradigm. Johnson (1993:192) even goes so far as to draw up a table which correlates the main concepts of systems theory with the main ones in Derrida's work.¹²⁵

In the introduction to his book, Johnson (1993:11) gives the impression that Derrida and systems theories can be compared to atomist philosophy. It is not clear what is meant with "atomist philosophy". In the rest of the work it is clear that neither Derrida's nor systems theories are in any way atomistic in their thinking.

Some criticism can be raised about Johnson's own knowledge of systems theory and the fact that his understanding of systems thinking is based only on the works of Von Bertalanffy and Bateson. But this will miss the point, namely, that it is extremely interesting that research has begun to look for similarities and connections between the literary and philosophical writings of a person and a systemic approach. It shows the awareness there is of systemic thinking.

Although much more research is necessary to compare postmodernism and ecosystemic thinking, the researcher is convinced that there are strong connections between the ecosystemic world-view and a postmodern world-view. A study of postmodern literature may confirm it.

124 . It is correctly taken from Johnson. There is not a word like that in the dictionary.

125 . "While Derrida's work itself remains within what might conventionally be defined as philosophy (though it also questions the reality or purpose of such generic demarcations), his conception of system and writing nevertheless has some remarkable affinities with the entirely different field of systems theory" (Johnson 1993:191).

2.2.2.1.4 Review

Systems theories have an underlying systems philosophy which can in itself be described as a philosophy (Lazio 1972).¹²⁶ It is important to see how postmodernism and systems thinking function broadly within the same spiritual climate. This does not mean that the two are the same - there are certainly big differences. The relationship between the two would constitute a study on its own. The relationship between Habermas's communication theory and postmodernism is also worth studying from a practical theological perspective. It is important for practical theology to take note of the debate between Habermas and postmodern philosophers, if it wants to take an ecosystemic world-view seriously and wants to make use of Habermas's communication theory.

It is very interesting to see how a philosopher like Derrida works in the same direction as systems theories. It also shows how systems thinking is not just something out of the air, but forms a basis for several thinkers. Derrida is a good example of a juggler, someone who succeeds to keep more than one ball in the air. Derrida makes it clear how difficult it is to really solidify anything. Bernstein (1991:178) describes Derrida as somebody who is close to Hegel and radically anti-Hegelian. He succeeds in understanding and describing how things and their opposites are actually close to each other; how things can be more than one thing at a time. No text of Derrida is simply univocal (Bernstein 1991).

Although Parson's understanding of how systems function differs from that of systems thinkers, the idea that society and people in society are all systems is in line with systemic thinking. At the same time it again proves the interrelatedness of thinking. It also means that systems thinking can further explore the concepts and ideas of Derridas, for example, and other deconstructivists and perhaps even Parson's understanding of society as a system for its own development. The importance of language and intersubjectivity for both Habermas and Derrida and some family therapists [cf 2.2.2.2.1] is also a subject worth studying.

Interestingly enough - just to emphasise the circular movement of ideas - the family therapist Lynn Hoffman (1990:8-11) explains in an article her own movement from a structuralist to a deconstructionist position, influenced by the philosophies of people like Derrida.

126. Without expanding too much on the theme, it is necessary to refer to the fact that systems thinking is, a philosophy. (Philosophy can be described as the inquiry into truth and reality.) Von Bertalanffy (1972:xix) himself speaks of the importance of a "systems philosophy". He sees the idea of "systems" as a new paradigm in Kuhn's understanding of a paradigm. A move away from a mechanistic view of life and nature towards a more organismic outlook. In a book *Introduction to systems philosophy* Ervin Laszlo discusses systems theory from a philosophical viewpoint.

Lazlo (1972:13) believes that there is a need for a "systems philosophy" to underpin the idea of systemic thinking. He builds his systems philosophy on the basis of a general theory of systems. He proposes a move from analytical to synthetic philosophy (Lazlo 1972:3). Lazlo (1972:3) understands synthetic philosophy as the conjoining of various sets of non-philosophical research data to provide new avenues and issues of discussion.

127. Cf Thurneysen (1962:200-220). Thurneysen (1962:210) puts it as follows: "It would be of great significance even for purely scientific knowledge if we not only made use of psychology as members of the church, but if psychology were also to be fertilized by the knowledge of living faith in the church."

There is a new breed of philosophers who have moved beyond the positivistic views and also beyond believe that neutrality is a real possibility. Bernstein (1991) describes what he calls a "new constellation" of thinking of several philosophers. Bernstein (1991:319) comes to the following conclusion that "one of the primary lessons of the new constellation is that we engage in critique as second order *participants* and not as third person neutral observers. As participants our critiques and affirmations are always tentative, fallible, open to further questioning". These thinkers forms the basis for a new approach to theology and also for practical theology. For practical theology to take on the challenge, set out by Moltmann (1989a), and also by the challenges of our time, it is necessary to take an ecosystemic metaparadigm seriously.

2.2.2.2 Psychology

The relationship between psychology and theology and specifically pastoral care and counselling and psychology has been a point of discussion for many years.¹²⁷ Bridger and Atkinson (1994:6) say that "how theology and psychology are to relate to each other is perhaps the most problematic question facing Christian counsellors today and the last 20 years are littered with attempts to define the relationship in terms which do justice to both disciplines".

In 1980 an article appeared in *The South African Journal of Psychology* with the title, Metatheory: a sixth 'force' in psychology. Jordaan and Jordaan (1980) discuss the implications of an interdisciplinary systems approach for psychologists and close their discussion by saying (1980:39):

Die huidige skrywers is op grond van die voorgaande uiteensetting van mening dat 'n interdissiplinêre sisteembenadering al die moontlikhede bied om die oënskynlik onderling uitsluitende paradigmas in die sielkunde en verwante vakgebiede te versoen en impetus te verleen aan die ontwikkeling van 'n metateorie van menslike gedrag en ervaring.

Ecosystemic thinking is not a well-defined theory; it does not work with fundamental laws [cf p 51]. This is one of the weak points of systems thinking and at the same time one of its strong points because it opens up many possibilities. A branch of psychology has developed - family therapy - which takes systems thinking very seriously. Auerswald (1987:329) is of the opinion that family therapy is the "site of connection" between the epistemological shift which has taken place in science in general and the behavioural sciences. Moving to a systemic view means that the researcher looks beyond the individual to his/her relationships with other systems, such as the family and community. Cottone (1988:357) is of the opinion that "systems theory has even received attention as a foundation for a possible paradigm shift in the counseling field".

Orford (1992:137ff), a community psychologist, speaks of those who are in, what he calls, the "people business". He includes health visitors, teachers, doctors, nurses, police and clergy in this category. According to Orford (1992:137), "the work done by these modern armies of human service workers, is in large part psychological". With this pronouncement Orford expands the field of psychology beyond the traditional borders, namely trained psychologists, and puts psychology within the field of all caring professions.

2.2.2.2.1 Systemic family therapy

The reason specific attention is given to systemic family therapy¹²⁸ is that it is consistent with systems thinking and works with the idea of systems. Jones (1993:xx) mentions a systems theorist like Von Bertalanffy and a cybernetician like Wiener as some of the people who played a pivotal role in the development of family therapy. Again it is necessary to stress that, even within the tradition of the systemic school, many points of difference exist (Real 1990:256). Auerswaid (1987:324) understands the anthropologist Bateson as one of the people who influences family therapy to think systemically. Although Auerswaid raises very serious questions of many of the groupings who call themselves systems therapist for not understanding what it means, he (Auerswaid 1987:329) also believes that "... family therapy would not exist had there not been a major epistemological shift in the thinking of those who pioneered the field". This study's aim is to develop a less individualistic approach to pastoral work. Clinebell (1981:214) describes family system therapy as follows:

The shift in their therapeutic focus is away from a primary concern with what occurs *within individuals* (the preoccupation of the mainstream of therapy since Freud) and toward enhancing *interpersonal relationships and small¹²⁹ social systems as families*. This conceptual reorientation has given rise to therapies that are a veritable gold mine of resources for enriching the quality of relationships and helping institutions, organizations, and communities become more growth-nurturing for everyone.

The beginning of family therapy can be found in the 1940's with child psychiatrists who started to see the mother with the child, later the rest of the family were involved. In the 1950's people like Nathan Ackerman, Murray Bowen, Virginia Satir and Charls Whitaker¹³⁰ started to write about family therapy. They were seriously interested in the field theory of the sociologist, Kurt Lewin.

Since the seventies the systemic family therapy approach developed, with the Milan School and the Palo Alto group in California and the Ackerman Institute for Family Therapy in New York City. They adapted a wide variety of techniques and philosophies from communications theory, group theory, interpersonal psychiatry, gestalt therapy and transactional analysis (cf Van den Blink 1983:61).

Systemic family therapies have changed over the years. Not only are there different groupings (e.g. the original Milan School broke up in 1978) and different movements as far as practical therapy is concerned,

128. Systemic family therapists often just speak of systemic therapy because social patterns that lead to problem behaviour do not always include family members only. Keeney and Ross (1985:3) prefer the term "systemic family therapy" because family members usually participate in the social patterns involved in the problem behaviour.

129. Although family system therapies are directed to the family as a system, it does not mean that other and bigger systems could not be included. Clinebell later (1981:215) refers to different categories of systemic therapies and says that "the third category of systemic approaches includes ... *larger face to face systems* (such as churches, schools, industries and social agencies) more growth-enabling". In his (1981:215) fourth category he refers to "*larger, non-face-to-face systems* such as government, institutions, and economic and legal systems...".

130. Brownlee (1994:15) sees Whitaker as an example of a family therapist who is still using first-order cybernetics.

there are also new epistemological viewpoints. Some even speak of paradigm changes in family therapies, which will definitely have an influence at pragmatic and ethical level (Jones 1993:213).

Systemic therapists have moved a long way away from the early applications of General Systems Theory (Jones 1993:214). Well known is the work of Mara Selvini Palazzoli and her colleagues, Luigi Boscolo, Giuliana Prata and Gianfranco Cecchin in Milan, Italy in the early 1970's (Bloch 1993:vii).¹³¹ According to Bloch (1993:ix), two phases in family therapy can be identified. In the first phase close consideration was given to Bateson's epistemological approach and in the second phase second-order cybernetics is of main interest. In this study reference is also made to later developments, namely a constructivistic approach and lately the social constructionists approach. Keeney and Ross (1985:5-6) distinguish between the approaches of:

- a) Watzlawick,¹³² Weakland, Fisch, Segal and others, who address the complementary relation of problem and problem-solving behaviour
- b) Haley, Montalvo, Minuchin,¹³³ Fishman and colleagues, who focus more on the structural organisation of triadic relations in the social context of the family
- c) Selvini-Palazzoli, Cecchin, Prata and Boscolo, who attend to the contextual meanings that frame the politics of troubled families.¹³⁴

Systemic therapy or systemic family therapy is a shift in focus from individual behaviour to social patterns of organisation (Keeney & Ross 1992:xi). In systemic therapy therapists treat symptoms and problems as part of a more encompassing systemic pattern of organisation. In most systemic therapies they make use of a cybernetic view of human communication and context.¹³⁵ In the systemic approach a "neutral" view of problems and solutions is taken by counsellors (Bor, Miller & Goldman 1992:7). This means the counsellor does not make a diagnosis as in the medical model¹³⁶ and decide what is right and what is wrong, but

131 . In 1967 according to Hoffman (1985:389).

132 . Associated with the Mental Research Institute (MRI) for strategic family therapy. Real (1990:256) believes that there are many points of overlapping in thinking between MRI and systemic family therapy.

133 . Associated with structural family therapy.

134 . According to Hoffman (1985:389), after the split in 1978 Boscolo and Cecchin have moved more in the direction of second-order cybernetics.

135 . Keeney and Ross (1992: xiv) connect their specific branch of family therapy very closely with a cybernetic view of human communication. In imitation of Gregory Bateson, they understand "mind" as synonymous with "cybernetic system" (Keeney & Ross 1992:xiv).

136 . Skidmore (1994:22) is critical of the emphasis on diagnosis in psychology and describes it as follows:

In order to cope with the world the carer has, by necessity, to devise diagnostic categories which are, in themselves, symbols. A diagnosis says much more than simply what is wrong with a person, it suggests how they came to be in that state and how they should be treated and how long we can expect them to be ill. In a sense the process of diagnosis becomes a structure in its own right and immediately

works with the interrelations on the table. The importance of the systems perspective in counselling is that the **interdependence** of people is taken seriously (Becvar & Becvar 1982:x). Behaviour, thought and emotion are interdependent (Bor, Miller, Goldman 1992:10).

The systemic approach believes that behaviour and problems occur in a context. They should be examined and understood in the milieu in which they arise. There is reciprocity in relationships. If something happens to an individual, it will have an impact on other people and may affect how they behave. There is also reciprocity in the counselling setting between counsellor and client. Bor, Miller and Goldman (1992:24) say there is also a reciprocal and circular relationship between the problem and the context. Keeney and Ross (1985:4) discuss different case studies in therapy and remark that: "In each case the therapist has conceptualized and treated symptoms and problems as part of a more encompassing systemic pattern of organization".

Becvar and Becvar (1982:5) are of the opinion that a system exists only as people give it existence by observing regularities or patterns. The problem defines the system and not the system the problem. The objects of interactional systems are not individuals but persons-communicating-with-other-persons (Jones 1993:3). Any system is a sub-system of a larger system and could itself be divided into subsystems. The borders of a system are not fixed at all. Even the family as a system is not very clear-cut. It will depend on cultural differences and not everybody who is biologically related may be part of the family. Elsa Jones (1993:2) defines a system as: "a group of elements in interaction with one another over time, such as that their recursive patterns of interaction form a stable context for individual and mutual functioning".

Many of the concepts which are repeatedly mentioned in systems theories have their origin in the General Systems Theory and in cybernetics. The following concepts play an important role (cf Jones 1993:4; Becvar & Becvar 1982:9-26; Lines 1987:104-115; De Jongh van Arkel 1988b:223-238; Von Bertalanffy 1968a:36ff; Fensham 1990:73-104).

- Wholeness - This refers to the interrelation and interdependence in the behaviours of family members. It also includes non-summativity - which means that something is more than the sum of its parts. The whole must be understood as being different from the sum of its parts.
- Feedback - This is the assumption that a system will respond to input with amplification or inhibition of pattern in such a way as to ensure its own continuance.
- Equifinality - The same endpoint may be reached from different starting points because the process is of more significance than the initial "cause" or starting point. In therapy that is important, because it means that the therapist can work with that which is on the table. Orford (1992:33) mentions multifinality which refers to the fact that similar initial conditions can lead to different end states.

loses sight of the individual... The diagnosis becomes the professionals' safety net that seeks to make illness a uniform process. Unfortunately illness is a chaotic process and people react to it in many different ways.

- Entropy and negative entropy (negentropy) - Entropy¹³⁷ refers to the lack of energy in a system which leads to an increase in chaos and disintegration, while negentropy describes a tendency away from maximum disorder and thus an increase in order and complexity (Becvar & Becvar 1982). In a closed system approach, entropy is the fate of the earth and everything. Negentropy is the answer from the side of the systemic supporters. Systems are not closed, everything is not in the process of dying.
- Homeostasis, morphostasis and morphogenesis - Homeostasis describes a tendency to stability. Stability alone is a restrictive way of seeing things.¹³⁸ Therefore morphostasis and morphogenesis developed in systemic therapy to give expression to the idea of stability (morphostasis) within change (morphogenesis). Both (morphostasis and morphogenesis) are necessary for a healthy (family) system.

In the world of systemic family therapy, there is a lot of confusion of points of departure. De Lange (1990) is specifically concerned with the fact that the ontological and the epistemological domains are confused, also when it comes to research. Auerswald (1987:321) describes five different paradigms in family treatment.

Systemic family therapy applies many of the principles of systems theory and systems thinking. For this study, the importance can be found in the tendency to move away from individualistic and reductionistic thinking. The emphasis on the family is a broadening of scope. It obviously raises the question of even broader systems than the family. What about the wider community or society? In the researcher's view, there is no doubt that there is a need to move even beyond the family as system to the wider community.¹³⁹

Many family systems therapists do not mention the wider society as a system. Others do refer to the society or the community as part of the systems that must be acknowledged, but do not elaborate on it. Van Zyl (1985:56) refers to Boscolo, who sees himself not as an individual therapist or family therapist, but as a systemic therapist, because he takes the broader systems into account. Becvar and Becvar (1982:60) talk of community therapy and societal therapy without explaining what they mean by these terms:

A general goal of family therapy is to help a family context evolve so that symptomatic behavior in an individual is not a necessary role for the continued existence of the system. **Community therapy or societal therapy** (my emphasis - FN), it would seem, should have a similar goal, i.e., that family pathology as symptomatic behavior is not a functional role. Thus family, community and social therapy are of the same class of activities.

137. Entropy may also refer to a thermodynamic quantity that changes in a reversible process by an amount equal to the heat absorbed or emitted divided by the thermodynamic temperature. It is measured in Joules per Kelvin. Another meaning of entropy is a lack of pattern or organisation, thus disorder. It is in this last sense that the word is used in this study.

138. Cf Bogdan's (1984) criticism of the use of homeostasis as explanation for behaviour in family therapy.

139. "I think that Bernard Smith, the non-alcoholic legal representative of AA, came close to the mark when he said 'the [AA] member was never enslaved by alcohol. Alcohol simply served as an escape from *personal* enslavement to the false ideals of a materialistic society'" Bateson 1972:311).

The researcher agrees with Becvar and Becvar (1982:60) that systemic community therapy will have similar goals and is of the same class of activities as systemic family therapy. There are definitely also some differences. In systemic family therapy the clients come to the therapist for help. The situation may differ completely in community therapy, therapists/counsellors will be sent out with the task of changing a certain behaviour which is problematic. This, in itself, is very problematic because it means that the counsellor (or his/ her superiors) has decided what is problematic behaviour, which is one of the points of criticism from the social constructionists.

Chasin and Herzig (1994) discuss their systemic approach in political interventions. They (1994:150) are surprised by the lack of interest in family systems therapy on the part of political psychology and that so few family therapists have brought their approaches into the realm of political intervention. According to Chasin and Herzig (1994), there are many similarities in reaction between families in conflict and political opponents in conflict. They mention about eleven of these similarities.

The researcher is of the opinion that if systemic thinking is taken seriously it is inevitable that patterns of behaviour can be related to bigger systems than just "the family". It is the researcher's firm belief that if there is a need for family therapy, there is also a need for a community approach to therapy. Although community psychology does not in the beginning explicitly make use of systems theories, because of its relevance for this study, it will be discussed in the next section.

In the theological world a person like Daniel Lord (1984) makes use of both family systems theory and the family metaphor, in the Bible, in his doctoral thesis. In 1965, even before the family systems therapy movement was started, Russell Becker wrote a book called *Family pastoral care*. Becker (1965:75) describes it as follows:

The purpose of family counseling is to open up communication between family members by finding the points of incongruity in the images of self and others and by helping the parents to see the way in which the behavior of the 'mysterious child in their midst' is a function of their own expectations and demands. Family counseling helps free a family from its costly preoccupation with its problem and return it to the larger community of the church and world for their role of service there.

A van den Blink (trained in family therapy at the Ackerman Institute) wrote an article *Gezinstherapie en pastoraat* (1984). In his article he explains what family therapy contains and pleads with the church to make more of the training of pastors in family therapy. He is convinced that the set-up in the congregation is "ideal" for family therapy, especially as pastors know the family set-up. If pastors are trained to be more aware of the different systems involved in problems, they will be able to identify many problems beforehand. He identifies the church's **individualistic** anthropology as one of the reasons why the church does not give enough attention to systems family therapy.

To conclude this discussion it is necessary to make some remarks on the importance of the systemic family therapy movement for pastoral work and for this study:

- The basic thinking behind systemic family therapy is systems thinking.
- Family therapy goes through so many phases and schools of thought that it is nearly impossible to

keep track of all of them. For the researcher, this is a "healthy" sign of the openness and dynamics involved in family therapy. Pastoral care and counselling can learn from this pattern.

- All people are seen as part of a bigger system.
- Family therapy puts the emphasis on the family as a system. Van der Blink believes that pastors in the church should make more use of family therapy.
- The therapist will never be able to understand the total complexity of people's interaction well enough to be the only person to know what the solution is for their problems (Van Zyl 1985:63). People must thus be involved in seeking for a solution.

2.2.2.2.1.1 From constructivism to social constructionism

Constructivism in general derives from the views of Kant, Berkely, Vico, Piaget and Wittgenstein (cf Hoffman 1985; Hoffman 1990; Greyling 1993) and the psychologist, G A Kelly¹⁴⁰ (Feixas et al 1990). The constructivists were influenced by the biologist, Humberto Maturana's ideas (Jones 1993:25).¹⁴¹ Constructivism is an approach that works with the idea that human beings develop an idea of the world and reality in their mind and that no real objective knowledge exists (Hoffman 1993:8; cf Greyling 1993:29-31; 35-38). The knowledge we have is all interpretation of reality. It is thus difficult, if not impossible, to say what is object and what is subject. Feixas et al (1990:55) define constructivism as follows: "an epistemological stance that involves a greater theoretical coherence while carrying few technical compromises".

Feixas et al (1990) describe constructivism as a metatheory which can provide a basis to integrate contributions from different schools of family therapy. For Feixas et al (1990:56) constructivism challenges the belief of objectivism that the reality is knowable and asserts that knowledge of the external world is actively constructed by the knower, whose constructions are subject to revision. This does not mean that there is no ontic world, it only means that we cannot know it. Constructivism deals with knowing not with being, according to Von Glasersfeld (1991:17). The only kind of "objectivity" possible in Von Glasersfeld's radical constructivism is when a construct turns out to be "correct" in the sense that another person or community or group comes to the same conclusion (Von Glasersfeld 1991:21).

Feixas et al make use of Kelly and Procter's Personal Construct Theory (PCT) as a model. They believe that PCT and systemic therapies work with the same epistemologies (Feixas et al 1990:57). Brownlee (1994) discusses the need for a constructivist approach to counselling, especially in rural areas where the therapist is part of the community and where maintaining clear boundaries between professional and

140 . In 1955 he wrote a two volume book entitled, *The psychology of personal constructs*.

141 . According to Feixas (1990:57), there are certain differences between Maturana and Kelly. Feixas believes that they are more ontological differences than epistemological differences.

personal life is very difficult. Brownlee (1994:21) speaks of a constructivist family therapy, making use of second-order cybernetics, because of its linguistic metaphor (Brownlee 1994:15).

De Jongh van Arkel (1987:206) opts for a constructivist approach, because it is not alien to theology and is supported by the critical-realistic rationality models in systematic theology (Van Huyssteen). He particularly likes the idea of metaphors which is an important part of the constructivistic approach. Metaphors can be a very important element of counselling and are also a way of communication. From a constructivist point of view, human lives are seen as being conversations. Constructivist therapy could be described as a form of "conversation or dialogue". It seems as if the constructivist approach could connect well with a narrative approach. Greyling (1993:30) is of the opinion that there is resemblance between a social constructivism and Habermas's communication operational theory.

People construct different experiential realities in the same situation. It is thus very difficult to describe a universal reality "out there". We are all part of a multiverse of experienced realities. This means that out of context a particular construction loses meaning. In a new context it may mean something else. Problems can be seen as ascriptions of meaning arising within a particular context of meaning. Constructivism is in essence against solipsism where the self is the only thing that can be known to exist and where reality can be constructed with no reference to the external world. It means that a constructed reality has to connect or has some consistency or complementarity with other ideas of the constructor or others. Constructions should fit and could be shared. Therefore not every "loose idea" could be taken as a construction of reality.

There are all sorts of criticisms against radical constructivism because it may also lead to an amoral attitude (an "anything goes" kind of attitude). This means that people do not have to take responsibility for their actions. In a world full of injustices, violence, discrimination and dishonesty this would be a fatal approach (cf Jones 1993:25).

Social constructionism is the latest development which takes the fear of an amoral attitude further by emphasising the role which social attitudes play. In her later work Hoffman (1990:2) prefers social construction theory above constructivism,¹⁴² because the social constructionists place more emphasis on social interpretation and the influence of language, family, culture and so on. This may all become very confusing,¹⁴³ but it seems as if the social constructionists (like Gergen) are gaining ground. Jones (1993:214, 221) also tends to promote the social constructionist idea. The reason for this is that it takes the influence of social contexts much more seriously. It asks questions of the dominance of certain value systems and how the observer-system is influenced by it. In a world where power struggles, sexism, racism and so on are the order of the day, it is important to take note of social constructs which influence systems.

Some background to the social constructionist position may be helpful. It is not so simple or easy to say exactly what is meant by a constructionist approach, because it is not a well-developed theory at all.

142 . In an article in 1985 she opted for a constructivist model.

143 . Greyling (1993:29) opts for the word "social constructivism" and not social constructionism or social construction theory.

Kenneth J Gergen is a central exponent of the social constructionist movement in modern psychology. Gergen makes use of the term "construction" in imitation of Berger and Luckmann's book (1966), *The social construction of reality*. The constructionist approach finds close connection with systemic thinking as far its objections against a positivistic view of the world and its criticism on a subject-object dichotomy is concerned, but makes much more of language and the role language plays. Gergen (1985:12-13) explains it as follows:

What is confronted, then, is the traditional Western conception of objective, individualistic, ahistoric knowledge - a conception that has insinuated itself into virtually all aspects of modern institutional life. As this view is increasingly challenged one must entertain the possibility of developing an alternative scientific metatheory based on constructionist assumptions. Such a metatheory would remove knowledge from the data-driven and/or the cognitively necessitated domains and place it in hands of people in relationship. Scientific formulations would not on this account be the result of an impersonal application of rigorous and decontextualized method, but the responsibility of persons in active, communal interchange.

Gergen speaks of *sociorationalism* as metatheory. Scientific rationality does not lie within the minds of independent persons but within the social aggregate (Gergen 1985:13).¹⁴⁴ From a constructionist viewpoint, traditional empiricism is challenged, particularly its claims of truth. Constructionists have no alternative criteria for what the "truth" is. Constructionism challenges the attitude of taking for granted that data expresses the truth even if it is collected properly. Sound method is not the issue any more. It is a myth that "the assiduous application of sound method will yield sound fact ..." (Gergen 1985:14).

Constructionism does not offer any foundational rules, but that does not mean that anything goes. It believes that there is an "inherent dependency of knowledge systems on communities of shared intelligibility" (Gergen 1985:14).¹⁴⁵ This will lead to some normative rules within such communities, but these rules must always be understood as historically and culturally situated and thus also subject to criticism and transformation. For Gergen (1985:14-15), the constructionist approach holds much more moral ground than the empiricist approach. The empiricist approach often goes into communities and cultures and in the process sustains certain patterns of conduct and destroys others, because that is what the facts show. The empirical practitioner claims, in the end, that he/she is a "victim of the facts". In constructionism, the researcher is challenged by and confronted with the implications of his/her research within society.

One of the tools used by constructionism is language, because language is also a system of reference and a form of social participation. Sampson (1993:1-2) describes different approaches which challenges the Western conception of personhood as a relatively autonomous self-contained person. Psychology as well as modern society's understanding of the universe is built on these assumptions. According to Sampson

144 . "That is, in contrast to the empiricist position, we find a metatheory that places the locus of knowledge not in the minds of single individuals, but in the collectivity. It is not the internal processes of the individual that generate what is taken for knowledge, but a social process of communication" (Gergen 1994:207).

145 . Cf Woolgar & Ashmore (1988:6) about reflexivity "the only way to hope to distinguish reflexivity from non-reflexivity is through thick description of the community within which notions like 'reflexivity' have currency".

(1993), the approaches that challenge this Western world-view include social constructionism, critical theory, systems theory and deconstruction. Sampson believes that deconstruction can be seen as a very strong foundation for a constructionist position.

Sampson (1993:15) believes that Derrida's deconstruction can help psychology to look at humans with a new perspective [cf p 94]. People will be viewed much more multidimensionally. Within Western thinking a person can be seen as apart from and opposite to society. This is not possible in deconstruction thinking. This means that if a person wishes to enslave others, he/she can only suffer himself/herself because those others are elements of the subject's own personhood. It helps in the sense that in the process of relativizing against the realism of the positivistic approach, everything is not relativised to the point "where everything goes", which is one of the points of criticism against postmodernism [cf p 94].¹⁴⁶

The family therapists, Anderson and Goolishian (1990) choose for the idea of social construction against second-order cybernetics, because they believe second-order cybernetics cannot come lose from its mechanical and control background. Anderson and Goolishian (1990:161) put it as follows:

... we have developed ideas that move our thinking about therapy into the domain of shifting systems that exists only in the vagaries of discourse language and communication. Our position leans heavily on the premise that human action takes place in a reality that is created through social construction. This is a world of human language and discourse, and not the world of cybernetic control and observed patterns.

It seems as if there is confusion between the terms "constructivism" and "social constructionist". Gergen (1993b:266) acknowledges this confusion in a footnote to his article, *The social constructionist movement in modern psychology*. Real (1990:255, 257) uses the terms "constructionist" and "constructivist" without making any distinction. He even goes further and uses the terms "constructionist", "ecosystemic" and "second-order cybernetics" as concepts which in principle have the same meaning (Real 1990:257). For him, the central tenet in all these words is an eradication of the idea of objectivity and a movement to "conversation". Brownlee (1994) speaks of a constructivists position and refers to Hoffman, who speaks of social constructionism. Feixas et al (1990) speak of constructivism, but refer to Kelly, whom Hoffman uses as an example of social constructionism.

The differences between a constructivism and social constructionism become clearer in an article by Lynn Hoffman (1992):

There is common ground in that both take issue with the modernist idea that a real world exists that can be known with objective certainty. However, the beliefs, represented by constructivism tend to promote an image of the nervous system as a closed machine. According to this view, percepts and constructs take shape as the organism bumps against its environment. By contrast, the social construction theorists see ideas, concepts and memories arising from social interchange and mediated through language. All knowledge, the social constructionists hold, evolve in the space between people, in the realm of the 'common world' or the 'common dance'. Only through the

146. Again a circular pattern emerges between Habermas, Derrida and social constructionsm. Habermas's criticism of postmodernism is the fact that "everything goes", which goes very much against the grain of critical theory.

on-going conversation with intimates does the individual develop a sense of identity or an inner voice.

Although Hoffman (1990:2) is correct in her understanding that the two terms historically have different backgrounds and emphasise different things, it seems as if the terms are used interchangeably. In the writings of some family therapists there are no difference between the constructivist and social constructionist positions in practice.¹⁴⁷ Therapists use both terms to refer to the importance of intersubjectivity, language and reality as a construction of ideas. Hoffman's objection that "everything goes" in the constructivist position must be taken seriously and her attempts to make sure that social issues, like the oppression of women, for example, are taken seriously by therapists, should be applauded. Many constructivist therapist will agree on this point with Hoffman (cf Brownlee 1994:17).

It seems as if second-order cybernetics form the basis of both the constructivist (Brownlee; Real; Feixas et al) and social constructionist (Hoffman supports second-order cybernetics) positions. Anderson and Goolishian (1990) are very critical of second-order cybernetics¹⁴⁸ and move to a hermeneutical¹⁴⁹ position.¹⁵⁰ It is not very clear from their 1990 article whether it is possible to call them social constructionists,¹⁵¹ although they did write about social constructionism in 1992. What is important is that Hoffman (1990:8) understands social construction theory as the gateway to what she calls a "postmodern view for systemic therapy".¹⁵² Dicks (1993:68) describes social constructionism as a second-order constructivism. Feixas et al (1990:57) make it clear that the constructivist approach is consistent with a systemic approach.

McNamee and Gergen (1992:3) describe social constructionism as an "integrative vehicle" which brings together critical therapists, family therapists, community psychologists, feminist scholars, phenomenologists,

147. Hoffman (1990; 1993:81) admits that for many years she also believed that constructivism and social constructionism were the same.

148. Hoffman herself is an example of this. In 1985 she makes use of second-order cybernetics to explain constructivism and in 1990 she still makes use of second-order cybernetics while she is promoting social construction theory. In 1993 (1993:82ff) she makes it clear that she does not support second-order cybernetics. The problem is that it still works with the idea of observer and observed and cannot move beyond this Cartesian split, namely that therapy is an indivisible social process.

149. In the hermeneutical approach, the feedback loops of cybernetic systems are replaced by the intersubjective loops of dialogue. The central metaphor for therapy changes to conversation.

150. If you read Anderson and Goolishian's (1990) idea of therapy where discussion should form the base and Griffiths et al's (1990) understanding of second-order cybernetic and the role of "discussion" in it, it is very difficult to see how the one can be against second-order cybernetics and the other be pro-second-order cybernetics.

151. They did not call themselves social constructionists at that stage although the impression gained from their article is that they support a social constructionist position.

152. Hoffman (1992:7,8) describes the social constructionist movement as "congenial to the movement known as postmodernism - with its implication that modernism is now dead and new perspectives are in the making".

constructivists, and hermeneuticists. The researcher believes that people will eventually be more precise in their definitions and the social constructionist approach of Gergen will win favour above constructivism. The researcher agrees with Hoffman (1991) that a relativism which means that "everything goes" is not acceptable and thus also opts for a social constructionist position and hopes that pastoral workers will take note of this movement.

To summarise: the following points sum up what is meant by a constructivist/social constructionist family therapy consistent with second-order cybernetics:

- Reality is constructed by the observer and is not an external entity entirely separated from the perceiver.
- Reality arises from a linguistic or social construction (a description of events) that is agreed upon through discussion and conversation.
- All constructions of reality are equally valid. The perspective of the therapist does not take precedence over the perspective of the client.
- The constructed reality accepted by individuals and families regulates and organises behaviour.
- The observer of reality is regarded as part of or contributing to what is being observed.
- Therapists are not expert change agents, but are "consulting co-authors who collaboratively assist families with rewriting their stories" (Selekman 1991:2).
- The concept of diagnosis is abandoned.
- What Hoffman (1985:393) calls the "Uncertainty Principles of Human Relations" after Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle, mean that the therapist never knows if a particular approach is going to work or not.
- The therapist does not influence people, but the context. The only part of the context which the therapist can control is himself/herself.
- It is a move from a behavioural approach to an imaginary framework for therapy (Hoffman 1985:395).

In 1992 Hoffman identified six "sacred cows of modern psychology" which are challenged by social constructionists. It is important to understand these remarks of Hoffman in context. It is not as if they are social constructionist theories, but gives an idea of the way of thinking within the social constructionist dialogue.¹⁵³

a) Objective social research:

Like the idea of a singular truth, objective research is also challenged. This threatens the status quo in the mental health profession because health insurance coverage in the US is only available if a problem is described in terms of the DSM III. Hoffman (1992:10) shows how the classification of the DSM III changes and sees it as a "proof" for social constructionist belief that reality is socially constructed.

153 . Earlier in the same article (1992:7) Hoffman uses the word "dialogue" where we would expect her to use the word "movement".

b) The self:

Family therapists move away from the idea that the self is an inner reality of emotions. The ideas a person hold of himself or herself will only change when the ideas held by the people close to this person change. Hoffman understands this as the replacing of the individual unit with the family unit. What Hoffman (1992:10) suggests is an even more drastic view, a move away from structure as such. The self must be seen like a river or stream, as the Australian Aborigine *songlines*. The self is not within a unit, but consists of a flow which reflects the past, the present, the future. It is a mix of ecological and social understanding of reality.

c) Development psychology:

Social constructionists question the idea of development stages. There is no universal standard by which humans can measure their functioning. In the light of research it becomes harder and harder to defend a view which believes in a predetermined and optimal development path.¹⁵⁴

d) Emotions:

It is a question of whether emotions exist inside people as discrete traits and are the same all over the world. For social constructionists emotions are part of a complex web of communication. The whole idea that emotions repressed will cause horrific after-effects is questioned.

e) Levels:

The whole idea of hierarchical layers of structure embedded within human events is questioned (Hoffman 1992:12). Hoffman's question is: what if all these layers are nothing else but sets of different factors at a horizontal level influencing one another? This question is very important for communication. Hoffman (1992:13) asks whether it is not enough to think of each category of communication as a possible context for another category of communication. This will solve many communication problems created by the idea of levels. What happens in therapy is that the therapist decides on the hierarchy. The segment of communication a therapist most characteristically focuses on will tell us more of the therapist than of the family. (A particular sequence between two people can be the context for a child's temper tantrum or vice versa.)

f) The nature of the professional relationship:

Hoffman (1992:13) calls this a "super sacred cow". She asks questions of the colonialistic nature of therapy and the implications for "discourse itself". Hoffman (1992:14) says that "therapists of all kinds must now investigate how relations of domination and submission are built into the very assumptions on which their practices are based".

154 . Cf James Fowler's books, *Stages of faith* (1981) and *Faith development and pastoral care* (1987). Cf also Dykstra and Parks (eds) 1986, *Faith development and Fowler* for a criticism of Fowler's theory.

To conclude this lengthy discussion it is necessary to remark briefly on its importance for pastoral work.

- It is a break from the medical approach to problems. It is strongly directed at people's humanity. From a theological point of view, this should be an accepted way of pastoral care.
- According to Brownlee (1994), the constructivist/social constructionist family therapy (consistent with systemic thinking) is the best approach to a situation where the counsellor is part of the community and where it is difficult to draw clear boundaries between professional and personal involvement with people.¹⁵⁵ This is a situation which is well known to pastoral workers in the church. It seems as if it holds much potential for use by pastors in congregations.

Brownlee says (1994:14) that the constructivist/ social constructionist family therapy is useful in circumstances where the counsellor is not a specialist in a specific field and must deal with a problem, without the resources to refer the person to a specialist. This is a type of situation that is well known to pastors. In rural areas the pastor is often the only person who has any training at all. In poor communities there are often no other professionals to deal with problems (cf Pargament 1982).

- Constructivist social constructionist family therapy may also hold considerable potential for the training of lay people as pastoral workers. It is not an approach which people without any training will be able to use, but because it is not a method in itself but an approach which makes it possible to incorporate other methods (Feixas et al 1990), it can be very useful. Lay people with other forms of training may be able to make use of this approach with a little extra training. The counsellor is not the person with all the knowledge but assists the "discussion" of what people identify as "the problem".
- The importance of language is emphasised all the time. Language may also be an instrument of power and control. What role does it play in counselling in a multilingual country like South Africa? (Cf Alexander 1989).
- There is also a serious challenge for pastoral workers. Constructivist/social constructionist family therapy takes away the privileged position of the counsellor. In the church we often work from a position of strength and power and control. This position is seriously challenged.
- De Jongh van Arkel (1987) has demonstrated the need to abandon the medical concept of diagnosis in pastoral counselling.

The implications of all of this for community pastoral work from an ecosystemic perspective will be illuminated in the following chapters. This, once again, emphasises an important perspective, namely that in research there is no real objective knowledge, but at the same time that does not mean that everything is acceptable. An important dimension emphasised by both the constructivist and social constructivism, is the community/ social/ relational character of research and counselling. This is in contrast with the

155 . Brownlee (1994:21) calls this "dual relationships".

individualistic character of the modern approach to research and counselling. The next section will discuss community psychology.

2.2.2.2.2 Community psychology

Community psychology's official "birth date" in the USA is 1965 (Zax & Specter 1974:1; Newbrough 1992). That is the year that the community mental health psychologists met in Boston (USA) to consider the training of psychologists for community mental health. The idea was that community psychologists would be active participants in problems of society. Zax and Specter (1974:2) refer to the fact that the idea was that community psychology would move away from the illness or disease model in favour of a model of healthy behaviour and optimal functioning. According to Zax and Specter (1974:3), at that stage there were calls for community psychology to develop a new **conceptual** outlook. Zax and Specter (1974:3) are of the opinion that community psychology is a shift away from concentration on intrapsychic dynamics and allows for active preventative interventions.¹⁵⁶ They (Zax & Specter 1974:18) describe the roots of community psychology as follow: "The work of the recent theorists who have emphasized social factors in man's development as well as that of the ego psychologists have provided a theoretical underpinning for the community psychology movement".

What is very interesting is the fact that Zax and Specter (1974) and Mann (1978) never refers to (eco)systemic thinking in their overview of the history of community psychology. They explained in length the medical model and its problems, for community psychology and were convinced that there was a need to move away from the medical model (Zax & Specter 1974:19-24).¹⁵⁷

Mann (1978:79-230) discusses four models in mental health, namely the mental health, the social action, the organisational and the ecological model (cf Van Wyk's (1992) discussion of these models). According to Seedat, Cloete and Shochet (1988), the mental health model and the social action model are, representative of the polarities in community psychology.

J R Newbrough wrote,¹⁵⁸ in 1992, a challenging article on the future of community psychology in a postmodern world. He related the history of community psychology and the history of science and came to the conclusion that community psychology should take on the challenges of the time. He sees it as a time to become more interdisciplinary (1992b:15); to explore the relationships between individuals and their community environments through theory, research and action; to become oriented to social issues such as AIDS and homelessness. Newbrough (1992:17) emphasises the importance of a more integrative model

156 . Newbrough (1992:7) says prevention and **empowerment** are the two matters in which community psychology invested time and energy.

157 . Capra (1983), for example, sees systemic thinking as the alternative to the medical model.

158 . It was the twentieth anniversary of the *Journal of Community Psychology*.

and says that "the new solution, an attempt to go beyond the dualism into a new integration, is made possible by **ecology and systems theory** (my emphasis - FN), providing for a hierarchical integration of two concepts at different levels of analysis."

Newbrough (1992) goes on to describe what he believes is the future direction for community psychology. Although there is no discussion of systems thinking in community psychology, it is clear that eventually the systemic world-view, of a more integrative universe where everything is interrelated, has become part of the thinking of community psychologists in America.

In South Africa A J Van Wijk wrote his doctorate on community psychology in 1992. In it he quotes Lazarus (1988) as apparently the only person in South Africa who has done extensive research on community psychology. Van Wijk (1992:39-48) discusses the paradigmatic changes since the sixties which resulted in criticism of the logic positivism. This led to a change in scientific thinking, a change which became visible in the medical sciences, sociology, social work and psychology. It is a move away from the medical model which works with a Cartesian dualism.¹⁵⁹ The need for interdisciplinary co-operation is now much more visible in all the disciplines. He refers (1992:42, 45) fleetingly to the systems approach as one of the approaches which support this paradigmatic change. His conclusion is that, because of the change in paradigm (which he does not describe in any detail) it is necessary to change the object of study from the person to the community. Van Wijk (1992:46-47) puts it as follows:

Die beoefening van gemeenskapsielkunde vereis egter 'n nuwe paradigma in 'n ontologies sin. Die heersende **ontologiese** (my emphasis - FN) paradigma in die sielkunde gaan uit van die studie van die mens. Ten spyte van metateoretiese pogings, soos die sisteemteorie of eklektisisme, om die paradigmadiese verskeidenheid op te los, bly die objek van studie die mens... Gemeenskapsielkunde vereis dat die gemeenskap die objek van studie word... Die gemeenskapsielkunde het as oogmerk die welsyn van die gemeenskap en nie in die eerste instansie dié van die individu nie. Dit gaan dus nie oor die individu wat in 'n kontekstuele verband in die gemeenskap funksioneer nie. Dit gaan oor die gemeenskap binne konteks.

Van Wijk (1992) does not give enough attention to the need for a metatheory as a foundation for community psychology. This lack of clear foundation for the move from an individualistic psychological approach to community psychology becomes visible. There is not enough written evidence available to know whether Van Wijk's view is also held by other proponents of community psychology in South Africa in general. Van Wijk does realise that change is going on in the scientific world and that psychology should reflect that change, but apparently he does not take it seriously. Van Wijk has a fundamental problem, when he describes the need for an ontological shift, but does not say anything about a need for an epistemological shift (from objectivity). Lazarus (1988:58) says of community psychology in the USA that

159. Saayman and Kriel (1992:39-40) describe the following features of the medical model or what they call the *biomedical* model of Western medicine.

- The pre-eminence of human research as the starting point of all knowing.
- It works with the object-subject scheme of the Enlightenment.
- It emphasises the parts rather than the whole. The parts took priority over the whole.

while it "values theory, it has to date shown a certain lack of a clear conceptual base".¹⁶⁰ It seems as if this is also true of Van Wijk.

It is necessary to make it clear that the emphasis on **the community**, in this study, to the point that the researcher often refers to an ecosystemic community pastoral work approach, does not make the community the object of pastoral work. Van Wijk (1992:49) gives the impression that the object of counselling has shifted from the person to the community. It is not possible to move away from the individual to the community. The individuals make up the community. It should be a **reciprocal movement** between the two. The shift should be at an ecosystemic level. That, according to the researcher, means a total shift in thinking which ties individual and community recursively.

- a) Seedat, Cloete and Shochet's (1988:42) evaluation of this model is that it identifies the limitations of mainstream individual therapy and is an attempt to make scarce psychological services available and accessible to people, but at the end of the day the "service is still rooted in the individual model with all its limitations ...".
- b) The social action approach to community psychology addresses the problems of the poor. It wants to make more social resources available to the poor. It criticises traditional psychology with its individualistic orientation which does not take cognisance of the structural inequities of society, like inadequate housing, overcrowding and political powerlessness. Although this movement also initially aimed at prevention, it later moves to **empowerment**. It is a move from a "need" model to a "rights" model (Seedat, Cloete & Shochet 1988:43). The emphasis shifts from "blaming the victim" to "implicating the social arrangements in society". It starts social action programmes which address problems like finance, power, resources, education and community development.¹⁶¹
- c) In the social action approach the emphasis shifts from self-actualisation in the individualistic approach to self-determination. This approach encourages community participation and makes use of non-professionals in the community who are also in a position to encourage the community. Seedat, Cloete and Shochet (1988:45) are of the opinion that this model represents a more concerted attempt to move away from the individual conception by incorporating socio-political variables. Seedat, Cloete and Shochet (1988:42) identify one very important problem and that is the tension between individual and community. "It is imperative to combine individual and community processes to arrive at an integrative perspective of community" (Seedat, Cloete & Shochet 1988:45).

It is interesting to see the resemblance this model as described by Saayman and Kriel (1992) has with the world-view of the Enlightenment as described by Bosch (1991). This has also an influence on pastoral care and specifically where care to the person living with AIDS is concerned (cf chapter 7).

160 . Cf also Lazarus (1988:29).

161 . Cf Grobler (1994). She argues that theology through missiology could play a role in community development.

Mann (1978:185-230) is positive of an ecological model for community psychology and even speaks of the community as an ecosystem (1978:189, 195, 224). He understands the ecological model as an analytical framework (1978:24) with a high potential for integrating the views of the individual and the community. It is clear from the final chapter in Mann's book (1978:321ff) that he still thinks of the community in geographical terms, but has a feeling that there is a need for a wider definition (1978:330). The task of the community psychologist is essentially to help to bring about change in the community (1978:327). What is needed in the field of community psychology is more knowledge about communities and social institutions and the socialisation processes of human beings (Mann 1978:322).

- d) Isemonger (1990:37) welcomes the departure from individualism in community psychology, but recognises the difficulties in shifting focus from the individual to the community. The problem is that the criteria for the identification of "a community" are enigmatic. Isemonger (1990:37-38) suggests that Anderson's idea of the community as a mental construct, should be taken seriously. Community psychology must be involved in the process of creating new communities. "In other words, the creation of communities in the minds of target individuals should be the essential component of community psychology ..." (Isemonger 1990:39). It also means a relocation of power because when community psychology targets communities it is actually busy entrenching existing power bases.

Sandy Lazarus's thesis, subtitled: *In search of an appropriate community psychology*, is relevant for this study. She (1988:25) works with the critical theories of the Frankfurter School and specifically with Habermas. She (1988:27) sees community psychology as a way to address the individual-social relationship. For Lazarus, (1988) community psychology as an approach is necessary to make sure that psychology takes societal issues (oppression) seriously. Lazarus makes very interesting observations of community psychologists in the USA. She (1988:58) is convinced that they work with a systems theoretical approach (e.g. systems theory).¹⁶² She (1988:57) believes that the systems approach "provides an interactional view of the individual-social relationship, focusing on the effects of the environment on the individual".¹⁶³

162. Lazarus's (1988:52) interviews with American community psychologists (in 1985) revealed that they have moved from a mental health focus to an emphasis on an environmental change model and from a rehabilitative and crisis model to a primary prevention framework. Community psychologists work broadly with the idea of the community as a system and assume that the "curing" of individuals is related to broader structures than just the individual him/herself. Community psychologists are aware of the need for structures in communities to change to support the welfare of people (cf Lazarus 1983:4).

163. Lazarus (1988: 55-56) discusses the criticism against systems theory e.g. a system is seen as given, with the focus on integration, with the result that societal conflicts get no attention; it functions as an ideology because the social life is seen as a matter of self-maintenance and social change is thus difficult to take place; and the inappropriateness of cybernetic concepts of social systems. Lazarus (1988:56) mentions the debate between Habermas and Luhmann and describes it as follows:

It should be noted that, while many criticisms have been levelled at the systems theory approach, its strengths have also been recognized, particularly by Habermas who has entered debates with Luhmann, a major proponent of the systems approach. While many of the criticisms referred to above are

According to Lazarus (1988), the critical perspective would favour a more dialectic view of this relationship and would stress the social constructed approach. Lazarus (1988:57) sees certain similarities between a Critical Philosophy and community psychology in the USA:

- a) Both aim to move away from an individual orientated analysis towards a more holistic view of the individual;
- b) They share some similar values.

Unfortunately, there is no real debate going between community psychologists and supporters of critical theory.

Lazarus (1988:114-154) makes use of critical theory to develop a framework for an appropriate community psychology in South Africa. She (1988:153-154) does not see it as the only theoretical perspective possible, but as the appropriate one for her understanding of the South African situation, where a strong value system is of importance.

Lazarus's approach must be applauded. She realises the need for an overall theory for community psychology and believes that the critical theory will complement something like systems theory, especially in South Africa with its situation of oppression. Unfortunately, she does not take note of the latest developments in the social constructionist and family therapy movement, which deal with the same issues, namely how to do therapy but not from a valuefree point of view.

For this study, Lazarus's approach is very valuable. The researcher has the (perhaps subjective) feeling that Lazarus's "paradigm" and the metaparadigm in this study connect at several levels. This study takes Habermas's critical theories as a given and develops a more ecosystemic approach to pastoral work. The fact that Lazarus believes that the American community psychologists can make more of critical theory to supplement their systemic approach means that there is a point of connection.

A more recent study by a community psychologist from England, Jim Orford, who works explicitly with an (eco)systemic framework, is also valuable. Orford (1992) emphasises the importance between the individual and the community or society. He mentions numerous examples of psychological treatment who ignored the influence of wider interaction between the individual and his/her environment. Orford (1992) explains why it is important to work holistically in counselling and the dire need to convince psychologists to work with a systemic framework.

recognized by Habermas, he sees the value of incorporating certain elements of this approach, particularly if a normative-analytic, historical and practical approach is adopted.

It should be clear from the discussion earlier in this chapter [cf p 91] that the systems theory that Habermas and Luhmann refer to, is the systems theory of Parson, which is not exactly the same as the systems theory of GST or the ecosystemic approach this study proposes.

2.2.2.2.3 Review

Traditional psychology works with the individual and his/her problem. The therapist (who is also the scientist) embodies the virtues of adequate functioning. The therapist/ psychologist/ scientist observes accurately and systematically and builds in safeguards against emotions and values and stands objective and independent from the client. The therapists offers his/ her conclusions about the inadequacies (or adequacies) of the client. It is the client as individual who may regain fulfilling life by adhering to the expert knowledge coming from an expert and from the scientific observation of his/her behaviour.

Since the sixties there has been a movement in psychology which is critical of the traditional view of psychology. A variety of schools and standpoints developed over the years with systemic thinking as their basis. These developments shifted family therapy thinking to what is called second-order cybernetics, constructivism and ultimately social constructionism (Anderson & Godlishian 1992:26). It is part of a movement concentrating on moving away from scientific foundationalism and individuality.

This movement away does not take place in isolation, and this is the point this study wants to make. Psychologists (or therapists, as some like to call themselves) are influenced by the new scientific developments in the physical sciences, and developments in philosophy, like Habermas's critical school of thinking and the deconstructionists and sociologists.¹⁶⁴

This study identifies this movement away from Cartesian, reductionistic and atomistic thinking as the result of a change in paradigm from non-ecosystemic to ecosystemic. In a recursive way, certain directions in psychology are influenced by changes in philosophy and new trends in science. In the process psychologist become part of a new paradigm and also play an influential role in the development and promoting of what can be called an ecosystemic world-view as metaparadigm.

The essence of all these developments can be summarised in the following points:

- Family therapists challenge the view that individuals are centres of malfunctioning. They locate myriad ways in which individual pathology is but a local manifestation of problems in the functioning of family systems and extended systems.
- Community psychologists expand the domain of contextual considerations to include various aspects of community life (educational institutions, economic conditions, work life). From this standpoint individual's problems cannot be separated from communal process.
- This means a move away from a linear approach to problems and cures.
- There is a move away from the traditional view of positivistic science and an object-subject dualism.

164. "In addition, the social construction theorists place themselves squarely in a postmodern tradition. They owe much to the textual and political criticism represented by the deconstructionist views of literary critics like Jacques Derrida in France and deriving from the neo-Marxists thinkers of the Frankfurt School" (Hoffman 1992:8).

- The effect of classifying "pathology" according to the medical model presupposes a certain objectivity and can be seen as oppressive and demeaning. The question is whose interest is served: that of the scientist/ therapists or that of the patient/ client/ careseeker?
- There is an awareness that therapists are not neutral, but that there are strong ideological biases within prevailing theories and therapeutic practices. Practices sustain certain values, political arrangements, and hierarchies of privilege. From a feministic view particularly, it becomes clear that therapies and the classifying of mental disorders serve to sustain a patriarchal society.¹⁶⁵ Therapeutic interpretation is heavily laden with therapists' presuppositions.
- Constructivists challenge the traditional separation between the knower and the known, arguing that processes inherent in the organism largely determine what is taken to be the real. The therapist is never independent of the observed world.
- All these developments have an influence on therapy. Hoffman (1992) makes use of "reflexive therapy", Gergen suggests "narrative therapy", while the Galveston group uses the term "collaborative language systems" approach.

All these approaches lean heavily on the following premises (cf Anderson & Goolishian 1992:27):

- a) Communication and discourse define the system, thus a therapeutic system is also a linguistic system.
- b) Meaning and understanding are socially constructed.
- c) A therapist is a participant-observer and a participant-facilitator of the therapeutic conversation.
- d) The therapist ask questions from a position of "not knowing".

What does all this mean for practical theology and the pastoral work of the church?

- It is impossible for pastoral work to function in isolation from developments in other fields, especially in the field of psychology.
- Pastoral work has much "catching up" to do at therapeutical level, if it wishes to implement some of the newer trends in psychology. A good example is De Jongh van Arkel's thesis where he moves beyond the medical model in his attempt to develop a "model" for pastoral diagnosing. Unfortunately, there is not much evidence in the literature to show that practical theologians in general take this movement in other sciences seriously.

165. "The 'patriarchy' is not just a collection of males who are dedicated to oppressing women (although it can be perceived as such); it is a way of experiencing and expressing ideas about gender that are cultural givens for both sexes" (Hoffman 1992:14).

- Practical theology and pastoral work must take on the challenge and move beyond the known to the unknown.
- Trends in psychology have to do with a mind frame, with a world-view, with an underlying metaparadigm. Pastoral work must be aware of this metaparadigm and its influence on the praxis.
- The challenge for traditional pastoral care and counselling is tremendous. It challenges the patriarchal systems of pastoral care; the hierarchical systems; even something like stages of faith development (Fowler 1987; Louw 1993:158 ff).

2.3 ECOSYSTEMIC THINKING

Previous sections have dealt with General Systems Theory [cf p 69] and changes in scientific thinking [cf p 56] which are forerunners of the ecosystemic¹⁶⁶ approach. The concept ecosystemic was also discussed [cf p 48]. It is important to realise that there is no clearly defined systemic model or systems theory. It is a generic term for a way of thinking (cf Worden 1994:9). It describes an approach to issues and problems and life in general. It is process orientated and searches for underlying patterns; it is circular or nonlinear¹⁶⁷ in thinking and not linear (De Jongh van Arkel); it puts more emphasis on the whole than on the parts. In essence it is a break with understanding the universe in terms of fixed models and categories where linear causality plays the major role - where A causes B. It is a break with what is known as the medical model, where everything is diagnosed and put into a category for treatment. Categories are seen as open, dynamic and evolving and part of a process. In systems thinking the observer or researcher or therapist is part of the process and is not observing from outside. If the therapist or the pastoral counsellor makes a "diagnosis" he/she is part of the diagnosis (cf De Jongh van Arkel 1987).

Systemic thinking is, at its root, interdisciplinary, because it is aware that all the different systems, in this case disciplines, play a role. It may justify a complete study on its own to see how (eco)systemic thinking is used in the social sciences. In this study the researcher just refers to its use in sociology, philosophy and psychology.

Systems thinking can be summarised in the following two ideas (cf Capra 1988:45):

166 . Capra speaks of *systems thinking* and this is what is referred to in this study as *ecosystemic thinking*. The researcher prefers the word *ecosystem* to distinguish between so-called hard systems used in the computer world and the more restricted use of the term "systems" by people who, like the sociologist Parsons, understand society and communities and families as systems, but do not use it in the sense of a new paradigm or world-view. The term *ecosystems* is also susceptible to confusion, particularly with the idea of *ecological systems* (environmental systems). *Ecosystems* includes the idea of the environment, but is a far more all-encompassing concept.

167 . Cf Keeney (1983:57) who uses the term "lineal". Cf also Cone (1985:133), who says that: "the lineal view of reality is a special case of a more encompassing and relational view of reality" The term lineal is sometimes use as a **more evolving term than linear**, but is still linear in essence. The researcher uses the word nonlinear/ nonlineal as the opposite of lineal/ linear.

- The fundamental underlying connectedness and interdependence of all phenomena.
- The dynamic nature of reality.

Something of this interrelatedness and interdependence has already become clear in this chapter when the discussion of GST leads to the discussion of cybernetics and then second-order cybernetics as used by family therapists. To help the researcher to develop a metaparadigm for pastoral work, he investigates how systems thinking is implemented in the other social sciences.

This section of this chapter goes on long excursions. There is a specific reason for this: Ecosystems as a metaparadigm is an all-encompassing paradigm. Essentially it is an antipositivistic, critical paradigm. It questions the way we look at the world at a scientific level, but also at a philosophical and socio-psychological level. It became clear to the researcher that the roots of such an ecosystemic metaparadigm cannot be found just in one place. An ecosystemic paradigm is, in a sense, a "culmination" of many patterns that reveal themselves in a variety of fields. Some of these patterns are highlighted in this study; some patterns the researcher ignored because of a lack of time to study them;¹⁶⁸ and there are, without doubt, many other patterns the researcher is still unaware of.

The roots of an ecosystemic metaparadigm can be found in the changes in the scientific world - the development of Copenhagen's understanding of quantum theory and Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle; further developments in the sciences as a result of Von Bertalanffy's ideas of systems and the GST. In sociology, a person like Parsons develops a functionalistic systems idea, although not really in line with systemic thinking, but this has as result a new way of looking at society as such and confirms the idea that there is an interaction between people and society (although Parsons understands the reasons for the interaction functionalistic). Other people in sociology who play a role are Berger and Luckmann with their *Social construction of reality*. In the field of philosophy, Habermas's critical theories are antipositivistic and can be seen as part of a criticism of Western society. It is critical of Parsons, but has an appreciation for what Parsons wishes to do; it is critical of the postmodernism, but asks the same critical questions about modern society as a deconstructionist like Derrida.

Pastoral work and psychology have an intimate relationship. Many of the developments in the field of psychology over the last few decades influenced the pastoral care and counselling movement in pastoral work very directly. This, together with the fact that a branch of psychology takes the systems approach very seriously, justifies all the time and space given to certain developments in family therapy in this study. Family therapy has taken the systems approach very seriously. The family therapy movement has also

168 . The whole field of social work also needs some attention (cf Millard 1976). Another development which needs some attention is the rise of ecofeminism. Ecofeminists object against what could be called the "God-rooted approach to objectivity" (Donini 1994:62). The "Creator-Lawgiver" use of God by men to relate to nature and to women as objects, is critiqued. Modern rationality is characterised by the law of separation of subject from object, of mind from nature, of God from the world, of the observer from the observed (Donini 1994:63). Donini (1994) sees it as a challenge for the feminist movement to challenge this type of rationality and to develop a "situated knowledge" which will develop an "ethics of responsibility".

developed a lot over the years. In the beginning cybernetics played an important role. This developed further until second-order cybernetics together with the influence of sociologists like Berger and Luckmann and Gergen and philosophers like Derrida started to influence their therapy. This brings us to the point where Hoffman (1990) speaks of a movement to a "postmodern view of systemic therapy."

The conclusion is that an ecosystemic metaparadigm can open up new worlds for pastoral work, because it helps to ask new questions and to ask questions in a different way. It helps to reveal some of the patterns in science, philosophy, sociology and psychology (to mention but a few) that have emerged in the last few decades. It can help pastoral work specifically, but practical theology in general to communicate with other disciplines and broaden the scope of practical theology to include the rest of the world and the universe. An ecosystemic metaparadigm pushes pastoral work beyond its small little world into a bigger world into a post-modern paradigm, into the year 2000 and beyond. An ecosystemic paradigm will help pastoral work to be antipositivistic in its approach and more critically orientated to society and the powers in society as such. Pastoral work can benefit, because it can make use of the latest developments in counselling from the family therapy movement and new developments in community psychology. An ecosystemic metaparadigm creates the climate for practical theology and pastoral work to be creative and to experiment with paradoxes and new approaches to pastoral care and counselling.

2.3.1 Ecosystemic thinking as a metaparadigm for practical theology

Practical theologians make use of metatheories. In the process of developing theories, the underlying metatheories must be spelled out clearly. In all research certain presuppositions exist, often in the form of certain theories (Mouton & Marais 1990:198). Metatheories are one of these categories of presuppositions. A metatheory is an epistemology (philosophical reflection on scientific knowledge) which gives expression of the researcher's understanding of reality, in a scientific way (cf Lemmer 1991:14). Pieterse (1991a:134; 1991b:43) defines metatheories as general scientific theories to which related subjects subscribe. They can also be described as a specific scientific (philosophical) approach to science (Pieterse 1994a:95-96). The nature of metatheories makes them interdisciplinary. The emphasis on metatheories in practical theology places theological research within the broader context of the social sciences.

Practical theology and theology in general (Van Huysteen 1989) should move away from a positivistic view of science: Pieterse (1991a:133) talks of a paradigm shift¹⁶⁹ within the scientific world and in his later works (1994a:93) calls it a paradigm change in theology. Pieterse (1991a:133) mentions the General Systems Theory as an example of this paradigm shift.¹⁷⁰ Pieterse (1991b:38-43) describes how the classical approach to reality, which concentrated on the gathering of objective knowledge, changes.

169. A paradigm is a coherent tradition or framework shared by a given scientific community. Van Huysteen (1986:67) quotes Kuhn who defines a paradigm as: "universally recognized scientific achievements that for a time provide model problems and solutions to a community of practitioners".

170. "Ons is seker almal bewus van die feit dat daar in die jongste tyd 'n paradigma verskuiwing in die hele wetenskaplike wêreld plaasgevind het. Die mees ingrypende is

Karl Popper's philosophy of science broke away from the positivism of the Wiener Circle (Pieterse 1991b:39; cf Van Huysteen 1989). For Pieterse, it remains a question of whether this break is so fundamental and whether Popper is not still making use of a "rasionaliteitsopvatting" where something is only scientific when it is objective (Pieterse 1991b:39).

Pieterse (1991b:40) explains how Gadamer's hermeneutical model goes a step further and how Habermas develops it into a broad idea of rationality in which objective, normative and subjective rationality have a place (Pieterse). Habermas and Peukert (cf Wolfaardt 1993:29) develop a communicative operational theory. According to Pieterse (1991b:43), scientific rationality evolves into a communicative theoretical perspective. Pieterse (1991b) describes Habermas's communicative action theory as functioning for practical theology as a metatheory.

Practical theology makes use of the other social sciences to develop metatheories. The researcher has already referred to the fact that many practical theologians accept communications action theory as a metatheory for practical theology. In practical theology the theory of communicative interactions (communicative operational theory) is one of the main metatheories. As a metatheory, it plays an important role in making practical theology more scientifically orientated (Pieterse 1993c).

This study accepts communications operational theory as a metatheory, but makes a distinction between theory and paradigm. A paradigm is understood to be a more comprehensive and less well-defined term than a theory. The "meta" quality of systems thinking is already recognised by others. According to Checkland (1981:5), systems thinking is: ¹⁷¹ "not a discipline to be put in the same set as the others, it is a meta-discipline whose subject matter can be applied within virtually any other discipline".

It is thus possible to take seriously both communication actions as a metatheory and ecosystemic thinking as a metaparadigm. There is nothing new in such an approach. Sociologists, for example, struggle with the same problem. A book with several such examples appeared in 1987. The editor, Ulf Himmelstrand (1987:14-15) puts it as follows:

In my own paper on Stein Rokkan's political sociology I seem to take Parsonian AGIL theory as seriously as Marxist historical materialism. Is such a mixture theoretically possible and admissible? Perhaps not if the mixture is made *ad hoc* in a mechanical fashion without due concern for the interlocking conceptual relationships involved. However, I do not think that the multi-paradigmatic 'eclecticism' appearing in quite a number of papers in these volumes is of such a loose mechanical nature. I see no great risk in the kind of 'eclecticism' visible in these papers, since they are all expressions of an active involvement in exploring new domains at the cutting edge of theoretical advances in sociology.

sekerlik die ontwikkeling van die Algemene Sisteemteorie, wat alle vakwetenskappe deursuur het" (Pieterse 1991a:133).

171. "More important, a systems orientation is recognizable in the work of some practitioners in many different disciplines, including biology, geography, economics, anthropology, sociology, psychology, political science, social administration, and management science, thus confirming the status of systems as a meta-discipline" (Checkland 1981:7).

The researcher does not imply that this study is really at the cutting edge of pastoral work, but it seems as if there are enough reasons to take both communication actions and ecosystemic thinking seriously. The researcher has already referred [cf p 46] to the fact that from a bifocal view, the ecosystemic metaparadigm refers to the distant vision and the communicative actions theory, as metatheory, to the nearer vision. This study purposely gives much more attention to the distant vision than to the nearer vision.

The (eco)systemic approach strongly supports the movement away from positivistic thinking. A person who in his own thoughts makes use of both systems type of thinking and communication theory is the anthropologist, Gregory Bateson (cf Van den Blink 1984:60). It may be worth the trouble to make a detailed study of Bateson.

It is important that systems do communicate with one another all the time. This communication takes place in very different forms and ways. Communication theories have a rightful place in systems theories. Communication can also be described as a pattern. When two people get married, a new system is created (marriage), in that system a communication pattern will take form. It may be a very positive or very negative pattern of communication. In therapy that communication pattern may be challenged.

Sampson (1993:1-2) describes Habermas's critical theory and systems theories as examples of approaches which challenge the individualistic approach to society. Pieterse (1993c:78), in referring to *Zerfass*, makes it clear that communication does not take place within a context where the individual is separated from the rest of society. Pieterse (1993c:78) puts it as follows: "Binne die kommunikatiewe perspektief is 'n ondersoekkeenheid nie 'n enkele mens (individu) nie, maar 'n situasie waarin mense in verhouding tot mekaar staan, *das Interaktionsgeflecht*".

There is a need, also in practical theology, to move beyond reductionistic and mechanistic views.¹⁷² It becomes clear that there is a movement in the philosophy of science, the social sciences and specifically also in practical theology to move beyond the reductionist view of the earlier centuries with objectivity as the only norm for science. The growing interest in systems theory and ecosystemic thinking is proof of this movement. Pieterse (1993c:13) confirms the importance of a systemic approach to reality to replace a mechanistic approach.

The need for an ecosystemic approach in practical theology becomes clear if you take into account that the systems studied in practical theology are often complex, living and dynamic systems, says the practical theologian, De Jongh van Arkel (1991a:63). This does not mean that the theory of communicative interactions has become irrelevant, at least not for supporters of ecosystemic thinking. Systems theory and the communicative action theory were both accepted as metatheories of practical theology (De Jongh van Arkel 1991a:61). De Jongh van Arkel (1991a:62) calls it a "binocular metatheory". According to De Jongh van Arkel (1991a), an ecosystemic metatheory will include systemic perspectives and cybernetics. Pieterse (1991b), an important protagonist of the theory of communicative actions, agrees that both theories can

172 . Reductionism refers to the belief that everything can be understood if you reduce it to basic building blocks and then look for interacting mechanisms (De Jongh van Arkel 1988b:224).

serve as metatheories. De Jongh van Arkel (1991a:72) understands an ecological approach not as an either-or approach. Therefore it can even accommodate a Newtonian approach, because certain things (like machines) cannot be understood in any other way than in a linear and reductionist way.

What is important is to understand that systems theory is not against a scientific approach at all, although it is critical of the Newtonian approach to science. The General Systems Theory, like quantum theory, developed out of new insights in science. The (eco)systemic approach is against simple, linear, reductionistic and mechanistic views and explanations. Some things (like machines) can only be understood in linear terms (Capra 1983:288; De Jongh van Arkel 1991a:72). The systemic approach includes the mechanistic view (Capra 1983:288). A machine functions in a specifically linear way according to cause and effect. It is known that living organisms sometimes function like machines. The human body, in many instances, functions like a machine. That does not mean that living organisms or human beings are machines. Von Bertalanffy (1968a:25) says that within the systems approach mechanistic and organismic trends, linear and circular trends, cybernetic and kinetic trends are in interaction. These models are not mutually exclusive. The systemic view does not reject reductionist and analytical approaches outright. What it does call for is a complementary approach where reductionism and holism, analysis and synthesis are used together. What is seen as dangerous is when a reductionist or analytical approach is used and taken to be the complete and only explanation.

Machines are constructed and the activities of a machine are determined by its structure in a precise and a predetermined way. Organisms grow and have internal flexibility. The structure of organisms is influenced by processes. Although organisms also exhibit, as a whole, well-defined regularities and behavioural patterns, the relationships between their parts are not rigidly determined.

The communicative theological operational science approach, with its specific emphasis on communication and praxis, is an important paradigm for practical theology. It is the task of the church to communicate the gospel of love and the task of practical theology to evaluate and investigate this praxis with a view to improving the actions of the church in the direction of the kingdom of God [cf p 16].

The ecosystemic perspectives will be discussed, from a theological point of view, in chapter 3. Fensham (1990) extensively discusses an ecosystemic paradigm from a missiological perspective. Fensham (1990:35) is convinced that there is enough in traditional Judaeo-Christian biblical revelation to allow for a non-dualistic approach to theology (cf Lines 1987). Vorster (1987) also mentions the need of a paradigm shift from a mechanistic world-view to a holistic world-view. There are certainly theologians who are critical about this shift from a dualistic, reductionistic, and mechanistic paradigm to a holistic and integrated paradigm. Van Aarde (1988) refers specifically to the theology of Jürgen Moltmann who applies "Capra's insights, although critically, in his theological reflection". Van Aarde (1988:58) is very critical from a theological perspective of, what he calls "the movement toward holism". He understands it as a move towards relativism and pantheism.¹⁷³

173 . It is very difficult to be in a discussion with this specific paper of Van Aarde, because he gives very little information about what he really sees as "holism" or "paradigm-switch".

The researcher is of the opinion that there are enough pointers, theologically speaking, which emphasise the need for a broader (holistic) metaparadigm for theology and particularly for practical theology. The next section will refer to many other theologians who already took up the challenge for an ecosystemic paradigm for theology and practical theology.

2.3.2 Ecosystemic thinking and practical theology

A person's perception¹⁷⁴ influences his/ her praxis. The way you understand things, interpret things, see things and believe things plays a major role in the way you do things. We all tend to act out our beliefs. There is a feeling (rightly or wrongly) that pastoral workers cannot just take over the methods of other disciplines. On the other hand, pastoral workers work within the same reality, as for example family therapists and community psychologists. This study is more to do with the perception (metaparadigm) of practical theologians and pastoral workers than their method.

The question was raised as to whether a systems view of life has anything to do with theological thinking in general and thus also with practical theology specifically. Schindler (1986:11) believes that the mechanistic view of nature also influences thinking on theology.¹⁷⁵ According to Capra (1983:330), the systems view of life is in its deepest essence consistent with spiritual traditions. Capra (1983:331) is of the opinion that the Western theologian who understands this best is the Catholic theologian, Teilhard de Chardin (1881-1955). He was not only a Jesuit priest, but also a scientist. His theories show remarkable similarities with the systems theory (Kraft 1983).¹⁷⁶ The theologian, David Tracy¹⁷⁷ (1987:147) agrees that, although the earlier mechanistic and positivistic scientific models are still alive in many people's and scientists' minds,

For example, he is positive about the "holism" of Smuts, but on the other hand (Van Aarde 1988:58-59) makes the following statement:

Theology would become psychology, sociology, anthropology, ideology, et cetera. Theologically speaking, such a paradigm-switch or a process heading towards it, cannot be seen as progress, only as suicide.

174 . A branch of philosophy that concerns itself with the nature of knowledge.

175 . "My intention has been to show, by means of these examples, not only how the mechanistic understanding of nature transforms the meaning of *physis* - and hence bears on the work of physicists; but also to show how, in so doing, that mechanistic understanding simultaneously and profoundly affects a whole range of other concerns: one's conception of mind, of God of moral and esthetic and religious values, of metaphysics and theology. My purpose has thus been to show that the mechanistic understanding of nature is also a matter of profound relevance to the work of philosophers and theologians" (Schindler 1986:11).

176 . Cf for more detail about Kraft's understanding of systems (1983:5, 110, 112, 121).

177 . Tracy is mainly known as a systematic theologian. Gous (1990:113) is of the opinion in his discussion of the systemic perspective that "Die ontwikkeling van 'n sistemiese teologie wat konsekwent nie-Newtoniaans is, lê meer op die terrein van die Dogmatiek of Sistemitiese Teologie." This is an interesting remark, because the work done in South Africa in terms of systems thinking are done mostly by practical theologians, there are exceptions like the missiologist C Fensham. It is not at all clear why Gous think that "systemic theology", as he calls it, should be developed by systematic theologians.

the fact of the matter is that science itself challenged these earlier models. Tracy (1987:147) puts it as follows:

It is not possible in an age where the content of science has been radically changed by evolutionary theories, relativity, quantum mechanics, the principle of indeterminacy, quarks,¹⁷⁸ DNA research, and so on simply to appeal to earlier mechanist or materialist models.

Theologians in South Africa have already made it clear that there is a need to move away from a reductionist and mechanist world-view. The "fragmentation in modern Western patterns of thought and life" can be linked to reductionist and mechanist ways of thinking (De Jongh van Arkel 1987:83).

The South African Biblical scholar, P J Founie (1988; 1991) pleads for a move away from reductionistic thinking in theology. He does not mention "systems thinking" specifically by name, but agrees with Capra that reductionist thinking is in a *cul-de-sac*.¹⁷⁹ Several practical theologians have discussed systemic thinking and expressed their views in favour of it. De Jongh van Arkel (1987) discusses the systemic approach in detail and comes to the conclusion that a systemic approach can be very useful for pastoral counselling and for pastoral diagnosis. This does not mean that such an approach is beyond criticism (De Jongh van Arkel 1987:196). The systemic approach is also accepted by other practical theologians as a "meta" concept: Gerben Heitink (1993:206-211), a wellknown practical theologian, in his latest major work *Praktische Theologie* (1993) discusses¹⁸⁰ communication theory and systems theory as the two most important theories for practical theology.¹⁸¹ Heitink (1993:210) describes it as follows:

Voor een integrale beoefening van het vak zijn ze daarom van grote betekenis. Het zijn de communicatietheorie en de systeemtheorie. Vanuit de verbinding van begrijpen en verklaren binnen een praktisch-theologische handelings­theorie (9.24), vullen ze elkaar aan en roepen ze elkaar op.

178 . A theory put forward in 1963 proposing that the majority of the known particles around an atom, including the proton and the neutron, are made up of different combinations of a small family of more fundamental particles called quarks (Brown 1987:72). According to Brown, there were at the time of writing about 18 different kinds of quarks.

179 . Founie (1992:1) describes the basics of a Newtonian epistemology to be: a) Reductionism or atomism: To reduce something to its most basic elements to understand it better. b) Linear causality: To understand the behaviour of things in terms of cause and effect. c) Neutral objectivity: The observer can be objective and neutral towards the research object(s). Real truth can only be obtained during objectivity.

180 . It is not clear to the researcher why Heitink discusses it under the heading of "operational fields in practical theology" (my emphasis - FN). Later in his book he has a section (III) on operational fields (1993:231ff), which does not refer to either communication theories or systemic theories. These theories can be described as operational sciences in practical theology, may be that is what Heitink's intention was. (Cf Heyns & Pieterse (1990:15) about operational fields).

181 . We have already referred to it that Heitink seems to be confused. In his discussion of systems thinking he apparently has in mind what we call ecosystemic thinking, because he defines systems in terms of wholes and he also refers to Firet, but he also referred to Habermas understanding of systems. We have already made it clear that Habermas makes use of Parsons's functionalistic understanding of systems.

Heitink (1993:207, 209) is of the opinion that cybernetics forms the background for both communication theory and systems theory. In communication theory Heitink (1993:207) makes use of Paul Watzlawick's work. Watzlawick's work also plays a central role in systems family therapy (cf Jones 1993:xx, xxi, 3, 5, 8, 9, 18, 214).¹⁸² Heitink (1993:208) also refers to R Ries's communication theories. Ries makes use of the influence of wider social systems on the communication process.

Although Heitink is positive about the systems approach, it seems as if he gives it a secondary place in practical theology. He gives the impression that it can be useful if it is used together with communication theories. From a systemic perspective, the opposite can be said, namely that communication theories can be very helpful in an ecosystemic approach. It does not seem as if it has struck Heitink that ecosystemic thinking is a way of looking at the world and a way of interpreting society.

The practical theologian, Firet (1987:40-43) refers to a systems approach to practical theology.¹⁸³ Firet is of the opinion that practical theology is a theology of paradoxes. Firet goes on to discuss practical theology in terms of: an operational science (1987:21-33); the semiological approach (1987:33-37); the dialogue model (1987:37-40) and the systems approach (1987:40-43). He is quite positive about the possibilities which the systems approach offers practical theology. Firet (1987:41) refers to Von Bertalanffy and it seems as if he makes use of the GST approach to systems. Because this article was written so long ago (1980), it is not clear how Firet would feel about what is known as ecosystemic thinking today.

Several other theologians have make use of both systemic thinking and communication theory. Emmanuel Greyling (1993) discussed the relationship between communicative action theory and systemic theory in detail. It becomes clear that it is not possible to reconcile the two metatheories in all aspects, but at a certain level they are complementary (Greyling 1993:45; De Jongh van Arkel 1991a:62). He comes to the conclusion that both can be used as perspectives on reality. Both are valid as metatheories in their own right (Greyling 1993:46). Greyling (1993), in his doctoral thesis, develops a theory for Systemic Pastoral Work. He describes the congregation¹⁸⁴ as body of Christ as a system and as the object of pastoral care.¹⁸⁵

182. Paul Watzlawick was connected with the Mental Research Institute in Palo Alto, California, which was involved in what Jones classifies as "strategic family therapy". According to Jones (1993:xxi) the original members of the Milan group were "particularly stimulated, in its early period, by the work of Watzlawick and his colleagues,..."

183. This article of Firet's was originally written in 1980.

184. In theology the importance of the church as family has been rediscovered by theologians (cf Burger 1995b:1). Burger (1995b) does not make use of systems analysis when he emphasises the importance of the church as family. His emphasis is based on the important role the metaphor of the family plays in the Bible and on sociological reasons. One of the sociological reasons why the church as family is important is the crisis in the biological family. Many people do not receive the love and caring and nurturing within their biological families and look to the church to fulfil this role.

185. Daniel Lord (1984) makes use of systems thinking by using family systems theory to develop a model of the congregation as a whole family. Lord (1984:334) comes to the conclusion that the "church as family" is a metaphor which, when developed through family systems theory, conceptually illuminates and explores the nature of the local church and parish ministry as relational-systemic development.

Greyling does not go further than that, namely to see the congregation as part of a bigger system, namely the community or society.

Lemmer (1990) also uses both communicative action theory and systems theory to construct, for the congregation's understanding of the sermon, a nondomineering and symmetrical model.

Gous (1990) discusses systems thinking in his dissertation on individual pastoral work with students. He comes to the conclusion that the systemic approach is Biblically acceptable (Gous 1990:111). Boshoff (1993) makes use of a systems approach in his study on the pastoral needs of people in a time of change. Fensham (1990:68), a missiologist, after a lengthy discussion, comes to the conclusion that systems thinking can "provide a matrix for theological discourse which is truly missionary". He warns against an uncritical acceptance of systems thinking, but believes that the systemic paradigm is more compatible than incompatible with the gospel (Fensham 1990:71).

One of the most intensely written books on the subject of systems thinking from a theological perspective is that of Timothy Lines, *Systemic religious education*. Lines' (1987:231) summary of religious education and the systemic world-view is as follows:

Systemic religious education and the systemic worldview are integrally related and complementary. Systemic religious education is made functional within the context of the systemic worldview. The systemic worldview is actualized through the development of systemic religious education.

Lines (1987:235) understands a systemic perspective as an approach in which a person meets, interprets and integrates reality. In the context of this study it is called a metaparadigm.

An ecosystemic approach, consistent with changes in view in the scientific and philosophical world implies a different view of cosmology. The way the universe is seen has changed. From an ecosystemic perspective it is possible to say that the view of reality¹⁸⁶ has changed. These changes must influence the pastoral work of the church. Peter Berger (1969:156) reminds us that the fundamental problem of religious institutions is "how to keep going in a milieu that no longer takes for granted their definitions of reality".

2.4 CONCLUSION

I had been increasingly aware that pastoral counseling as a ministry to individuals, marriages, and families was incomplete in itself because the social and cultural context within which these individuals, marriages, and families were living was also contributing to their problems. Pastoral care would not be balanced until it also included in its ministry this larger environment (Hulme 1973:7).

An ecosystemic metaparadigm for practical theology is to embark on a new route with all the uncertainties that brings. It is a critical reflection on the modern way of thinking, which is heavily influenced by the Enlightenment. It is a new look at science, it is a questioning of basic assumptions like objectivity,

186. The word "reality" is not used in the sense of "objective knowledge" of what is real or not real.

rationality, truth and individualistic tendencies¹⁸⁷ in society (cf Gergen 1994:ix). There are many people (Prigogine [physicist]; Heinz Von Foerster; Humberto Maturana [biologist]; Francisco Varela [biologist]; Ernst Von Glaserfeld; George Bateson [anthropologist] and postmodern philosophers) who for many years questioned and still question the way Western society thinks. They warn us of the dangers awaiting Western society if we do not move away from our nonholistic, linear, mechanistic, cause-effect, absolutistic, type of epistemology, where we have a fascination with power and control as the main features of society. The exploitive use of technology and the Western attitude towards science is consistent with a false illusion of objectivity.

A new paradigm signals the emergence of a new world-view - new ways of seeing, interpreting, and making sense of the world and life. Bosch (1991:351) says that something like the Second World War and people like the representatives of the Frankfurt School and later Habermas, Ricoeur and Kuhn, help modern society to be critical of itself. We could add to that new developments in science,¹⁸⁸ systems theories and ecosystemic approaches to the natural sciences, technology and social sciences.

Modern society has taken as paradigms reason and a (logical) positivistic approach to science. Habermas developed a new perspective on reason in his critical communication operational science, when he challenged the subject-object scheme of thinking. Habermas's communicative reason challenged the instrumental reason of the Enlightenment (Bosch 1991:362). But the most fundamental challenge to the modern way of thinking comes from an unexpected corner, namely from the discipline where the Cartesian and Newtonian approach appeared to be inviolable, that is the field of physics. This study emphasises the developments in natural sciences with special reference to the Copenhagen interpretation of quantum theory. An ecosystemic paradigm reflects and acknowledges this change in scientific thinking and the move not only away from positivistic thinking, but also from mechanistic and reductionistic thinking.

The positivistic way of thinking influences theology tremendously, with the result that many theologians believe that truth can be formulated once and for all and also give that interpretation to the confessions of the church (cf Bosch 1991; Hendriks 1994). This attitude is also very much part of human sciences, and of the caring sciences like psychology, social work and pastoral work. Gergen (1994:vii) puts it as follows:

... it is simply the case that the empiricist tradition continues to remain stalwart within the social sciences, maintaining a steady grip over the future of the disciplines, shaping decisions regarding educational curricula, journal policy, hiring and firing criteria, the allocation of research funds, and the representation of the science to the society.

A change in attitude is a long process. In this study the researcher refers to changes in science and certain developments since the beginning of the century. Von Bertalanffy emphasises that systems influenced developments in different ways. Systems became the "magic" word in the world of technology and concepts

187. The freedom of the individual, which is an important component of a democratic society, is not so much in question as long as the individual is seen as part of society. Individualistic tendencies where each person lives just for him/ herself are under criticism.

188. What is new in science? For example: Ted Peters (1989:45) believes the Big Bang theory presupposes unilinear and eschatological thinking.

like "homeostasis", "feed-back" and "organisation" are used every day. Ironically, today these concepts are part of a technocratic world-view. While Von Bertalanffy pleads for the humanisation of science and for the importance of values, he criticises psychology for its scholasticism and positivistic attitude.

One of the most important developments in the human sciences was in the field of psychology and specifically in the field of family psychology. Hoffman (1985:381-383) is of the opinion that George Bateson must get much of the honour for opening up the minds of family therapists to move beyond cybernetic thinking to second-order cybernetics. An ecosystemic metaparadigm moves beyond modern society and starts to ask questions to modernity. One of the criticisms on postmodern thinking is the radical movement to relativism. This is also the criticism from Habermas's side on postmodernistic thinking. The social constructionism of Gergen and family therapists like Lynn Hoffmann and the deconstructionist Derrida, can help to give perspective, they are postmodern thinkers and make use of ecosystemic thinking, but is critical of a total relativism.

But what have all these views on reality to do with pastoral work, which goes out from the church community? There is an interaction between society and the religious community. The people in the church are part of society and the way society thinks influences the way people in the church think about the church and the actions going out from the church. This study works with the surmise that people's world-view (perception) or the metaparadigm (perspective) people work with influences their ecclesiology and as a result influences the actions of the church like pastoral work.

This study wishes to emphasise the importance of an ecosystemic paradigm for practical theology and specifically for the pastoral work of the church.¹⁸⁹ This does not mean that an ecosystemic paradigm is the only paradigm that reflects reality, in the sense that this is the "truth" and nothing else. The pastoral work of the church does not take place in a vacuum, it functions within certain paradigms. Pastoral action takes place within the context of a broader theoretical background (practical theology).

This study describes as metaparadigm the movement away from a mechanistic, deterministic, absolutistic, positivistic and atomistic view of the world. The term "ecosystemic" wants to make it clear that there is a difference between "closed systems" or "hard systems" and a systemic way of thinking.¹⁹⁰ The term

189. There is certainly also criticism against the systemic approach. It also depends on what phase of the systemic approach you concentrate on. The General Systems Theory of Von Bertalanffy and his insistence on mathematics as universal principle can be queried. The use of closed systems and cybernetics as the solution to every problem raises very serious questions.

The conclusions drawn by Capra where he connects Quantum Mechanics and the Relativity Theory with Eastern Philosophy and mysticism can be described as a generalisation and oversimplification. It must be accepted that systemic thinking also has its limitations. As a certain perspective on the world and as a valid response to the present reality it is acceptable for many people. It is highly likely that the systemic world-view will be challenged in future and that it will be broadened and even taken over by a new world-view. This does not negate its importance for this study.

190. There are people who have an erroneous notion of systems thinking and who see it as a mechanistic and deterministic approach to life and to the world. The phrase "systems approach" brings to some people's mind ideas of rigid categories, computers, quantitative

"system" in ecosystemic thinking does not describe a territory with borders, it is a metaphor and merely a map. It is useful and it simplifies our understanding of the world to conceptualise a certain pattern or relationship as a system.

An ecosystemic approach puts the emphasis on the fact that an organism is a living and open system and not a machine. Capra (1983:286, 287) puts it as follows:

The systems view looks at the world in terms of relationships and integration. Systems are integrated wholes whose properties cannot be reduced to those of smaller units. Instead of concentrating on basic building blocks or basic substances, the systems approach emphasizes basic principles of organization.

The same aspects of wholeness are exhibited by social systems - such as an anthill, a beehive, or a human family - and by ecosystems that consist of a variety of organisms and inanimate matter in mutual interaction. What is preserved in a wilderness area is not individual trees or organisms but the complex web of relationships between them.

The systemic properties are destroyed when a system is dissected (Capra 1983:287). Systems have an intrinsically dynamic nature. They form flexible yet stable manifestations of underlying processes, but are not rigid in structure (Capra 1983:287). Ecosystemic thinking implies the following:

- Thinking in terms of wholeness and not in terms of parts.
- The point of departure is not the individual anymore, but the bigger systems of which the individual is part.
- An emphasis on the bigger picture means also in psychology a move from the emphasis on the intrapsychic and developmental approach.
- Attention is focused on the patterns of interaction in systems and between systems rather than on individual characteristics.
- Action or change in one part may lead to change in other parts as well.
- Reality and truth are not absolute any more. It is deeply aware of the greyness or fuzziness (Kosko) that exists.
- A move away from linear-causal explanations to circular understanding of behaviour or actions.
- A change from a linear to an evolving understanding of reality is paralleled by a shift in therapeutic focus from isolated individual units to ecological relationship systems.

analyses, clear-cut answers. Checkland, for instance, speaks of "hard systems" and "soft systems". Although some modern systems analysts view systems mechanically, this is not what is meant by the terms "systems approach" or "systemic thinking" or "ecosystemic thinking". The term "ecosystemic" is thus preferable to avoid confusion.

191 . Real (1990:258) refers to a "multiversa".

Several developments influence us in our thinking about pastoral work. We live in a globally interconnected world, in which biological, psychological, social and environmental phenomena are all interdependent (Capra 1983:xviii) - a global village (Pieterse 1993c:13). We should actually speak of a "total earth" and see the planet as a total system (Boulding 1973:965). That does not mean that the rest of the universe¹⁹¹ is excluded. Earth is, indeed, to be placed in a solar system and in a universe as a whole. (All the different spheres interact with each other - lithosphere, hydrosphere, atmosphere, biosphere, sociosphere.). Clinebell (1981) illustrated it as follows:

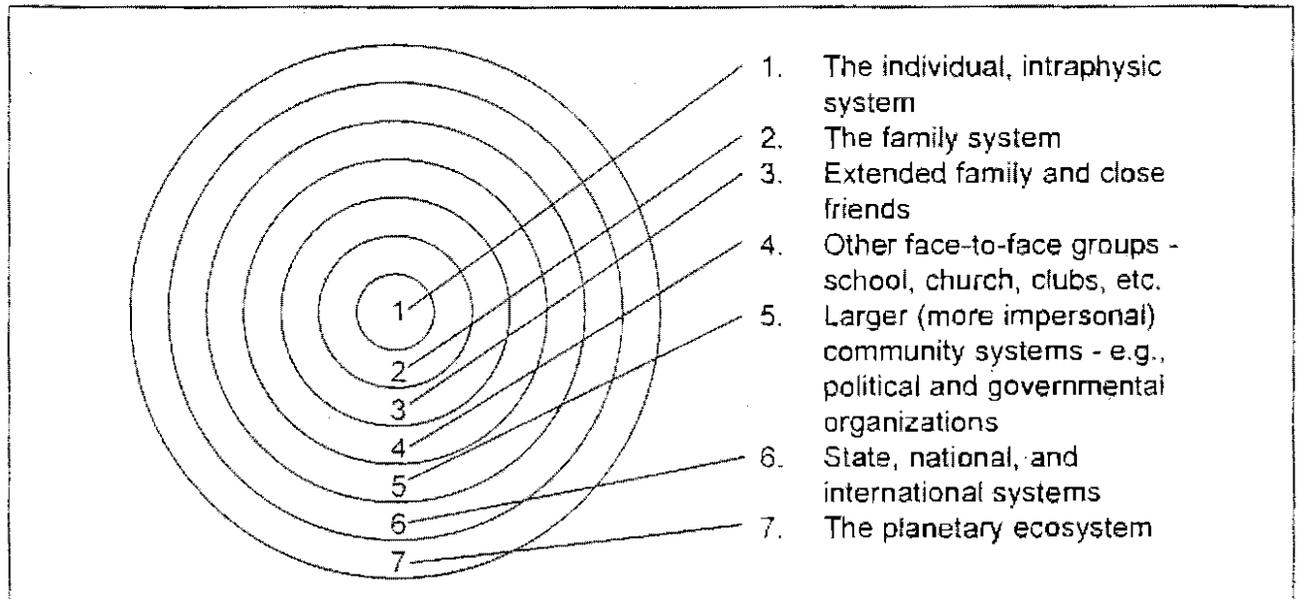


Figure 1; Clinebell (1981:231)

Pastoral activity in general will benefit from an approach where the bigger systems and underlying patterns are important. Many of people's problems and needs can be better understood and better dealt with if the bigger picture is kept in mind. Changes in the understanding of sciences [cf p 56] and a total new understanding of life underpins a world-view where interrelatedness and interdependence of all phenomena are accepted. What does it mean for pastoral work to function within an ecosystemic metaparadigm? The implications could be described as implications for a meta level, meso level and micro level. The researcher tried to distinguish between all the different levels, but ran into difficulty in isolating implications between the different levels. The following pattern of implications could be identified as the outcome of an ecosystemic approach:

- An ecosystemic approach works with a certain epistemology (meta level?).
- The ecosystemic paradigm will influence the metatheories and the basis theories of pastoral work and pastoral care and counselling (meta level?).
- The ecclesiology and anthropology of the church will be challenged (meta level?).

- The patriarchal mode of relating to nature and women as objects is questioned.
- It questions the individualistic nature of pastoral care (meso level?).

The interconnection between things is very important for pastoral work. A systems perspective works with a universal view, it does not interpret events in isolation of other events (Becvar & Becvar 1982:3). All the different systems: family, peers, work group, church members et cetera are part of a community system, societal system, cultural system, national system, world system and cosmic system (cf Becvar & Becvar 1982:55). There is an interrelatedness of several of these systems. It is impossible to give attention to all of them. Often it is necessary to make a choice and decide to give attention to only some of the systems, well knowing that other systems may play a role in the problem.

Take, for instance, the world crisis around the HIV virus.¹⁹² It is a crisis for the whole world, to all societies and communities. The problem is further intensified because although it is a behavioural problem, many other factors play a role in the spreading of the virus. Factors like education, social structures, economics, beliefs, taboos and sexual orientation have already been identified.¹⁹³ This problem can only be successfully resolved by an interwoven dynamic approach which takes into account all the biopsychosocial factors. Thus an ecological paradigm focusing on all the patterns and interconnections seems to be the only useful conceptual model.

- The fragmented society we live in has as result that people specialise in different fields (meso level?). A systemic approach¹⁹⁴ opens new insights for us. It breaks down the traditional barriers between sciences. It breaks down a dualistic thinking between mind and matter, between the religious and the secular, between church and a wider social community. There is a need for interdisciplinary interaction between the pastoral worker and other disciplines. There is a definite need for pastoral workers working from a religious background and psychologists and medical practitioners and lawyers, social workers and educationist to work together and to approach problems together.
- Systemic thinking works with the universe and reality as a whole (meso level?) and recognise that everything is connected to everything else.¹⁹⁵

192 . Becvar and Becvar (1982:47) make an important observation when they say that often in systems it is the behaviour and attitude around a so-called problem which is the real problem.

193 . Cf Saayman and Kriel (1992) and Van Niekerk (1994).

194 . By the word "approach" the researcher wishes to emphasise the importance of the way people think about pastoral work.

195 . Lord (1984:82-84) tells the story of Carl Whitaker who was involved in a psychiatric hospital with schizophrenics and realised that after visiting hours their behaviour changed. Lord (1984:84) tells it as follows: "Whitaker spoke of his frustration and agony as he repeatedly saw the small gains of treatment, made over long periods of time with much professional effort disintegrate in the few hours of a family visit with the patient."

Needless to say, Whitaker became involved in a systemic approach.

If things are divided and dissected (which we must do quite often to get a grip on reality), something is lost in the process. The modern approach puts all the emphasis on the individual, without keeping in mind that the individual is a subsystem which is part of other bigger systems, like a community, which again is part of another system, for example, society. The result is that the pastoral worker sees himself/ herself as the only person who can help the person. Pastoral workers are often overworked and themselves the object of illness.¹⁹⁶ From an ecosystemic perspective the whole congregation and the whole community must be involved in the care.

In the mechanistic approach the person very easily becomes an object and often a distance develops between the person in need and his/her social situation. A solution is sought for the person only, but not for the broader situation. The pastoral worker or doctor or psychologist or social worker must give the solution and bear the responsibility. In an ecosystemic (holistic) approach the solution is the person's responsibility as well as the care giver as well as the responsibility of the rest of the community. In a systems approach blame is not of importance.

Many of the problems people approach the pastoral worker or any other care giver with can be related to other patterns, like, say, stress which can be related to people's life style. Many of the illnesses doctors and psychologist see have to do with the way people live. Often society makes use of medical diagnosis as a cover-up for the social problems encountered every day (Capra 1983:165). As a society we prefer to talk about children's hyperactivity or learning disability rather than examine the disintegration of families and the inadequacy of the school system or the amount of pressure children experience very often at home or at school. We prefer to talk about our hypertension rather than change our overcompetitive society and bad eating habits.

- People's spiritual needs should not be seen in isolation, but should also be understood as part of society's spiritual needs and the same can be said about spiritual neglect. It is part of society's spiritual neglect, which is part of the way society believes, namely in a mechanistic scientific world, where the spiritual and the physical are not connected to each other, but are loose entities. The pastoral worker may be tempted to see the people who approach him/her as spiritual objects and not approach them holistically. People's need for spiritual advice cannot disconnected from their other needs like to be accepted as a person and physical needs like housing, security, jobs, and so on.

An ecosystemic way of thinking moves beyond a dualistic view of the world where the spiritual and the physical aspects are divorced from one another (cf Bradshaw 1993:30):

196 . See Greyling (1993:1-2) who discusses this problem in more detail. Cf also London and Wiseman (1993).

Spiritual (supernatural, sacred, values, private)	Physical (Natural, secular, facts, public)
Theology Religion Ethics	Physical sciences Social sciences Economics Management Education Politics

Figure 2: Adapted from Bradshaw (1993:88)

An ecosystemic view can be described in terms of a circle which includes different aspects.

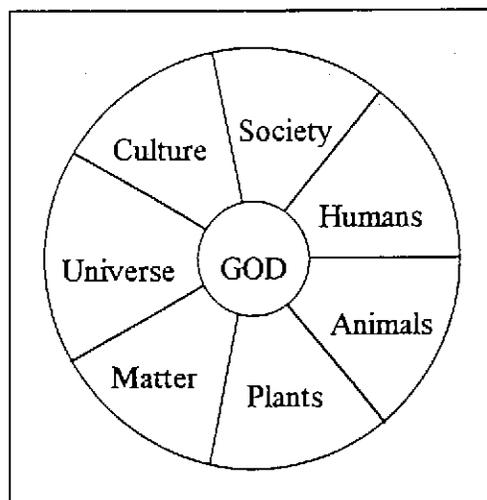


Figure 3: Adapted from Louw (1993b:131)

- An ecosystemic world-view should help the pastoral work of the church to get a global vision. The systems perspective is a universal view (Becvar & Becvar 1982:3). This means that it does not interpret events in isolation from other events, and is very much aware of the interdependence of physical, biological and psycho-social systems. Religion, in general, tends to be exclusive in approach and reveals a tendency to show its independency from other systems. This is a sign of Cartesian and dualistic thinking.
- Systems theory is also a unifying theory (Becvar & Becvar 1982:5). People and objects are not studied separately but in relationship with one another.
- The methods used in pastoral care and counselling would be influenced by an ecosystemic

approach. The importance of language, conversation and dialogue in the counselling process will be on the table. The individual is not the focus of counselling or the family is not the focus of counselling, the whole meaning system - individual, family, counsellor - takes part in the counselling process. The problem is an ecology of ideas (Hoffman 1985:387).

- An ecosystemic approach opens the range of pastoral work. Pastoral work done from an ecosystemic approach cannot be narrow in scope. An ecosystemic paradigm will give the pastoral worker a broader vision to see that there is a world of unattended issues which should get attention from the church.
- An ecosystemic approach to pastoral work also emphasises the need for global ethical issues to be addressed by the church's pastoral work.

An ecosystemic approach should also influence pastoral care and counselling at a micro level.

- Social issues will be part of the counselling process.
- Environmental issues will be part of the counselling process.
- People are not diagnosed as neurotic or alcoholic or schizophrenic anymore.
- Objective reality and objective truth are not absolute any more, and the counsellor cannot take the role of a neutral and objective therapist. This also means that therapists may decide that they do not want to deal with certain people and certain problems. An ecosystemic metaparadigm for practical theology and pastoral work will have a definite influence on the pastoral work of the church and the way the church, as such, is seen.
- An ecosystemic metaparadigm may lay the foundation for pastoral work to take up the challenge of a technocratic and scientifically orientated postmodern society. The challenges in South Africa may not only be the technocratic and scientific orientation of society, but also the pluralistic nature of the South African society where 50% of the population in some areas cannot write or read (Wilson & Ramphela 1989). A narrative and oral approach to theology may benefit also those who cannot read. An ecosystemic metaparadigm opens up many possibilities and may be seen as the most capable paradigm to use in a society with such vast differences like the South African society, because of its less dogmatic approach to issues and its greater acceptance of paradoxes. Ecosystemic thinking works with a hermeneutical paradigm, which is less interested in solving all problems but more interested in understanding problems. Where people develop understanding, they often also develop an awareness of the issues and people involved, which opens new possible solutions. For the church it means a more ecumenical orientation and more involvement in society. The pastoral work of the church will be more directed to society and less inwards.

An ecosystemic approach as a metaparadigm for practical theology is a paradigm where the sciences and the humanities are integral components of an indivisible whole. This holistic paradigm or world-view should help to give us a broader view and deeper understanding of natural phenomena and the meaning of human existence in the universe.

Any new era depends on the preceding one and retains strong ties with an earlier one (cf Kok 1996:117). We will continue to use the analytical, reductionist method of science and thinking,¹⁹⁷ but we should redeem its blinding dogmatic claim that it is the only source of authentic knowledge by subjecting it to the holistic approach of synthesis and the liberating insights provided by a broader approach. We should be aware of the role of sensory perception and of the natural and societal phenomena, but should complement it with the images and insights and visions from the realm of inner perception. We should be aware of the existence of object-subject relationships, but should see objectivity in another light, namely as the consensus of qualified subjectivities (Tannous 1985:449). We will continue to be aware of and to experience component particles and mechanisms and use them appropriately to our benefit, but we will be freed from the chronic, blinding illusion that they can explain everything and that they provide the key to unlock the physical door to the mysteries of the universe and our destiny in it (cf Tannous 1985:449).

The following chapter will give attention to an ecosystemic approach to ecclesiology as a base theory for practical theology. This base theory for practical theology will also serve as a base theory for pastoral work. Chapter 4 discusses the notion of a *community* pastoral work approach in the context of modern society. Chapter 5 describes a quantitative research project where pastoral workers' view of the church and of pastoral work is investigated. It is also an attempt to see how ecosystemic/ nonecosystemic pastoral workers are thinking in the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa (URCSA).¹⁹⁸ Chapter 6 discusses a community pastoral work approach from an ecosystemic perspective. Chapter 7 discusses the social challenge of AIDS for pastoral work.

197 . Newton's theories are still valid, many things happen in a cause-and-effect way.

198 . The Dutch Reformed Church in Africa (DRCA) for Africans and the Dutch Reformed Mission Church (DRMC) for so-called coloureds united in April 1992 to form the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa (URCSA), after starting the unification process independently of the DRC. The National and Regional Synods of the white Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) have recently voted for unification in principle with the URCSA.

3. AN ECOSYSTEMIC BASE THEORY FOR PRACTICAL THEOLOGY

The church is the church only when it exists for others (Bonhoeffer 1981:140).

The previous chapter described an ecosystemic metaparadigm for practical theology. This metaparadigm functions as a world-view. As mentioned already, our world-view influences our perception of the world. This means that an ecosystemic metaparadigm for practical theology will also imply an ecosystemic approach to pastoral work. It will influence the way we do pastoral work. This study works with the assumption that people's world-view also influences their ecclesiology. Chapter 5 of this study is a quantitative research project to see whether this relationship, which the researcher believes exists, between pastoral workers' ecclesiology and their understanding of pastoral work, can be traced through a more quantitative approach.

This section proposes an ecosystemic approach to ecclesiology and anthropology as base theories for practical theology. The supposition is that the ecclesiology and anthropology developed in this chapter for practical theology should also serve as an ecclesiology and anthropology for pastoral work¹ and as a base theory for pastoral work.²

Pieterse (1993c:134) is of the opinion that there is a need for the development of a base theory for practical theology in the field of pneumatology, ecclesiology and anthropology and a base theory for communication for the purpose of evangelising. Pieterse (1993c:133-134) describes base theories as follows:

Basisteorieë is fundamentele prakties-teologiese teorieë binne die vak. Basisteorieë in die vak word na my opvatting gevoed deur interdisiplinêre diskussies met die ander teologiese dissiplines en met insigte uit die sosiale wetenskappe, asook insigte wat deur die empiriese ondersoek in die praktiese teologie gedoen is ... Basisteorieë dien om die kommunikatiewe prosesse van die praxis in ons studieveld te verstaan, om as kritiese teorie dit te toets en te beoordeel, om die perspektief en normatiewe komponent vir praktykteorieë te verskaf, asook om as rigtingwysers vir die kommunikatiewe handeling in diens van die evangelie te funksioneer. By die ontwikkeling van basisteorieë sal die praktiese teoloog dit altyd doen vanuit sy of haar teologiese vertrekpunte en vanuit die metateoretiese perspektief op die werklikheid wat ons ondersoek.

Much has been done to develop an ecclesiology for practical theology which could form the foundation of a base theory for practical theology (Heitink 1993). Heitink (1993:232-235) warns against a base theory for every sub division of practical theology. What we need, according to Heitink, is a base theory for practical theology. The congregation is the place where most of the communication takes place. Therefore Heyns and Pieterse (1990) develop a practical theological base theory for the congregation. They (1990:57) also

1. Graham (1992:22) defines pastoral theology as "a subsystem within theology in general, and practical theology in particular". This study uses the term *pastoral work* and not *pastoral theology*.

2. "A basic theory is one developed by a specific science for its own purposes. In our case, it stipulates the practical theological premises for the whole subject or specific areas of it" (Heyns & Pieterse 1990:49). Cf also Hendriks (1992:278) who is of the opinion that a base theory is concerned with the underlying theoretical basis of the praxis.

call it a practical theological ecclesiology. In his book, *Gemeente en prediking* (1991a), Pieterse further develops a practical theological ecclesiology. Heitink (1993:276) comes to the conclusion that a practical theological ecclesiology is a base theory for practical theology. Hendriks (1992:37-38) understands a base theory to describe what the church is. According to Hendriks, a base theory is the biblical and theological foundation of the church (cf Potgieter 1995).

3.1 A PRACTICAL THEOLOGICAL ECCLESIOLOGY AS BASE THEORY

Anders dan de tradisionele pastorale teologie eindigen we met de ekklesiologie, als het raamwerk waarin pastoraat als hulpverlening zich afspeelt (Heitink 1979:81).

The role of the church is discussed in numerous works. P F Theron (1978) argues convincingly that one of the best symbols for the church can be found in Matthew 5:13-16, where the church is described as the salt of the earth and the light of the world. One of the foremost issues in practical theology is the quest for an ecclesiology of practical theology (Heitink 1993:235; Van der Ven 1993a). The importance of an ecclesiology for practical theology has been the subject of discussion for the last few years. Practical theologians (Louw 1992; Burger 1991a; Pieterse 1991a:36; Van der Ven 1993a) emphasise the necessity for an ecclesiology of practical theology more and more. Pieterse (1991a:36) sees it as a way of integrating theory and praxis, which is, for example, necessary for the preaching of the church. Pieterse (1993c:43) calls a practical theological ecclesiology the most fundamental base theory for practical theology.

With an ecclesiology of practical theology the researcher establishes a base theory on how to be a church in practice (Burger 1991b:17). The researcher also briefly discusses what can be called an anthropology, but as part of the ecclesiology and not as a separate base theory.³ It seems that when ecclesiology is done from the perspective that the church consists of people, an anthropology becomes part of ecclesiology. The choice to deal with anthropology as part of ecclesiology says something about ecclesiology. To give it a name you could perhaps call it an anthropological-ecclesiological approach. In this study it is part of an ecosystemic approach to ecclesiology.

An important outcome of an ecosystemic approach is the emphasis on a dynamic ecclesiology. De Gruchy (1972:222) confirms this when he warns us that a "static ecclesiology is demonic". The Reformation emphasis on *ecclesia reformata semper reformanda* (De Gruchy 1991:203) must not become a theological cliché, or just part of the confession of the church. The church is only truly the church when it is constantly in the process of being reformed according to the gospel (De Gruchy 1994a:131). Campbell (1985:111) puts it as follows:

The motto *ecclesia reformata semper reformanda est* (a reformed church always requires to be reformed) applies as much to the pastoral ministry of churches as to other aspects of their life, and it need not be applied only to churches claiming the designation "Reformed". On the contrary, it is in encounter between different church

3. In his book, *Pastoraat as ontmoeting* Louw develops a base theory for pastoral work which is strongly based on anthropology, but not linked to a practical theological ecclesiology.

traditions and in open dialogue between Christian churches and other religious and secular groups concerned with human welfare that flexibility in institutional form may be learned.

A dynamic ecclesiology implies a church open to the Spirit and open to the outside world. Boff (1982:125-126) puts it as follows: "... we must position the church within the world as the world happens to be organized socially ... This fact is overlooked in almost all books on ecclesiology ... This omission prevents us from understanding the church in concrete terms".

An ecclesiological "model" will always be a pattern⁴ developed within a specific context. No pattern can escape the elements of time, place and culture. The context in which the church functions in South Africa is not very easy to describe. The same church confession may function very differently in different areas because of the plurality of the South African society. In ecclesiology there is always the danger of taking a specific pattern from the Bible and applying it directly to our time without keeping in mind the difference in time and culture and context. It is important to keep in mind the historic difference between then and now. This ecclesiological danger can also exist when one model is elevated to become the only pattern that can be deduced from the Bible.

In theology, ecclesiology is traditionally discussed under the discipline of systematic theology. Therefore it can be asked: Why discuss it under the discipline of practical theology?

3.1.1 Why an ecclesiology of practical theology?

Usually Reformed theologians examine the church in the light of systematic theology, which is also necessary and significant. It is important to give some attention to ecclesiology from the viewpoint of practical theology for several reasons. Pieterse (1993c:43) sees the move in practical theology from the praxis of the pastor to the praxis of the congregation as one of the main reasons for a strong need for a practical theological ecclesiology.

Systematic theology and practical theology differ in nature, the reason being the different role of the two subjects in the church (cf Breytenbach & Pieterse 1992:102) and the different questions the two disciplines ask. Practical theology is involved in an operational field where action and communication play a decisive role (Louw 1992:119) while systematic theology asks questions about, for example, the substance of the church.

4. The researcher opts for the word "pattern" to move away from the dogmatic idea associated with the word "model".

Practical theology and systematic theology differ in their object of theology. Practical theology is also concerned with theological reflection, but not with a direct study of the Scriptures.⁵ Heyns and Pieterse (1990:1) put it as follows:

Practical theology is the branch of theology that considers those actions designed to ensure that God's word reaches people and is embodied in their lives. Its object is people's religious actions.

Practical theology concerns itself with the encounter between God and humanity (Heyns & Pieterse 1990:6). Systematic theology focuses mainly on the church's dogma. The dogma of the church is the formulated and authoritative system of doctrines derived from the church's understanding of the revelation of God in the Bible. Systematic theology views the revelation of God from a specific angle, namely how the revelation of God is reflected in the confessions of the church (Heyns & Jonker 1974:291).

This does not mean that the two subjects (systematic theology and practical theology) are in opposition to each other. Theology is an indivisible whole, but consists of different fields of study that are interdependent. There is a definite interrelationship between the various fields of study in theology. The different fields of theological study "constitute an organic whole rather than a numeric aggregate of parts" (Heyns & Pieterse 1990:6).

For systematic theologians, it is important to define clearly what the church is and what the church is not. This is done by describing the church through her attributes (cf Pieterse 1991a:37), namely unity, catholicity, apostolicity and holiness. To know if it is a true church the Reformers speak of the marks (or *notae ecclesiae*) of the true church, namely pure preaching of the gospel, pure administration of the sacraments and the exercise of church discipline (Berkouwer 1979:14-15). Berkouwer, a systematic theologian, admits that there are many images of the church in the New Testament, but maintains that the best way of discussing the church is through the *credo ecclesiam*, the church as it is (Berkouwer 1979:25; Küng 1981:34-39).

Practical theology concentrates on the praxis and functions of the church and not on the nature of the church (Louw 1992:121). That does not mean that the nature of the church is not important. This is the philosophical point where, in a certain sense, the ways part between systematic theology and practical theology. In practical theology the discussion of the church starts from the perspective of the people involved in the church. In practice that would mean that in practical theology the images of the church in the Bible get more attention than the credo of the church because the images of the church give an idea of the actions of the church rather than the formal beliefs of the church.

5. Jonker (1968:24) defines practical theology narrowly as follows: "dat we de taak van deze vakken willen zien als de bestudering van het Woord Gods onder het gezichtspunt van de dienst van de kerk."

See also Burger's (1991a:84) commentary. He agrees that the study of the Word of God is part of the task of practical theology, but that it is not the main and only focus of practical theology.

Theology cannot be value free because all theology is influenced by outside factors. Systematic theology is influenced mainly by philosophical streams, while practical theology must be aware of the influences brought to bear by the theories of psychology, sociology and communication. Pieterse (1991a:38) stresses that practical theology works with a bipolar model and both the theological and the empirical side of the model are of importance.⁶

There are very exciting possibilities if we describe the church from the viewpoint of practical theologians. Burger's (1991a:66) research shows that practical theologians in South Africa have a confessional flexibility. That does not mean that they have no systematic-theological viewpoints, but their viewpoints are not always the same as the confessional tradition to which they belong. The result is that a more flexible and ecumenical view of ecclesiology is possible than in systematic theology. That will hopefully open up new perspectives to theology in general and the church specifically.

In the light of the above, it can be expected that some aspects of an ecclesiology from the viewpoint of practical theology may look different (from time to time) from the ecclesiology of systematic theology. In his book, *Praktische Theologie*, Heitink (1993:261) mentions the tension between systematic theological pronouncements and the empirical pronouncements of the church as one of the problems within the ecclesiology.

The need for a practical theological approach to ecclesiology is confirmed. The next section will deal with some practical theologian's approaches to ecclesiology.

3.1.2 Ecclesiological approaches to practical theology

The importance of an ecclesiology for practical theology has been emphasized. Several "models" for an ecclesiology for practical theology have emerged in South Africa and overseas. It is not possible to discuss all of them. What follows is a very brief discussion of some of these approaches to a practical theological ecclesiology. A detailed discussion of these ecclesiological approaches would serve little purpose for this study, therefore only certain aspects of these ecclesiological approaches will be highlighted and used later in developing an ecosystemic base theory. The purpose of the discussion is to see if the researcher's ecclesiological approach to pastoral work is, broadly speaking, in line with the latest approaches to ecclesiology in practical theology.

The importance of an ecclesiology for practical theology is emphasised by D Louw (1992), who develops an ecclesiology for the edification of the congregation. He makes a very important point when he says that there is a shift taking place in practical theology (Louw 1992:119). He describes this shift as an emphasis on the role of the church as agent for transformation of this world and says it has the following implications (Louw 1992:120; cf also Louw 1995c):

6. Heitink (1979:78) also develops his model of pastoral work around a bipolar scheme: God - man; subject - object; general revelation - specific revelation; theology - psychology; pastoral work - other forms of care; theory - praxis and word - deed.

- A move away from the clerical and official model of the church to an ecclesiology of presence in the world.
- A move away from the institutional way of being church to an ethical approach of being church.⁷
- A move away from theories of the nature of the church to a more critical reflection on the praxis of the church.
- A move away from the evangelical model, with the emphasis on redemption, towards a liberation model where the emphasis is upon liberation.

Louw (1992:122-123) suggests a move away from an ontological to a hermeneutical model. That means that the church must be understood in terms of its functions. The church as a charismatic corporate entity (body of Christ) should be described in terms of its functions without being functionalistic in the sense that the actions and operations become absolute.

The researcher's impression is that Louw does not succeed finally in breaking with the ontological model when he maintains that the structural elements of a practical theological ecclesiology⁸ can be found in the four attributes of the church, namely unity, catholicity, apostolicity and holiness.⁹ From Louw's article it becomes clear that it is not very easy for practical theologians to make a shift from the nature of the church to a more critical reflection on the praxis of the church.

3.1.2.1 Pieterse

Pieterse (1991a:37-95) in *Gemeente en prediking* starts his practical theological ecclesiology with an emphasis on the encounter between God and human beings. This encounter happens in the sphere of the congregation. Thus: communication between God and humans happens in the sphere of the congregation. The congregation is a communicative community. The structure of the congregation also plays a role in the

7. Burger's (1991a:44) research shows clearly that most South African practical theologians believe that the theological subject that is of the most importance to practical theology is ethics. It is important to be aware that the division between ethics and systematic theology is part of the Greek dualism which influenced theology in the Western world so deeply. Liberation theologians and the so-called Third World theologians question this division.

8. "Dit gaan nou in prakties-teologiese ekklesiologie veral om hierdie verskyningsvorme wat 'n bepaalde geskiedenis van die kerk in die wêreld beskryf" (Louw 1992:129).

9. Breytenbach and Pieterse (1992:102) also make use of the marks of the church as a point of departure for developing of a practical theological ecclesiology.

communication process. The type of communication in the congregation can be asymmetrical or symmetrical.¹⁰

The church and the congregation are in a relationship with society. The same is true for the relationship between the congregation or church and the rest of society.¹¹ It can be asymmetrical - when the church has no openness towards society or symmetrical when the church functions on the principles of good communication, namely openness, solidarity, participation and equality (Pieterse 1991a:43).¹² Pieterse opts for a symmetrical communication structure and believes that the body of Christ metaphor in the Bible expresses it best.

The church and the congregation are in society and take part in the activities of society. The members of the church are called to live in this society. There is an interaction between the church and society. The communication between church and the church members takes place in society and through society's communication systems.

Pieterse (1991a:45-56) spells out in detail the features of modern society. Because of the relationship between church and society, the features of modern society and the changes that take place in society are vital to the church and for an ecclesiology. He also discusses the structures of the church. It becomes clear from his discussion that the church's structures are the result of historical developments in society and the church. In the Bible there is no systematic analysis of how the church should be structured. The structures of the church are thus not fixed and may change if necessary. The church's structures can be related to the church's sociological dimensions, while acknowledging that there is also a theological dimension to the structures of the church.

A second perspective in Pieterse's ecclesiology is built on the theological dimension of the church. Pieterse (1991a:66-67) sees *koinonia*, *diakonia* and *kerygma*¹³ as the essential functions of the church. These functions of the church take place within a specific structure.

10. Cf also the study of Lemmer (1990).

11. According to Pieterse (1991a:41), the churches with asymmetrical church structures, where only the offices of the church are allowed to proclaim the gospel, are often also the churches who have a dichotomistic view of the relationship church-society: "Die geloofsgemeenskap is dan die teendeel of die kontrasbeeld van die wêreld. Die samelewing word dan of gesien as 'n terrein wat herower moet word of beveg moet word."

12. "Dagegen bezeichnet ~Freiheitsordnung~ jene Gemeindestruktur, die der kommunikativen Verwirklichung der geschenkten Freiheit dient. Spielregeln dieser Kommunikation sind - Offenheit, Herrschaftsfreiheit, Partizipation, Solidarität" (Baumler 1984).

13. There is a difference of opinion among theologians on the *functions* of the church. Heyns and Pieterse (1990:57) say the essential functions of the church are *kerygma*, *koinonia* and *diakonia*. Breytenbach and Pieterse (1992:105) follow Van der Ven and mention the four functions of *kerygma*, *liturgia*, *koinonia* and *diakonia*. Louw (1992:130-131) mentions: *marturia*, *koinonia*, *diakonia* and *doxa*. Hendriks (1992:105-117) sees all the functions of the church as part of the service aspect of the church. He identifies the

Pieterse (1991a:72-79) discusses Dulles's description of the church as proclamation; body of Christ and *diakonos*.¹⁴ For Pieterse (1991a:71), it is clear that the three ecclesiological models which Dulles describes correspond to the essential functions of the church, namely *kerygma*, *koinonia* and *diakonia*. A practical theological ecclesiology must incorporate and integrate all three of these functions of the church.

Pieterse (1991a:80) comes to the conclusion that the body of Christ model, with *koinonia* at its centre, is the best model for a practical theological ecclesiology. In the body of Christ model the *kerygma*, *koinonia* and *diakonia* functions of the church get their rightful place.¹⁵ It also supports a symmetrical communication structure - and supports the need of the modern human being to become part of a community. It also allows room for the necessary pluralism within the context of unity.

Pieterse (1991a:89-91) goes on to describe how the *body of Christ model* type of congregation will be able to function in a modern society. He also describes (1991a:92-93) the "body of Christ" model in the structuring of the congregation and the edification of the congregation. Several elements of Pieterse's ecclesiology will be used in later sections of this study to describe an ecclesiology against the background of an ecosystemic metaparadigm.

3.1.2.2 Heitink

In *Praktische theologie* (1993) Heitink takes a different approach from Pieterse and Van der Ven to an ecclesiology for practical theology. Heitink does not describe an ecclesiology as a base theory for practical theology, but discusses ecclesiology just as part of a base theory for practical theology.

According to Heitink (1993:21), practical theology does not have the church, but society, as horizon.¹⁶ The importance of the relationship church-society for practical theology should not be underestimated. Later

following functions: *marturia*, *kerygma*, *koinonia*, *diakonia*, *liturgia*, *pastoral work*, *instruction*, *organising*, *unity* and *social responsibility*. It is clear that the boundaries between various aspects of the church's functions and ministries are not absolute.

14. Pieterse (1991a) does not mention that Dulles actually discusses five models of the church in his later editions, namely: the church as institution; the church as mystical communion; the church as sacrament; the church as herald; and the church as servant (Dulles 1987).

15. "In die lig van ons benadering tot 'n prakties-teologiese ekklesiologie soos hierbo uiteengesit, is dit nodig om die drie funksies te integreer in ons beskouing van die gemeente. 'n Prakties-teologiese ekklesiologie volgens die benadering vanuit die funksies van die kerk, sal die drie funksies in balans moet bring binne 'n gemeente-beskouing. Dit is noodsaaklik omdat die drie funksies nou saamhang as aspekte van dieselfde heilsdiens en nie uitmekaar geskeur kan word nie" (Pieterse 1991a:80).

16. "De beoefening der praktische theologie heeft niet de kerk, maar de samenleving als horizon" (Heitink 1993:21).

sections in this study will deal with this relationship in more detail. Heitink (1993:268) is well aware of the pluralistic society we live in and its influence on the church. For Heitink (1993:268) pluralism is a practical theological "thema bij uitstek".

Heitink (1993:168) describes this pluralism in terms of the way people have different world-views, different views of God, different anthropology's and different views of the church. It also brings theology to the point where it should realise that many theological differences could be related not to theological factors but to differences in world-view. The way the ecclesiology of the church may deal with pluralism is through the concept of *koinonia* (Heitink 1993:169).

Heitink develops a base theory for practical theology based on what he calls "action fields", namely anthropology, ecclesiology and diaconology. He (1993:230) develops bi-polar theories for the three fields, namely human being-religion; church-faith and religion-society. According to Heitink (1993:263), a practical theological ecclesiology will give attention to the following:

- Ecclesiastics:

This is the organisation and the functioning of the church in society. Heitink (1993:263) makes use of Fret's understanding of ecclesiastics. For Fret, ecclesiastics is the social dimension of the church. Heitink (1993:263) believes that ecclesiastics should be able to relate to what he calls the systematic-theological ecclesiology, like the *notae ecclesiae*.

Heitink (1993:270) mentions the praxis surrounding the borders of congregations. Traditionally, the Reformed churches believe that "men *kies*t zich geen gemeente, maar men is *gekozen* door de Heer via de aanwezige gemeente". This is an issue in a pluralistic society and should be an important theme in discussions of a practical theological ecclesiology, says Heitink (1993:270).

- Koinonia:

For Heitink (1993:264-265), the concept "koinonia" is central to a practical theological ecclesiology. Koinonia connects the social and the theological dimensions of the church. Koinonia also binds together the anthropological and the diaconological views of the church. Heitink (1993:264) agrees with Kuhnke (1992) that:

Het begrip koinonia, (dat) een normatief begrip genoemd mag worden, staat theologisch gezien niet op één lijn met de andere grondfuncties van de kerk, martyria, diakonia en leiturgia. Koinonia overstijgt, doortrekt en verbindt deze drie ...

Heitink (1993:265-266) sees koinonia as an integrating force which will integrate the false divisions in theology. It offers the church new ways of being a church in a modern world. The koinonia character of the church can help the church to function as a minority movement in a modern world. The importance which Heitink places on koinonia will be used further in this study.

Heitink (1993:174) takes the hermeneutical perspective of practical theology seriously. He supports a circular process of interpretation for practical theology. These elements in Heitink's ecclesiology fit

in with an ecosystemic ecclesiological approach. It would be difficult to describe Heitink's ecclesiological approach in general as ecosystemic. Heitink is very much aware of the changes in society, but his ecclesiology is an extension of his bi-polar approach to pastoral work discussed in his earlier work (Heitink 1979).

3.1.2.3 Van der Ven

Van der Ven's ecclesiological model for practical theology will be discussed in more detail because he describes a complete model for an ecclesiology for practical theology in *Ecclesiology in context* (1993a). His discussion of an ecclesiology must be seen in the light of his Catholic background and his intention to open up the praxis of the Catholic Church (1993a:12).¹⁷ This point of departure is the episcopal approach to church government.¹⁸ Van der Ven (1993a:10) understands ecclesiology as the theological theory of the church.¹⁹ He is very much aware of the fact that his point of departure is Western society (1993a:10).

Van der Ven (1993a:76) chooses an ecclesiology of transformation that keeps track with the transformation of society. He struggles with the role of the church in a modern secularised society and battles with the fact that the church is a social and religious reality, and the difficulty (also in history) in portraying the church according to both functions (Van der Ven 1993a:87).²⁰ He (1993a: 53ff) sees religious communication as the general function of the church. This general function can only be realised if the church is busy with its core functions: identity, integration, policy and control. Van der Ven (1993a: 67ff) makes use of the sociologist Parsons' understanding of the four functions necessary for all systems to perform [cf p 87].

17 . "In de ecclesiologie in dit boek gaat de keuze uit naar de katholieke kerk" (Van der Ven 1993a:12).

18 . His decision to take the episcopal approach as point of departure rests on the fact that he knows this approach best and is not a value-judgement on the presbyterial and congregational approaches (Van der Ven 1993a:12).

19 . "De ecclesiologie wordt hier opgevat als een theologische theorie van de kerk... De ecclesiologie bekommert zich om de toekomst van de kerk en om de kerk van de toekomst" (Van der Ven 1993a:10).

20 . It is important to keep in mind that Van der Ven is working from a Catholic background, where nature and grace are often perceived as opposites. He is thus also in discussion with his own tradition. In this process he associates himself with the Protestant theologian, Berkhof, who believes that it is not possible to distinguish between the visible and invisible church (Van der Ven 1993a:89).

The church exists in social relations and structures and these are necessary for the church because without them the church would not be able to accomplish its religious functions. The church as *communio* is one example where both the social and religious functions of the church are portrayed (Van der Ven 1993a:89-90). Van der Ven (1993a:91) rejects a theological dualism and sees it as the other side of sociological reductionism. The sociological reductionist approach sees the church as only a social-empirical expression (appearance). The church is not different from other organisations. The theological reductionist sees the church as totally different with a totally different identity and does not want to compare the church with any other organisation. Van der Ven (1993a:91) opts for the term *nevenschikking*²¹ to express the relationship between the church's social and religious functions.²² By this term he wishes to give expression to the idea that the functions of the church can only be understood if they are approached from both the social and religious spheres. He also wants to emphasise that both spheres are important and that neither is superior to the other.

This idea of *nevenschikking* is important for research in the field of practical theology because it will influence the way research on the church is done. One method is to study the church from different angles in a non-sequential way. The successive angles will make use of different approaches. The church will be studied from a judicial, historical, theological, empirical, or sociological angle. Another method is to make use of a sequential method. This means that the researcher studies the social aspects of the church and then follows this up with a study of the theological aspects of the church. Van der Ven (1993a:92-93) opts for this last approach.²³

One way to describe the social and religious aspects of the church is by making use of semiotics (the study of signs and symbols and the relation between written or spoken signs) and hermeneutics (the theoretical reflection on the processes of comprehension, communication and textual interpretation) [cf p 73].

The social manifestations of the church function as religious signs (Van der Ven 1993a:100), because people's knowledge of the codes of the church cause them to interpret them as such.²⁴ This, according to Van der Ven (1993a:100), is the link between the social and the religious spheres of the church. This interpretation of social actions as religious actions can be explained by the fact that the giving of meaning to something happens in a person's brain. You give a specific meaning to something because you believe it has that specific meaning.

21 . Cf Firet (1977:313) "evenmenselijke relatie".

22 . "De ecclesiologie dient te worden ontwikkeld vanuit de nevenschikking van de sociale en de religieuze aspecten van de functies van de kerk" (Van der Ven 1993a:94).

23 . There is a certain danger that with this approach Van der Ven again ends up with a dualistic ecclesiology, something he tries to avoid at all costs.

24 . "De sociale verschijnselen in de kerk fungeren als religieuze tekens. Dit is de kern-uitspraak waar het ons hier om te doen is" (Van der Ven 1993a:100).

Van der Ven believes that people are aware of the codes of the church. Religious codes function on the cognitive, emotive and conative levels. He mentions the following religious codes: Community of Faith, the Nation of God, the Body of Christ, the Jesus Movement, the Work of the Spirit and the Church of the poor. Van der Ven (1993a:106) mentions three possibilities for ecclesiological supercodes. One possibility is the *communio sanctorum*;²⁵ a second is the church as *communio fidelium*.²⁶ Both of these options are valid, according to Van der Ven. He himself opts for the third option, namely the church as sacrament. Quite possibly, his Catholic background plays a role in this choice.

The question Van der Ven wishes to answer is: How can the basic religious functions of the church (identity; integration; policy; control) become carriers of the religious codes of the church (community of faith; people of God; body of Christ; work of the Spirit; church of the poor) in a modern society? It can be tabled as follows:²⁷

BASIC FUNCTIONS (sociological dimension)	RELIGIOUS CODES (theological dimension)	MODERN SOCIETIES (demands)
Identity	People of God Community of believers Jesus Movement	Secularisation
Integration	Body of Christ	Individualising
Policy	Building action of the Spirit	Utilising
Control	Church of the poor	Calculating

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a) The first basic religious function of the church, according to Van der Ven, is to wrestle with the question of the identity²⁸ of the church: Who and what is the church? The answer must be sought in the context of a secularised world. The identity of the church can be found in the term "Nation of God", which also encompasses the vision of the church. The vision of the church is very closely related to the mission of the

25 . "Men kan daarom de *communio sanctorum* opvatten als basisformule voor de kerk, als ecclesiologische supercode" (Van der Ven 1993a:106).

26 . "Een tweede mogelijkheid is de kerk als *communio fidelium*. *Fidelium* verwijst naar *fides*: het geloof in God, Vader, Zoon en Geest. Een meer omvattende supercode dan deze trinitarische basisformule is welhaast niet denkbaar" (Van der Ven 1993a:106).

27 . Cf Louw (1995). Use has been made of Louw's table, but it has been shortened and translated into English.

28 . This is what Parsons calls "latency".

church. The mission of the church gives expression to the idea that the church is not static, but on the move. Van der Ven explains this movement character of the church in terms of what he calls the Jesus movement. The two aspects, vision and mission, nation of God and Jesus movement, are in relation to each other (Van der Ven 1993a:176 ff).

b) What keeps the church together? The church also wrestles with the question of integration, according to Van der Ven. The context of the integration of the church can be placed within the social context of an individualising world. The church responds in different ways to the individualisation of society. One reaction is to deny this process of individualisation and to have only one desire and that is to go back to the time of pre-industrialised society. In practice it means the church's task is reduced to comforting people and reconciling them to society. The church's task to be critical of society and to challenge society and culture is totally neglected.

Van der Ven (1993a:209) refers to research done on how pastors (i) actually spend their time and (ii) what their priorities are - how they believe they should spend their time. In both instances pastoral care and liturgy tops the list. Pastors spend most of their time on either liturgical tasks or pastoral care. This seems to be the priority for most pastors. Van der Ven also interprets the time spent on liturgy as a pastoral activity. He (1993a:212) also refers to research done by Derksen in 1989 about churchgoers' involvement in the church. According to Derksen's study, church members are very much involved in activities which he describes as "charitas- en diakonie-groepen".

Van der Ven concludes that the emphasis of pastors and lay people in the church is not the same. To know what is going on in the church it is necessary to take into account not only the activities of the pastors, but all the activities in the congregation (Van der Ven 1993a:213).²⁹

The church, in its efforts to bring integration to an individualising and urbanising world should take the "body of Christ" model seriously (Van der Ven 1993a:213). Most people understand the church as a group, as a network or a community. Van der Ven (1993a:214-224) sees the necessity of giving attention to the theories about how groups, networks and communities are formed and function. His point of departure is the modern Western world where people belong to many different groups and the strength and density of networks differ.

Van der Ven (1993a) **warns against idealising the church as community**. This does not mean that community-forming cannot take place. Part of the mission and vision of the church should be to approach

29. "De taken waarmee de groepen in de lokale kerk zich occuperen, nuanceren het scheve beeld dat uit de cijfers van de feitelijke en gewenste tijdsbesteding van de pastores naar voren kwam. De pastores legden het accent vooral op de liturgie en de pastorale zorg. De groepen trekken dit beeld in evenwicht door de grote aandacht die zij geven aan maatschappelijke taken zoals charitas, diakonie, missie-, ontwikkelings- en vredesarbeid. Hier blijkt dat het leven van de lokale kerk niet mag worden afgelezen aan wat de pastores doen, maar wat er in het geheel van de gemeenschap aan activiteiten wordt verricht" (Van der Ven 1993a:213).

the problem of pluralism. Pluralism is not only part of society, it also is part of the church.³⁰ Van der Ven (1993a:224) suggests that the concepts "consensus" and "witnessing" be used.

Consensus in the church can only be reached via communication. People belong to groups for three different reasons: (1) they are forced to belong to the group (prison; army; religious sects); (2) they believe they will benefit from or make some profit out of it; or (3) what Van der Ven calls (1993a:226) a normative reason, which means that they belong to the specific group out of conviction. People belonging to the church are expected to belong to the church out of conviction (cf McGaw 1979). The way to deal with church people is through communication and not force.

Confessional statements should not be *norma fidei* or *norma doctrinae* (Van der Ven 1993a:229). Several confessional statements were in active use in the early church and the first centuries. They were not a-historic and a-cultural norms. They were, firstly forms of doxology that highlighted certain aspects of faith, were time-bound and did not try to be a doctrine for the church for ever, and were the result of what and how people believe. The formulations were personal and existential. This did not end the communication process, but stimulated it.³¹

The church as community can be found in the symbol "body of Christ." The church as community finds its origin not in the community itself, but in the participation³² of every member of the community in Christ (Van der Ven 1993a:236). Participation in Christ forms the foundation and purpose of the church as community. This also is the difference between the church and other bodies. The church as body of Christ comes from Christ and is directed to Christ.

According to Van der Ven (1993a:237), the church and the body of Christ are not identical. The role of the Eucharist is very important. In the Eucharist the church becomes part of the body of Christ. The Eucharist is essential for community-forming. In the letter to the Corinthians, Paul encouraged the people to become the body of Christ. The church in the New Testament is pluralistic. The church communities in the New Testament were not united in one organisation, or uniform in confession or in liturgy or identical in social behaviour. Still, in spite of many differences, they had a common understanding that they were a community of the people of God and the church of the resurrected Christ, anointed by the Holy Spirit (Van der Ven 1993a:239).

30. See also Smit (1994a:42-54). Smit argues that individual Christians and different Christian groups, traditions and communities speak about the same God revealed in Jesus Christ, in different ways. Such a pluriformity must be accepted as possible and legitimate within a certain parameter (1994a:46). Even the word "father" means different things to different people. See also Conradie (1994:2-3) and Greeley (1974).

31 "Het is eerder een kristallisatiemoment waarin de lokale kerk of een groep in de kerk op haar eigen wijze het geloof in Gods heil in Jezus verwoordt" (Van der Ven 1993a:230).

32. It is not clear just what is meant by the word "participation". Is it the same as believing?

In its attempts to bring integration in a pluralistic church, the church should take seriously the question of conflict and leadership. The type of church government needs some reflection and should be directed at maximum participation of the ordinary church members (Van der Ven 1993a:278). According to Van der Ven, there is a certain necessity for professionalising pastoral care. The danger is that it will increase the distance between the church community and the professional. For the church to aim at its mission (to be a Jesus movement) and its vision (to be the nation of God) means that the church should be purposeful and effective. Therefore it is necessary that professionalism be connected with community involvement.

(c) The third core function of the church, according to Van der Ven (1993a), is policy.³³ The vision and mission of the church determine the identity of the church. This identity must be implemented, therefore the church must have a policy. What should be the policy of the church? Part of the question is: How does the church implement its policy in a modern society where the principle of utilising is foremost (Van der Ven 1993a:284)? The modern human being has, generally speaking, only one purpose in mind - to satisfy him/herself. The policy of the church and its implementation should lead to more participation of the members of the church in the activities of the church (Van der Ven 1993a:284).

In modern society, people expect something back for everything they do. Part of this utilising society is the expectation that your needs will be fulfilled. The expectation also is that the state will look after those in need (Van der Ven 1993a:285). People also belong to the church with an expectation of getting something back from the church (Van der Ven 1993a:286; 305). Van der Ven (1993a:286-306) makes use of numerous studies to show that people's needs differ. Many factors - economic, political, social, cultural and religious play a role.

The policy of the church must take into account the differences between people and communities. An urban society may differ considerably from a rural society. In a rural area the social infrastructure may be very well developed, and it may not be necessary for the church to be involved in the development of a good social network. In an urban area, the establishment of a good social infrastructure may be a priority for the church. This question of the community task of the congregation cannot be answered just by a simple "yes" or "no".³⁴

(d) The fourth function of the church Van der Ven deals with is control (what Parsons calls adaption). Van der Ven (1993a) makes use of the idea of "markets" and economy to explain how control functions. He (1993a:374 ff) discusses the influence of money and the economy on the church. He admits that although this is a topic which few people would like to connect to an ecclesiology, is a reality. Certain aspects of the

33 . This is what Parsons calls "goal attainment".

34 . "Van hieruit gezien is de vraag of een parochie aan gemeenschapsvorming moet doen geen kwestie van vrije keuze. Het gaat om de vraag of er een voldoende sociale infrastructuur in de lokale kerk aanwezig is. Indien zij inderdaad aanwezig is, zoals in de dorpen, is gemeenschapsopbouw niet of minder noodzakelijk dan wanneer zij afwezig is, zoals in de anonieme stadsdeelparochie. Hier ligt voor de verschillende parochies een verschillend aantal vrijheidsgraden" (Van der Ven 1993a:289).

church are competing in the market place, so to speak. The church offers a "product" and competes with other social organisations. This places certain pressures on the church and on the pastors and voluntary workers in the church. The church delivers a certain service, which has a specific character and nature. Van der Ven (1993a:389) describes service as a communicative action for the purpose of serving individuals and groups to promote their personal and social welfare from the perspective of the gospel.

The church must also reflect on the quality of its service, especially its pastoral work. Van der Ven (1993a:396) proposes a model for quality pastoral work. This brings the question of professionalising care to the fore again, which Van der Ven (1993a:403-419) discusses at length. The economic position of the church is something which needs in-depth discussion, especially from the perspective of the poor and underprivileged. The role of the deacon in the distribution of wealth is important. The spirit of capitalism also is visible in the church (Van der Ven 1993a:431). For the church to accomplish its functions of identity, integration, policy and control a healthy financial infrastructure is required, which means that there is no way in which the church can escape the problem of money.

Van der Ven (1993a:81 ff) makes use of the word "sectoren" (sectors) to describe the diakonia, pastoral work, liturgy, catechism and proclamation tasks of the church.³⁵ He acknowledges (1993a:82) that some theologians identify only three and others four sectoren.³⁶ The relationship between the sectors and the functions is not direct. He has a very precise and schematic approach of how a practical theological ecclesiology works or functions.

Gemeenschapsvorming³⁷ heeft betrekking op de ontwikkeling, vorming en begeleiding van sociale netwerken in de kerk. Ze is als een onderdeel te beschouwen van de kernfunctie integratie. In de matrix doortrekt zij vanuit de kernfunctie integratie de vijf genoemde sectoren: pastoraat, katechese, liturgie, verkondiging en diakonie. Gemeenschapsvorming realiseert zich niet los, maar juist in de activiteiten in deze sectoren. ... Ze (figuur 4-4 - FN) maakt duidelijk dat alle activiteiten in alle sectoren (pastoraat, katechese, liturgie, verkondiging, diakonie) geheel en al door de kernfuncties (identiteit, integratie, beleid, beheer) worden bepaald. En van de andere kant, dat deze kernfuncties slechts in deze sectoren worden gerealiseerd. Deze beschouwingwijze maakt de kernfuncties en sectoren tot een geheel. Ze verschaft kerk en pastoraal een eenheid van visie (Van der Ven 1993a:83).

Van der Ven's well-developed and comprehensive ecclesiology is worth studying and reflecting on and will certainly become a basic reference work for all practical theologians who take the ecclesiology seriously. Many of his ideas are backed by quantitative research. His very thorough exposition of modern society is worth serious consideration. His understanding of the functioning of the church in a modern and pluralistic society open up new perspectives. Van der Ven understands the church, on the one hand, as a sacrament

35 . Pieterse (1991a) calls these tasks functions.

36 . Church growth is not one of the sectors, because church growth is the summation of all the functions and sectors of the church.

37 . The church as community refers to the fact that the church is a community of believers and also an association/society (vereniging) (cf Van der Ven 1993a: 49-51).

(theologically) but on the other hand as a sociological entity. He believes in the church as body of Christ, but warns against an idealistic view of the community aspects of the church.

Van der Ven's ecclesiological approach is difficult to summarise. He campaigns for an open view of the church and for her involvement in society. His emphasis on the role symbols of the church is typically catholic, but also a sign of his broader perspective. He understands the church as non-dualistic where concepts like *koinonia* and the metaphors body of Christ and people of God play an important role. The way he describes the church gives the impression of a structuralistic and functionalistic view of the church.

This is an example of an approach where the empirical and theological dimensions are incorporated in an ecclesiology. Unfortunately the numerous categories and divisions give the impression that the church is a closed and controlled system where everything fits like a glove and not a dynamic entity. This mixture of ecosystemic and non-ecosystemic elements does not mean that his ecclesiology has nothing to say for those who wants to work with an ecosystemic approach. Several of the elements he touched on will be discussed later on in this study.

It is clear that enough work has already been done on an ecclesiology for practical theology. It is not necessary to repeat all those efforts. What this study will do is to take the work already done a step further to see in what way the existing ecclesiologies for practical theology can help to develop an ecclesiology for pastoral work from an ecosystemic perspective.

3.2 AN ECOSYSTEMIC APPROACH TO ECCLESIOLOGY

The previous section discussed ecclesiological approaches to practical theology by Pieterse, Heitink and Van der Ven. Some of the ideas will be taken further in the following sections and put in the context of an ecosystemic metaparadigm to develop an ecclesiology as base theory for practical theology. In terms of the holistic view inherent in an ecosystemic approach, this base theory for practical theology will also serve as a base theory for pastoral work.

All three the above ecclesiologies give attention to both (a) the theological and sociological dimensions of the church and (b) the functions of the church (*koinonia*, *diakonia*, *kerygma*, etc.) (c) and the importance of the metaphor *body of Christ*.

The following sections give attention to the sociological and theological dimension of the church.³⁸ The debate should be understood in the context of modern society, which works with a dualistic approach and an object-subject scheme. An ecosystemic approach, which works with open systems and accepts the holistic character of the universe, does understand the (sometimes paradoxical) interaction between the theological and sociological dimensions as interactive patterns.

38. "Die kerk is enersyds 'n skepping van God en andersyds 'n sosiologiese werklikheid" (Hendriks & Ludik 1993:811).

It is necessary to ask ourselves in what sense an ecosystemic ecclesiology differs from other ecclesiologies for practical theology. In the first place, it is not so much a different ecclesiology as an ecclesiology which is aware of certain characteristics in modern society which have also influenced the ecclesiology of the church in a profound way.³⁹ The modern dualism, which separates body from spirit, science from religion and natural from supernatural, has found its way into our ecclesiology.

An ecosystemic ecclesiology wants to challenge modern thinking which also influences modern ecclesiologies where the human mind is ultimate and the point of departure of all knowing; where the only real knowledge is factual knowledge and where ecclesiologies try to be value-free and neutral. It wants to emphasise the importance of a spirituality which runs deeper than a theology of feeling, which is the result of the subjectivism of modern society where experience is separated from reality. An ecosystemic ecclesiology also challenges an ecclesiology where everything is explainable and the result of direct causality, where object and subject are clearly distinctive, where all problems are solvable. Ecosystemic ecclesiology also challenges an ecclesiology which is individualistic and autonomous and where the individual is isolated from the whole. An ecosystemic ecclesiology wants to work with a holistic view and challenge the subject-object scheme of modern society where the emphasis is on the parts and not on the whole.

The ecclesiology described in this study is not something totally new or different. It often connects closely with the ecclesiological patterns of Pieterse, Heitink and Van der Ven as described in the previous section. Because this study works with an ecosystemic approach as metaparadigm, ecclesiology as base theory is also described in terms of this metaparadigm. What this study does is to describe known patterns but in terms of a specific context and world-view.

To develop an ecosystemic ecclesiology for pastoral work, the relationship "church-community" or, in broader terms, "church-society" needs some closer clarification. The next sections will discuss this relationship. The non-dualistic nature of an ecosystemic metaparadigm will play a role in the researcher's understanding of the relationship between church and society.

3.2.1 The role of the church in society

De Gruchy (1972:194) cites Emil Brunner who says "the social character of the ecclesia is the most urgent requirement for Christian theology". Understanding the relationship "church-society" is of the utmost importance (Van Niekerk 1985:60; Pieterse 1991a:57, 62; Heitink 1979:341-350; Theron 1985:43-54).⁴⁰

39 . We refer to the characteristics of modern thinking as described by Bosch (1991) [cf p 36].

40 . By this remark the researcher does not want to enter the sociological debate. Dekker (1987:89) writes: "En daarmee bevinden we ons in het hart van de godsdienstsociologie, omdat de relatie tussen godsdienst (en/of kerk) en sameleving het grondthema is van de godsdienstsociologie".

This relationship is also important for practical theology.⁴¹ Campbell (1972:223-224) makes the following remark:

It seems that the articulation of the nature of practical theology is intimately related to one's understanding of the relationship between the life of the Church and the life of the world 'outside the Church'. Practical theology's concern for operations and its relatedness to specific situations needs to be grounded in some systematic conceptualisation of the church-world relationship.

It is very difficult to describe this relationship without describing it in terms which put church and society as two entities in opposition. The term "society" often refers to what in biblical language is called the "world"⁴² (*kosmos*).⁴³ According to Tracy (1981:23), the "world" can also be understood as a properly theological reality and "society" as an expression of the theological reality "world", because the term "world" also has a theological and not only a sociological character.⁴⁴ Minear (1977:15) makes it clear that even the term "world" is open to misunderstanding: "Our objective would be much easier to accomplish if there were a genuine congeniality between the New Testament thought world and the contemporary Christian thought world. But such congeniality is, to say the least, both minimal in extent and problematic in content".

In this study the words "community" and "society" are used⁴⁵ and not the word "world". The term "society" is used to describe the interrelatedness between church and what sociologists call society.⁴⁶ This is because the term "society"⁴⁷ is expatiatory and gives expression to the idea that the church's interrelatedness is not limited to certain spheres only. The word "community" gives expression to the type

41 . Pieterse (1991a; Heitink 1993; Van der Ven 1993a) extensively discuss the relationship church-society.

42 . "the world is, in New Testament usage, the world that is lost, sinful doomed; it is also the world that God so loved and that Christ redeemed" (Greeves 1960:96).

43 . De Gruchy (1972:246) in reference to Von Rad says: "Furthermore, Biblical cosmology is anthropocentric in that it always sees nature and history in relation to man and the nations".

44 . Tracy (1981:23) uses the word "world" to describe the theological understanding of realities like "society" or "academy".

45 . Another word that can be used is "culture". Cf Tracy (1981:6-10; 34-35). But this is also a very loaded word, particularly in South Africa where the term "culture" was often used to justify apartheid.

46 . To define society is very difficult. Dekker (1987:41), a sociologist of religion, understands society as a more or less institutionalised unity of people in relation to each other, by virtue of the social positions they occupy and the functions assigned thereto:

En daarmee komen we aan enkele belangrijke elementen van een sameleving, die we in een soort werkdefinitie kunnen opnemen: een sameleving is een in meerdere of mindere mate geïnstitutionaliseerd geheel van mensen die in relatie tot elkaar staan op grond van de sociale posities die zij innemen en de rollen die daarbij horen.

47 . In Dekker's definition, society is not a fixed entity, but a dynamic unit where people and the roles they play take an important place.

of interrelatedness between the church and society. It is a word often used in the Bible and brings with it something of closeness and caring. Although the two concepts do not have precisely the same meaning, they will be used alternately in this study, with the assumption that "community" includes the idea of "society" and "society" includes communities of people.

What is the church? Several definitions can be given. This thesis will take as a working definition James Gustafson's⁴⁸ (1961:85) formulation:⁴⁹

The Church is the community that remembers Jesus Christ, understands what he means, relives his meaning, and gives it contemporary expression in personal and common life.

There are different theological models which explain this relationship "church-society" (cf Van Niekerk 1985).⁵⁰ According to Van Niekerk (1985), the similarity between most of these models, is that they all contain the assumption that a specific part of life is devoid ("emptied") of God and salvation.⁵¹ You will find God in the church, not in secular society or you will find God and salvation in the Christian organisation, but not in the non-Christian organisation. Often these models, that work with this dichotomy between church and society or church in society, describe the church and images of the church as if the church and the kingdom of God were the same [cf p 168]. Another feature, which is related to the above

48. Smit (1994b:22) describes James Gustafson as one of the most important North American ethicists and a follower of Richard Niebuhr.

49. It is possible to give many different definitions of the church. This study does not intend to be a systematic theological treatise on the church. For the purpose of this study the church can be understood as an historically continuous body of persons known as Christians, whose common life is in part institutionalised in churches (Gustafson 1961:6).

50. The secularisation model sees the church as being in society. A certain part of society is religious and Christian - this is the church- the rest of society is non-church, non-religious. The church becomes God's only programme and channel to reach the world (Van Niekerk 1985:53). The secular and the religious provide a defined dichotomy.

The ghetto model explains this relationship not so much as church-non-church, but more in terms of Christian organisations and non-Christian organisations. This model extended the dividing line between Christians and non-Christians across the whole spectrum of life (Van Niekerk 1985:55).

Van Niekerk (1985:58-60) opts for a third model: what he calls the diaspora model. In this model the distinction is not between church and society or religious and non-religious organisations. Signs of the kingdom can be seen there where people or groups of people experience God.

51. See as an example Kuitert (1986:77-88).

mentioned aspect, is that "the church" becomes an entity on its own, which often stands opposed to society.⁵²

Gerben Heitink (1979) describes five models of the church in the Protestant tradition, which give expression to the relationship church-society. He emphasises the important role which the situation plays in all models. According to him, the church's aim is society. This aim of the church has different dimensions. Heitink (1979:349) opts for a combination of two of the models: the "church for the poor" model will help the church to be more prophetic and⁵³ the "church for the world" model will emphasise the importance of the priestly dimension of the church. In his article, *Brug of breuk?*, P F Theron (1985:44) makes it clear that Heitink's different models are not opposed to one another. The emphasis is only on different aspects.⁵⁴ Theron himself (1985:45) describes the church as a bridge between kingdom and cosmos.

The question of the relationship "church-society" also is related to the question about the nature of the church. Abraham Kuyper speaks of the church as organism and the church as institution. Van Ruler opposes this distinction (Part IV:176-200). Another distinction is between the church as visible and invisible. This distinction is also heavily criticised by the theologian Berkouwer (1979:37-39).⁵⁵ It is beyond the scope of this study to go into detail about all the different aspects of the nature of the church. What will become clear is that the nature of the church cannot be discerned apart from its task in the world (De Gruchy 1994a:133).

According to Berkouwer, people cannot just discuss what the church should be, but must also discuss what the church is in reality (cf de Klerk 1990:6-8). There is thus a need to make a social analysis of society as part of one's ecclesiology (cf Pieterse 1991a). This is also important for the pastoral actions of the church. Greevas (1960:96) reminds us that

The whole pastoral approach is inevitably influenced by our convictions upon this matter. The pattern of Church-life, the training of young people, the relation between worship and work, and that between the Christian's so-called religious and secular activities - all these and many other issues will be decided, consciously or unconsciously, by our comprehension of the place of the Church in the world.

52 . The way the well-known Dutch theologian, van Ruler describes the church is a good example of what van Niekerk (1985:50) describes as the 'secularization model' where church and world are in opposition. Van Ruler (Vol II:126-127) writes: "De politieke overheid is de eigenlijke tegenpool van de kerk ... de kerk presenteert zich tegenover de overheid als geheel en al van eigen rechte. Zij staat op één niveau met de staat. Zij is er op geen manier ondergeschikt. Zij poneert zichzelf als volwaardige pool tegenover de tegenpool van de staat".

53 . "But it is of considerable importance to recognize here that the description of the church as the 'church of the poor' has become fundamental for contemporary ecclesiology" (De Gruchy 1994a:132).

54 . "Veeleer is dit dikwels die geval dat die toon die musiek maak" (Theron 1985:44).

55 . For further discussion see Theron (1978:119) and Küng (1981:34-39).

To establish an ecosystemic pastoral work approach, it is important to understand the church as functioning in society, as part of society, but also different from society. An example of a pastoral work approach which makes a very thorough social analysis of the South African situation in the eighties can be found in B Kotzé's (1990) work, *'n Pastorale strategie vir sosiale transformasie*.⁵⁶

To further clarify this relationship between church and society, with a view to the development of an ecosystemic pastoral work approach, the following sections will discuss the different dimensions of the church [3.2.1.1] in terms of the church and the kingdom of God [3.2.1.2] and the church's prophetic role [3.2.1.3]

3.2.1.1 The church has different dimensions

The church⁵⁷ can be viewed from a sociological (empirical or institutional) or from a theological (biblical) position. Depending on the position from which you are looking at the church, different dimensions of the church will be seen. The church has a definite theological and a definite sociological dimension.⁵⁸ According to De Gruchy (1994a:125), ecclesiology is "particularly concerned with this dialectical relationship between the Church as a sociological and a theological reality. It (ecclesiology - FN) recognises that the church is similar to many other human associations, but it also believes that the church is different".

Tracy (1981:23) emphasises the importance of a sociological understanding of the church. He takes it as obvious that people will understand the church theologically. To understand the church only theologically is a reductionist view (cf also Gustafson 1961). Tracy (1981:23) puts it as follows:

A theological understanding is almost overwhelmingly operative. A sociological understanding may be implicit but is rarely explicit. The notable exceptions to this rule... serve to highlight the need among all ecclesiologists, and by extension all theologians, to explicate and correlate both sociological and theological understandings of the reality 'church'.

Pieterse (1991a:36), with reference to Hübner, sees the task of a practical theological ecclesiology as being to bring together the theological and the sociological aspects of the church.⁵⁹ What can be understood

56 . Cf also H Bester's (1989:53-60) thesis, *Gemeentediakonaat in ekumeniese perspektief*.

57 . This study makes use of the word "church" in referring to the religious community, without differentiating between the church at local (congregational), national or international level. Paul used the term *ekklesia* for the local church.

58 . "In de eerste plaats is er het belangrijke onderscheid tussen de kerk als instelling of organisatie en de kerk als een verzameling van mensen die tot een kerk behoren. Beide zijn werkelijkheden en beide vallen onder het begrip kerk, maar bij analyse blijken er soms grote verschillen tussen die twee te zijn, zodat het goed is steeds aan te geven welk kerkbegrip men op het oog heeft" (Dekker 1987:75).

59 . * 'n Prakties-teologiese beskouing sou die twee lyne dialekties in interaksie bring. Dan word teologie en empirie geïntegreer. Dit lei tot 'n funksionele teologiese ekklesiologie" (Pieterse 1991a:36).

from a sociological standpoint may not be as easily understood from the standpoints of the other disciplines. A social analysis of the church does not displace investigation from other points of view (Gustafson 1961:5).

Viewed from a theological perspective, the *ekklesia* (community/fellowship of people)⁶⁰ consists of people who are witnessing to the coming of the kingdom of God. The church is called "the sign of the kingdom of God"⁶¹ (Theron 1978:89) or the *kainē ktisis* (new creation);⁶² or the church as alternative community (Bosch). According to Bosch's (1982:140) understanding, the church is clearly distinguished from society, but at the same time involved in society. If this were not the case, Bosch argues,⁶³ why did the Roman state see Jesus and his disciples as enemies of the state? The church is both *ekklesia* (community of people in society) and *paroikia* (stranger) at the same time (Bosch 1982:140). When this type of paradoxical language is used to describe the church, it tries to explain something of the theological and not the sociological (or empirical) dimensions of the church.

Viewed from a sociological position, the church is just another organisation in society and there is nothing special about the church.⁶⁴ The church is not functionally different from other organisations: it also needs money; it must also be managed in a proper way; discipline is necessary and structures are necessary. Hendriks and Stoppels (1986:102) say there are three types of organisations:⁶⁵ the coercive organisation (like prisons) where the people involved have no choice and do not belong to the organisation out of free will; the utilitarian organisation, where people belong for the benefits they can get out of the organisation; the normative organisation where people belong because they believe and support the norms and objects of the organisation (cf Van der Ven 1993a:126). According to Hendriks and Stoppels (1986:102), the church is a normative organisation [cf p 154].

60. "Though some persons have tried to see in the term *ekklesia* a more or less literal meaning of 'called-out ones', this type of etymologizing is not warranted either by the meaning of *ekklesia* in NT times or even by its earlier usage" (Louw & Nida 1988:126).

61. "Van Ruler brengt voortdurend in herinnering dat wij de kerk moeten zien `in het wijdere verband van de basileia. De kerk is niet het rijk van God, ook niet de aanvankelijke realisering daarvan, zij is teken van het rijk, gestalte van het heilrijk handelen van God" (Hendriks 1977:72).

62. Bosch (1982:138-142) is of the opinion that Theron overemphasises the strangeness of the church to the point where the church loses all relevance for society. The church becomes too much of a stranger to society.

63. Bosch (1982:139-140) refers to K L Schmidt's exposition of the words *ekklesia* and *paroikia* (1 Pt 1:17) in *Theol. Wörterbuch z. Neuen Testament V*, 850. [Cf. Ridderbos's (1969:338; 389) commentary on Schmidt's article on *ekklesia*].

64. For Theron (1985:52), the church as an institution is clearly different from any other institution (cf Louw 1992). Cf also Van der Ven (1993a:39-46, 91) who makes use of the term *nevenschikking* to give expression to this relation [cf p 151]

65. Dwangorganisaties, utilitaire organisaties, and normatieve organisaties.

From a sociological point of view, the church is not against society or this world or the state in principle, but is just another structure in society. When the task (i.e. the pastoral task) of the church is discussed, it often reflects the way the church is functioning as part of society.

This discussion about the different dimensions of the church is not an attempt to strengthen the Greek way of thinking of a dualism between heaven and earth or to promote a docetic and unearthly ecclesiology. It is actually an attempt to overcome this dualism, but still give recognition to the eschatological tension inherent in the church and the fact that people look at the church from different perspectives. The church has a certain duality in it,⁶⁶ which is not the same as dualism. The church can be described as the eschatological people of God. From a theological perspective, it must be accepted that the domain of the church is different from the domain of society.⁶⁷ At the same time the task of the church will encompass all domains because the people who make up the church are also in society and in the eschaton the difference between the domains of the church and of society will become relative and irrelevant (cf Nicol 1984:205).

Quantum physics can help us to understand the duality of the church without becoming dualistic. This duality can be described with the idea of paradoxality. In a paradoxical way, the church is two things at the same time: it functions as an organisation with all the features of any organisation and also as a theological entity with an eschatological vision.

When this study emphasises the task of the church in a sociological sense, it is worthwhile remembering Heitink's (1993:261) words, in referring to the use of empirical language to describe the church: "Deze taal staat in een dialectische spanning tot het bijbels-theologisch spreken over de kerk, dat uitgaat van de realiteit van de Geest en de christelijke gemeente beschrijft in termen, die gezien de kerklijke situatie meer lijken te slaan op een ideaal, dan op werkelijkheid".

A sociological interpretation exposes the elements of humanity in the church. This is no council of despair for it is precisely the human community that God has called and through which he acts. Gustafson warns us that the church must not become so identified with the being of God himself that it becomes a fourth member of the Godhead (Gustafson 1961:111). Because the church is a human community, the church can make Christ present to human beings. The reason why it is possible to describe the church sociologically and in human terms is that the church is not the kingdom of God and the church consists of people [cf p 168].

The Pauline letters are directed to people and communities of people in the different regions and not to a static church. Nearly all the pronouncements in the Bible, which from a theological point of view refer to the

66. Theron (1982:128) makes use of the term *duality* to give expression to the tension between nature and grace.

67. Luther uses the term *domain*, but separates the domain of the church and that of the 'world' to the point where the two function as nearly independent domains. This is not what is meant in this study by the term *domain*.

church, in essence refer to the community of **people**⁶⁸ who make up the church. This connection can help us to overcome a dualistic approach to the church. When we refer to the church as being in society, we actually refer to the people who make up the church in society. The common denominator between church and society is the **people**.⁶⁹

This thesis emphasises that it is people that form the connection between the different dimensions of the church (biblical-dogmatic understanding and sociological-empirical understanding). They, in their faith, understanding and activities connect church and society, even at a time when the church does not have much influence in society. Society is not an entity in itself, it consists of people in relationships. Durkheim (1961:678) puts it as follows:⁷⁰ "(This is) because society cannot make its influence felt unless it is in action, and it is not in action unless the individuals who compose it are assembled together and act in common. It is by common action that it takes consciousness of itself and realises its position; it is before all else an active co-operation."

What the church stands for and witnesses to (the coming of the kingdom of God) may (or may not) differ from time to time from what society stands for. And when the church and society agree on certain actions and programmes, the people who make up the *ekklesia* may have a different motivation for involvement in these programmes than those who are not part of the *ekklesia*.

The underlying meta-forces that keep church and society together can further be described as *koinonia*. According to Heitink (1993:263), who also struggles with the tension between the church's "ecclesiastical"⁷¹ side and its systematic-theological side, *koinonia* is the point of connection. Heitink (1993:265) makes use of Kuhnke's (1992) theories and concludes:

Met behulp van deze en andere gegevens onderbouwt Kuhnke zijn hypothese dat *koinonia* de gezochte optie is om de identiteit van de christelijke gemeente in kritische zijn te reconstrueren. We hebben hier naar zijn mening bovendien te maken met een convergerende optie, die theologische en sociaal-wetenschappelijke gezichtspunten langs dialectische weg op elkaar betreft.

68. Spoelstra (1989a:69) summarises it as follows: "Besinning oor die kerk bring K ng en Calvyn saam by die wonderlike feit dat die kerk altyd mense, gemeenskap van gelowiges, volk van God is (1 Pt 2:9,10)."

69. "De verbinding tussen kerk en samenleving vindt als het ware vanzelf plaats door middel van de kerkleden: de leden van de kerk vervullen nl. ook allerlei funksies binnen de samenleving" (Dekker 1971:7).

70. Durkheim (1961) makes the distinction between mechanical solidarity in society and organic solidarity. Durkheim believes that primitive societies had so much in common because they were so unspecialized that they felt alike and close. This is a mechanical solidarity. In modern societies people do not feel close, but we need each other in the sense that we do business, make contracts, agree on rules and principles - this is organic solidarity. Cf also Spencer & Inkeles (1982:11).

71. Heitink (1993) understands the word 'ekklesiastiek' in the same sense as that which we describe as the sociological and empirical dimension of the church.

The relationship between church and society can be theoretically discussed. In practice, this relationship is an ongoing one because of the ongoing connection between church members and society. If the church takes society seriously, it should also try to understand how society functions because of church members' involvement in society (Dekker 1971:7). The church has a hermeneutical task in interpreting society. De Gruchy (1994a:131) puts it as follows: "the ongoing ecclesiological task is bound up with hermeneutics, with the attempt to understand the truth of the gospel in relation to the challenges and issues presented by the specific contexts within which the church is called to bear witness to the reign of God."

The church is not an abstract entity. It is functioning within society (Dekker 1971:21).⁷² There is enough proof that society influences the church⁷³ and the church also influences society (Durkheim 1961:678), although it becomes clear that the influence of the church on society is on the decrease. The influence of the church on society increases dramatically after the third century and decreases since the seventeenth century.⁷⁴

The ecclesiological base theory discussed in this chapter is determined by the ecosystemic metaparadigm as world-view. In terms of this metaparadigm, the relationship church-society can be called an interrelated relationship. To understand this interrelatedness further, the next section discusses the relationship between the church and the kingdom of God.

3.2.1.2 The church and the kingdom of God

Another premise of the 'new' ecclesiology is the distinction, now quite generally accepted, between the Christian Church and the Kingdom of God ... The Church exists to serve the Kingdom and it is therefore relativized by it (Schanz 1977:253).

To understand the church's interrelatedness with society, it is necessary to understand the relationship "church" and "kingdom of God".⁷⁵ According to Pop (1951:101), Augustine translates the word *ekklesia* with the words *civitas Dei* (the kingdom of God). This may lead to some confusion. Augustine understood

72 . "Dit wijst er weer eens op dat de kerk altijd binnen een bepaalde samelevingssituatie funktioneeret en dat haar betekenis voor de sameleving verandert wanneer de samenleving verandert" (Dekker 1971:21).

73 . "In general, the church is always influenced by society; sometimes it is even determined by it. In other instances strictly theological-religious considerations determine the church's relationship to society" (Tracy 1981:24-25).

74 . "Zij hangt samen met de verzelfstandiging van de religieuze mens enerzijds en van de publieke godsdienst anderzijds ten opzichte van de kerk, die in het verleden, binnen het Corpus Christianum, heel het gebied van kerk, staat en maatschappij omspande. Het proces van secularisatie van de sameleving heeft deze situatie ingrijpend gewijzigd" (Heitink 1993:232).

75 . Van der Ven (1993b:69-76) discusses the concept *basileia* as a normative principle underlying hermeneutic-communicative praxis which forms the basis of human communication, but also the boundary which prevents argumentative-communicative praxis to become cognitivism.

the church as the provisional manifestation of the kingdom of God (Ridderbos 1969:343). Two questions need some clarification in the discussion about the church and the kingdom of God. The one question is: Does the *ekklesia* refer to the empirical church? The other is: Are the *ekklesia* and the *basileia* the same?

Does the term *ekklesia* refer to the empirical church? In his reference to the *ekklesia* in Matthew 16:18 and 18:15 did Jesus have the empirical church in mind? For some people, the visible gathering of believers with a certain amount of organisation lay entirely outside the field of Jesus' vision. This spiritualistic view like the radical eschatological view (Albert Schweitzer), which understands Jesus' proclamation as eschatological preaching, sees the church as the consequence of the non-fulfilment of the *parousia* of the Son of Man announced by Jesus. The church is, then, the result of those who had been waiting for the coming of the kingdom. They had no other alternative than to form an organisation. The theologian Loisy puts it as follows: Jesus preached the kingdom and what came was the church (Ridderbos 1969:337).⁷⁶ Supporters of this thinking did not believe that Jesus wanted to form a church community in the time between his resurrection and his *parousia*.⁷⁷

It is beyond the scope of this thesis to go into the details of this debate. The researcher accepts that the words of Ridderbos (1969:342) are fundamental to this study, and wants to conclude with them:

(Therefore) the *ekklesia* is not only an eschatological reality but also an empirical one given in Christ. ... The beginning of its organization is found in Christ's calling of the disciples. The founding of the church by Christ mentioned in Matthew 16 is to be acknowledged as genuine in the full sense of the word, in opposition to the old liberal and the recent eschatological conceptions.

Are the *ekklesia* and the *basileia* the same? The second question is about the relationship *basileia-ekklesia*. The *basileia* and the *ekklesia* are often seen as having the same meaning.⁷⁸ Ridderbos (1969:343-344) concedes that this idea could possibly be supported if just the synoptic gospels are taken into account.⁷⁹ If the whole New Testament is taken, though, there is no real support for understanding the word *basileia* as "the church", which does not mean that the *ekklesia* was not an element in the scope of

76 . Spoelstra (1989:4; 1989a:68) refers to this viewpoint of Loisy's in a positive sense. It is not clear whether Spoelstra supports this viewpoint wholeheartedly.

77 . Part of their argument was to question the authenticity of the *ekklesia* text in Matthew 16:18 (cf Ridderbos 1969:338-342).

78 . According to Greeves (1960:94) the Encyclical, *Quas Primas* of the Catholic church, says: "The Church is precisely the Kingdom of Christ destined to cover the whole world". Greeves (1960:95) cites also the biographer of William Temple quoting Temple: "All the doctrinal errors of Rome come from the direct identification of the Church as an organized institution, taking its part in the process of history, with the Kingdom of God".

79 . There are a few instances in the synoptic gospels where the word *basileia* is used in a derivative sense (Mt 11:11; 18:3,4; Mk 10:15), and where it may refer to the church. Ridderbos (1969:344) is of the opinion that a few linguistically unclear passages cannot be used as a proof of "the transition of the one notion into the other".

Jesus' preaching of the kingdom of God.⁸⁰ But the *basileia* has a much more comprehensive content; it has cosmic dimensions which transcend time and eternity. The two cannot be seen as identical, although they can be seen as inseparable yet without the one merging into the other. Ridderbos (1969:355) is of the opinion that it is impossible to formulate the relation between the *ekklesia* and the *basileia* precisely. Vorster (1993:530) describes very aptly the relationship between church and kingdom when he says "die kerk staan dus in diens van die koninkryk".

. Defining "the church" as co-extensive with the kingdom of God may imply that the church and society are opposed. The tension is not between "the church" and "society", but between the kingdom of darkness and the kingdom of light.⁸¹ This thesis takes as its point of departure that the kingdom of God is not the same as the church. Tracy (1981:23) puts it very aptly as follows: "Moreover, there now exists among ecclesiologists a broad consensus that the church is not identical with the 'kingdom of God'. The importance of this theological consensus is crucial for undercutting any residual ecclesial triumphalism."

The people of the church are witnesses to the kingdom.⁸² That does not mean that the church and the kingdom of God are one and the same thing. Both the people and the church are subject to God's judgement.⁸³ That the term "church" or "congregation" is only mentioned twice⁸⁴ in the gospels while "kingdom of God" is used so plentifully (more than a hundred times) already indicates that the two terms

80 . "Although the gospel does not contain any passage in which the word *basileia* is used in the sense of "the church", the *idea* of the *ekklesia* is a very essential element in the scope of Jesus' preaching and self-revelation. This fact has of late been rightly emphasized" (Ridderbos 1969:347).

81 . It is clear that the kingdoms on earth (Mt 4:8; Mk 6:23; Rv 17:12; Mt 12:26) stood in contrast to the *basileia tou theou*, kingdom of God. In Jn 18:36, Jesus says: "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now my kingdom is from another place".

82 . "But what is of fundamental importance for ecclesiology is the recognition that the church is not the kingdom of God, but exists to bear witness to God's reign in Jesus Christ" (De Gruchy 1994a:130).

83 . Cf De Gruchy (1994a:130); judgement begins with the household of faith (1 Pt 4:17).

84 . What is striking is the absence of the word *ekklesia* from the gospels except in two cases: Mt 16:18; 18:17. Although the word does not appear in the gospel of Luke, Luke uses the word twenty three times in Acts. Jesus called together the Twelve Apostles, but did not found the *ekklesia* as such: "the church was also aware that it was still part of this age, and was therefore not identical with the *basileia*, the kingdom of God" (Dictionary ... 1980, s.v. 'church').

85 . "Is het nog nodig, na al het voortgaande te zeggen, dat de Kerk niet = het Rijk Gods?" (Miskotte 1989:193). Cf Heyns (1974:37:40-41).

are not co-extensive (Deist & du Plessis 1989:149).⁸⁵ To enter the church is not to enter the kingdom of God. To leave the church is not to leave the kingdom of God.⁸⁶ The implication is clear: people who do not belong to "the church" can still be part of "the kingdom" of God.

The church⁸⁷ spreads the message in which the kingdom is explained and offered and works towards the realisation of God's sovereignty in the world. The kingdom of God has its focus on the idea that God reigns. The word is used in this sense of reign both in the Old Testament and New Testament (Deist & Du Plessis 1989:145). While the *ekklesia* is referring to people here and now, the kingdom sometimes refers to the present and sometimes to the future. The *ekklesia* could expect God's reign now, but also in the future. In Jesus' coming to this world, his miracles, his loving compassion for the afflicted, his mingling with the outcasts and his forgiveness of sinners, his kingdom has come.

The parables want to tell us more about the kingdom of God.⁸⁸ The kingdom of God is then described in terms which reflect God's openness to his creation. The kingdom of God has cosmic dimensions which

86. In Rv 12:10 we find *hē sōtēria* (salvation), *hē dynamis* (power) and *hē basileia tou theou* linked together. According to Paul, the kingdom of God is righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit (Rm 15:17 *dikaiosynē kai eirēne kai chara en pneumati hagiō*).

87. The church can be located in and is definable to certain geographical areas (1 Cor 1:2; 2 Cor 1:2; 1 Th 1:1). The word *ekklesia* occurs frequently in the plural (20 out of 50 instances). Sometimes it refers to the different congregations in an area (Gl 1:2; 22; 1 Cor 16:1, 19; 2 Cor 8:1) and sometimes to a number of churches (Rm 16:1; 1 Cor 7:17; 14:33; 2 Th 1:4). Small groups in houses are also called the *ekklesia* (Phlm 2; 1 Cor 15:5; Col 4:15).

88. Mark and Luke speak of the kingdom of God (Mk 1:15; Lk 5:20), while Matthew prefers to speak of the kingdom of heaven and of the Father (Mt 4:17; Mt 5:3). Matthew also uses the words 'kingdom of God' (12:28; 19:34; 21:31,43) in four instances.

It is interesting that Jesus often speaks of the kingdom as something that is coming (Mt 3:2; 5:17-20; Lk 21:31;), in the sense that the rule of God is coming. In Jesus' preaching the kingdom of God could come at any moment (Mt 24:37, 43; Lk 12:39; Lk 12:26; Mt 24:45; Mt 25:1-13; Mk 9:1; Mt 16:28; Lk 9:27; Lk 22:18; Mk 1:14) even before they have finished proclaiming the kingdom of God (Mt 10:23). (*Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, Vol 2 1980:382).

On the other hand, Jesus also often speaks of the kingdom of God as something that is present (Mt 12:28; Lk 10:18; Lk 17:20; Mk 2:19; Lk 12:32). Jesus himself embodied the kingdom of God. Jesus preached the kingdom of God as someone who was aware that the future was present in his actions. He was realising the future in his proclamations, teachings and actions. He made the kingdom inseparable from his own person. Several examples where Jesus and the kingdom of God are related can be found in the Bible. In Mark 1:15 we read that the kingdom of God was near (*ēnigiken hē basileia tou theou*); in James 5:8 we read "the Lord's coming is near" (*hē parousia tou kyriou ēngiken*). Mark 10:29 - the disciples forsakes their families for Jesus sake (*heneken emou*) and in Luke 18:29 for the sake of the kingdom of God (*heneken tēs basileias tou theou*). Paul speaks of the kingdom of Christ and God (Eph 5:5) at the end of time. Christ hands back to the Father the kingdom he has received from him (1 Cor 15:24-28).

Paul speaks of the kingdom that has come and is already present (1 Th 2:12; 2 Th 1:5; Rm 14:17; 1 Cor 4:20). He also speaks of the kingdom in the futuristic sense and connects it then with the future of *klēronomeō*, to inherit (*Dictionary ... 1980, s.v. 'church'*).

include everything and everybody (Floor 1974:6; Vorster 1993:528). The kingdom of God is not against creation. Deist and du Plessis (1989:147-148) put it as follows:

The kingdom is, however, preserved against a decline into spiritualisation or escape from this world, for the instruction is given that the kingdom should be proclaimed to the people of this world. And the content of the kingdom of God which has to be proclaimed, is a further guarantee that the kingdom will and must be a concrete reality in this world.

The Pharisees and the scribes often criticise Jesus after he has told a parable because they see the kingdom as exclusive something that excludes people, while Jesus has opened up the kingdom to sinners and people who are socially despised and ostracised. Take, for example, the parable of the prodigal son with the emphasis on the compassion of the father, the parable of the lost sheep and the joy over the lost who are found, the parable of the tax collector or the parable of the labourers where God rewards according to need and not merit. Villa-Vicencio (1991:12) reminds us that: "The biblical vision of what society ought to be (symbolised by the Kingdom of God) must be allowed to impinge on what society is in reality".

To understand the church as both a sociological institution and a theological entity is in line with an ecosystemic understanding of the universe. The church as a witness of the kingdom, without being the kingdom, is also in line with ecosystemic thinking where systems are not absolute entities. To understand the kingdom of God as something with an eschatological dimension as well as an earthly dimension is important. The kingdom is not in opposition to this world, but is also more than this world. It is more than the logic of this world and it challenges modern society's belief that only what we can explain logically and only what we can see, really exists. At the same time the kingdom of God does not ignore this earth, but calls us to be faithful to this earth and creation and to the invisible world, the world of things which are often beyond our comprehension, understanding and explanation.

3.2.1.3 The prophetic role of the church

An ecclesiology which is not only directed to the kingdom of God, but also directed towards society should give attention to the prophetic role of the church as institution and also to the members of the church. Much has been written about the prophetic role of the church. In South Africa the *Kairos Document* (1985) challenges the church to be more prophetic in its actions (cf Kritzinger 1988). Theologians started to talk about a prophetic theology. Pastoral work is often described as the "priestly" action of the church and often not seen in terms of the "prophetic" actions of the church.

In pastoral work the prophetic⁸⁹ element is receiving increased attention. William Hulme mentions numerous examples of injustice in American society in his book, *Two ways of caring* (1973: 8-17). He

89 . *Prophetic* refers to the prophets in the Old Testament. In the New Testament a prophet sometimes has the meaning of someone who is able to predict the future (cf 1 Cor 14:29; 1 Jn 4:1).

pleads that the church and the caring actions of the church take the role of priest and prophet seriously. Caring in a prophetic mode must give attention to the wider society, and society's problems.

De Jongh van Arkel (1994) emphasises the importance of a prophetic-ethical element in pastoral care and counselling and challenges pastoral work to overcome the dualism between the prophetic and priestly dimensions. Hendriks and Stoppels (1986:74) conclude that a true pastoral approach is also prophetic and that the shepherd motif in the Bible has prophetic characteristics (cf Heitink 1985:266). Hendriks and Stoppels (1986) firmly believe that justice and mercy cannot be separated.⁹⁰ They (1986) discuss the church's pastoral task in the light of the nuclear rearmament programme/ proposal.⁹¹ They believe (Hendriks & Stoppels 1986:73, 75) that the pastoral task of the church can be found in the leadership the church gives. Leadership is much more than just effective management of a congregation or the church.⁹² Leadership is helping people to find direction. Hendriks and Stoppels (1986:73) put it as follows: "Ons uitgangspunt daarbij is 'dat leiding geven in de kerk (en daarbij is uitdrukkelijk ook te denken aan leiding geven in bestuurlijke zin) een *pastorale* activiteit is' ".

Hendriks and Stoppels (1986:73) use the metaphor of the shepherd to explain why pastoral work should be connected to the leadership role of the church. By the term "leadership" Hendriks and Stoppels (1986) are referring to what De Jongh van Arkel (1994) calls the prophetic-ethical element of pastoral care and counselling. Browning (1978) talks of the moral context of all acts of care.

The church has a prophetic task to become involved in issues like peace and rearmament. This prophetic task incorporates a leadership role, which implies that the church's prophetic role is also part of the church's pastoral task. The church should be serious about helping people, both pastorally and diaconally, whose consciences do not allow them to become involved in the militarization of society (cf Hendriks & Stoppels 1986:74).

Gerkin (1991:163-164) is of the opinion that the church's role can be described as "pastorally prophetic". This means the church acts with sensitivity to human need and human frailty, but with a concern for justice and an awareness of systemic evil and dominance over people and an eschatological vision of the reality to which God is calling the human community.

Brueggemann (1978:13) describes the prophetic ministry of the church in true pastoral terms as "a ministry to nurture, nourish, and evoke a consciousness and perception alternative to the consciousness and

90 . "Dat hebben we ook geleerd van de ontkoppeling van gerechtigheid en barmhartigheid. Gerechtigheid zonder barmhartigheid dreigt de mens uit het oog te verliezen. En als barmhartigheid los komt te staan van gerechtigheid dan word barmhartigheid = liefdadigheid = lapmiddel" (Hendriks & Stoppels 1986:74).

91 . Hendriks and Stoppels (1986) believe that the issue of peace and safety is a pastoral issue and pastoral work should give attention to it.

92 . Cf Van der Ven (1993a:252-274) about the different types of leadership in the church and the concept *democracy* in church leadership.

perception of the dominant culture around us". For Brueggemann (1978:11-12) the American ethos of consumerism founded in scientism and Enlightenment is a depreciation of history and a ridicule of hope. According to Brueggemann (1978:13), the prophetic ministry does not primarily mean the addressing of specific public crises, but the addressing, all the time of the dominant crisis which is enduring and resilient. Brueggemann suggests an "alternative consciousness" for the prophetic ministry. Brueggemann (1978:110-111) states:⁹³

Prophetic ministry does not consist of spectacular acts of social crusading or of abrasive measures of indignation. Rather, prophetic ministry consists of offering an alternative perception of reality and letting people see their own history in the light of God's freedom and will for justice. ... The practice of prophetic ministry is not some special thing done two days a week. Rather, it is done in, with and under all the acts of ministry - as much in counseling as in preaching, as much in liturgy as in education. It concerns a stance and posture or a hermeneutic about the world of death and the word of life that can be brought to light in every context.

The prophetic dimension of the church calls the pastoral work of the church to be prophetic, but even more than that, it calls for an ethical approach. Not only should pastors act ethically but as part of their pastoral actions they also should call society to act ethically. Ethics should not be seen in a narrow and moralising way, but should include social justice.

Graham (1989) made a study of the prophets and is convinced that prophetic dimension should be included in the caring actions of the church. He (1989:50-52) mentions the following characteristics of the prophetic dimension which should inform the pastoral work of the church:

- The prophets provide critique of what are currently the dominant patterns, shapes and issues of society.
- The prophets function and emerge in times of difficulty and distress.
- The prophets offer a direction toward health, salvation, shalom, justice and fulfilment for the individual and the community.
- The vision of the prophets extends to the welfare of the nations and of the created order.
- The prophets have a sense of responsibility for the world and a belief that their activities could be an influence for personal and societal changes. They create a climate of personal and corporate accountability.
- The prophets were embedded in the situation to which they spoke.
- The prophets had a holistic perspective, they interpret what is happening in the light of larger religious, social, political, economic and global perspectives.
- The prophets affirm the interrelation of creation.

93 . Cf Gerkin (1991:163).

From a wide variety of directions theologians understand the pastoral work of the church to include a prophetic dimension. We need to think more broadly about the prophetic ministry than only in terms of specific social and ethical actions. This Brueggemann helps us to do. The total underlying thinking must be challenged. The premise of this study is, at this point, in line with Brueggemann's challenge to the church. In this study pastoral work is understood within a bigger framework of thinking. It seems necessary to include a strong prophetic dimension in an ecclesiological base theory for practical theology so that it could also form a base for the pastoral work of the church.

3.2.1.4 Review

The church is not against society and although there are differences between the church and society, the church is still part of society. The church consists of people, those same people are part of society. When we say that the church consists of people, we also mean that the church consists of individuals. The church is not the kingdom of God, the kingdom of God actually extends far beyond the church.

An ecosystemic view of the relationship church-society opens new perspectives. The world or society is not seen as a dangerous, alien, threatening place that must be conquered personally with God's help. An ecosystemic view underscores the internal relationship between God and cosmos and between the individual and society. Individuals as well as the whole cosmos are affected by sin and brokenness. The whole universe is redeemed and is in the process of being transformed by God, not cast off or left behind. The mandate to increase the love of God, self, and neighbour, and to promote justice and responsible stewardship of God's creation has consequences for the whole society as well as for the church and the persons who make up the church.

A base theory for practical theology which develops within the framework of an ecosystemic paradigm should be built on a holistic view of the church. An ecclesiology as base theory should be aware of the theological as well as the sociological dimensions of the church. From an ecosystemic perspective, a pastoral work ecclesiology should be non-dualistic.

- The church as witness of the kingdom of God must reflect the merciful kingship of God in this world. This can only be done if the pastoral work of the church is also directed at the wider society. The fact that the scope of the kingdom is wider than that of the *ekklesia*, on the one hand, and the *basileia* is revealed in the church, on the other, has definite meaning for the work of the church and gives the church a specific character of **openness, reflexivity and paradoxicality**.

These characteristics should be used in an ecosystemic perspective of the pastoral work of the church, which means that pastoral work must not only be directed at the members of the church, but at a much broader community, which is also in need of care, because God's kingdom reaches out to this world. There is a real danger that the church can become an entity in itself, that it can become a "closed shop"; that the church in general can exist just for itself. But the connection with the kingdom of God is the inherent pressure for the church not to be confined to itself and its own needs.

- The *ekklesia* is brought together by God (theological dimension), but has a task in this world (sociological dimension) to proclaim the gospel of love. The essence of this task is to demonstrate God's love, love becomes real where the *ekklesia* starts to care for those in need.
- An ecosystemic perspective on an ecclesiology should stress the prophetic task of the church. The prophetic task is part of the ethical dimension of the church and should not be separated in a dualistic way from the individual.

3.2.2 A theological-metaphorical understanding of the church

From a ecosystemic perspective it becomes clear that theologians should come to recognise that their language and the language of the church in general is much less scientific and much more metaphorical than previously realised. How do we understand what the church is and what it stands for? There is no complete ecclesiology in the Bible. Different biblical writers have different ecclesiologies and often use different ways to explain what they mean. To speak about the church from a theological perspective and in terms of Biblical images is very difficult. This study prefers the term "metaphor" to describe certain aspects of the church. But what is a metaphor?

Sally McFague (1982:14) suggests that we talk about *metaphorical theology*.⁹⁴ She explains the word "metaphor" as follows (1982:15):

Most simply, a metaphor is seeing one thing *as* something else, pretending "this" is "that" because we do not know how to think or talk about "this", so we use "that" as a way of saying something about it. Thinking metaphorically means spotting a thread of similarity between dissimilar objects, events, or whatever, one of which is better known than the other, and using the better-known one as a way of speaking about the lesser known.

Metaphors assert similarity but deny identity. McFague understands Jesus' parables as extended metaphors. Symbols are not a way of thinking and speaking, but are the "solidification of metaphor" (McFague 1982:16). Metaphors also make use of the dissimilarity, the unconventional and surprising - something which Jesus used in his parables. Symbols, on the other hand, make use of similarity and the assumed. **Metaphors ask for further interpretation.**

According to McFague (1982:23) a model is a dominant metaphor - a metaphor with staying power. When a metaphor gains wide appeal and becomes a major way of structuring and ordering, it becomes a model. Models are a further step along the route from metaphorical to conceptual language. Models give us a way to think about the unknown in terms of the known. The same can also be said of metaphors. McFague (1982:23) understands a model as a "grid" or "filter". Models have the danger of becoming more easily

94. Gerkin (1991:22) speaks about metaphorical theology and says: "that stream of contemporary theology builds on the assumption that no one metaphor is adequate to convey the rich and varied meanings of Christian understanding".

identified as *the* only one than metaphors (McFague 1982:24).⁹⁵ From metaphors and models arise concepts and theories. McFague (1982:26) says concepts and theories are "at the far end of the continuum and rarely expose their metaphorical roots".

According to McFague (1982:77), the idea of "metaphor" was lost in the eighteenth century (cf Cone 1985:48). McFague (1982:77) argues that this was a result of the mechanistic, objective, deterministic view of science and says:

It is not difficult to see how Newtonian science and its concomitants form a clear line of tradition to present-day positivism. It is in essence a *nonmetaphorical* way of perceiving the world and everything in it. ... As a consequence of these strategies, the Bible has been turned into an idol - perfect and absolute,⁹⁶ closed to human interpretation.

Metaphors are used to explain the theological side of an ecosystemic ecclesiology. Metaphors also help to give expression to the difficulty of saying exactly what the church is. Ecosystemic thinking draws the attention to the non-absoluteness of things, also the church. The church can be described by many different metaphors, the church as body of Christ (1 Cor 12:12-30); the church as a building (1 Pt 2:4-8); the church as the people (nation) of God (1 Pt 2:9-10); the church as a city and as a bride (Rv 21:2). In 1 Peter 2:5 we are told that Christians are a temple built of living stones. In Ephesians 4:16 Paul says that the Body of Christ is still under construction. Minear (1977:253) reminds us that this mixing of metaphors "reflects not logical confusion but theological vitality". For this study this **dynamic** character of the church is very important. The selection of only a few metaphors does not imply that other metaphors are unimportant or that this is the only way to speak about the church.

The metaphors used here have something in common, they all confirm and strengthen the idea that the church can be called a "community". At the same time the idea of community should also be seen metaphorically (cf chapter 4). Bosch (1991:368) aptly describes how his discussion of the different missionary elements should not be seen as isolated components, but as intimately interrelated components. "As we focus our torchlight on one element at a time, all the other elements will also be present and visible just outside the centre of the beam of the light". What follows should be seen as a torchlight shining on different metaphors for describing the church, without losing track of the bigger picture, which is present all the time.

95. Hendriks and Ludik (1993:817) say: "n Model is egter nie identies met die Bybelse metafoor waarop dit steun nie. Dit is bloot 'n prakties-teologiese konstruksie met 'n heuristiese funksie. Kritiek teen 'n model impliseer dus nie kritiek teen 'n metafoor vir die kerk nie". Hendriks and Ludik is critical about "the shepherd-flock model" for the church, especially in urban churches. That does not mean that they do not accept the shepherd metaphor in the Bible. Cf Breytenbach (1992) for a discussion of both the "body of Christ" and "shepherd-flock" metaphors (cf also Pieterse 1991a: 22-25).

96. Bosch (1991:270 ff) is of the opinion that it leads to concepts like the "inerrancy" of Scripture and "pure doctrine".

3.2.2.1 The church as a community of believers

'Gemeenschap' vind je niet exclusief in de (kerkelijke) gemeente; maar het omgekeerde is wel waar: wie 'gemeente' zegt, zegt 'gemeenschap' (Feret & Hendriks 1986:139).

This section will discuss the theological and biblical dimensions of the church. To do that the metaphor "community" will be taken as one of the best ways to give expression to what we mean by the concept "church".

The church is built on the principle of group and community development (Van der Ven 1993a:208).⁹⁷ The church has been presented as a community from the earliest times (Van der Ven 1993a:219). Every person participates in many communities, without necessarily consciously pledging allegiance. A person can be part of a farming community or a suburban community, without consciously being aware of it. It often just happens through the natural processes of socialisation. Identifying with the church may come in the same way for some people while for others, it is a very conscious decision to become part of the church community.

The church as a community is discussed thoroughly by James M Gustafson (1961) in *Treasure in earthen vessels: The Church as a human community*.⁹⁸ Gustafson describes the church from a sociological point of view and as a social organisation. This does not mean that he denies the theological dimensions of the church (cf 1961:104). His study also is meant to be a criticism of those who only interpret the church in terms of its theological dimensions and deny its social dimensions.

In his monumental book *The people called: the growth of community in the Bible* (1986), Hanson discusses the importance of the principle of community in both Old Testament and New Testament texts. Hanson's book is one of the most detailed studies about the concept "community" in the Bible. It is impossible to summarise or to discuss it in detail within the limits of this study. The researcher leans heavily on Hanson's understanding, because his interpretation of the context and content of the Bible can broadly be described as an ecosystemic understanding of the Bible, although he does not specifically call it by that name.

Hanson consciously tries to work with the bigger picture and understands the subject "community" in terms of the traditions in the Old Testament and the New Testament and the times between the Old Testament and the New Testament. He emphasises the importance of the Old Testament in understanding the New Testament and also the understanding of the socio-economic and political background of the Bible texts. Specific concepts can only be understood in relation to other concepts and the community in which they are used. According to Hanson (1986:75-78) the concepts "righteousness", "compassion" and "worship" can

97 . "Hij is begrijpelijk omdat de kerk op groeps- en gemeenschapsvorming is aangewezen. Zonder deze bestaat zij niet, is zij een institutionele luchtbel. Bovendien kan zij er krachtens haar visie (volk Gods) en missie (Jezusbeweging) geen vrede mee hebben dat menzen in eenzaamheid en vervreemding terechtkomen ..." (Van der Ven 1993a:208).

98 . Cf also Tracy's (1981: 23-24 note 77) references to Gustafson.

only be understood in terms of a dynamic interrelationship between them. These terms and their interrelationship forms the basis of the community.⁹⁹

Hanson (1986:81-86) describes the importance of understanding the *tôrâ* in the wider context of the community and the principles of the community. As example he describes the story of Tamar and Judah in Genesis 38. According to the law of Moses, Tamar should be stoned (cf John 8:3-6a). According to Hanson (1986:83), this story can only be understood in the context of the bigger story. In the context Tamar is the one wronged against. She is the one in need of righteousness (cf Judah's reply in Gen 38:25). It is only within the context of the covenant community as a righteous community that we can understand the story. The early Yahwistic community extended special protection and care to those who were helpless and vulnerable. The alien, the widow and the poor were protected by special laws. Tamar falls into all three categories. Hanson (1986:85) explains it as follows:

Not only is the story of Tamar compatible with the attitude toward *tôrâ* which we have seen in Matthew and Paul, but it exemplifies the remarkable notion of community that is the tap root out of which would grow God's new people in Christ, a people living from the promises of the God who saves the weak and the oppressed. The meaning of the church will be grasped, therefore, not by denying that root, but by carefully tracing its history of growth.

The community of faith does not exist in isolation. It is part of a bigger society and environment. This interrelatedness of the Yahwistic community with its wider environment becomes clear if you take into account how often the stories in the Old Testament can be related to similar stories of other nations in the Near East. This is especially true of the creation stories (cf König 1982b). The Yahwistic community gives its own interpretation to these narratives within the context of Yahweh as the creator and so contributes to a new understanding of creation.

The creation narratives are also an example of how the Yahwistic community takes the natural environment seriously. Again Hanson (1986:127-132) makes much of the fact that the Yahwistic community was serious about its natural environment. Hanson (1986:129 and 130) puts it as follows:

Israel was not a people detached from its natural environment, or forever wandering like a bedouin without a home to call its own. God had created for all humans, and thus Israel as well, a good home, one supportive of life and capable of benefitting its human inhabitants with great blessing. The effect of this introduction of the theme of creation was that the Yahwistic community would not only direct attention to its passing through history toward a goal promised by Yahweh, but it would also focus attention on the world of nature as a home - yes, even a garden - for which it was to care tenderly in partnership with the creator God.

99. "According to this analysis, then, a triad of qualities underlies the early Yahwistic notion of community. In their interrelationship, they clarify the dynamism discernible in Israelite community in the premonarchical period. The righteousness of God represented a universal standard of justice that ordered life; Compassion allowed righteousness in Israel to maintain its stringency as a clear and dependable standard by giving it a heart; Finally the two were able to work together as a life-enhancing polarity in maintaining an ordered but open society by finding their unity in worship of the one holy God, the Judge of the wicked and the Redeemer of the repentant and the innocent oppressed" (Hanson 1986:75).

The stories of Genesis 1-11 themselves indicate how profoundly the Yahwistic community was enriched by being located explicitly within its larger natural and world environment.

Hanson (1986:208-214) describes the importance of community for the individual. The Wisdom literature, in particular, describes the plight of the individual. What becomes clear is that the individual is part of a bigger community and it is within this context that we must understand the joy and the sorrows of the individual. Many of the proverbs should be understood against the background of this wider community. Job's cry of despair to God (7:11-21; 9:21-24) should be understood in the community context. Community and individual are not in opposition. The prophet Ezekiel makes it clear that every person has a responsibility (Ezk 18:19-28; 3:16-21).¹⁰⁰

According to Hanson (1986:372-374), different movements could be identified as carriers of the ideas of the Jewish people in the time of the Hellenization.¹⁰¹ In the Qumran writings of the Essenes there is a hatred of the world. The Essenes were rigid and exclusive and worked with a dualistic apocalyptic vision of the world. There was no compassion for those outside the community of the elect. The rabbinical writings of the Pharisees show a "basically world-tolerating spirit" (Hanson 1986:375). Hanson (1986:376-377) describes the Pharisaic interpretation of the Torah as "dialectic and "subtle" and part of a "lively hermeneutical process". He portrays the *pāser* method of the Essenes as "rigid" and "authoritarian". The lines between the Pharisees and other Jews and even non-Jews were not as fixed as between the Essenes and others. Non-members could join the Pharisaic party, if they accepted the interpretation of the Torah. Hanson (1986:375) sees the fact that the Essenes had one person, the Teacher of Righteousness, who was allowed to interpret the Torah as the main reason for the rigid structure of the Essenes.

The Pharisees were much more in line with the Yahwistic notion of community. A community with vitality, with love, compassion, righteousness and worship. But the Essenes were a much more closed group. "There can be no question that Pharisaic Judaism both inherited and refined essential qualities of the classical Yahwistic notion of community" (Hanson 1986:379). In the New Testament the Pharisees is portrayed as something of a caricature. It is true that they were staunch guardians of an established and

100 . Many more pages could be written about the role of community in the Old Testament. Hanson (1986:372-381) has an interesting interpretation of the times between the two testaments. The encounter between the Jewish tradition and Hellenism forced the Jews to think through many of their teachings. The various streams in the tradition were compelled to clarify their formulations vis-a-vis the Hellenistic spirit. The result was the birth of important rival parties, each seeking to preserve what they believed to be the essential qualities of the Jewish heritage (Hanson 1986:373).

101 . The Hasmoneans and Sadducees seem to be of less importance "in the ongoing history of the notion of community in Israel, for they both failed to live beyond the deaths of the early structures with which they had become entangled" (Hanson 1986:374). The Sadducean party held a very conservative view of Scripture. The Zealots and Sicarii shared radicalism with the Essenes. The Essenes and Pharisees, were both committed to the Torah. Both groups were stemming from the Hasidean movement which from its inception repudiated "all those worldly entanglements that lured the hearts of the people toward gods other than Yahweh" (Hanson 1986:375). There was a great contrast between these two movements, although they had the same background and principles.

carefully defined religious system and a party committed to preserving the received Mosaic tradition (Hanson 1986:388). Their sincerity and devotion need not be doubted (Hanson 1986:481).

Some communities were more closed than others and some were more dogmatic in their interpretation of the religious writings of the times. Information about the above may help to understand how the different traditions view the idea of community.

It is against this background that we should interpret the Christian movement in the New Testament. The roots of Christianity must be sought for in the traditions of the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament). But it is important to keep in mind that in the time of the Old Testament and in the time between the two testaments different traditions and different communities existed and that New Testament writers make use of the different traditions.

Early Christianity (also called the Jesus movement) took shape within a Hellenistic-Roman world, but was rooted in a Jewish heritage and Hebrew Scripture. Hanson (1986:385 ff) mentions several examples of this continuity between Jesus's message and the Jewish religious history. The commandments to love God and neighbour comes from the Hebrew Scripture; the Lord's Prayer is paralleled by traditional Jewish prayers like the *Amidah* and the *Kaddish*.¹⁰²

Hanson (1986:388) believes that the **openness** of the early disciples to other people was not a new phenomenon, but a rediscovery of the openness in the Yahwistic faith. Examples are the Hebrew slaves in Egypt, the Jewish exiles in Babylon and the Torah-faithful *hasidim*. Hanson (1986:389) comes to the conclusion that: "in some respects the confessional and communal patterns emerging from early Christianity find close analogies in early Yahwism".

The influence of the earlier history of the Jewish nation and of movements like the Essenes and Pharisees should not be neglected. This is the mind-frame in which the disciples and many other people of that time grew up. Therefore the origin of the church must be understood "both as a continuation of what precedes and as a new beginning" (Hanson 1986:394). The style found in Jesus's preaching was **openness**, which led to a redefining of the community of faith with the accent on repentance rather than on a community safeguarded by laws of purity. This led to a different attitude to nonmembers. Jesus ate with publicans and sinners. Hanson (1986:394) believes that Jesus and the disciples' attitude resembles the patterns of early Yahwism in important aspects. The principles of righteousness, compassion and worship play an important role in the New Testament. Hanson (1986:423-426) sees these three principles as the basis of Jesus' understanding of community.

102 . The twelve apostles' very number refers to the twelve tribes of Israel (Mt 10:5-23; Gl 2:7-10). The disciples visited the temple (Ac 2:46; 3:11); Matthew starts his account of Jesus' life with a genealogy of David. Paul depicts the Christians as the offsprings of Abraham (Gl 3:20). Many more examples can be mentioned.

Paul's understanding of the Christian community differs completely from that of his former co-religionists, the Pharisees. They still structured their community according to the Mosaic Torah. They lived as a minority dedicated to maintaining ritual purity in a defiled world. This was their communal ideal with roots going back to the time of (for example) Haggai (cf Hg 2:11 - 14) and Ezra 9 - 10. Paul proclaims the message of the Gospels, namely that Jesus Christ has come and that the day of reversal has arrived. This also means a reversal of the relationship between the holy and the profane. Hanson (1986:441) explains it as follows: "No longer was the holy threatened, under siege, or on the defensive. The reign of evil had been broken, and the unholy was in retreat".

Is this not a too optimistic understanding of Christ's coming to this earth? Paul is well aware of the paradox of this time between Christ's first coming and resurrection and his second coming, of the "already" and the "not yet". His eschatological perspective did not blindly overlook the persistent signs of the presence of evil in this world (cf Rm 8:22-23; 2 Cor 4:18).

Paul stood firmly against the gnostics' seductive beckoning to abdicate responsibility for the world. Paul's understanding of community is not a closed community with no contact with the world. In his understanding of community, a community does not exist because it wishes to shield itself from the world. A community exists because Christ has risen from the dead. The community which exists because of this has a completely different purpose from a community who wishes to withdraw from the world.

For Paul, a community exists because it is the body of Christ. To be part of the body of Christ means to be an ambassador and to have the task of reconciling the world with God (2 Cor 5:14-21). The members of the body of Christ must be servants in this world (Phlp 2:1-7; Rm 15:1-3; 7-9). Everybody is important and has a task in the body of Christ (1 Cor 12).

According to Hanson (1986:460), a gnosticizing form of Pauline theology developed later on. The author of the Book of James spoke out against it (cf Ja 2:18-26). In his closing chapter Hanson (1986:467-512) comes to the conclusion that the understanding of community in the New Testament can only be done in understanding the Old Testament. If we want to understand the task of the Christian community of today, it is necessary to understand the role of the Judaeo-Christian community in the Bible. It is still the same (covenant) God who calls people to make up the community and we should not be surprised if we discover that He is calling us to the same tasks to which He called our spiritual ancestors.

Hanson (1986:470-493) believes that as Israel was called to be righteous people because Yahweh was righteous; and people with compassion because God had compassion for them while they were slaves in Egypt, we are called as a Christian community to show the same characteristics. The same with the idea of *shalom*. God gives *shalom* but God intended it for all creation. God's people must have *shalom* between themselves but must also spread *shalom* in this world.

At the same time we must be aware of the fact that there is not only one ecclesiastical form in the Scriptures (Pieterse 1991a). Contemporary communities of faith have to see for themselves how their communities should function, because we have a dynamic God. The Bible is not a reference manual that

provides direct answers to modern problems. That is to limit the Bible. Communities of faith must know to what God has called them and, with that in mind, must adapt their communal structures to changing situations which will enable them to preserve the classical themes in the Scripture and address the critical issues of this world with prophetic clarity and courage. Hanson (1986:493) formulates it as follows:

A community of faith is able to confess that no human formulations of institutional structures are eternally valid and at the same time maintain a healthy communal stability if it lives from the belief that its life is created ever anew as an aspect of God's ongoing creative, redemptive activity, of which it is a modest part. The true community of faith is thus a pilgrim people, seeing its forms and structures as provisional within a world being transformed from brokenness to wholeness, and trusting that ultimately its own transformation is being guided by a God whose promises are trustworthy and whose purposes are dedicated to the redemption of all creation.

To summarise: According to Hanson, the concept *community* in the Old Testament and the New Testament carries with it the following meanings:

- Community in the Bible carries with it the concepts of righteousness, compassion and worship.
- Community means protection and care for those who were helpless, vulnerable - the alien, widow, orphan and the poor.
- Community is very closely linked with environment.
- The joys and sorrows (Job) and wisdom (Proverbs) of the individual can only be understood in the context of community. Individual and community are very closely linked.

According to Grenz (1994:625), there is a reciprocal relationship between the individual and the corporate fellowship of the church as covenant people.

- Community does not exist for its own benefit, but is the power base from whence people go out into a bigger world.
- Community can be linked to the concept of covenant and the concept of body of Christ. (Cf also Grenz 1994). The eschatological community which arrives in its fullness only at the consummation of human history is already present among us in a partial manner (Grenz 1994:627).

From an ecosystemic approach it is important to think about the Christian community not in terms of a triangular hierarchy with the important people (priests, clergy) at the top and the poor and the outcasts at the bottom. A Christian community resembles a circle of people where Christ even dares to put himself among them, being the Lord and one of the equals at one and at the same time (cf Bruwer 1994a:50).

Gerkin (1991:124-125) reminds us that the original English usage of the word "parish" referred to a church district with its own church. A parish included all the activities that took place in that geographical location. The fact that the word "parishioner" today identifies only those who hold specific membership in a particular local congregation is a sign of the modern dualistic world-view. Persons and the community are divided into

sacred and secular, members and non-members. In this way the church plays a role in the fragmentation of the larger community (Gerkin 1991:125).

Gerkin (1991) fears that emphasis on the community aspect of religion may lead to a closed community where sameness rather than diversity is emphasised. Then the religious community as a fellowship becomes insulated from interaction with the pluralism of the world which is "fundamentally disloyal to the biblical metaphorical images of the church as embodying all of the people of God" (Gerkin 1991:125).

In a very interesting and relevant way Gerkin (1991) explains how the community metaphor can be used to form a church-centred or pastor-centred community. Gerkin (1991:132) calls it the centrifugal model. The pastor and those closest to him/her form the middle point (centre) of the community. According to Gerkin this centripetal model is a self absorbing model. It is a sign of a Christian community which is self centered.

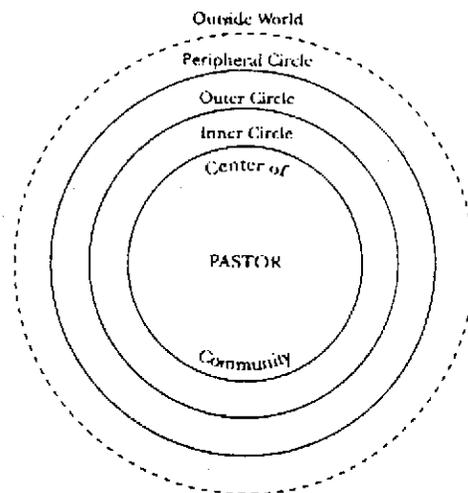


Figure 4: Gerkin (1991:120)

Gerkin (1991:134) makes use of Hanson's (1986) exegesis of the term *community* to formulate an understanding of the Biblical concept community where the church is not aloof and distant from the affairs of the world, because God is a God concerned with the world. This type of community is different from the centrifugal model. Here it becomes possible for people of the church community to nourish and encourage the viability of the community they find rather than simply pull people to the centre of the visible institutional Christian community. It is a genuine concern for the community of all people and not simply or exclusively for those close to the centre of the worshipping community. Gerkin (1991:137) describes it very aptly as follows:

The meanings that hold the Christian community in relationship to God and the people of God as they are inculcated in the Christian community are thus to be disbursed into all other levels and varieties of community relationships, rather than to be treasured and harbored within the Christian community itself. They are to be placed in service to all other levels of communal relationships and brought into creative dialogue with the bodies of meaning that arise within other forms of communal life

The Christian community thus finds its vocation and purpose not by preoccupying itself with its own

activities, but by becoming dialogically involved in and committed to the enhancement of other loci of communal life (Gerkin 1991:137). Rather than competing with other centres of activity for the time and energy and commitment of persons in trying to pull persons away from other activities, the church community should see as its fulfilment the involvement of the people of the church community in other communities. The church community's task is not so much to draw the world to itself but to dislocate itself into society as a servant people (Gerkin 1991:161).

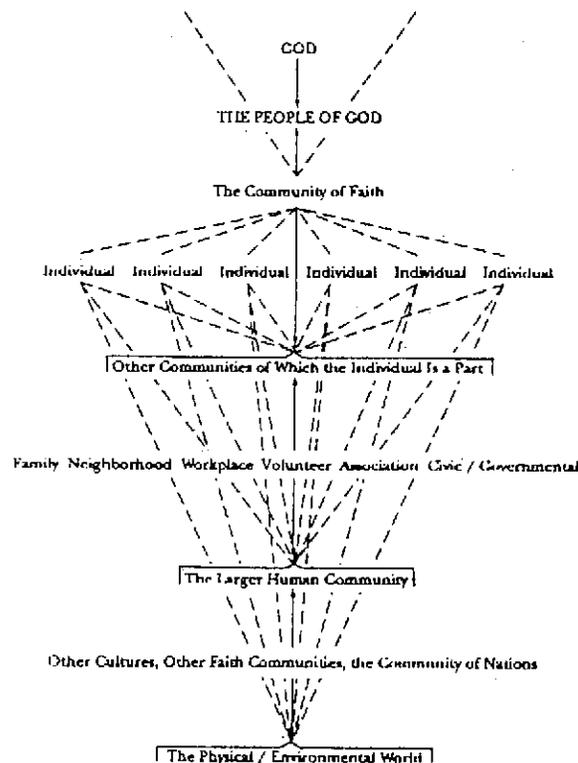


Figure 5: Gerkin (1991:136)

Gerkin (1991:135-136) describes this centrifugal model of the church as an illustration of a church community which is not closed to other communities.

3.2.2.2 The church as a family and household of God

Pastoral care is considered to be the task of the entire church family where an individual's burden is lifted temporarily or shared continuously by the group. Ideally, the group bears the burden until the individual is able to assume his own load once more. Thereby, the whole church family is made strong once again" (Brister 1964:22-23).

At the beginning of this section the researcher refers to the use of metaphorical language. The importance of the metaphor "family of God" is emphasized by Burger (1995b). The idea of the church as a family or household can be found in several New Testament passages (Eph 2:19ff; 1 Pt 2:5ff and 4:17; Heb 3:1-6; 1 Tm 3:15; Gl 6:10; 1 Cor 3:9-16. The metaphor "family" and the metaphor "household" could be seen in relation to each other. In essence, these metaphors of the church as a family or a household confirm the

idea that the church is a community of people caring for each other. Firet and Hendriks (1986:140-141) understand the "family model" as something that functions within the "community model". So, how does the church as a community function? Like a family! There is also the possibility of what Moltmann calls a friendship model (cf Jn 15:15). Gous (1990:112) believes that the Biblical model for the family and the systemic model for the family correlates on many points.

Burger (1995b) makes it clear that without the context of a caring and loving family, it is impossible to understand the gospel and to live out its demands. The commandments of the gospel do not function in a vacuum, but in a concrete situation. (This is more or less the same "message" as Hanson's, in what he has to say about the church as a community.) It is impossible to understand God's commandments without comprehending the caring situation in the community. Burger (1995b:7-11) believes that the family metaphor brings some aspects of the church to the fore more strongly than the other metaphors. He mentions the following:

- It emphasises the koinonia dimension of the community of believers. This for Burger (1995b) means that the communicative aspects of the church get more attention.
- It can motivate people to think not only in terms of themselves, but also in terms of others. A family context often asks people to put the "family" and not themselves first. It can help people to think less selfishly and be more willing to direct themselves to others.
- A family metaphor of the church will help people to understand the radicality of the gospel, namely that it is radical grace, on the one hand, and radical commitment to God, on the other (cf Mt 12:46). In the context of the family where people will find love, acceptance, caring and belonging, the quest for commitment is understandable as well as the fact that there is forgiveness.
- Burger (1995b:11) understands the metaphor of "family of God" as a call for the church to be more ecumenical.

Crosby (1988) researches the concept "house" in Matthew, which he believes to be a primary metaphor. He (1988:33) rejects the viewpoint that *oikia* refers to the building and *oikos* to the group of people or household and believes the words *oikia/oikos* are used interchangeably. Crosby (1988:33) puts it as follows:

Religiously, the movement¹⁰³ originated in and owed its growth to the conversion of entire households or of certain individuals within households; generally cultic activities like the eucharist took place in the house. Economically, the household constituted the context for the sharing of resources among co-believers as well as the wandering charismatics. Socially, the household provided a practical basis and theoretical model for Christian organization as well as its preaching.

103 . He refers to the Christian movement.

According to Crosby (1988:54), Matthew did not make a simple equation between *ekklesia* and *oikia/oikos*. But the words function very much within the same domain of meaning. The *ekklesia* refers to the gathering of people which is not necessary spatially determined, for example Matthews 18:18 which refers "to the gathering of at least two or three", but also can be house-based (Matthews 17:25). The *oikia/oikos* assumes local households (Matthews 16:16-18), but can also be a more universal concept.

These households were the foundation of society and through them Jesus had a message for society. Issues like justice and poverty and the right-ordering of resources were dealt with in the households. It is not possible to transpose Matthew into the twentieth century, but Crosby (1988:264) believes that, with an interactive hermeneutic, we can learn a lot from the concept household. We need to develop "a communitarian ethic of justice and policies implementing justice within post-industrial 'corpocracy'..." (Crosby 1988:264). His conclusion is that Matthew's vision for the household of God, namely justice, should become the church's vision for the world. Crosby (1988:264) puts it as follows: "This involves gathering together to become church via communities of conscientization that are in the process of being continually converted from society's addictions and inviting others in society to a similar ongoing conversion."

Crosby's interpretation of the *oikia/oikos* is very interesting. He (1988:266) understands that the task of the *oikia/oikos* is to interact with nature and the divine. This means that things must be seen from the "viewpoint of the ecological whole". Crosby (1988:266) describes it as follows: "The justice demanded of Matthew's households should compel us to work for a new kind of ecological house-ordering".

Crosby (1988:266, 324) is of the opinion that the word "ecology" comes from the word *oikia/oikos*.¹⁰⁴ "Ecology is merely the study of the world as a basic organism, as a basic global household" (Crosby 1988:266). Crosby understands ecology from a religious perspective to be concerned with the world as the original household created by God. Santmire (1989:269) puts it as follows:

The whole cosmos, not just the human family, is on a pilgrimage with God from alpha to omega, and God is on a pilgrimage with the cosmos, not just humanity, from the very beginning to the very end. We gain this insight, if for no other reason, when we lift our eyes to see God's future and see a new heaven and a new earth, not only a new Jerusalem.

Kritzinger (1994a:199)¹⁰⁵ calls Paul's theology a "family theology", which he also describes as the same as a "body theology" or a "people's theology". Kritzinger (1994a:198) quotes Davies, who says that the

104. According to Crosby (1988:324), the word "okologie" was coined by the German zoologist, Ernst Haeckel to mean "the relationship of the animal to its organic as well as its inorganic environment".

105. Kritzinger (1994a, a missiologist, does not take pastoral work as his point of departure. His article explores the role of church buildings in the traditional churches and in the African Independent Churches. Kritzinger (1994a:199) makes the statement: "... missionary theology (is), interested primarily in the church's role in the world". This correlates very well with some of the aims of this study in practical theology. It is also an example of the interrelationship between the different subjects in theology.

absence of church buildings in the first centuries was due not to practical factors like poverty or persecution, but to an underlying conviction about the church as people and not as a building. Kritzinger (1994a:198-200) emphasises the need for the "family" character in the church, because that will reflect a church where people are more important than buildings.

Paul often makes use of the family or household metaphor for the church (Gl 6:10; 1 Tm 3:15; Eph 4:17 of also 1 Pt 2:5; 1 Pt 4:17). Interestingly enough, even before there was any theological understanding of the church as a family, the early church organised itself in family settings and along familial lines. Early Christians met in private homes and started to use kinship language to one another, like brother, sister and children. Loubser (1994:64) researched the role of house churches in Luke and says:

The reason for the role assigned to the house churches in Luke-Acts was that they also played a critical strategic role in the expansion of the gospel of salvation. On the one hand they gave members of the fledging movement a breathing space in a hostile environment, while on the other hand, they embodied the messianic lifestyle, witnessing to an alternative social order where the traditional roles of society were reversed.

Loubser (1994:68) makes a very important remark when he summarises his research, he says that the house churches "placed a special burden on Christian members of the Roman elite to open their households to the church and to care for the poor". An important implication of Loubser's article is the idea that house churches were not chosen because that was the only option available, but that they were chosen on purpose, because they demonstrated something of the beliefs of the early church.

To summarise: The importance of the *family* and *household* concepts are that they demonstrate a closeness and caringness, a boldness - to stand up for the rights of others, but also an openness to others.

3.2.2.2.1 The family in modern context

From an ecosystemic perspective it is impossible to refer to the metaphor of the church as family without acknowledgement that the notion of "the family" is in a crisis in the Western world.¹⁰⁶ Couture (1995:63) says the family has lost many of its historical functions, it is no longer the economic, medical and educational centre it once was. Browning (1995:80) does not want to reconstruct a male-dominated family or a female-dominated family system. This would only be a change of power in the same system. What is necessary is a more ethical approach to the problem and this is in this respect that pastoral care can be of value. Browning (1995:83-84) proposes "mutuality" as a value. This means that children should learn in their homes to love others as themselves. Self-love and love for others must go together. This is in contrast with a "self-love" attitude promoted by some psychologists and a "self-hate" attitude promoted by some

106 . Browning (1995:75) refers to statistics in the USA where there is a 10% decline in the marriage rate since 1975. Births out-of-wedlock increases from 5% in 1960 to 30%.

Christian traditions. It seems if "mutuality" as a value for the family system could also be used in the church community.

Fishburn (1991) believes the church should be seen as the family of God, but is critical of the concept that the family is seen as the church. She (1991:86) puts it as follows: "It has been typical of the Protestant tradition to believe that "the Christian home" can or should be a little church. This reverses the biblical expectation that the power of "the love of Christ" is known through participation in "the household of God".

Fishburn believes that the importance of "the Christian home" is a Victorian view which is not true in the secular society of this century. Fishburn (1991:86) puts it very strongly as follows:

Membership in the household of God presupposes a common faith in Jesus as Lord. Membership in a family may presuppose little more in common than biological kinship. There is no sociological entity that can accurately be called *the Christian home*. The family is not essential to the Christian life. People can become Christian through participation in a congregation of Christians whether they were born into a Christian family or not. Only the church is essential to the Christian life.

Fishburn (1991:40-42) believes that the formative power of the congregation is neglected in favour of the home. For her (1991:46), the quality of relationships in the life of a congregation is a part of Christian nurture. As the body of Christ each generation in the church should learn anew what it means to live in love of God and your neighbour. Couture (1995:57-70), takes this further in her discussion of the issues of single parenthood and also asks questions about the underlying assumptions in society's understanding of the importance of the family while little reference is made to the importance of community networks in some analyses (cf Couture 1995:69).

Fishburn (1991) wishes to include in the church those people who often feel excluded by the traditional view of the church as consisting of families. For example, people who are single, unmarried, single parents and their children, or gay people. Fishburn sees the church as much more than the coming together of the family. **The diversity of the church will be enhanced if the family is not seen as the most important building block of the church.** In reality, the church's view of the family no longer really exists in this century. Fishburn moves beyond the traditional view that the church consists of smaller building blocks, namely the family.

Fishburn's (1991) view is important for an ecosystemic approach to ecclesiology. The family metaphor is a good example of how people in the church should live together. The church itself is the family of God, which brings together people from all situations and all walks of life. The family metaphor could be taken too literally if the physical family is taken, in a Newtonian way, as the building block of the church. Then the church gets an exclusive character and loses its ecumenical vision. People who are not part of close-knit families are often then excluded.

The book of Cosgrove and Hatfield (1994) *Church conflict: the hidden systems behind the fights* (1994) works with a family systems approach to the local congregation. Cosgrove and Hatfield (1994) help us to be aware of all the different systems involved in a congregation. This confirms that an ecosystemic

ecclesiology is necessary in dealing with church issues like conflict.

To summarise:

- The family is actually a community in a community or a sub-community.
- The family or the household metaphors of the church confirm the idea that the church is a community, body, family, household where people should love, accept and care for one another.
- Burger (1995b) reminds us of the ecumenical dimension in the family metaphor. The fact that the word "ecumenical" comes from the word *oikoumene*, which refers to household, emphasises the fact that the church consists of people in relationship with other people.
- Crosby (1988) emphasises the ecological dimension in the household metaphor.
- Fishburn (1991) puts the family metaphor in perspective and the importance of not excluding those people who are not part of traditional family structures.¹⁰⁷

An ecosystemic approach to ecclesiology should incorporate these aspects in its ecclesiology, because it confirms the need for an ecclesiological view which is deeply aware of the holistic nature of the universe.

3.2.2.3 The church as the body of Christ

The body of Christ is one of the main metaphors in the New Testament which describes the church. It is seen by several practical theologians (cf Pieterse, Louw, Van der Ven, Greyling) as one of the main concepts to describe a practical theological ecclesiology (I Cor 12:13; 27; Rm 12;)¹⁰⁸. Both Louw (1992) and Breytenbach and Pieterse (1992) make use of Paul's metaphor of the body of Christ to develop a practical theological ecclesiology for practical theology. Breytenbach and Pieterse (1992:103-104) are of the opinion that the comprehensiveness of this metaphor makes it possible to use it for developing a communication theory. Other metaphors for the church can be accommodated within the metaphor of the body of Christ.¹⁰⁹

107. The negative attitude towards homosexuality in modern society may be related to the idea that the modern family and not community is the centre of society. Anyone who does not contribute to the upholding of the family concept is seen as a danger to society (Fishburn 1991).

108. In Ephesians and Colossians the accent is on the headship of Christ and the subordination of the total church to him.

109. Theron's (1978:42-43) understanding of the metaphors of body of Christ and Christ as the head of the body is very interesting, Theron understands it as two different metaphors. Christ, as the head, is not one part of the body and the church the other part. The whole body is the church - from head to toes. Christ as the Head of the body represents the church. The church as God's body is represented by Jesus Christ, the Head of the body.

McFague (1993:205) says: "The embodiment model has been central to ecclesiology; it has been one of the ways that organic thinking has flourished in Christianity."¹¹⁰ This New Testament concept of the church and the Old Testament concept of "the nation of God" are very closely related.¹¹¹ In the New Testament the *ekklesia* is referred to as the new Israel or the People of God of the New Covenant (Rm 9:23-26; Heb 8:10; Ja 1:1; 1 Pt 2:9). Dulles (1976) describes the Body of Christ as one of the possible ecclesiological models and makes the following remarks (1976:49):

For many purposes the analogues (sic) of Body of Christ and People of God are virtually equivalent. Both of them are more democratic in tendency than the hierarchical models... Both focus attention likewise on the mutual service of the members toward one another and on the subordination of the particular good of any group to that of the whole Body or People.

The expression *the body of Christ* is important when we talk about the church. It is important to understand the body metaphor not in a limiting sense as a stagnant entity *the church*, but in a much more dynamic sense as people who belong to the church. In Van Niekerk's (1985:58) diaspora model, the body of Christ is not necessarily the entity *the church*, but refers to the *ekklesia* (community of people).¹¹² Van Niekerk (1985:59) puts it as follows:

The fulness of the body of Christ as *ekklesia* is experienced in the multitude of societal relations and structures. The diaspora model does not identify the *ekklesia* or body of Christ with the church. It only sees the church as a fairly important structure where people share in the fellowship of faith.

Romans 12 confirms this idea that the body of Christ is people and not an abstract group called the church. The body of Christ is not an entity in itself, namely the church or the congregation.

Ridderbos (1979:381) comes to the same conclusion when he says: "We have to do here not with one and the same metaphor but with two, each of which, although they are (can be) closely connected with each other, yet has an independent significance and an independent existence."

110. McFague (1993:205) sees it as a model which is exclusive to people of other religious traditions. McFague (1993:205) proposes that it should be used in conjunction with other models for the church, like the church as pilgrim people, as a liberating community, or as a fellowship of friends.

111. According to Van der Ven (1993:234-236), the relationship between these two codes is a point of discussion and dispute in the Catholic tradition.

112. "Uit het beeld 'lichaam' wordt soms een grenzlose reeks beeldspraken als quasi-consequentie getrokken (zeer sterk en exegetisch gans onverdraaijck in de encyclick van Pius XII over het mystieke lichaam 1943). Ook dit woord 'lichaam' staat o.a. weer bloot aan een substantiële verstarung. In het bijbels denken is lichaam een samehang van functies, een harmonie van gebeurtenissen, het lichaam 'is' dat alles wat oog en oor en hand en voet doet, de persoon in actie, veelvuldig en één. Daarom is de kerk het lichaam, waar zij zich richt naar het profetisch-apostolisch getuigenis" (Miskotte 1989:176-177).

113. Anja Kosterman (1992) wrote a very interesting and critical article, *De wereld als het lichaam van God*. She got the idea from Sally McFague, who uses metaphors to say more about God. If this world (meaning this creation) is the body of God, then it means that God is not only involved with people, but with the whole world (creation and earth).

Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given us (Rm 12:4-6) (my emphasis - FN).

Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part (1 Cor 12:27) (my emphasis - FN).

In Ephesians 4:4 it is the body of Christ that is **one**. In John 17 Jesus prays that all believers may be **one** as the Father and the Son are one (17:21-23). Theron (1978:38-43) makes it clear that in essence the *ekklesia* in the New Testament is the same as the *people of God* in the Old Testament. The body of Christ is also a New Testament way of referring to what the Old Testament calls the "people of God".

It is possible to come to the conclusion that wherever people are living out the principles of the kingdom of God, there the body of Christ is realising. In the light of Scripture's use of the word *ekklesia*, it seems justified to understand the word in a collective sense. It is important to realise that in this corporate dimension lies a richness that must not be undervalued.

We discussed the corporate dimension of the covenant in the section on the covenant [cf p 209]. König (1986a:121) understands this corporate dimension of the covenant to be reflected in the image of the body of Christ. God does not give to every believer everything he/ she needs. Every believer receives different gifts and it is only when everyone contributes his/ her gifts to the rest of the body that the body of believers can grow (Eph 4:16).

The body of Christ image of the church helps to give expression and recognition to the pluralistic reality of the church. This pluralistic side of the church is nothing new. It can be found back in the time of the New Testament. There are congregations in Palestine to which the synoptic tradition is related; the church in Acts; the communities in Corinth and Rome; the city congregations in Ephesians and Colossus; the congregations in Little Asia, and so on. Andrew Greeley (1974) feels it is a pity that the church does not understand the wonderful richness of the pluralistic society.. The church people's understanding of unity is often that everybody should be the same. Greeley (1974:699) sees the Holy Spirit as the Christian system which "correlates" best with the phenomenon of human pluralism. The body of Christ metaphor emphasises unity because we are so diverse. This is not a unity which means "the same", it is a coming together of those who are different. This has very important implications for an ecosystemic ecclesiology, which is not practised from the point of departure that everybody is the same.

The body of Christ metaphor throws light on the mutual relationships within the church itself in its interdependence on and its pneumatic communion with Christ (Rm 12:1; 1 Cor 12; Eph 4:18 ff; Col 2:19). Ridderbos (1979:395) says that: "With respect to relationships within, the church can and must learn to understand its unity and diversity, its limits and its universality from the fact that it is the body of Christ".

The metaphor *body of Christ* is a rich and dynamic metaphor which emphasises the dynamic character of the church. From a practical theological view, this is important because of the static view of the church often created by the dogmatic theological theories about the church.

From an ecosystemic view, the concept body of Christ makes much sense.¹¹³ The church and specifically the congregation can be viewed as an ecosystem. Many theologians who work with a systemic approach (cf Greyling 1993; Boshoff 1993; Lord 1984) compares the congregation to a family. From an ecosystemic perspective it is necessary to warn against too closely identifying the congregation as system with the family as system (cf Fishburn 1991).

The idea of the congregation as a system is acceptable in principle and also important for pastoral work. For an ecosystemic approach to pastoral work, it is important not to see the congregation as a homeostatic entity which tries to move to equilibrium. The metaphor *body of Christ* should not be misused to create the idea of the congregation as a static homeostatic entity. The congregation as a system should not be viewed in terms of an extraordinary degree of integration among the parts of the ecosystem. Again, the idea of an ecosystem must not be seen in terms of structures, but of patterns of communication.

McFague (1993) is positive about the "body of Christ" model as giving expression to a holistic and organic model, which takes God, human beings and the earth seriously. It is a strong and powerful model which is busy gaining ground again. But this model also poses definite problems. McFague (1993:28) expresses her concern about the mixed record of this model in Western society and its demise with the seventeenth-century scientific revolution, with its preference for the machine over organic models and for a positivistic, dualistic and atomistic model which forced both God and human beings out of the natural world into an increasingly narrow inner world.

To summarise:

- Authority is vested in the body of believers and not so much in individual members. Strengthening the less important, means strengthening the whole body.
- The "body of Christ" image refers to the people who belong to the church in general and not to a specific institutional church.
- The metaphor emphasises the interdependence of relationships in the church.
- It reflects the corporate dimension of the church.
- The concept *body of Christ* refers to the people who make up the body.
- It gives expression to the pluralistic reality of the church.
- It emphasises the dynamic character of the church.

3.2.2.3.1 Review

The concepts "community", "body of Christ" and "family or household" should be understood in a metaphorical sense. The church should be like a community and a family. These concepts must also be seen in terms of their use in the Bible. Here the approach to the Bible is important. It is possible (like the

Essenes) to interpret and use a concept to support your opposition to the wider world and to form a closed community.

If the church uses the concepts of community, household of God and body of Christ as a way to isolate itself from the rest of society, then the church will lose its servant task (Gerkin 1991:125).

The above section supports the idea that these concepts could be used to support the idea of an ecclesiological metaparadigm which has a certain openness to it. The features of the church as described in the previous sections are not that of a closed system directed only to itself and inwards. This supports the idea that the church should live in an interrelated way with society with an openness to the future which transcends the boundaries of the present without ignoring the realities of the here and now.

If the church as "community" is not seen in relationship with the church's prophetic task and involvement in this world, a dualistic ecclesiology will develop. Then the so-called secular world will increasingly be seen as a world without God and the religious community will become privatised to the extent where the church will no longer be seen as a community exercising active influence on public affairs (Gerkin 1991:122).

3.2.3 An anthropological ecclesiology

The main emphasis in this study is the fact that an ecosystemic paradigm also challenges the ecclesiology of the church and eventually also the pastoral work going out from the church. It is very difficult to separate an ecclesiology from an anthropology. **An individualistic anthropology will lead to an individualistic ecclesiology which will lead to an individualistic pastoral work approach.**

Several practical theologians emphasise the need for a practical theological anthropology as a base theory for practical theology (cf Pieterse, Fiet, Louw). It is clear that the modern world has also heavily influenced anthropology. Bosch (1991:267 ff) mentions some characteristics of a modern anthropology. The most important is what he calls "autonomous individuality", the sacred creed of individual self-sufficiency first and foremost, before any social responsibility. It brings with it very important aspects such as that "all people were born equal" and equal rights (cf Gerkin 1991).¹¹⁴ So, although the emphasis in this study is on ecclesiology, a very brief outline for a practical theological anthropology in the light of an ecosystemic metaparadigm is given here.¹¹⁵

Anthropology is studied by scientists, biologists, philosophers, sociologists and also by theologians. Most of the time it is the systematic theologians who are busy with the quest for a theological anthropology (Du Toit

114. "Both capitalism and Marxism, says Newbigin (1986:118), derive from this Enlightenment vision of human beings as autonomous individuals without any supernatural reference" (Bosch 1991:267).

115. Human beings are more important than nature but not fundamentally different from animals and plants. This makes it possible to eventually degrade individuals to machines, exploited and manipulated by those who want to use them for their own purposes - power and money.

1984, 1988; Jonker 1984; Durand 1982). The need for practical theologians to give some attention to this very important matter is long overdue. Pieterse (1993c:134) refers to the need of an anthropology as base theory for practical theology. Fiet (1987:241) believes that people who work with other people (educationists, pastoral workers, social workers, nurses, doctors etc.) should keep themselves occupied with questions about anthropology. For the philosopher Ludwig Feuerbach (1804-1872) theology and anthropology were the same (Heitink 1993:41). According to Fiet (1987:241): "De theologische antropologie stelt vooral de vraag naar 'het ware mens-zijn', het mens-zijn in relatie tot God, dat in de mens Jezus Christus openbaar geworden is".

The need for a practical theological anthropology is understandable, if you take into account that in practical theology and pastoral work the religious actions of people are the object of study. It has already been said that a practical theological ecclesiology should be developed from the idea that the church is, in effect, people, and that it is people's actions which make the church visible. A practical theological approach to anthropology does not want to be a systematic treatise of the human being, but wants to understand human beings from a specific perspective, namely in terms of human beings as communicative beings and human beings as part of the environment and the universe (cf Vos & Pieterse 1992:147-150).

To be correctly understood, an ecosystemic approach to pastoral work must be placed in the context of a theological anthropology. In this study it is not necessary to give particular attention to more than the basic underlying principle in a theological anthropology, namely that humankind is created in the image of God. According to Louw (1993:97), pastoral theology is not interested in human beings as a phenomenon, but as creature (cf also Louw 1989a). From a theological perspective it is thus impossible to talk about anthropology without discussing the creation. To refer to creation is not an attempt to develop a cosmology. The question is whether it is at all possible for theology to develop its own cosmology apart from anthropology. Wildiers (1982:5) cites Karl Barth,¹¹⁶ who argued for a Christian anthropology, but believes that a Christian cosmology is unthinkable. Wildiers (1982:24-26) makes it clear that both the New and the Old Testament have very little to say upon which to build a distinctive Christian cosmology. This does not mean that the biblical authors did not work with an underlying cosmology. They derived their cosmology from the ideas circulating at that time. Du Toit (1995:40) reminds us of the need of metaphors to discuss cosmology. He (1995:40) puts it as follows: "The metaphor is therefore an escape for both theology and natural science. To express the complex cosmos with restrictive language calls for the metaphor".

Wildiers (1982:9) is of the opinion that cosmological conceptions exerted a powerful influence on the medieval interpretation of Christian doctrine.¹¹⁷ Cosmology, anthropology and theology formed a unity in medieval times (Wildiers 1982:10). That is also why it was so difficult for the church to accept Copernicus. Old notions concerning the universe changed and put theologians under pressure to reinterpret theology.

116. *Kirchliche Dogmatik*, Vol 3, part 2, (1948:2-6).

117. Wildiers (1982:7-10) believes that it is the Greek conception of cosmos as order which was taken over by the Catholic tradition.

This section confirms that an ecosystemic approach to a practical theological ecclesiology and pastoral work should include an anthropological dimension. The next sections deals very briefly with several features of such an anthropology, namely humankind as a unity and the covenant character of human beings.

3.2.3.1 The unity of humankind: a creational perspective

Not only it is necessary to connect a practical theology ecclesiology with anthropology, it is also important to connect it to a creational perspective.¹¹⁸ From an ecosystemic perspective, a unitary view of humankind is sought: a view which admits the many-levelled complexity of humankind (cf Barbour 1972:7). The belief in the unity of humankind also follows from the theological affirmation that God is the Creator (Grenz 1994:195). The belief that, theologically speaking, the origin of humankind lies with Adam and that all humankind forms a theological unity (cf Gn 3:20; Ac 17:26; Rm 5:12-21).

The unity of humans does not only refers to the unity between body and soul, but also to the unity of humankind. This lies already in the Genesis narrative. After the fall Adam named his wife Eve because she would become the mother of all the living (Gn 3:20). Paul echoes this in his speech to the Athenians where he suggests that all nations originated sprang from Adam (Ac 17:26). This also follows from the theological affirmation that God is the Creator. The findings of modern biologists confirm that in the light of biological evidence and genetical research human beings belong to the same species.

The unity of humanity has serious theological significance. It means that each of us stands before God as a participant in the one humanity. It implies that all persons are equal in the sight of God (Grenz 1994:195). This provides the foundation for our response as Christians to ethical issues such as justice. It should also have an impact on the church's pastoral work approach to people. The next section discusses the aspect of unity further.

3.2.3.2 The wholeness of human beings as creatures

Previous chapters have mentioned the Cartesian approach where human beings are seen as divided into parts, namely body, spirit and soul. The atomistic spirit is very visible in this way of thinking where humans are thought to consist of building blocks. It is not only the human being that is divided. The human race is also divided on the basis of sex. Part of this Cartesian thinking is also patriarchal thinking, which believes that women should be subservient to men. Moltmann (1985:320) believes that the mechanistic and the patriarchal world-views can be linked.

118 . A creational perspective is not the same as creationism, which is a commitment to the literal truth of the Genesis creation account (cf Timm 1989). L Berkhof (1979:199-201) and Grenz (1994:214-217) deal with creationism extensively. They describe it as a view in both the Catholic and Reformed tradition which believes that each human soul comes into existence by means of a direct creative act of God.

One of the sources of a theological anthropology is the story of the history of creation.¹¹⁹ The Biblical material speaks holistically about human beings as the image and likeness of God. Pannenberg (1989:159) sees the theological affirmation that the world of nature proceeds from an act of divine creation as an example of the fact that the world and all its parts are a whole and contingent. From a theological point of view, nature (*physis*) is treated as creation (*ktisis*) (Moltmann 1985:53). This contingency of the world at large and all its parts implies a close connection between creation and conservation (Pannenberg 1989:159). For Pannenberg conservation is nothing other than continuous creation. This means that the act of creation did not take place only in the beginning. It occurs every moment (Moltmann 1985; 1989b).

According to Gn 1:26-28 and the related passage in Ps 8:6-7, humankind is created in the image (*tselem*) and likeness (*demut*) of God.¹²⁰ Different interpretations for the word *tselem* were given. What is clear is that the word expresses a basic relationship (Durand 1982:163). In the patristic times a distinction between the image and the likeness of God was made. The image was seen as a natural gift which belongs to our essential nature and part of human powers, it was connected to the idea of reason. The likeness of God was seen as a supernatural gift. In the fall we lost this likeness to God. The Reformers rejected this distinction (Grenz 1994:221).¹²¹

The fact that theology speaks of humankind as the image of God, based on only a few Bible verses, should not be seen as strange because the idea can be found right throughout the Bible (König 1991:21; Durand 1982:162-163). The fact that humankind is created according to the image of God is closely related to and just the other side of the covenant. The Bible expects human beings not only to be obedient to God (covenant), but also to love others as He loves us (image).

For Durand (1982), König (1991) and others, it is important that the whole human being is seen as the image of God. This is in response to history where only a part of the human being was seen as the image of God. They rejected the view that only the soul or spirit is seen as the image of God. In this they follow numerous other theologians (Ebeling, Berkouwer, Von Rad) who believe that the person as a whole is the image of God.

The idea that humankind is the image of God and not only the individual human being, is emphasized by Karl Barth (König 1991:24). According to Anthonissen (1989:83) "(Barth) ... has broken away from the former theory in which theology has concentrated on individualistic terms when dealing with the Image of God". König (1989:25) is of the opinion that the idea of humankind as the image of God is acceptable as

119 . The interpretation of the J material (Gn 1:24b-3:24) and P material (Gn 1:1-24a) is complex and the researcher is aware of the problematical nature of these texts. This study will not give any attention to the exegetical problems and debates surrounding these texts (cf Von Rad 1972; König 1982b; Anthonissen 1989).

120 . The other reference to the image of God in the Old Testament is Genesis 5:1 and 9:6. In the New Testament, there are references to the image of God in 1 Corinthians 11:7 and James 3:9 and in a metaphorical sense in Ephesians 4:24 and Colossians 3:10.

121 . For a more detailed account cf L Berkhof (1979:202-210).

long as it is not seen in an exclusive way. It is thus not against the idea that the individual is the image of God.¹²² The way the Bible, especially the New Testament, speaks makes it clear that the individual is the image of God and should become more and more like that image. What is significant for König (1986a) is the lack of examples in the Bible where Israel or the church are referred to as the image of God.

The question is: In what sense is a human being (or humankind) the image of God? The Old Testament does not give us a clear indication. Berkouwer argues that we must go to the New Testament to find out. In the New Testament Christ is called the image of God (2 Cor 4:4; Col 1:15; Heb 1:3). The New Testament calls us to become the likeness of Christ (Rm 8:29; 2 Cor 3:18; Gl 4:19) and become new according to the image of God (Eph 4:24; Col 3:10). The New Testament exhorts us to be like Christ in forgiving, being merciful, being holy (Col 3:13; Eph 4:32; 1 Pe 1:15-16; Lk 6:36; 1 Jn 1:5-7; Mt 5:48). We are also exhorted to act like Christ; to love one another and to be righteous. König (1994a:108) comes to the conclusion that we are dealing with a similarity of life, lifestyle and values between what God expects from us and from Christ.

This fits in with what God expects from Israel (the Ten Commandments in Exodus 20 can be compared with Ephesians 4:25-5:5). It also fits in with Genesis 1 where humankind is created to represent God on earth. We are not the same as the Creator, we represent the Creator. König (1994a) makes use of the word "analogy" to describe this relationship. Humankind has some attributes analogous to divine attributes. Because God is love, we must love; because God is patient, righteous and faithful, we must also be these. Because it is an analogous relationship, our love, for example, differs. God loves us despite our unworthiness, we should love others because they are made in the image of God.

König (1994a:108) comes to the conclusion that these attributes bind people together. We cannot love people at a distance. The fruit of the Spirit (Gl 5:19-22) binds people together while the practices of sinful human nature estrange us from others. To be created in the image of God means that we must represent God in our lives and lifestyles and thereby represent God as a loving God in society. The essence of our humanity is determined by these relationships. König (1994a:108) understands the implications of being created in the image of God that: "people are relational beings (my emphasis - FN), and their relations must be lived in love, because God is love. It means that they must be committed to God, to other people and to nature. Because all have the same nature, all are equal. Christians will therefore work for an open, free, just society in which people have equal rights and opportunities, in which, above all, they care for one another as individuals and as groups".

Grenz (1994:226) follows in the footsteps of Gerhard von Rad¹²³ and suggests that the parallel terms "image" and "likeness" carry the sense of representation. These terms do not connote a mere aspect of the

122 . König (1991:25) puts it as follows: "Die derde gedagte dat nie (of nie soseer) die enkeling nie, maar die mensdom, die mensegemeenskap, die beeld van God is, is 'n goeie en belangrike gedagte, maar dit hoef nie noodwendig eksklusief teen die oortuiging gestel te word dat die enkeling die beeld van God is nie."

123 . Cf Von Rad (1972:57-60).

human person. "It is rather in the whole of our being that we are somehow like God" (Grenz 1994:226). But we separated ourselves from God by sin (cf Belgian Confession Article XIV). Sin is to live in either wrong or broken relationships. Because of the sin of humankind, this image of God is totally affected in all humankind. In Jesus Christ this image of God can become more and more visible in the life of the Christian.

You have stripped off your old behaviour with your old self, and you have put on a new self which will progress towards true knowledge the more it is renewed in the image of its creator; ... (Col 3:9-11, Jerusalem Bible).

Paul Tillich identifies sin as estrangement from others in self-centredness and lovelessness, estrangement from God in our attempt to be self-sufficient and estrangement from our true selves. Barbour (1990:206) adds estrangement from nonhuman nature by violating its value and our interdependence with nature. Barbour (1990:202) concludes that sin "in all its forms, is a violation of relatedness".

There is an eschatological dimension to this: one day we will carry the heavenly image (Phlp 3:21; 1 Cor 15:49). Does that mean that when we sin we lose this image? All of humankind has sinned and is affected by sin, but because we are created in His image, God in His grace upholds us as His creation.

I will demand an account of every man's life from his fellow men. He who sheds man's blood, shall have his blood shed by man, for in the image of God man was made (Gn 9:6, Jerusalem Bible).

The image of God in human community witnesses to the close relationship (connectedness) between people. Berkouwer (1979) makes it clear that new life in Christ will be reflected in community life. We do not look at each other from a distance any more, but because we love one another we will become closer to one another. The Old Testament scholar, Hans Wolff (1981:1962) says: "Men can only fulfil (sic) the commission as the image of God given to them in their creation by turning towards one another, like man and wife".

Grenz (1994:230-233) comes to the conclusion that the theological understanding of human beings as bearers of the image of God implies that human beings have a shared divine image. This divine image is a shared corporate reality. "It is fully present only in community" (Grenz 1994:231). Grenz (1994:231-233) puts it as follows:

... God's program for the world and hence for humankind as God's representative in the world focuses on the establishment of community. The foundation for the understanding of the image of God as a "community" concept lies in the creation narratives... In the final analysis, then, the "image of God" is a community concept. It refers to humans as beings-in-fellowship.

The optimism of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries about the human being is deeply undermined by the depth of the evil of the two World Wars, especially the Holocaust. Auschwitz occurred, not in a primitive society, but in a nation known for its scientific and cultural achievements. Add to this the weapons of mass destruction developed and used in the Western world. It confirms that the concept of sin is not outdated. From the world of psychotherapy we learn that a too negative view of ourselves can also be harmful. Guilt without forgiveness and self-hatred without self-acceptance seem to hinder rather than encourage

love of others (Barbour 1990:207). It is important to realise that human-kind is both creative and destructive (cf Barbour 1990:207).

Barbour (1990:208) is of the opinion that the classical dualism between body and soul accentuates this distinction between humanity and other creatures. The non-human world played a diminutive role in Medieval times and the Reformation. Therefore it is not surprising that there was such little resistance to the exploitation of nature for human purposes in the time of the Enlightenment.

In classic dualism there is also a very clear distinction between God and human beings. What does our confession, that we are made in the image of God, mean? In a holistic approach we should look how to formulate this distinction between God and humans. It is a difference in kind, but not absolute. There is both continuity and discontinuity between humans and God and humans and animals.¹²⁴ It also brings the question of Christ as the only revelation of God to the fore. Could we say in the words of Barbour (1990:212): "for the Christian, Christ is the distinctive but not exclusive revelation of the power of God"?

3.2.3.3 Openness to the future and the world

What makes human beings, created in the image of God, different from the rest of creation? Their openness to the future!

A biblical anthropology is imbedded in the biblical story of the creation. Creation was not for Israel only something which refers to the beginning of the world (Gn 1). It refers also to the new heaven and the new earth (Is 65:17). A biblical view of creation should arrive at an eschatological view of creation (Moltmann 1985:54). Creation embraces thus creation in the beginning and creation at the End-time. Therefore, it is clear to Moltmann (1985:54) that creation forms the "universal horizon of Israel's experience of God in history". Creation points beyond itself to the coming kingdom which will renew heaven and earth. Creation points to an open future which will be consummated in the second coming of Jesus Christ.

Grenz (1994:169-171), following Wolfhart Pannenberg,¹²⁵ believes that **openness** encapsulates the basic situation of humans in the cosmos. Humans could move beyond the borders of their own existence and experience the environment always in new ways because of their adaptability. Humans are not as closely restricted by inherited factors as animals. As humans we transcend our world and are continually on the move to something yet undefined. Grenz (1994:171) puts it as follows:

124 . African chimpanzees and gorillas share more than 99 percent of their DNA with that of human beings (Barbour 1990:189). There are differences of degree which if they are added up result in differences of kind (Barbour 1990:190). The basic brain is the same, the midbrain we share with animals. The outer layer of the brain, namely the neocortex controls perceptual, cognitive and communicative processes, and is more prominent in higher mammals and humans. This makes possible more complex forms of language, learning and intelligence. Only humans are fully capable of language. We, as humans, are part of nature, but a unique part (Barbour 1990).

125 . Pannenberg, W 1970. *What is man?* Philadelphia: Fortress.

... humans are never completely satisfied with the present. We are always seeking the new, the "future", the not-yet, that which surpasses the present. We are continually shaping and reshaping our environment in an unfulfilled attempt to create a "home" for ourselves.

This openness to the world and the future points to another dimension namely "infinite dependency". Humans are dependent on some reality that transcends the finite confines of the term *world* and that is God. It is this openness which prompts us to seek God. Within the cosmos we as humans are restless creatures that look beyond the borders of this universe. This dependency is actually an interdependency, because God made us his representatives and wants us to live on the earth as his representatives, with a view firmly towards the future.

3.2.3.3.1 Unitary person, not a body-soul dualism

The diachotomistic approach asserts that the human person is the product of the immaterial (inner/ soul) and the material (outer/body) (Grenz 1994:204-205). Supporters of this view will quote the seemingly interchangeable usage of the terms "soul" and "spirit" in Scripture (Gn 35:18; 41:8; Ec 12:7; Heb 12:23; Rv 6:9; Ps 42:6; Jn 12:27; 13:21; Mt 20:28; 27:50; Ja 2:26; Ec 12:7).

König (1993:200) is of the opinion that Socrates (470 B.C.) and Plato (427 B.C.) were the two people who pre-eminently influenced Christian anthropology (cf Barbour 1990). Behind the idea of a separate soul and body was the Greek legend of the god, Zeus, who punished the Titans with lightning because they ate his son, Dionysus. Human beings came out of the ash of the Titans and consisted of a Titan nature, that represents the evil part, and a Dionysian nature, that carried with it the spark of the gods and of life, namely the soul (König 1993:200).

The Platonic philosophy stresses the primacy of the soul. The body becomes an insignificant casket for the soul. The death of the body is the feast of freedom for the soul, so the death of the body became something to be desired. In Platonic sense the soul is immortal because it has never lived in a bodily sense. What has never lived can never die. So it is not the lived life that is immortal, it is the un-lived life (Moltmann 1985:249). Moltmann (1985:250) summarises it as follows:

This detachment, degradation and de-animation of the body means that the notion of 'the immortality of the soul' can hardly be reconciled with the biblical belief in creation, even though the church's theology took over the idea at an early stage and has continued to maintain it to some extent, down to the present day.

A strong dualism, developed in the Gnostic¹²⁶ and Manichaean¹²⁷ movements, influenced by the Greek idea that the body is a prison from which death liberates the soul. Matter was understood to be evil. This

126. The church fathers Clemens and Origenes belong to this school of thinking. Gnosis refers to "insight". God the Creator and God the Redeemer are seen as two different gods. Knowledge of God is revealed to those who live according to God's will in a mystical way. The soul is a battlefield where the evil and the good are struggling for dominion. Cf Durand (1982:14-17) for a detailed discussion.

negative attitude toward the body is seen in Augustine's writings and in medieval Christianity. This dualism is also visible in some of Calvin's writings (König 1993:205).

Descartes is well known for his distinction between *res cogitans* and *res extensa* in the human being. Descartes believed that the pineal gland links soul and body (Moltmann 1985:47-48). According to Moltmann (1985:250), Descartes did not see the soul as a higher substance, he thinks in terms of the modern subject-object dichotomy. Descartes viewed the body as a machine, like a clock. The body becomes the object and the thinking human being, the I, the subject. The two parts co-exist on earth. Moltmann (1985:252) is of the opinion that, although Karl Barth's anthropology moved from the Platonic and Cartesian way of thinking, it still tends to make use of spiritualization, on the one hand, and instrumentalization, on the other, to describe the human being. The unity of soul and body is still described in terms of superordination and subordination. The soul "rules" and the body "serves".

The implications of a dualistic view of human beings are that a person consists of autonomous parts, body and soul. The soul is then seen as the more important part. The soul is immortal and salvation is restricted to saving the soul. The body is of minor importance and relates to the earthly and temporal things. König (1986b:80) describes it as follows:

This dichotomy presupposes a dualistic view of the whole of reality as divided into what is spiritual, invisible, heavenly and superior as against what is temporal, visible, earthly and inferior. This dualistic view is called into question by important aspects of the biblical message.

There are also trichotomists who believe that the human person consists of "spirit", "soul" and "body" (cf Heb 4:12; 1 Th 5:23). In this distinction the spirit is that part which is capable of knowing God. The soul encompasses our intellect, emotions and will. The church father, Irenaeus is a forebearer of this viewpoint. A Bible commentator like Franz Delitzsch and the Chinese Christian, Watchman Nee were supporters of this approach (Grenz 1994).

A holistic approach of human beings as unity is not a new development. Grenz (1994:209) puts it as follows:

Despite its recent rise to prominence, wholistic anthropology is not a modern invention. The Bible itself espouses a similar view-point concerning the human person. Recent exegesis yields the conclusion that in the Scriptures the terms "soul" and "spirit" are neither designations of two constituent elements nor synonyms for some immaterial substance that inheres the physical body. Rather both words can stand for the human person as an undifferentiated whole.

127. This movement was founded by a Persian by the name of Mani (215 - 273 a.C). Störig (1976:212) describes his teachings as follows:

Zijn leer ontleent, voorzover zij uit de spaarzame fragmenten van zijn geschriften en uit latere berichten kan worden gereconstrueerd, aan de Perzische godsdienst de voorstelling van twee, elkander van eeuwigheid tot eeuwigheid bestrijdende rijken, dat van het licht, beheerst door de goddelijke vader des lichts, en dat van de duisternis, onder heerschappij van de vader der duisternis - welke door Mani met de joodse Jahwe wordt gelijkgesteld - en diens demonen. Jezus is bij hem de uit het rijk van het licht neerdalende verlosser.

An anthropological differentiation between soul and body is foreign to the Old Testament tradition. In the Old Testament people do not have souls; people are living souls. People do not possess flesh; people are flesh (Moltmann 1985:256). In the Old Testament there is no primacy of the soul or an inner hierarchy according to which the soul is to be thought as higher and the body as lower or subservient to the soul.¹²⁸

The Bible looks on body, mind and spirit as aspects of a personal unity. In the Bible human beings are a unity with different dimensions or aspects. The idea of dualism in many Christian approaches to anthropology is not consistent with the Bible, but with the influence of Greek philosophy. König (1993:229) describes it as follows:

Om terug te keer tot die tradisionele indeling van die mens in siel en liggaam. In die Bybel is hierdie twee begrippe nie belangriker as die ander nie. Dit is duidelik dat jy van elders beïnvloed moet wees om nou juis die mens as siel en liggaam te beskou. Direk of indirek kom hierdie invloed uit die Griekse filosofie. As Plato nie geleer het dat die mens uit 'n siel en 'n liggaam bestaan nie, sou geen Christen ooit op grond van die Bybel op hierdie gedagte gekom het nie.

König (1993) discusses the words "body", "soul", "flesh", "spirit" and "heart", which are often used in the Bible, in detail and comes to the following conclusions:

- These terms do not have a fixed meaning and are used in many different overlapping ways.
- All these terms refer to humans as a whole (cf Rm 12:1 and Ps 42:2, 3).
- These words often have the same meaning.
- The word used the most for humans is "heart". It is interesting that this word is quite often not used by those who believe that the words "soul" and "flesh" refer to different parts of humans.
- It makes no sense to speak as if humans can be divided into six or even more parts.

This does not mean that a materialistic understanding of human beings as just impersonal matter is supported. This is also reductionistic. The human person is a psychosomatic unity.¹²⁹ There is a fundamental interconnectedness between all aspects of the human being. Human beings are capable of relating to the physical world and also of transcending themselves. The modern emphasis on holistic medicine and the acceptance of the influence of the psyche on illness and physical symptoms, accentuate the unity aspect of humans. Moltmann (1985:48) says psychosomatic medicine began when "the spell of scientific objectivism was broken". Moltmann (1985:48) explains it as follows:

128. "The unity of soul and body, what is inward and what is outward, the centre and the periphery of the human being is to be comprehended in the terms of covenant, community, reciprocity, a mutual encircling, regard, agreement, harmony and friendship" (Moltmann 1985:258).

129. According to Moltmann (1985:48 note 61), V von Weizsäcker is the founder of psychosomatic medicine. (cf also Von Rad, M 1974. *Anthropologie als Thema von psychosomatischer Medizin und Theologie*).

Human medicine in the true sense cannot be founded on a subject-object relationship. It has to presuppose a relationship between subject and subject. Its tendency is to abolish the alienation of the body which results from purely physical medicine. It supplements the concepts of 'having' by the concepts of 'being'. It comprehends the totality of the human person.

3.2.3.3.1.1 Spirituality

Hedendaagse spiritualiteit moet in 'n holistiese perspektief gesien word. Die skeiding tussen gees en liggaam het verdwyn. Die mens word as 'n eenheid gesien en daar is aandag in die antropologie vir die h le mens (Pieterse 1989:49-50).

An interrelated ecclesiology, which takes the unity of the human being seriously, should include spirituality as part of its anthropology. In the light of the unity perspective proposed in the previous section, it is impossible to see spirituality as a reference only to the inner being of human beings. Spirituality includes people's actions in this world. Spirituality could refer to an individual, but it is always an individual in community. Pieterse (1989:54) explains it as follows:

Vir die verdieping van die geestelike lewe, wat 'n mens op die weg van geestelike volwassenheid plaas, is omgang met God (individueel en korporatief), met medegelowiges en met die w reld in die nood, ellende en vreugde daarvan uiters noodsaaklik. Die heil word dan individueel  n kollektief beleef, vir mense en vir die opset van die samelewing.

The concept spirituality has many meanings. For some people, it may mean devotion, worship, mystic experience and inner life. Spirituality may be identified in many traditions with a tendency to withdraw from this world and as a form of asceticism.¹³⁰ According to Smit (1989:85), the concept spirituality for the last two decades has been used to describe how the inner life influences practical life before God (*coram Deo*). In his historical overview of Reformed spirituality, Smit (1988:187) says:

Wie die gereformeerde spiritualiteit wil verstaan, moet hierdie verweefdheid tussen vroomheid en organiese lewensverbande ernstig neem. Die gereformeerde spiritualiteit neem nie die gelowige weg uit die w reld nie, maar plaas hulle volledig, en s am met mekaar, binne die alledaagse lewe.

Smit (1989:83-84) sees spirituality as an ecumenical action. Smit (1989:87) and De Jongh van Arkel (1989:19) all maintain that spirituality is not something acquired only in the Christian tradition. Spirituality may thus connect people of the Christian tradition with people of other religions. It is possible to speak of Christian spirituality or Buddhist spirituality (De Jongh van Arkel (1989:19). According to Perelli (1991:22), spirituality has to do with issues of meaning, hope, freedom, love, forgiveness, truth and so on. It differs from religion which is the ritualization or professionalization of these experiences. "Although religion and spirituality can exist in a delicate balance, there seems to be a primacy, inasmuch as religion exists to serve spirituality" (Perelli 1991:22). The importance of this is that when people are disconnected from organised religion, for many different reasons, they may still be connected spiritually to a Godhead.

130. "Die beoefening van die persoonlike, meesal innerlike, gemeenskap met God is losgemaak van die etiek - anders natuurlik as in die Nuwe Testament, waar die geestelike lewe die hele lewenswandel ingesluit het" (Smit 1989:86).

De Jongh van Arkel (1989:19) believes that spirituality is important for pastoral work because pastoral work is interested in this relationship between inner devotion and everyday life. Pastoral work is interested in human beings' orientation and how people see themselves in terms of the things that give direction to their life and the influence these things have on their actions. De Jongh van Arkel (1989:19) says that: "Die pastoraat wil weet wat aan die gang is in die lewensgende kern van die mens... Die spiritualiteit van 'n mens is aanduidend van hoe daardie mens sy menswees verwerklik".

De Jongh van Arkel (1989) approaches spirituality from a systemic perspective. People interpret and understand things in terms of a semantic structure. For De Jongh van Arkel, spirituality is at the centre of this semantic structure of interpretation. Spirituality makes of this often fixed semantic structure a more open-ended semantic pattern. De Jongh van Arkel (1989) understands spirituality in terms of a pattern in a human being's life. Spirituality, as pattern of connection between a person's inner life and everyday life, forms a non-reified centre. Spirituality as a pattern also interacts with larger systems of interpretation, for example with people of other religions. Spirituality as a pattern accentuates the role of the Holy Spirit in pastoral work. It may help the pastoral worker to break through closed systems of thinking, and relativise and actualise at the same time (cf De Jongh van Arkel 1989:20) and even help people in pastoral counselling to reframe issues. The mechanical way of thinking in the Newtonian-Cartesian paradigm sees the world as spiritless materialism (cf Vledder & Van Aarde 1991:505).

Louw (1989b) describes how the modern secularised human being has a need of the transcendental. There is a new emphasis on the need for spiritual deepening. Many people look to Eastern mysticism to give them new direction in life because in their experience Western religions do not give enough attention to things like meditation and reflection. Louw (1989b), in reference to K Leech, makes us aware that this desire for spirituality is a criticism on the lack of spirituality in the Western church, also a desire to experience God's presence and to give sense to people's lives. At the same time it is because of an intense concern for peace, justice, freedom, liberation and concern about the influence of oppressing structures in society. It is a need to connect spirituality with a transforming and more humane society.

According to Vledder and Van Aarde (1991:506) holism in ecumenical thought is seen to be brought about by the Holy Spirit. Vledder and Van Aarde (1991:507-508) cite different authors and state:

Renewal by the Holy Spirit is given a cosmological interpretation. This means that renewal does not just mean emotional piety, but the creation of a 'new creation' in the 'new things' which are happening in the world around. Renewal involves everything, not only a new heaven but also a new earth.

Vledder and Van Aarde (1991:521) are on the one hand positive that holism and ecumenical pneumatology could be a helpful paradigm in correcting the Newtonian-Cartesian paradigm which alienated human beings from the earth and which is partly responsible for the ecological crisis the world is experiencing. They are, on the other hand, careful not to overestimate the usefulness of ecumenical pneumatology in resolving present-day crises. Vledder and Van Aarde (1991:519-521) warn against a preoccupation with social upliftment or the ecological crisis to the extent that the Christ event and Christ-confession that "Jesus is

Lord" (1 Cor 12:3) get lost. The work of the Spirit must always be connected to Christ (cf Jonker 1981b).

An interrelated anthropology should also include the importance of spirituality. Spirituality has many different dimensions and people understand it in different ways and there is a need for it. This need is even more vivid in our modern society. Many people see the concept of spirituality as escapism and for some it may even be a way of escaping the harsh realities of this life. For a holistic and integrated view of human beings, spirituality would not be a form of escapism but a way of connecting all the facets of the human being. De Jongh van Arkel (1989) makes use of an ecosystemic framework to explain how spirituality could be used in pastoral work to form a pattern of connection between inner life and everyday life. A holistic approach to anthropology would be incomplete if it did not accentuate the importance of spirituality for humankind.

3.2.3.4 The covenant character of human beings

Previous sections [cf p 177] referred to the covenant character included in the Old Testament view of human beings. The covenant helps us to understand the role of the individual (anthropological) and the role of the church (ecclesiological character) in the Bible. Gerkin (1986) relates the problems of modern life with its pluralism and fragmentation to the narratives of the Judaeo-Christian tradition. He (1986:38 ff) understands the Old Testament covenant as very important for modern life and pastoral care. The story of the covenant people and God's promise "I will be your God and you shall be my people" is a narrative to which modern people can relate.

Vos and Pieterse (1992) discuss the covenant from a practical theological perspective. For them (1992:150-151), the concept covenant can be used to develop an anthropological base theory for practical theology. They (1992:156) believe the covenant, as an anthropological-theological concept, should be understood as "hermeneutically-communicative".¹³¹ Vos and Pieterse (1992:155) connect the covenant concept with the concept kingdom. This gives a Christological perspective to the concept covenant. The covenant gives expression to God's grace.¹³²

In the Old Testament narrative of the covenant, people wrestle with the problem of relations to the outside world. The issue of withdrawal or involvement with persons and ideas outside the covenant community has been a crucial and contentious one. It is impossible to speak of community or human being from a Judaeo-

131 . Van der Ven (1993b:41ff) describes hermeneutic-communicative praxis as the basis of practical theology.

132 . "Verbond is een van die begrippe wat 'n insig gee in die genadige omgang van God met die mens na die sondeval. Verbond dryf op die waters van genade" (Vos & Pieterse 1992:153).

Christian perspective without referring to the covenant (*berit*). The meaning of the word *berit* can only be understood in the context of community.¹³³ Vriezen (1977:183, 185) understands it as follows:

Door het verbond met Israël te sluiten verbindt Jahwe Zich met dit volk tot een gemeenschap. Het hebreeuwse woord *berit* (verbond) betekent ongeveer: gemeenschapsverband;...

De priesterlijke schrijver ziet elke gemeenschapsverhouding van God en mens onder het gezichtspunt van het verbond.

Some theologians understand the covenant in the sense that it has a narrowing effect on the gospel. This is normally done in a context where God's covenant is understood as a covenant with Israel as an ethnic entity.¹³⁴ This study understands the covenant as proof of God's involvement in this world and provides the basis for the belief that there is a wider community embracing the whole of humankind. By his covenant God strengthens the fact that this world is bound together in one human community. Dulles (1976:49-50) describes the importance of the metaphors¹³⁵ Body of Christ and People of God for the church. He then opts for the Body of Christ metaphor because the People of God, when used as a synonym for the church, strikes many people as egotistical and monopolistic.¹³⁶ Dulles (1976:50) goes on to say: "Actually, the Bible itself testifies (Gen 8-9) that God has entered into a covenant-relationship with all mankind, and that all men are in some sort members of the People of God".¹³⁷

Hake (1989:47) says that the earlier texts of the Bible are primarily concerned with particular communities, but that after the exile¹³⁸ when the Jews had been in contact with other cultures, they set the story of Israel's special covenant relationship in the context of the whole of creation. It is in this context that Cain was asked in Genesis 4 if he was his brother's keeper. Hake (1989:48) puts it as follows:

Cain's ironical question, 'Am I my brother's keeper?' has been decisively answered by Jesus' demonstration that anyone who shows compassion or excites our compassion is

133. Vriezen (1977:183) understands the word to mean "gemeenschapsverband". "Het woord kan niet losgemaakt worden van het assyrische *biritu*, tussenruimte, in de zin van het gemeenschappelijke, verbindende (*ina birit* = tussen;..." (Vriezen 1977:183 footnote 2).

134. The whole covenant is based on the idea of a nation of God's people (Ex 6:7-8; Jr 31:32-33). Nation must not be understood in exclusive but in inclusive terms. Israel (God's nation) does not consist only of Jews, but also of Gentiles (Eph 2 & 3). In the New Testament the church is just called Israel (Gl 6:16).

135. "There is a sense in which the notion of People of God, like that of Body of Christ, is metaphorical" (Dulles 1976:50).

136. There is a certain sensitivity, because of the misuse of the term for political gain. The term "people of God" is then used in the sense of the "chosen group of people".

137. Dulles (1976:50) suggests that the church be called "People of God of the New Covenant".

138. Berkhof (s.a.:260) is of the opinion that even before the time of the exile there were clearly universalistic tendencies. He especially refers to Gn 12:3.

our neighbour, to whom we must show love and responsibility just as much as to a member of our own smaller 'community'.

Firet and Hendriks (1986:138) describe the Cain and Abel story as follows:

Wie het verhaal hoort moet beseffen, dat hier iets fundamenteels omtrent het mens-zijn onthult word. Overbezorgdheid en bemoeizucht zijn beneden de menselijke waardigheid zowel van het subject als van het object. Maar aandacht voor het wel en wee van de ander, bereidheid tot bijstand, zijn kenmerken van een levenshouding die 'menselijk' genoemd mag worden.

This study is not the right place to go into the different (theologically speaking) covenants in the Bible in detail.¹³⁹ König (1980:66-70) discusses the distinction between the covenant of works¹⁴⁰ (*foedus operum*) and covenant of grace (*foedus gratiae*) and comes to the conclusion that such a distinction is not justified (cf also Theron 1978:38). There is only one covenant and that is the covenant of grace, because we are sinners who do not deserve to be children of God or to live under God's care. What about the covenant with Abraham and with Noah? König's (1980:70) point of departure is that both these covenants are witnesses of God's way of acting. There are definite differences, but in essence it is only one covenant and these differences should not be seen as different covenants. The basic structure of the covenant could be found in the formula: 'I shall be your God and you shall be my people'.

What is very important for this study is the fact that König (1980:70), in his understanding of the covenant, sees the covenant as something with a universal character. Berkhof (s.a.:244, 260) also believes in the universal character of the covenant.¹⁴¹ In God's covenant with Noah, God made his promises of mercy although the people continued their wrongdoing. His grace became very clear: He is not going to abandon this creation. König (1980:70) concludes his discussion on the covenant with Noah with the words:¹⁴² "Verder dra die Noagitiese verbond 'n duidelike universele karakter".

139 . The researcher follows the systematic theologian König to a great extent. According to the researcher König follows Berkhof to some extent; cf König (1975:157-162; 1980:66-76; 1984:93-105; 1986a:84-120; 1991:14-21; 1994b:102-105).

140 . Cf Louis Berkhof (1979:211-218).

141 . Berkhof (s.a.:244) writes as follows:

Hoewel geconcentreerd op Israël, is het verbond toch van universele strekking. De God van het verbond is tegelijk de God van de hele wereld. Hij handelt ook in en door de natuur.

142 . Jonker (1989:174-187) discusses the relation between predestination and covenant. He criticises the universalistic approach in Barth and Berkhof's views of the covenant. Jonker agrees that there is a tendency to universality in the Noachic covenant, but that it is not the same as Barth and Berkhof's universalistic misinterpretation.

"Ook in die verbonde met Noag (Gen. 6 en 9) gaan dit om die hele wêreld en die hele toekomstige mensheid. Maar die universele strekking van verbond en verkiesing is iets anders as 'n universalistiese misverstaan daarvan" (Jonker 1989:185).

According to König (1980:70), there is also a misunderstanding so far as the universal character of the Abraham covenant is concerned. König (1980:70) says of the universal character of the covenant with Abraham:

Hierdie verbond is egter nie minder universeel as die Noagitiese verbond nie. Dit is net op 'n ander wyse universeel. God kies hier 'n bepaalde man en deur hom 'n bepaalde volk om deur Israel *die hele wêreld* te seën... Dit is dan ook volkome in lyn met die bedoeling van God met hierdie verbond dat die kneg van die HERE 'n lig van die nasies ... tot aan die einde van die aarde' moet wees (Isaiah 49:6).

Theron (1978:39) sees the universal character of the new covenant as the mark of distinction between it and the old covenant. In an English summary of his thesis, he (1978:129) puts it as follows: "The New Testament unanimously witnesses to the fact that the church is the continuation and fulfillment of the Old Testament people of God. The covenant, which was directed towards 'all the peoples of the earth' (Gn. 12:3), achieves its fulfillment in the 'newness' of the new covenant, which is expressed especially in its *universality*".

The covenant thus does not limit the work of the church, it asks the church to extend its actions beyond any human borders. A very important feature of the covenant of grace is the one-sidedness of the covenant. God takes the initiative. No deed or quality serves as the reason why God concludes the covenant with Abraham (Gn 12, 15, 17). God alone passes between animal carcasses in Gen 15 verse 17. The action comes from God, who¹⁴³ expects reaction. The fact that God acts first and we can only react to Gods action makes it a covenant of grace, a free gift.

König (1984:101) says that this one-sidedness is not only peculiar to the covenant, but visible in all God's works. God, for example, creates from nothing, creation can only respond to His act of creation. God justifies ungodly people who have nothing to offer, and the godless can only live justly thereafter.

According to Paul (G1 3:18), the Gentiles who come to faith are included in the covenant with Abraham. Paul repeats in Galatians 3 verse 14 that the blessings of Abraham include the pagans. This corporate character is central to God's dealings with humankind. To refer to Paul again, for him all people are under God's condemnation through Adam's disobedience. At the same time Paul says that all people are acquitted by Christ's obedience (Rm 15:12-21; cf 2 Cor 5:19). The corporate character of the covenant is crucial (useful) for our study. The promise in Genesis 12 verse 3 is that the whole earth will be blessed in Abraham: "I will bless those who bless you: I will curse those who slight you. All the tribes of the earth shall bless themselves by you" (Jerusalem Bible).

143 . God is understood to be neither masculine nor feminine, but more than all our words can ever connote. Unfortunately, language is inadequate to give true expression to this idea. The reader should understand the use of masculine or feminine pronouns in this context. (UNISA Tutorial letter FAKTLG-C/301/1994.) McFague (1982:178) suggests that we understand God not in terms of mother or father, but as friend.

It is a corporate covenant (König 1984:96). The covenant is not made with an individual on his/ her own behalf. The individual enjoys the blessings of this covenant, which was made with Abraham and his descendants. "God made his covenant with the community of Israel as a whole people... The community, or people, of Israel were viewed as a single personal reality or corporate personality" (Kraus 1993:36, 37).

Many Westernised people find it difficult to understand the corporate character of the covenant. The covenant gives expression to the all-embracing relationship between God and human beings, where God takes responsibility for us, accepts us as his children, forgives us our sins and protects us. The covenant is the way God acts with this world. Hake (1989:52) suggests that the affirmation of one's corporate identity is an essential element in individual identity.

God's covenant with Abraham and Israel was his way of expressing his grace and love for this world. Israel did not understand it. In the New Testament (Galatians) this covenant with Abraham is extended to the church. The church should make it clear to the world that God is a God of love and grace. The church should do it through preaching, caring for those who are suffering, through witnessing and seeking justice.

In his book, *Bondgenoot en beeld* (1991), König makes it clear that relationships are very important and essential for people's humanity. The covenant emphasises that as human beings people are unequal partners in a relationship with God. God takes the initiative, humans respond. As responsive beings we are under authority and live by grace and are responsible to God, who makes a covenant with us. Human beings are also in a relationship with one another. This relationship may not become exclusive. Our covenant relationship with God must prompt us to expand our boundaries to include all people. The covenant carries with it a certain world-view. It can serve as a "corrective vision" to a selfish world (cf Hamel 1994:24). It broadens the understanding of the relationship between the individual and his/ her community; it also emphasises the importance of responsibility (cf Kraus 1993:41).

What implications does the covenant have for the church and an ecosystemic approach to anthropology?

- The covenant which God makes with Abraham and his house has a universal tendency. God reaches out to the whole of humanity. Pastoral work should reflect something of this universal outreach of the covenant.
- In this covenant of God we are bound not only to God, but also to one another (König 1991:18).
- All communities are part of this bigger community, namely humanity, to which God has extended his grace. The church as one of these communities must understand that it must reach out further than just the church community.
- The corporate character of the covenant should motivate our pastoral work to move beyond the individual and to think 'corporately' without losing interest in the individual.
- An ecosystemic approach to anthropology will emphasise that human beings created in the image of God can only be understood in the context of the corporate character of God's covenant of grace.

The caring activities of the church should be motivated to reach out wider than only the church community. Care should take place within the broader framework of the corporate character of God's grace. This does not mean that the individual is of no importance, but the individual is part of a bigger world. This is important, especially for the modern human being who is 'obsessed' with his/ her individuality.

The church has the responsibility, activated by the covenant, to be active in this world, to have a mission for this world. The covenant can be seen as the vision of the church. This vision will be realised through the mission of the church, which is care. This mission starts in the community by the community of faith. The way this community of faith is structured is the body of Christ model.

The vision of the church is to include people in the covenant. The great command in Matthew 28 is to go and baptise (inclusion in the covenant). To include more people will ask of the church to proclaim the gospel (mission); the essence of the gospel is love (1 Cor 13). There is no better way to demonstrate love (mission) than through the caring activities (diakonia and koinonia) of the church (mission). These activities of the church must be done by the community of faith (church) and be visible in the community, where the church operates. To do this, the church must be structured according to the body of Christ model.

An atomistic and linear world-view, which tries to explain where the individual responsibility starts and God's grace ends, will find it difficult to find Biblical evidence. The covenant theme in the Bible is full of greyness and fuzziness. The whole is important and so also the parts. The covenant passages are a call to look at our faith holistically and not particularistically.

We are not saved in isolation (Grenz 1994:573) nor in order to enjoy an exclusivistic relationship with God. Rather, through conversion, the Spirit brings us to participation within a community for community. Conversion is the event which marks our entry into the ongoing activity of God. Individual salvation is a community phenomenon. This leads us to an ecosystemic ecclesiology. Israel was elected as the people through whom God could bless all the nations of the earth. This forms the context for the inauguration of the New Testament church as the new expression of the elected people of God. By virtue of our incorporation into Christ's body, God has elected us and mandated us to proclaim the gospel in all the world and consequently to invite people everywhere to join us.

3.2.3.5 Review

The researcher is of the opinion that a holistic view of human beings can be found in the Biblical evidence. Humans are created as relational beings with different dimensions. A nonlineal way of thinking and an awareness of the fuzzy world we live in fits in with the Biblical view of human beings and the difficulty of confining the covenant to a closed system of thinking.

An ecosystemic and interrelated ecclesiology could not be developed without an anthropology. The expectation of the coming kingdom of God unites all the individual destinies of humankind (Moltmann 1974:9). The belief in God the creator is, from a theological perspective, the binding factor for humanity. Because God is the creator therefore all human beings form one community. Two themes are taken as

central to an anthropology, namely: a holistic view of human beings as created in the image of God and the concept of covenant. It is impossible to understand human beings, from the perspective of the Reformed tradition, without understanding that all humans are created by the grace of God.

This researcher comes to the following conclusions:

- Human personhood is founded in the personhood of God (Anthonissen 1989:63). All people are created in God's image. This makes it possible to speak of a human community.
- A dualistic anthropology is part of a world-view and should be replaced by a more holistic perspective (König 1994a:107).
- The image of God can be understood as referring to individuals and to humankind as a whole.
- The image of God calls humankind to (be in) a growing relationship with God and with the rest of creation.

3.3 TOWARDS AN INTERRELATED ECCLESIOLOGY

What is the characteristic of the church and how can it be interpreted in terms of an ecosystemic approach to ecclesiology? This study suggests that what we need for an ecosystemic approach to pastoral work is an ecclesiology which takes seriously the role of the church in society (range) as well as all the dimensions of the church' (nature). The researcher wishes to call this an interdependent and interconnected ecclesiology.¹⁴⁴

The church is described in metaphorical terms as a (covenant) community, as a family (household of God), as the body of Christ. R J Russell (1985:155) compares the church as the body of Christ metaphor with the holistic approach of a person like Bohm. Russell (1985:155) puts it as follows:

In many ways we affirm the reality of the whole body as complementary to each individual person. This forms a striking analogy with the quantum potential in quantum formalism as stressed by Bohm, and in the factorization of the whole into relatively autonomous subwholes in the explicate order as Bohm has more recently emphasized.

The interrelatedness between the church community as people and society is described with special reference to Gustafson's remarks. The interrelatedness of the caring (*koinonia*) and serving (*diakonia*) aspects of the church is described. In the last instance the interrelatedness between the individual and community aspects of the church is discussed.

144 . Hendriks and Stoppels (1986:88) make use of the *idea* of an interdependent model for ecclesiology, although they use the term in a slightly different context. Cf also Bosch 1991.

3.3.1 The interrelationship between the theological and social dimensions of the church

Although the church is a natural community in the sense that it exists *next* to other communities and its members are also part of other communities, it is also a covenant community. This tension is inherent in the church and cannot be ignored. The church as a community should not be seen in a linear way in the sense that you can see exactly where it begins and where it ends. It is also not always apparent who belongs to the church community.

When the Bible speaks of the church as a community, it wants to emphasise that the church is not something abstract, but that it is **people**. There are not many references in the Bible to the church (Minear). Most of the references in the Bible are directed to a community of people who make up the *ekklesia*. Minear (1977:29) puts it as follows:¹⁴⁵

In the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew reports Jesus as saying to his disciples, 'You are the salt of the earth' (Matt 5:13). Does this saying have an ecclesiological connotation? Almost certainly we must say yes. To be sure, there is **no** (my emphasis - FN) clear-cut assertion: 'The Church is the salt of the earth.' But such formulas are extremely rare in the New testament. Many undoubtedly ecclesiological sayings tend to take this form: Jesus, the Lord of the **community of disciples** (my emphasis - FN), speaking directly to them, not as separate individuals but as a band of followers, says, 'You are ...' This second person plural reminds us that the congregations that preserved and utilized this saying heard themselves being addressed by him who had called the Church into being. Moreover, it is typical that in addressing his followers as a single unit he indicated their function in the world. The assigned function is essential to their existence as his people. This kind of formula ('You are...'), therefore, is an important characteristic of many ecclesiological images.

The *ekklesia* is there where the event of Christ's death and resurrection is recalled collectively by people. Whoever is drawn into the *ekklesia* is not removed from his/ her position in the social order, but remains a Thessalonian, a Roman, a slave or a free person (cf 1 Cor 7:17 ff). People making up the *ekklesia* stay part of society and in relationships with other people all through society.

The *ekklesia* functions where people act according to the gospel and the kingdom. The *ekklesia* should not be seen as a fixed entity.¹⁴⁶ The people who make up the *ekklesia* are part of the society. Every single

145. There are many studies describing the meaning of the word *ekklesia*. Hanson (1986:7) is of the opinion that word studies on their own are inadequate for grasping the theological meaning of community in the Bible, although word studies could shed some important light on aspects of community life. The problem with word studies, in the researcher's opinion, is that they could promote an atomistic approach where the sum of the parts is seen as equal to the whole. Hanson (1986:7-8) puts it as follows:

..., much of the information found in the Bible regarding community is not found in association with specific words for community (as illustrated, for example, by the infrequent appearance of the word *ekklesia* in the gospels). Above all, to get at the essence of the Yahwistic community or the New Testament church, we must penetrate beyond individual word studies to a recognition of the community-forming power created through encounter of groups of believers with God's presence in their world.

146. "De kerk blijft in al haar zichtbaarheid een niet aan te wijzen en niet vast te leggen werkelijkheid" (Miskotte 1989:175).

member who makes up the *ekklesia* should be a sign of the kingdom of God. When the researcher refers to the church, he wishes to emphasise the idea of a **community of people**.¹⁴⁷

We have already referred to the church as an alternative community [cf p 163] and the uniqueness of the church, theologically speaking. While P F Theron emphasises the uniqueness of the church, Gustafson insists on the fact that the church's uniqueness should not be understood in the sense that it can be separated from society, the church permeates society. There is a **continuity between church community** and other human communities (Gustafson 1961:5, 8). The uniqueness of the church does not make it absolutely different (Gustafson 1961:13): "Uniqueness per se is not a quality of the Christian community; its object of loyalty and faith marks its uniqueness".

The uniqueness of the church cannot be disputed. At the same time it must be said that the naturalness of the Christian community may be so obvious that it is ignored. Theologians may become so interested in the differentiating and unique elements in the church that there is a real danger that they may overlook the importance of qualities and patterns in the church that are continuous with other societies and natural communities.

The church as a community consists of people and is not a static entity. It is also a community that is deeply entrenched in society and not something separate from society. It is important to understand that the church as a religious community is part of society and is also influenced by society. The church as community consist, of various groups and movements and traditions. This explains the pluralistic character of the church. We saw in the previous sections that the metaphors body of Christ and family or household do not imply a homogeneity in the church.

There are, indeed, numerous factors which bind the people in the church together as a community. The church as community has certain characteristics which make it a church community. Gustafson helps us to identify certain of these general social characteristics which help to identify the church as a community.

a) Gustafson discusses in detail how the church functions as a community of language (it is not used exclusively and the outer boundaries cannot be sharply designated).¹⁴⁸ The terminology of the church is a means of communication (Gustafson 1961:49-51). It is this communication which makes the development of an identifiable Christian group possible. In learning the church's terminology and using it as a means of communication, people become identified with the Christian community.

147 . The term *people* plays a double role. It includes the idea of individual people as well as the idea of a group of people. This ambiguity is an inherent part of religion. Durkheim (1961:681) puts it as follows: "even when religion seems to be entirely within the individual conscience, it is still in society (meaning community - FN) that it finds the living source from which it is nourished".

148 . "The language of the Church functions socially in a way comparable to a national language or the technical language of a profession such as medicine or law" (Gustafson 1961:45).

b) The church is also a community of interpretation (Gustafson 1961:56-71). The interpretation of the Bible and the symbols of the church form the church as a community and give meaning to the community. The fact that there are different interpretations and understandings of the church may be a point of division. The fact that the Bible is central to the interpretation process helps to promote the unity of the community. This interpretation is made by people who may be lay people, evangelists, historians, theologians, preachers and prophets.

c) Gustafson describes the church also as a community of memory and understanding (1961:71-86). Common memory is necessary to make possible common life. In the community the common memory is kept alive by continually rehearsing the important events. The church's existence as a community also depends on its continued decoration and re-enactment of the common memory. The symbols and rites of the church help to give expression to the common memory. It is a fact that the church is also divided by what is remembered and relived. The cultural and personal context also influences what is remembered. But this does not mean that what the community remembers can be trivialised. The church is characterised by its unique objective centre of meaning, Jesus Christ.

d) The needs of the church community are consistent with the **natural needs**¹⁴⁹ of human beings. Gustafson (1961:15) says that "whenever the church is gathered some of man's natural needs are met". The church is an agent for socialisation (Gustafson 1961:50) and participates in processes common to all human communities. An analysis of many of the activities of the church will prove this point. Although the church does not always provide directly for bodily needs, it may provide in an indirect way.

e) The church is a community of deed (Gustafson 1961:12). Deeds are common to all communities (Gustafson 1961:13). But because central to the church's belief is to be concerned for the welfare of humankind, the religious socialisation processes extended into the wider social and cultural milieu as well (Gustafson 1961:26-27).

Gustafson (1961:16-17) discusses the importance of initiation **rites** in primitive societies and the importance of "the rite of confirmation" and "the rite of believer's baptism" in the church. The same can be said about marriage, death and, for example, the church's celebration of Holy Communion. The breaking of the bread is consistent with the need of human beings for nourishment of the body (Gustafson 1961:8; 18). His conclusion is that although the rites have a defined theological intention, the church's social and personal functions must not be underestimated. Just like belonging to any other organisation or society, belonging to the church, has certain psychological and emotional rewards (Gustafson 1961:19, 21). The church just like other organisations provides a certain fulfilment of desires and needs that are common to all people.

149 . Gustafson (1961:15) defines "natural needs" as the physical needs of people for food, shelter, and mating and also the psychological and emotional needs.

Another characteristic of the church as community is that it can be a **dividing factor as well as a uniting factor** in society. The church can be a dividing factor which can lead to social differentiation and tension in society. This does not vitiate the fact that the church is also an unifying factor in society. Christians sometimes believe that the task of the church is to be separated or even against natural communities. Often such arguments will be defended by referring to Mark 13:12-13. The church community then comes into opposition to society and other communities in society.

In the history of Western culture, especially in pre-Reformation Europe, Western culture was intertwined with the catholicity of the church (Gustafson 1961:22). Gustafson discusses ample examples of the role of the church in the integration of society. He (1961:25) concludes:

All of the evidence suggests that the function of social integration is part of the significance of the Church, whether it is normatively accepted or not. The Church is a natural community; like other groups and institutions, its beliefs, common life, and practices often sustain the unity and harmony of various human societies.

The church, like other communities, seeks to continue its existence in time. It realises the importance of procedures to preserve itself and at the same time executes its theological mission. Teaching plays a major role in the church to establish a specific identity. This identity plays a differentiatonal role - the Christian community depends on this identity to differentiate itself from other human groups. This is natural to all human groups. Very few groups would like to be placed in the same category as a group of robbers or thieves, who also form a group with a specific identity.

The Christian community can be described as a community where the members of the community are committed to the community and believe in Jesus Christ, who is the rallying point, around which the community is built. But it is also very difficult to restrict the Christian community just to those who are committed and faithful to the Christian beliefs. It cannot be fully measured externally or precisely determined who they are. External profession is not necessarily correlated with inner trust and belief. The church as a community includes those who make use of the Christian language or the interpretation and understanding of the Christian community (Gustafson 1961:93). Members of this community often acknowledge their loyalty as well as their disloyalty to this community; their faith as well as their unfaith. It is also so that it is possible to be influenced by the Christian community without being committed to it. The dividing line between "believing community" and "unbelieving community" is not always quite so clear. Some church members may not call themselves believers and some non-members may call themselves believers.

Because at least some people in the Christian community are seriously committed to the ethos of the community, the Christian community is also known for its deeds. "Action is a function of commitment and a

confirmation of belief". (Gustafson 1961:97)¹⁵⁰ Action can also lead to more profound commitment and trust.

Because the Christian community is a community where there is an expectation that the members are committed to God, it can be expected that all those who see themselves as part of the community will be involved in the actions of the community. Unfortunately, a tendency has developed, especially in some Christian communities, to delegate responsibility to its ministers. The lay members of the Christian community often act only in a secondary way. Some tasks in the church and the community have become so professional and sophisticated that they have become out of the reach of the lay person in the community. At the same time lay people are admonished to keep their zeal for the tasks of the church alive.

These features of the church community are important and help to characterise the church as a community. However, when these features are examined in terms of other religious communities and even in terms of other communities and organisations of people with the same purpose and aims, very few are unique to the church community.

Because the church community consists of people who are also part of other communities, the church should be understood in terms of its interrelatedness. The church community has certain characteristics, many of which can also be found in other religious and even non-religious communities. The continuity between the church community and other communities must be accepted and be used by the church in a positive way. The ecclesiology proposed in this thesis is one deeply aware of the church not as a fixed entity divorced from the rest of society, but as a community entrenched in society. The uniqueness of the community should not be so much in the community itself as in the merciful God and Redeemer of the community.

3.3.2 The church as a caring and serving community (*koinonia* and *diakonia*)

Not many people will disagree with the idea that the church has a caring task. Most people will agree that the church also has a serving task. What Biblical motives do we have for the caring actions of the church? Brister (1964:17, 19) mentions the servant motif, which he connects to *diakonia*¹⁵¹ and the shepherd or

150 . Gustafson sees action in a very limited way when he describes it (1961:93) in terms of worship, evangelical witness and moral action. In this study action is interpreted in terms of the diaconal and pastoral task of the church.

151 . "It is not surprising then that *diakonia*, the Greek word for ministry, was employed by New Testament writers characteristically as the most favored way of referring inclusively to the church's workers and their work" (Brister 1964:17).

152 . Roscam Abbing (1950:302-303) understands pastoral work (*zielsorg*) as "het strijden tegen de zonde met name de zonden der gemeenteleden ... bestaat het pastoraat in niets anders dan in het voortdurend en geheel doen leven uit het woord der schuldvergeving. Het pastoraat komt dus voort uit, en leidt terug tot het apostolaat".

caring motif (cf Campbell 1981:26). The pastoral work of the church is closely connected with the idea of *koinonia* (Müller 1970; Wessels 1982:137, 189). In this section the researcher wishes to emphasise the interrelatedness between the caring and the serving tasks.

Roscam Abbing (1950) describes the serving church as a church where the proclamation of the gospel takes place (the apostolate), where the pastoral work or *zielsorg*¹⁵² takes place and where the diaconate takes place (cf Furet 1977:136). In practice, there is often a differentiation between the church's "pastoral" task and its "service" task; between its caring task and its diaconal task.

The diaconal task and responsibility of the church community and its members cannot be separated from the caring task of the church. The caring function of the church is connected with the word *koinonia*. Heyns and Pieterse (1990:60) put it as follows:

The actions of care and celebration are associated with *koinonia*, the sharing and celebratory function of the congregation... Care is expressed mainly in pastoral care, when Christians tend to one another's needs and problems, help one another, share their joys and troubles and charitably meet each other's spiritual and material needs.

De Klerk (1982:220) says "barmhartigheidsdiens is ten diepste *koinoniaal van aard*". To separate "pastoral work" and "diaconate" is an attempt to separate spiritual and psychological needs from physical needs, and to separate the individual from the community and the church from society. An ecosystemic ecclesiology, with its emphasis on the person as a whole and the interrelatedness between all ecosystems, should move away from this distinction between care (often seen as something individualistic) and service (often directed to a group of people).

Heitink (1993:232) makes a distinction between anthropology, ecclesiology and diaconology as three dimensions of a base theory for practical theology. According to Heitink (1993:265), the *koinonia* concept connects the anthropological and diaconological dimensions of the church with the ecclesiological dimension [cf p 145]. Heitink (1993:265) puts it as follows: "Het begrip *koinonia* als kernbegrip in een praktisch-theologische ekklesiologie legt een verbinding met antropologische en diaconologische gezichtspunten".

The researcher believes that *koinonia* should be connected with *diakonia* to give the theological action of caring a much more encompassing character. Campbell (1985:66) confirms this idea when he says:¹⁵³

We return, then, to the necessity to relate pastoral care to the whole life of the church in witness (*kerugma*), fellowship (*koinonia*), and service (*diakonia*). These three terms make it plain that there can be no radical division between the church and the world, and that a diversity of gifts is called for if the church is to fulfill, even in the slightest degree, its function as Christ's body.

153 . Cf also Bruwer (1994:53) who makes the following statement:

This process which has shifted the diaconate (*diakonia*) to the centre of attention of the Church has been intertwined with the *kerugma* or the proclamation of the Gospel, the *koinonia* or unity of the church, and the *leiturgia* or the order of Christian service.

To see whether it is possible to connect pastoral care and counselling with the diaconal actions of the church, the meaning of the words *koinonia* and *diakonia* is discussed. The word *koinonia* occurs eighteen times in the New Testament, Paul uses the word thirteen times, Luke once in Acts (2:42), the author of Hebrews once (Heb 13:16) and the author of the Johannine epistle three times in the first chapter (1 Jn 1:3,6,7). Panikulam (1979) made a very thorough study of the word *koinonia* in the New Testament. According to him (1979:4), the word *koinonia* with its entire range of meanings is peculiar to the New Testament. The Greek word *koinonia* is used in the New Testament in different grammatical constructions and in different contexts with different meanings. It falls far beyond the scope of this study to discuss the use of the word in all the texts. So reference will only be made to the use of the word in selected texts.

In the first letter to the Corinthians, the word is used twice (1:9; 10:16); alternative forms of the word *koinonos* occur in 1 Corinthians 10:18 and 20. The word *sygkoinonos* is used in 1 Corinthians 9:23. At the same time the word *ekklēsia* is used twenty two times in 1 Corinthians. In 1 Corinthians 1:9 the call is for fellowship or unity with the Son. The one who calls is the faithful one, God the Father. Fellowship with the Son means to belong to Christ (Panikulam 1979:14). Fellowship with God is at the centre of the meaning of the word *koinonia* in 1 Corinthians 1:9. This fellowship with God has implications, one of which is fellowship with the other members of the body of Christ. Panikulam (1979:30) puts it as follows: "But the fact of responding to the call to *koinonia* produces a far - reaching result in the horizontal plane, that of a new fellowship, a new community. Thus the vertical move of the Christian towards a fellowship with the Son is brought to include the horizontal plane: the community".

Panikulam (1979:25) discusses the word *koinonia* in 1 Corinthians 10:16-17 thoroughly. He (1979:28-29) argues convincingly that verses 17 and 18 are a unit and that verse 18 confirms his argument with reference to the Jewish world. It is in this context that Paul introduces the Lord's Supper. Participation in the Body and Blood of Christ produces fellowship among the participants. Panikulam (1979:25) comes to the following conclusion:

The sharing of the one bread is producing (sic) a true (sic) horizontal effect: making the partakers of the one bread into a true body, the community... The individual participating in the body and blood of the Lord immediately is brought to encounter the brother and together in Christ they form one body. It is here that one find (sic) the originality of the Pauline *koinonia*.

Groenewald (1932) has done a study of the word *koinonia* in the writings of Paul and compares it with the use of the word outside the New Testament. Groenewald (1932:31) says that in classical times the word *koinonia* could mean *consortium*, *communio*, *communitas*, *commercium*, *conjunctio of societas*.¹⁵⁴ The word *koinonia* must be seen in relation to its verb *koinonein* - "to take part", and is often used to express the idea of communicativeness. It also expresses the idea of everyday action between people and of something of a mutual interaction between people. *Koinonia* could also mean a consummation of marriage;

154 . According to Groenewald (1932:24), Aristotle (384-322) and Plato (428-348) were the first people to make use of the word *koinonia* very often. The word is used in different contexts in different ways.

community of property or give expression to sexual intercourse in marriage. According to Groenewald (1932:59), the word *koinonia* was also used in a religious sense. Philo uses *koinonia* to express the relationship between human beings and divinity.¹⁵⁵ Paul mostly uses the word *koinonia* to give expression to all the different aspects of fellowship (1932:157).

Groenewald (1932) comes to the conclusion that Paul uses it to give expression to the relationship between Christians and God to convey something of the mystique (mystery) of the relationship between man and God (cf 1932: 157). The mutual fellowship between believers is a result of the fellowship between believers and Christ.

It seems that Groenewald emphasises fellowship with God and Panikulam both fellowship with God and with humankind. The concept *koinonia* reflects something of both the relationship (fellowship) between human beings and God and between humans and humans. The word *koinonia* is more orientated to those who belong to the church, the members of the church. It emphasises an "insider" approach to pastoral work.

There is no agreement about whether the two words *dia* (through) and *konis* (dust) constitute *diakonein*, but the combination of the two emphasises humility (Van Klinken 1989:27). The three words used in the New Testament are *diakonein* (to serve), *diakonia* (which is the action of *diakonein*) and *diakonos* (the person who performs *diakonein*). The etymological meaning of *diakonia* was to be of service at the table (Panikulam 1979:40). Its wider meaning was to provide the necessities of life. In the Old Testament service was seen as the highest relationship of man to God. In the New Testament Jesus gives the concept **service** a new orientation when he stresses in Matthew 25:44 the importance of service to the least reputable as serving God.

Paul uses the word *diakonia* several times in the context of the collections. In Romans 15:31 it was used to denote the whole collection project of Paul (*diakonia mou*). In 2 Corinthians the term is used as follows: *koinonia tes diakonias* (8:4); *diakonia tes leitourgias* (9:12); *dokima tes diakonias* (9:13) and *diakonia*. *Diakonia* becomes a fundamental sign of the ministry of Paul (Rm 11:13; 1 Cor 3:5; 2 Cor 3:6; 4:1; 5:18; 6:3; 11:8, 23). In the Christian community, service refers to a single function in the body of Christ or as a collective term for all such functions (Rm 12:7; 16:1; 1 Cor 16:5).

155. Groenewald (1932:31-42) analyses the use of the word *koinonia* in different periods and literature: the time of Alexander the Great (356-323); the Hellenistic Age; the Septuagint and in the works of Philo of Alexandria (25 BC - 40) and Flavius Josephus (38 BC - 100 AD). He comes to the conclusion that it is used in more or less the same way as in the Classical Age.

156. Rossouw, in his book *Grondlyne van 'n pastorale model*, critically discusses the theology of Gerben's Heltink's book. Rossouw (1983:41) comes to the conclusion that Heltink in his broadening of the scopus of pastoral work, broadened it to include the diaconate.

The best known use of the word *diakonein* can be found in Matthew 20:28 "The Son of Man came to serve". This service presupposes a willingness to become a servant and to be the slave of all (Mt 20:26). Cranfield (1966) discusses the use of the word *diakonia* in the New Testament in detail and makes the following inferences from the New Testament use of the word *diakonia*:

- The word carries with it a recognising of the other person who is served as person (Cranfield 1966:42-43).
- The church's *diakonia* is directed to all people in need and not only to the members of the church or the "brethren" (cf Mt 5:43-48; 7:12; 25:32-46) (Cranfield 1966:43-44). Cranfield (1966:44) believes that Jesus taught his disciples to show love to anyone in need, but that the church narrowed it down to the church members.
- The *diakonia* of the church should be done by the individuals and by the congregation as such. Cranfield (1966:45) puts it as follows.

For the New Testament clearly envisages both a *diakonia* which is undertaken by the congregation ... and also a *diakonia* which is a matter of the individual Christian's responsibility and initiative (though it is also, of course, a contribution to the *diakonia* of the congregation), as is clear from such passages as Matthew 25:31-46; Romans 12:20; Galatians 6:2.

Van Klinken (1989:32-40) links the word *diakonia* with justice and peace. He also connects it with the eucharist (1989:42-46), which (we know) is very closely connected with the word *koinonia* in Corinthians. In the Reformed tradition, one of the functions of the deacon is to serve the eucharist to the congregation.

The two terms (*koinonia* and *diakonia*) cannot be seen as totally separate from each other. Panikulam (1979:41) discusses the use of the word *koinonia* in 2 Corinthians 8 and comes to the following conclusion: "In 8:4 he (Paul - FN) connects *diakonia* with *koinonia* and with *charis*. By doing so the service to the poor in Jerusalem becomes a response to the working of God among the Macedonians and at once it is shown that *diakonia* is an essential part of *koinonia*".

Regarding the connection between *koinonia* and *diakonia*, according to Panikulam (1979:41), Nickle rightly remarks that:

... *Koinonia* had special reference both for Paul and for the early Church with reference to the celebration of the Lord's Supper, that climactic event in the liturgical life of the Church with which the ministry to the poor and needy was intimately connected. Thus it was perfectly logical to employ the term *koinonia* where concern for the fellow-Christians was involved, especially for the supplying of their needs whether spiritual or material. In applying the term (*koinonia*) to collection, Paul was clearly emphasizing that it was a direct expression of Christian fellowship that the Churches were contributing relief funds to Jerusalem.

Bruwer (1994a:54, 56) describes how Acts 2:42-47 can be an example of the connection between *koinonia* and *diakonia*. In Acts 6 the apostles called the body of believers together and shared with them the complaints of the Grecian Jews that their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. By coming together (fellowship) they realise that some people are in need and gave to those in need

(*diakonia*). The result was the election of people to see to it that the diaconal task of the church is not neglected. Bruwer (1994a:56) describes it as follows:

To a certain extent the core of the problem in the Jerusalem church was the fact that they had to admit that their fellowship was not as close as they thought it to be ... The only way to solve the problem was to call the whole body together and deal with it within the one body of believers, to restore the *koinonia*.

In *Pastoraat als hulpverlening*, Heitink definitely broadened the scope of pastoral work to include the diaconate. The following quotations (Heitink 1979:56, 81, 336) should make this quite clear:¹⁵⁶

Verder moet bedacht worden dat - zoals we later zullen zien - de overgangen van pastoraat naar gemeentediakonaat vloeiend zijn.

Pastoraat als hulpverlening is geworteld in de *diakonia* van de gemeente.

Wanneer men de taken van de kerk mag onderscheiden met behulp van de woorden 'kerygma', 'koinonia' en 'diakonia' moet 'pastoral counseling' verstaan worden als uitdrukking van 'diakonia' en ontstaat er al werkende 'koinonia'.

It would seem that if *koinonia* and *diakonia* are used in conjunction, they will enrich each other. If Heitink's understanding of *koinonia* is taken seriously, *koinonia* will connect service to anthropology, which means that the person who receives the service is taken seriously, which Cranfield (1966) believes is important.

Van Klinken (1989:39) puts it as follows:

Christ not only demanded a new quality and direction in living, but at the same time he provided a means by which his followers and his church, when accepted in faith, can live a new life in which *diakonia* (justice and compassion) prevails. The means to this end are: the Holy Spirit, his Word, the sacraments and *koinonia* (which is a shape of the sacraments), prayer, and, last but not least, his representatives on earth.

Koinonia and *diakonia* are closely associated. They do overlap in many areas. Some practical theologians regard them as different sides of the same coin (Theron 1991:146). This could be demonstrated by an ellipse with two centres *diakonia* and *koinonia*. Pastoral work centres somewhere between the *diakonia* and *koinonia* functions, sometimes closer to the *diakonia* aspects and other times closer to the *koinonia* aspects of the church. The researcher suggests that pastoral work should be seen as a combination of the *koinonia* and *diakonia* functions of the church.

In an article entitled *De dilemma's van diakonaal pastoraat*, the Catholic theologian, Van den Hoogen (1989: 415, 431) writes that it is a problem that so many activities of the church are "ecclesiocentrisch" (ecclesia centred). His point of departure is the belief that changes in values in the society will also influence pastoral work. For the church to play a role in this modern and secularised society, requires a change in attitude. The church must take up the challenge and begin with diaconal-pastoral work. Diaconal-pastoral work will take the church out of its cosy context where the centre of its pastoral activities is the church. Van den Hoogen mentions three ways in which diaconal-pastoral work can move the traditional scope: (a) to start to talk about values and norms; (b) challenge a dualistic view of humanity; (c) the community of believers must start to listen to others and consequently confirm the value of people created in the image of God. Then the church is doing what it is really called to do. Van den Hoogen

(1989:437) puts it as follows:

Daarmee konkretiseert ze wat in haar zending van Godswegen besloten ligt: een gemeente te zijn die door God 'uit den vreemde' bijeengeroepen is, dat wil zeggen: die juist gemeente is in de mate dat ze haar grenzen openbreekt of althans laat openbreken door de 'vreemdelingen' de vluchtelingen, de armen, de mensen die niet worden gehoord.

An ecosystemic ecclesiology where the concepts *koinonia* and *diakonia* are connected will have a tremendous influence on the pastoral work of the church and will also extend the range and the nature of the pastoral work of the church.

- Pastoral care will be seen as more than just caring for souls (*cura animarum*) or supporting somebody emotionally (cf Greeves 1960:4 ff). Pastoral work will be broadened to include issues like justice and poverty (Coetsee 1991).
- The concept "caring" will imply more than just the caring of church members for each other (*koinonia*).¹⁵⁷ The *diakonia* aspect will move caring beyond the borders of a congregation. At the same time *diakonia* connected with *koinonia* will become more than just "sending food" or "sending money" (called a humanistic approach by some), but will raise the question of fellowship with God.¹⁵⁸
- *Koinonia* and *diakonia* together will prevent the church from either collectivism or individualism or egoism (cf Van Klinken 1989:40).
- Often the *diakonia* of congregations is structured through a committee of the diaconate. Most of the time the pastoral care is unstructured. The researcher does not believe that something is *per se* better or more effective if it is structured. But it shows us how people's minds work. It says, in effect, that the *diakonia* function is important, the pastoral care function is less important.¹⁵⁹

157 . "... the uniqueness of pastoral work is that its actions are caring" (De Jong van Arkel 1991b:120).

158 . Both pastoral work and *diakonia* are rooted in God who loves in word and deed. In several Old Testament passages judgement is pronounced on the people for their failure to care properly for the poor, the widows, the orphans, the strangers and those in distress. In the New Testament the actions and words of Jesus reflect His attitude of compassion for those in need (Mt 25:31-46).

159 . *Koinonia* and *diakonia* together could help to break the present impasse in the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa (and perhaps also in many other churches too) where the pastor (who is an elder) does the pastoral care and counselling and the deacons do the diaconal work.

160 . Panikulam (1979:41) quotes Barth who said: "Diaconate means quite simply and generally the rendering of service. Hence it does not denote only a specific action of the community but the whole breadth and depth of its action".

- A diaconal pastorate could help the church to become more ecumenical and to develop an eye for the whole of creation.

Earlier in this study, the church as caring servant was emphasised: Dulles (1976:91) describes the church as servant and says that in this model the beneficiaries of the church actions are not exclusively the members of the church itself, but rather all those people the world over, who seek a word of comfort or encouragement from the church or receive some material help in their hour of need.

The church community should act as servant to the community and not as another entity of power. In his book *Power to the powerless* (1987), Laurie Green explains how their congregation, St Chad's, was involved in problems of the urban community (Metropolitan District of Birmingham) in which they were functioning. As church they approached the local authorities on behalf of the whole community. The church realises that it is important to play this role as servant. This lengthy quotation from Green (1987:33) gives some idea of how they saw their task:

We had in the past campaigned and won the battle against the City Planning Department for certain roads, which had been made one-way only, to be reopened to the community. We had run a number of schemes by which local residents were made aware of our commitment to the Gospel of Christ and encouraged to join our worship. We had taken a leading part in pushing for the provision of a Community Centre in the locality separate from the church and this had enabled the church to remain in the servant role rather than for it to appear itself to be the centre of the community. It seemed to us, in our secular urban setting that to purport to be the centre of the community would have contradicted the New Testament mandate to be the servant.

The researcher believes that the servant motif strengthens the diakonia¹⁶⁰ of the church and the shepherd motif, the caring task of the church. These two tasks cannot be seen separately. The distinction between diakonia and care is a false distinction and part of our atomistic thinking. Separation between shepherd and service, between the koinonia and the diakonia aspects, resulted in an individualised pastoral work approach.

Hendriks and Ludik (1993:819) discuss the importance of the small group for the church and see a small group (or cell) which is only directed towards koinonia and not towards service (dienswerk) as a false type of koinonia "*Koinonia* wat die kerk na binne rig, is vals *koinonia*. Dit bou nie die gemeente nie, maar maak dit eerder siek".

An interrelated ecclesiology will influence the pastoral care of the church. The church exists not for itself, but more especially for others because it is proclaiming the communicative action of God to this world (Jn 3:16). The church should reach out to others by communicating the love of God, which becomes visible in the koinonia and diakonia of the church. The congregation is a community in which fellowship (*koinonia*) plays an important role (cf Burger 1991b). It is within this atmosphere of fellowship that caring takes place. Caring demonstrates the koinonia. The experience of fellowship should develop into diakonia to one another and to the wider community.

It is to be hoped that in future the "care" and "service" functions of the church will be dealt with together, also theoretically (at seminaries and universities) to form a diaconal pastoral work. The interrelatedness

between *koinonia* and *diakonia* should be one of the pillars of an interrelated ecclesiology.

3.3.3 The church as an interaction between the individual and the community

The metaphors of the church that have been discussed earlier in this chapter, namely, the church as community [cf 176]; as body of Christ [cf 189] and as family or household of God [cf 184], emphasized the collective and community aspects of the church. Does that mean that the individual is of no importance? This tension between individual and community¹⁶¹ is widely discussed in theology and also in sociology.¹⁶² The practical theologian, Browning (1983b:19) says that: "pastoral care is primarily the care of systems and secondarily the care of individuals within these systems".

This statement of Browning's is problematic. It suggests that individual and system are two entities in hierarchical order or in conflict. The emphasis on the church as community may lead to the wrongful

161. In this particular study the researcher prefers the concept community to the concept society because it gives more expression to the interrelatedness of people than the term "society", which gives the notion of distance. Later in this study the term "network" is proposed.

162. It is beyond the scope of this study to take part in the sociological debate about the individual and society. From a sociological point of view the question of the place of the individual in society is a very old debate. Rhoads (1991:117) talks of methodological individualism in referring to those who give priority to the individual. This debate can be found back in the differences between Durkheim and Tarde. For Durkheim, the beliefs that sustain interest in life are collective beliefs, beliefs in religious, domestic and political societies, that is why Durkheim understands morality in social rather than in individual terms (Rhoads 1991:127). Weber, on the other hand is thinking in terms of individuals. Rhoads (1991:133) describes Weber's position as follows:

There is, said Weber, no understandable action except the action of individuals. Collectivities like the state, business corporations, and religious associations must be treated solely as constituted by the particular actions of concrete individuals. There are not collective actors with their own realities and cannot be understood on their own terms.

Rhoads's (1991:150) conclusion is that those who opt for the theories about total societies have a greater affinity for structuralism than those who choose for methodological individualism. Berger and Luckmann's book *The social construction of reality* (1967) is one of the most widely read books in sociology (Ritzer 1988:346). The authors tried to integrate the individual and society. Ritzer puts it as follows: "They attempted to integrate Weber's work on social action with Durkheim's thought on social facts as external realities."

Rhoads (1991:151) should be understood in terms of his view on the limitations of the human mind. Humans want to reduce perplexing complexity to a comprehensible simpler model. To do that, those who prefer to think from social structures prefer to make use of structuralist theories which reify social structures as a method to overcome the problem of complexity. The researcher's criticism of this approach is the idea that the human mind is not capable of dealing with complexities and that complexities must be broken down analytically into smaller reified units to be interpreted.

163. Often the actions of people are described as the actions of the church. Heyns (1974:41) describes the task of the church in society and then interrupts his own argument with the following words: "Of, om dit beter te formuleer; die lidmate (my emphasis - FN) in die kerk word opgeroep om in die wêreld daarbuite gestalte aan die koninkryk te gee."

conclusion that the individuals in the church are of no importance. The ecosystemic ecclesiological approach should emphasise the interrelatedness between the individual and the community.

It is important to keep in mind that a community does not exist as an entity in itself, it consists of individuals. The researcher believes that "community" and "individual" are not at their roots in conflict with each other. Looking at the church from the one side and you will see a **community** of people; looking from the other side you will see a community of **people**. Although individuals who act in response to their own faith, they are acting not as individuals but as part of the *ekklesia*.¹⁶³ Clearly, both society and the individual have a place. The church as community should not be seen as the only form of salvation because then the next step would be to see the church as institution as the only vehicle for salvation. The Cyprian bishop of Carthage (250 C.E.), for example, made the statement: *extra ecclesiam nulla salus* (outside the church no salvation).

This brings us to the question of individualism in our time. Individualism is a feature of most modern societies. It is also the result of the urbanisation process and can be sociologically understood. People are moving increasingly to the cities. In the cities human relationships are much more fragmented, every person fulfils many different roles and every role a person fulfils represents differing relationships with other people. People can only invest a limited amount of energy in every relation. The result is that people try to limit the number of roles they play and relationships they are involved, or at least reduce the intensity of the relationships. People may become reserved and distance themselves from other people. This is called individualism. Individualism makes it clear that human beings are essentially selfish and live just for themselves.

Are modern people and modern society more selfish than traditional communities? This is the impression of many people (cf Granberg-Michaelson 1991:16-29). Perhaps it is more complicated than that (cf Jonas 1996:88). What we do know is that this spirit of individualism in society will have an influence on communities and the pastoral task of the church. Over the centuries the church's involvement in this world has been through its members. The individuals in the church have a task. Tracy (1981:21) puts it very aptly as follows: "Through their individual members and more rarely through their institutional weight, the churches may directly affect the policies of the society as a whole".

This study refers to modernity as a reason for all people (and thus also church people) to live more individualised lives. The theology of the church may be another reason. According to De Gruchy (1991:177), it is the scholastic understanding of grace that leads to the privatisation of religion in the Reformed and Catholic traditions. De Gruchy (1991:178) explains it as follows: "The privatization of grace undermined not only its social and historical but also its personal character because it reduced the church as a community of persons in the world to an aggregate of individuals".

According to De Gruchy (1991:177), it is this privatised understanding of the Christian faith that undermined the Reformed tradition's commitment to the transformation of society. Interestingly enough, there is a world-wide growth in the charismatic churches (cf Dekker 1975:11). Is it because they emphasise the community aspect of Christianity more, or is it because they emphasise the "personal faith" aspect of the

church more?

Modern insights into anthropology, sociology and psychology confirm the biblical presupposition that the basic human being is not an independent individual, but an individual in community (Kraus 1993:28). Community is integrally involved in the individual's self-identity. The nature of human responsibility and freedom are defined by the nature of being in community.

The impact of rational individuals has left its mark on modern society where the assumption is that the individual takes precedence over the group. Freedom means individual independence. Salvation and moral decisions are private individual matters before God. Terms like "community", "social" and "corporate" are often nothing more than legal constructs.

This study suggests that the answer for community pastoral work is not so much in trying to reconstruct a sense of artificial community in a modern world where individualisation is a given fact. This would mean that individualisation is seen as just negative. The reasons for individualisation are not only negative. Throughout the ages all people have been selfish. Not only modern human beings, have wanted to live for themselves. In the traditional community it is usually of benefit to yourself to live in co-existence with the community. One person needs the community for survival just as the community needs him/ her. Individualisation in modern communities is, in a sense, a self-defence mechanism. Because of an "overload" of relationships, not every relationship can be too intense. Because of the differentiation of life between work area, living area, religious area, social area, etc. it is not possible for people to be in a relationship with every person they meet.

Harvey Cox (1978:40) in his well known book *The secular city* explains it clearly:

The small-town dweller, on the other hand, lives within a restricted web of relationships and senses a larger world he may be missing. Since the people he knows also know one another, he gossips more and yearns to hear gossip. His private life is public and vice versa. While urban man is unplugging his telephone, town man (or his wife) may be listening in on the party line or its modern equivalent, gossiping at the kaffee-klatsch. Urban man, in contrast, wants to maintain a clear distinction between private and public. Otherwise public life would overwhelm and dehumanize him. His life represents a point touched by dozens of systems and hundreds of people. His capacity to know some of them better necessitates his minimizing the depth of his relationships to many others.

Technopolitan (Cox's term for the modern human being) humans must protect their privacy to protect their humanity. In traditional communities, a certain way of involvement in the community is just as necessary for the survival of the person's humanity. An interrelated ecclesiology is thus not an attempt to ignore the necessity for people in modern society to live more individualistically than their ancestors. At the same time it wants to address the problems arising from such an individualistic way of living. One of the results of an individualistic way of living may be that you see your fellow human beings not as humans but as objects, because it is much easier to objectify those you have no contact with. An interrelated ecclesiological

approach wants to move away from the church as just a *Gesellschaft* (society),¹⁶⁴ as the sociologist Tönnies already described it in the previous century.¹⁶⁵ The church as the body of Christ and as covenant community should be a *Gemeinschaft* (community). According to Wessels (1982:44) in German theology *Gemeinschaft* is the equivalent of the term "fellowship" in the American theology. *Gemeinschaft* is the same as *koinonia*, or "communion of community". Parsons (1977:58)¹⁶⁶ warns us not to be unrealistic about the idea of community and to idealise it to the point where we put community against society.

It is not necessarily the physical or geographical nearness which binds the church community together, but also the Holy Spirit and Holy Communion. The community of believers is described as a very close community which does everything together (Ac 4). Unfortunately, people sometimes tend to forget that this community has also its divisions and disunion (cf Galatians and the Second letter to the Corinthians). The church community is also described as the salt of the earth (Mt 5) and should be part of society to have any influence.

An interrelated ecclesiology, which emphasises both individual and community, should be closely connected to an anthropology¹⁶⁷ (cf also Winter 1989). What is important is how we see people. The parable of the good Samaritan (Lk 10:29-37) can be regarded as the most important Scripture in motivating the pastoral work of the church. Luke connects this passage with the "great commandment" (Lk 10:25-28) to love God and your neighbour as yourself. From this parable the disciples learned that "your neighbour" is not necessarily somebody next door. The man who fell among the thieves was a stranger to the passers-by. "But a Samaritan traveller who came upon him was moved with compassion when he saw him" (Jerusalem Bible).

To emphasise only community without the broader perspective of an anthropology may result in people who are very willing to be caring about their community and the people in their community, while ignoring people of other communities. Apartheid in South Africa worked that way. In more rural areas you would find

164. An association organised for a common goal and the functioning of individuals towards that goal.

165. Ferdinand Tönnies published his book in 1887. Cox's (1978:37-38) and Richards (1971:51-54) differ in opinion about the importance of the distinction which Tönnies makes between community and society. Cf also Schanz (1977:202ff).

166. Parsons (1977:58) writes as follows:

Above all, it is necessary to establish adequate links between the psychology of the individual, the functioning of social systems in many different respects, and the grounding of the normative factors in the cultural system. One probability is to avoid simple dichotomization of the *Gemeinschaft-Gesellschaft* type, which is so strikingly parallel to that of socialism-capitalism. There is a distressing tendency among today's intellectuals to posit return to a relatively primitive level of *Gemeinschaft* as the only remedy for what are so widely held to be the malaises and the moral evils of contemporary society.

167. This again is an example of the circular element in this study. A previous section of this ecclesiology deals with anthropology [cf p 188].

that, for example, the white Afrikaans-speaking people formed a very close community,¹⁶⁸ supporting and caring just as in the time of the Acts. But you would also find that some of them were very closed to outsiders. Even other white Afrikaans speaking people, who may have moved into that area, could find it difficult to become part of the community. People who did not speak Afrikaans or who were not classified as white had no chance to become part of such a closeknit community. This is why an interrelated ecclesiology is necessary so that both the individual and community aspects can be emphasised.¹⁶⁹

Daly and Cobb (1989:383-386) have an interesting approach. They work from a biospheric perspective: not only the earth, but the whole universe must be seen as a whole. Where does the individual fit into such a scheme? They see the Old Testament prophet¹⁷⁰ as an example of the importance of the individual. The prophet was part of a community of God's People. Although as individuals the prophets spoke out severely against Israel, they knew that they were persons in community (Daly & Cobb 1989:385). With this understanding of the prophets Daly and Cobb (1989:383) challenge the absolute authority of human community as well as the modern view of individualism.

What we can learn from quantum theories is that something can appear in different ways. In the same sense, it may be necessary to see both the individual and society or community as important. The emphasis on community is not an attempt to enforce the church as a powerful entity, but to give expression to the interrelatedness between the individual and society.

The relationship individual-society raises the question of the position of the individual in the family. Le Roux (1987:115) is of the opinion that the emphasis on the family is a result of an individualised society [cf p 183] This is the only way a child can survive. Society will not look after the child so the family must. The emphasis on the family is a result of the movement away from a communal life (Le Roux 1987:116). Types of communities other than just the family develop. The emerging importance of the peer group is another type of "family" group which also reflects the movement in society to individualisation. Different types of communities develop within a geographical community. These sub-communities reflect the individualisation of society. At the same time there is evidence that these sub-communities are often in relationship with one

168 . Cf Bruwer (1994:47) who discusses poverty and community puts it as follows:

Blood brothers stick together. As a matter of fact, it is often the complaint that people would be very helpful to their own kin, but don't expect them to help outsiders! The history of the Afrikaners during the difficult years of the so-called *poor white* problem is a very good example. After the setbacks of the Great Trek of the 19th century, the destruction of the Anglo Boer war, and the serious depression of the nineteen thirties the Afrikaners were on their knees. By different actions, but mainly through close co-operation and loyalty to one another, they worked themselves out of poverty and into seats of power. The result was 40 years of apartheid; white privilege, and black struggle and pain. To care for your own kin is but another way of caring for yourself (my emphasis - FN).

169 . "But neighborliness does not necessarily include a concern for the rights of strangers, those who are not indigenous to or those who are recent arrivals in the community. From the perspective of those who may enjoy its kindred spirit, a neighborhood may have some of the attributes of Eden, but from the perspective of the excluded, it can easily be mistaken for a jungle" (Lewis 1982:301).

170 . Cf a previous section [p 166].

another and form a **network** of relationships. A high school child may be part of a family, a football team, a peer group and a catechism group. These sub-communities can also be called "cell groups" [cf p 264].

Modern people experience the illusion of a greater communal existence because of the advances of technology and mass media. While people are becoming more isolated, they believe they are becoming more socially involved while they depend on their television, video or computer for indirect interpersonal communication (cf Le Roux 1987:118).

The church as a community has very important implications for pastoral care. The community aspect of care has thus far been neglected in favour of the very important individual pastoral care. The pastoral care of the church is very often directed to the members of the church. If you understand the members of the church as part of a community, which again is part of other communities, the dynamics begin to change. Especially if it becomes clear that the church as a community is more than just the members of the church. Jonas (1996:89) refers to the important role which the black part of the church could play to foster *koinonia* in the church. Jonas (1996:89) says: "In our assessment of black spirituality it is therefore essential to understand that authentic Christian piety should reflect less of an individualistic emphasis on private acts of devotion, and find greater expression in *koinonia* and in participation in communal acts of solidarity, service and worship".

3.4 CONCLUSION

An ecosystemic approach to ecclesiology requires a basic ecclesiological reorientation and not a new or different ecclesiology. In this study an ecosystemic approach to ecclesiology is described as an interrelated ecclesiology. An interrelated ecclesiology emphasises the importance of commitment to fellow human beings and creation. This is why ecclesiology should be discussed within the context of an anthropology. The researcher holds that anthropology can only be understood theologically within the context of creation.

This chapter laid the theological basis for an ecosystemic approach to practical theology. To do that, some basic elements of an interrelated ecclesiology are discussed. The intention thereby is in no way to replace already existing ecclesiologies for practical theology, developed over the years, but is rather an attempt to broaden the scope of existing ecclesiologies and, in the process, also the field of practical theology. An interrelated ecclesiology for practical theology is thus not another ecclesiology next to other ecclesiologies [cf p 141].

An ecosystemic approach to ecclesiology understands the church not as something static but as something dynamic, not in a linear way, but in a circular or reflexive way. An ecosystemic and interrelated ecclesiology does not see the church separate from the people in the church. Such an ecclesiology should also be

eschatologically inclined. Humans cannot be separated from the past¹⁷¹ but should also not be separated from the future. Human beings are occupied with God's ongoing creative work (Moltmann 1989b).

An interrelated ecclesiology is well aware that the actions of the church happen within a much larger context. The church is part of a larger secular society- which is not of itself church-orientated.¹⁷² The church is no longer the centre of the world or the community. The role of the church has been minimised to that of just another organisation. It is important to keep this in mind and to realise that any ecclesiology for practical theology must understand the position of the church in society [cf chapter 4].

The identity of the church is not determined by society, but the church should be in reciprocal interaction with society. Such interaction will have an effect on the actions of the church and the church will have an influence on society. According to De Gruchy's (1972:222) understanding of Barth's ecclesiology, "conforming to the world arises when the church withdraws from the world instead of seeking to relate to and serve it".

We should see ourselves as (the) children of Mother Earth (McFague), and as sisters and brothers to other human beings (Moltmann). One should think holistically rather than analytically; emphasise togetherness rather than distance; break through the dualism of mind and body, subject and object, and emphasise symbiosis (cf Bosch 1991:355). In his voluminous work *The people called: the growth of community in the Bible*, Hanson (1986:8) emphasises the importance of understanding all human life as "intricately intertwined", he stresses the importance of the social, psychological, anthropological and historical dimensions of the community of believers.

An interrelated ecclesiology is a holistic ecclesiology. This means that it is more than just a comprehensive ecclesiology which tries to incorporate both the spiritual and the physical aspects. A holistic ecclesiology moves away from such a dichotomy and emphasises the intrinsic relationship between the spiritual and the physical. This holistic relationship exists because Christ's redemptive work includes the whole of creation (Bradshaw 1993:16). Not the Bible,¹⁷³ but our paradigm or world-view lays the basis of a dichotomy between the soul and the body. Bradshaw (1993:17) puts it very aptly as follows:

Do we advocate justice and minister to the poor, naked, sick, hungry, and oppressed because it gives us the opportunity to preach the Good News to them? Or is advocating justice and ministering to the poor, sick, naked, hungry, and oppressed, in itself, good

171 . It is difficult to think where our past is. Archaic forms of *homo sapiens* appeared 500 000 years ago and the Neanderthals were in Europe 100 000 years ago. Painting on cave walls and burial rituals can be traced back 30 000 years and agriculture 10 000 years. The earliest known writing, Sumerian, is 6 000 years old. The Iron Age is less than 3 000 years old (Barbour 1990:190).

172 . The pluralistic character of the modern world makes it difficult to speak monomorphically about society. Some societies are more religiously orientated than others.

173 . Veenhof (1990:21) puts it as follows: "De Bijbel spreekt ongetwijfeld over 'lichaam' en 'ziel', ook over 'geest', maar daarbij gaat het niet over 'delen', 'stukken' van de mens, die van elkaar losgemaakt kunnen worden. Veeleer gaat het om aspecten van de ene mens."

news? Holism affirms that ministering to the poor, sick, naked, hungry, and oppressed and preaching the message of eternal salvation is Good News.

An interrelated ecclesiology is built on the belief that all people are created in the image of God. An ecosystemic and interrelated ecclesiology should lead to awareness of the importance of justice, injustices, poverty, environmental issues, sexism, racism and ecumenism. It is important that in an interrelated ecclesiology the prophetic voice of the community should be heard at all times. In the light of the body of Christ metaphor, it is clear that not everyone will be a prophet. But some people will have a prophetic ministry and that is also why the emphasis on the role of the ecumenism is so important. The more people (denominations) included in the church community, the stronger the chance that the church will fulfil its prophetic task.

The importance of the concept community in ecclesiology has become clear through this chapter. Firet and Hendriks (1986:142-147) emphasise the importance of the concept *koinonia* in the church. The church as community can only function pastorally if there is *koinonia*. Firet and Hendriks (1986:146) are aware that people in the church community may have stronger bonding with other communities than with the church community. This makes *koinonia* in the church even more important.

The church consists of people who live and interact in many different contexts and systems, like marriage, family, community of believers, geographical community, work community, recreational community and even nature as a community. The church could be described as a community of communities. This refers to the church community's special relation to those who belong to the church, but also its involvement in other communities. "The whole earth should, for its human inhabitants, be like a community of communities" (Daly and Cobb 1989:381).

The church as community functions as the body of Christ. This means that it is a community where everyone has some gifts and everyone is of importance. An interrelated ecclesiology with the emphasis on the church as the community or the body of Christ or a family also reflects a shift in power. It has its basis in the common dignity and vocation of all the members of the church. The members of the church participate in the body of Christ directly, not through the offices of ordained ministers. The ordained ministers are on the same footing as the members of the church. From this perspective, it could be expected that church members will take more responsibility for the ministry, also for the caring ministry, of the church. This will result in people and not pastor driven churches and congregations. The idea of house churches and small groups will be much more acceptable in churches with a community approach to the church than in ones where every member is viewed only individualistically. The church is a community of interchange.¹⁷⁴

174. This concept of "interchange" is used by pope John Paul II in a different context (namely to explain the relation between church and scientific community). Buckley (1990:319-320) cited John Paul II who says: "A divided community fosters a fragmented vision of the world; a *community of interchange* encourages its members to expand their partial perspectives and form a new unified vision."

The way the idea of community is understood is influenced by the ecosystemic approach underlying this chapter. A community is not necessarily a group of people who are physically and geographically close to each other and share everything with each other. A community is a group of people with strong relationships. The role of the individual in such a community is of the utmost importance.

One of the basic needs of people is to be in relationship with others and the Other. But, because of the sinful nature of humankind, people tend all the time to break and not to build relationships. An interrelated ecclesiology has as one of its basic cornerstones the idea of a "community of the faithful" which has strong relationships with those people committed to the church and also with those who are not strongly committed to the church.

The church community should be an open community: a safe haven, a place of rest for the tired, a place for food for the poor, a place of justice for those who experience injustice, a healing place for those with wounds. The grace of God should be at its centre. Such a community can only be understood in the context of the covenant; the covenant which includes the importance of community, but especially the fact that we are sinners who find grace before God.

3.4.1 An approach to pastoral work

Several theologians (Heyns & Pieterse 1990:46vv) have reflected on the importance of communication in practical theology. Communication is fundamental to an understanding of an ecclesiology of practical theology.¹⁷⁵ The whole research into a practical theology ecclesiology is based on the need to communicate the actions of the church and, in this instance, specifically the caring action of the church to the members of the church (vision) and those outside the official church (mission). An ecclesiology must help and promote communication.

This study is about pastoral work. This chapter is about a practical theology base theory in the light of an ecosystemic metaparadigm. An interrelated ecclesiology is proposed as a base theory for practical theology. Heitink (1993:232-235) warns against a base theory for every subdivision of practical theology. Pastoral work as one of the fields of action of practical theology (Heyns & Pieterse 1990:14) will make use of this interrelated ecclesiological base theory as its base theory. **An interrelated ecclesiology forms the basis for an interrelated pastoral work approach.**

The researcher proposes an interrelated ecclesiology as an integral part of an ecosystemic metaparadigm. An interrelated ecclesiology points strongly to the necessity of a community pastoral work approach, if the church's pastoral work wishes to be comprehensive.

This means that the pastoral care going out from the church should be aware that people are not isolated beings, and that every individual is part of a bigger system, or to put it in more theological language, is part

175 . "De bijstand van de Geest vervangt niet het verstand noch maakt hij de redelijke communicatie overbodig" (Van der Ven 1993a:227).

of a community or communities. The church itself can be described as a system or a community. Pastoral work should include more than only emotional care, it should include care on all levels, emotional, spiritual and physical. Pastoral work must also include preventative actions and should not only be directed to those in need.

To be comprehensive, care which takes into account the bigger systems people live in as well as all the different aspects of people's needs and preventative care, means that the pastoral work of the church cannot be done only by the pastor, for example, and cannot be directed only to individuals. Therefore the term "community pastoral work" can be used to give expression to this comprehensive task of the pastoral work of the church.

In an interrelated ecclesiology the community will play a central role. The community may be seen by some as in opposition to the individual. Hopefully this study will succeed in attesting to the opposite. It is so that the individual often plays a major role in the pastoral work of the church.¹⁷⁶

Van den Blink (1984:77) works from a systemic family therapy position and is of the opinion that human beings are fundamentally relational (cf Conradie 1995c) and that this should become clear from our anthropology. An individualistic anthropology will lead to an individualistic pastoral work approach.

How do we move from an individualistic pastoral work approach to a holistic pastoral work approach? The researcher proposes an ecosystemic metaparadigm for practical theology as solution. From a theological perspective, the researcher proposes an interrelated ecclesiology as base theory for practical theology. **The supposition is that a base theory for practical theology could also serve as a base theory for pastoral work.**

How will an interrelated ecclesiology for practical theology influence the pastoral work of the church in practice? This influence will be on different levels. It will influence the way pastoral work approaches a person in need and the way the church as a community organises itself. Gerkin (1986) makes us aware of the importance of narratives. Narratives have a humanising effect on us as people and help us to "maintain a sense of the whole of things" in a very fragmented society (cf Gerkin 1986:28-30).

Ecclesiology for community pastoral work wants to understand the importance of the relationships in which people find themselves. If a person is from a traditional community, pastoral activities should take that into account and also that, for instance, the extended family is very important. Pastoral care should then make use of the benefits of such a community for the care of the person. It may also be that in certain circumstances such a community can be detrimental to a persons health. For instance, if the community does not give or allow the individual enough space and individual freedom. An example would be the belief of many cultures that "men do not cry". The community belief and lack of individual freedom will then

176 . "Binnen de poimeniek staat in de theorievorming de zorg voor de individuele mens centraal;..." (Heitink 1993:240).

prohibit many men from showing their feelings. If a person is from a modern community where there is not much bonding and people are not close to each other, a community pastoral work approach will help the person to develop closer ties with other people in the church community.

An interrelated ecclesiology can help pastoral work to become aware of the importance of the bigger picture and mega forces involved in people's lives. For example, if a person has a drinking problem, all the factors which precipitate the drinking must be taken in account. An ecclesiological base theory for pastoral work will make pastoral workers aware that service and care arise out of the "not yet". The arrival of the fullness of God's kingdom awaits the future eschaton (Grenz 1994:863).

If pastoral work takes the body of Christ metaphor seriously, every member of the believing community will perhaps understand that he/she has a role to play. Mutual care and pastoral care will be part of the everyday life of the church. Church members with specific skills and training will be used for pastoral counselling.

The community of believers is not a closed community. The pastoral work of the church cannot just be directed to the church members, but should take into account all the other relationships of which people are part. It should also take in account all the different communities a person is involved in. Pastoral work must be extended outside the borders of the church community to others in the geographical area or even to people in other geographical areas because care is part of the *missio Dei* of the church.

The essence of pastoral work should be looked for in terms of an interrelated ecclesiology which includes an anthropology. What is important is how we see people. The parable of the good Samaritan (Lk 10:29-37) may be regarded as the most prominent part of Scripture to motivate the pastoral work of the church. Luke connects this passage with the "great commandment" (Lk 10:25-28) to love God and your neighbour as yourself. From this parable the disciples learned that "your neighbour" is not necessarily somebody next door. The man who fell among the thieves was a stranger to the passers-by. "But a Samaritan traveller who came upon him was moved with compassion when he saw him" (*Jerusalem Bible*).

The anthropological view of the pastoral worker is of importance. It will influence the approach of the pastoral worker who is involved with other human beings in their hour of need, sorrow, poverty, experience of humiliation because of discrimination, etcetera. From an ecosystemic perspective pastoral workers cannot ignore ethical questions and issues. Take, for instance, the position a pastoral worker will take in terms of equality of all people in the eyes of God. Many other issues like abortion¹⁷⁷ and homosexuality¹⁷⁸ will confront the pastoral worker.

177. According to Grenz (1994:216-217) a position of anthropological creationism will influence a persons view of the origin of the soul which has important implications for the abortion debate and birth control.

178. Fishburn believes that the modern understanding of the family also plays a role in the way people view homosexuality.

Community pastoral work can be related to the word *koinonia*, which means fellowship. Fellowship reflects a caring attitude and should not only be practised in the confines of a community but should extend beyond those confines. That very extension provides a further community. Fellowship expresses your attitude to other human beings. Community gets a broader meaning when it is understood in the context of the covenant.

An interrelated ecclesiology will include all people, rich as well as poor, and will emphasise how important it is that the church moves away from power towards servanthood. In a paradoxical way servanthood comes forward where you empower people to accept their own humanity (Bruwer 1994a:32-35, 51). An interrelated ecclesiology also points to a pastoral work approach which is much more aware of the social influence and the need for pastoral work to work with a holistic approach. The pastoral work of the church should not take place without social involvement. This implies that involvement in social issues could be seen as part of the pastoral work of the church.¹⁷⁹

The following chapters will take this section's discussion of pastoral work, which developed out of an interrelated ecclesiology, further. Chapter 4 will place it in the context of a changing society. Chapter 5 will be a discussion of an empirical investigation into the pastoral worker's view of the church and of pastoral work. A community pastoral work approach will be discussed in Chapter 6. Chapter 7 will be a discussion of the AIDS challenge from an ecosystemic perspective.

179 . See Crafford (1978:50). Who is writing from a missiological perspective.

4. COMMUNITY PASTORAL WORK IN THE CONTEXT OF A CHANGING SOCIETY

God's image on earth is not the solitary human subject but true human community. It is not its individual parts, but the community of creation as a whole which reflects God's wisdom and God's beauty (Moltmann 1989b:56).

The first chapter of this study formulates the belief that pastoral work tends to be individualistic, reductionistic and directed mainly to individual psychological needs. Chapter 2 discusses an ecosystemic world-view, which is holistic and directed to the relationships between individuals and their community or society, as a metaparadigm for practical theology (and thus also for pastoral work). Chapter 3 discusses an interdependent and interrelated ecclesiology as a base theory for practical theology (and thus also for pastoral work).

An ecosystemic perspective as metaparadigm for practical theology and an ecosystemic interrelated ecclesiology as base theory for pastoral work point very strongly in the direction of "community" as a focal point for pastoral work. This chapter will discuss and investigate this notion further.

In line with an ecosystemic perspective to pastoral work, which should be interdisciplinary and holistic, the *community* aspect of an ecosystemic approach is discussed in a broader context. The complexity of the idea of community and also the interrelatedness inherent in the idea of community become visible. A true paradox emerges. The emphasis on the importance of "the community" comes sometimes more indirectly¹ and from many different vocations such as theologians, sociologists, social workers, psychologists, educationalists² and even politicians. The importance of working with bigger systems is emphasised by many without necessarily defending it theoretically in terms of their world-view or metaparadigm. To work with bigger systems also implies analyses of the bigger systems. The field of sociology is very helpful in this respect. Fumiss (1994:108) explains it as follows: "*The sociological dynamics of religious communities in the modern situation mirror the psychological dynamics of careseekers.*"

In this study both the terms *community* and *society* are used to refer to the bigger systems. There is no value attached to the terms in the sense that *community* is better than *society*. In contrast with this is, for example, the way the theologian Moltmann (1974) understands the concepts *community* and *society*. Moltmann (1974:61) understands community and society to be two opposed systems. He understands community to be a more organic formation and society as a mechanical formation. "In community men are bound together by a natural process; in society they are divided in their very nature" (Moltmann 1974:61).

1. Couture (1995:61-67) discusses the role of individualism in parenting.

2. Wilson (1993) is convinced that the individualistic character of British schools is one of the reasons for the problems they encounter. There is a need to be more community orientated and less individualistically orientated. Children should learn to conform to the 'command' structure of community life. Children become involved in street gangs with a strict command system: "Of course we need to arrive at some kind of balance between communality and individualism; but in doing this we have to recognize fully the human need for the former as well as the latter" (Wilson 1993:4).

4.1.1 The importance of communal life for the church

From a systemic approach it should be clear that all people are part of several different systems which are somehow connected. Although that does not exclude the importance of the individual, it becomes clear that emphasis only on the individual neglects an important aspect of the way the universe, society and people function.

Psychology specifically plays an important role in pastoral care and counselling in the church. In the late sixties there was a definite shift in psychology from more individual-directed therapy to more family directed therapy. Van den Blink (1984:59) puts it as follows:

Na de Tweede Wereldoorlog en vooral in de jaren zestig en zeventig heeft langzaam maar zeker een belangrijke verschuiving plaats gevonden in het bewustzijn van veel psychotherapeuten: een verschuiving van het individu, van de persoon op zich zelf, naar de groep waar de persoon deel van uit maakt, van een bezig zijn met intrapsychische conflicten en hun innerlijke etiologie naar een interpersoonlijke en contextuele manier van zien, ...

Psychology has moved from an individualistic approach. As described earlier [cf page 98] the philosophy behind this change can be found in systems thinking. A person's intra-psychic health (relationship with self) is important, but people are in relationships with other people (systems) all the time. This knowledge is the foundation of systemic family therapy, for instance. By the term "family", family therapists understand all relationships and not only those with next of kin. The social constructivistic approach emphasises the importance and influence of social and environmental factors.

Another branch of psychology, namely community psychology, developed after the mid-sixties. Community psychology is not really rooted in a particular philosophy even though it developed in the USA mainly in the time when the Civil Rights Movement was very strong. There was great pressure to take psychology to the people, meaning the poor and underprivileged. The problem with this movement is that, unfortunately, some therapists set community and individual against each other. Our conclusion is that in psychology there is a strong movement from the individual to the community.

The need and desire for more emphasis on communal life is propagated in many different forms.

- For many theologians the future of the church is imbedded in the rediscovery of the importance of "community" (cf Dawn 1992; Dudley 1991, Schanz 1977, Kraus 1993, Ward 1991, Deeb 1991, Grenz 1994, Hake 1989, Dussel 1988, Granberg-Michaelson 1991).

The sociologist Peter L Berger (1969:45) discusses the importance of a social structure necessary to maintain religions' continuing existence as something that is real to human beings. According to Berger (1969:45), this social structure can be called a *plausibility structure*.³ Berger (1969:46) says all religions

3 . Berger (1969:45-46) refers to the disappearance of the Inca society in Colombian Peru after the Spaniards destroyed the social structure their world-view was based on.

have a way of describing the religious community (which forms the base of the religion). The Muslims call it *umma*, the Buddhist *sangha* and the Christians *koinonia*. Berger (1969:46-47) puts it as follows:

Nevertheless, it can be said that all religious traditions, irrespective of their several "ecclesiologies" or lack of same, require specific communities for their continuing plausibility... The reality of the Christian world depends upon the presence of social structures within which this reality is taken for granted and within which successive generations of individuals are socialized in such a way that this world will be real to them... In this respect, despite the historical peculiarities of the Christian community, the Christian is subject to the same social-psychological dialectic as the Muslim, the Buddhist, or the Peruvian Indian.

The future of Christianity is, in terms of sociology, based on the existence of a Christian community. Pastoral care, as care going out from the church community, is thus based on the existence of a community structure.

- Many theologians understand *community* as essential for the church. It is understandable, because community life used to include a religious dimension. In very modern communities this religious dimension is lacking and there is a movement to make religion and the spiritual part of the community once more. Hanson (1986:8) portrays modern society as in a "spiritual crisis". Hanson (1986:8) describes the need for a movement back to the sacred as follows:

Religion restores our sense of purpose by reminding us of our connections with the past. Through remembering our religious roots, we capture those moments that taught our ancestors those lessons in humility and caring without which a humane society is impossible.

There is a certain looking back to the "good old days". Often an emphasis on communal life means motivating people to go back to their roots, which for some might imply taking people back to their spiritual roots. Pato (1994:160) emphasises that if the church (in SA) wants a future, it should take the traditional way of life of black people seriously. This is affirmed by Setiloane (1986) who believes that the primal African view could help society with values, even more than the Westernised church.⁴ John de Gruchy (1991:226) confirms the importance of community for the church in South Africa, when he says:

One reason why the African Indigenous Churches and the Roman Catholic Church have experienced the greatest growth of all churches in recent years in South Africa is because their focus has not been individualistic but communal. The needs of persons are met in community.

Karin Granberg-Michaelson (1991:26-29) sees communities as healing for the human spirit, as not only spiritual and emotional healing but also physical healing takes place within the caring atmosphere of the community. She tells the story of several communities in the South (or Third World) and how people and the churches benefit from communal life. The basic communities in Latin America in particular are an

4. Pato (1994:160) puts it as follows: "If the church has any future in Africa, that future lies with black people. Hence the need to make them feel that they belong, that the church takes them and their traditional way of life seriously, and that they have responsibility for the life and well-being of the church and its credibility in the world."

example to the church. According to Granberg-Michaelson (1991:32), communities can provide support, consolation, security, intimacy, moral depth, social cohesion and continuity. Granberg-Michaelson (1991:34) explains it as follows:

We have lost a lot of power in the church today because we are not struggling to live in unity within a community and have in many cases accepted the easy individualism that marks many of the industrialized nations of the North. The focus on the common good, interdependence, and community life through the extended family that can still be found in many nations of the South has much to offer the world church.

In writing about the task of the church in Britain, Pityana (1989:111) expresses the need for a theological model which takes seriously the concept of community in black culture. Comer and Hamilton-Lee (1982) describe the important role the black church in America has played as a support system within black communities since the days of slavery. The church helped to form a social and emotional community in a hostile world. Comer and Hamilton-Lee (1982:125) describe the community role of the church as follows:

Both during and after slavery, the black church was more than a church. It was a "substitute society" - a source of valuesetting, direction-giving, judgemental activities to bind the black community together in spite of the uncertainties of secular family, political, or economic life. It was the primary reference point of black community. It was to blacks what the city council, employers, and other powerful individuals and institutions were to whites... The black church had such power because it fulfilled social and psychological needs that could be met in the larger society.

- Jonathan Draper (1994) confirms that, from a Western perspective, in his article with the sub-heading *Challenge to a communitarian Christology*. Draper (1994:29-42) discusses the importance of the Jesus movement for a Christology, concluding that Jesus was part of a local community in Galilee and that it is necessary to define "Jesus as a product and also a shaper of community". Draper (1994:42) believes it is necessary to define the person and the work of Christ for the South African situation. He calls for a critical reflection on the function of *ubuntu* for theology. He is positive about what he calls "an effective community of fundamental humanity". Draper (1994:42) believes that it can be compared with the Jesus movement, and concludes his argument:

We are human only in society; we attain full humanity only through a liberative, empowering relationship (my emphasis - FN) with other human beings in community. However, if *ubuntu* is to become a Christological category for us, it should be approached via the practice of actual Christian base communities, rather than as an abstract concept.

- Communal life confirms and protects our humanity. In the African tradition, the concept of community plays a major role. Pato (1994:156) sees the African concept of community, namely *ubuntu-batho* (human solidarity) as a rich source at the disposal of the African theologian on which to build his/her understanding of theology.⁵ Kalu (1992) does not specifically refer to *ubuntu*, but to the fact that life in

5. It is a misconception to see African culture and thus also African theology as homogeneous. It is important to take Mosala's (1985:110) criticism of West and Sundkler seriously when he accuses them of describing African culture as if it was timeless. Mosala himself proposes a materialist reading of the Bible and also a historical-materialist sociological interpretation of the church.

Africa is communal and that "individual growth and self-realisation are largely expressed in the context of the community, that is welfare of others" (cf also Twesigye 1987: 107-113).

- In systematic theology the political theology of the sixties made us aware that theology must take note of what is going on in society. Theology cannot just be directed at the problems of the individual. This was complemented by Liberation theology, especially from Latin America. The importance of a theology that takes on unjust and oppressive systems was raised. In America a special type of theology, namely Black Theology,⁶ developed under the leadership of James Cone. In South Africa we have a mixture of Black and Liberation theologies (Nel 1989). These different forms of theology (also Feminist theology)⁷ have one ideal in common, namely to move away from an individualistic understanding of the gospel.

Moltmann (1989b:9) is of the opinion that "community is the true protection of personal freedom", because community means solidarity and gives people the possibility of standing together for their rights.

- In South Africa we look appreciatively at the Basic⁸ Christian Communities (*comunidades eclesiales de base*) in Latin America, which emphasised the important role of communities in resisting oppression and caring for those who resist state and church powers. The power of people, especially poor people, lies in communities. "The alternative to poverty is not property. The alternative to poverty and property is community" (Moltmann 1989b:9). In and through communities people may find that they have enough power to resist the political and economic power of those who oppress them. An example is the role played by the church in Latin America in developing the principle of Basic Christian Communities.⁹

In the South American context the church (primarily the Catholic Church) traditionally played an important role in supporting the rich and powerful (De Gruchy 1982). The Basic Christian Communities resisted this traditional role of the church and also mobilised Christian communities to resist the rich and the

6. Harris (1991:62-63) argues that Black theology is concerned with the total person as well as the social structure in which black people find themselves. Therefore Harris (1991:63) believes that Black theology and practical theology should be two sides of the same coin.

7. Particularly Feminist theology from a black perspective (cf Mashinini 1991:351-352).

8. Cf Kritzinger's (1989:34) discussion of the word *base*. According to Kritzinger (1989:34), there is a feeling that the word *basic* does not adequately translate the Spanish and Portuguese expression *de base*. Kritzinger (1989) uses the word *base* and not *basic*. Torres and Eagleson (1981) use the word *basic*.

9. The importance of Basic Christian Communities for the church in Latin America is described by several authors, for example Gustavo Gutiérrez (1982) in *The irruption of the poor in Latin America and the Christian communities of the common people*, and Leonardo Boff (1982) in *Theological characteristics of a grassroots church*, José Bonino (1982) in *Fundamental questions in ecclesiology*, and Ronaldo Muñoz (1982) in *Ecclesiology in Latin America*. In all these articles the point of departure is the poor and oppressed people of Latin America.

powerful.¹⁰ People rediscovered that when they stand together as a community, they can form a united front against those in power and those who oppress them.

Basic Christian Communities involve especially the poor and the oppressed,¹¹ although this involvement includes all people who are willing to identify with the poor and powerless (Gutiérrez 1982). Gutiérrez (1982:111) says that the poor should not be understood as individual poor people, but as a social group or class. This has tremendous implications for the church in South Africa¹² where poverty is also entrenched in a certain section of society, especially the black section.¹³

Both Bruwer (1994a) and Kritzinger (1994b) describe the importance of a community approach to development work for the church. Kritzinger, a missiologist, describes historically how the development work of the NGK ran into trouble because of the "outside" and "from above" approach of the church. Kritzinger (1994b:56) summarises it as follows:

The negative experience of the previous model, and the growing realisation that the previous outreach did not really address the most basic needs of people, led to a rethink of the church's diaconate... The experience certain key individuals gained in community development,¹⁴ coupled with their knowledge of the latest thinking in the development field, led them to embrace a more community based approach.

- Earlier it was said that from an ecclesiological point of view it is clear that the church and specifically each congregation is part of a wider society. The church has a calling to be involved in the broader society to proclaim the gospel. The emphasis is on the importance of an **interconnected ecclesiology**; it will include an anthropology which goes beyond just the individual. A Biblical anthropology sees the individual as part of society. We are humans not on our own, but in relation with others.

10. Kritzinger (1989:35-36) summarises the BCC's impact on the life in the church in the following points: (a) They represent a new understanding of the social reality - from the bottom up. (b) They are a new way of being church, namely communitarian, holistic, inclusive, lay-centred, ecumenical and committed to the poor. (c) They practice a new way of doing theology namely from the perspective of the oppressed and marginalized and non-professional.

11. Cf De Gruchy (1991:226).

12. Research carried out by the NGKA in 1990 found that 58% of households belonging to the NGKA had a monthly income of less than R500 (Van Niekerk et al 1991:16). The report Van Niekerk et al 1991:31) proposes that:

The existing patterns of service and ministry need to be re-evaluated and reconciled within the context in which our congregations function. Structures must not be limiting or enslaving and are only there to serve people. In this light, the experiences of 'Christian base communities' need to be studied.

13. Cf Second Carnegie Report (Wilson & Ramphela 1989).

14. "Gemaenskapsontwikkeling het te doen met die herstel en bevordering van gesonde interaksie tussen die dele van die sisteem" (Müller 1991b:94).

- An ecosystemic approach to pastoral problems will be aware of the importance of the individual for any system. Individuals influence systems, but are also influenced by the systems in which they find themselves (Cosgrove & Hatfield 1994:125). This means that the individual can be influenced through the system and the system can be affected through the individual. Pastoral work should work both ways in addressing pastoral problems. Therefore pastoral workers need to be aware of the mutual role and influence of people, communities and society on each other.
- Pastoral workers who want to nurture and take responsibility for everyone with whom they come into contact are on a sure path to pastoral burn-out and also do not honour the responsibility of systems (families, congregations, communities) to look after one another. Communities have often a certain "inherent" element of caring. The pastoral task is thus not for the pastoral worker to nurture those in need single-handedly, but that the pastoral worker will strengthen the systems available so that the systems can better support and care for those in need. Most systems are both dynamic and stable. They tend towards homeostasis, but adapt to pressure from within or without and are able to restructure themselves (cf Cosgrove & Hatfield 1994:125). The pastoral worker may be part of the system (i.e. the church or community) and can play a role from within the system in restructuring itself to become more caring.

The emphasis on a community approach in theology thus comes from different directions and cannot be ignored by the pastoral work of the church. Both an ecosystemic approach to pastoral work and an interrelated ecclesiology as base theory point in the direction of a community approach to pastoral work. After all this evidence it becomes difficult to ignore the importance of the concept *community* for the church and the pastoral work of the church. From a sociological point of view, it is important to be reminded that the church functions within a pluralistic society. The next section will discuss the changing society in which we live.

4.1.2 Different communities

It is important to realise that modern society is a pluralistic one (Browning 1983b:14). Never has society been more fragmented. According to Dekker (1987), every fragment of society is either the beginning or end point of a relationship. Within South African society it is possible to identify different communities (cf Nümberger 1994:131).¹⁵ For the sake of simplification they could be called traditional communities and modern¹⁶ communities.¹⁷ Communities in the cities tend to be more modern and those in the rural areas

15. Nümberger's (1994) article is about the church and the economy. He refers to "rural traditionalism" and "urban modernity".

16. The option of bringing in a third category, namely "post-modern communities" was considered in the light of chapter two of this study, but decided against because the distinction between modern and post-modern communities would be very vague. Post-modernism is more a way of thinking than something that could be pinned down in terms of structures. This does not rule out the possibility that some modern communities may consist of pockets of people who think in a postmodern way. Moltmann (1989b:1) describes modern society as societies which have risen out of the industrial revolutions. Moltmann

to be more traditional. These are the extremes on a continuum. Between the very modern (urbanised) and the very traditional (rural) communities are many communities that are either more rural or more urbanised or a mixture.¹⁸

The role of church communities differs. Different churches cater for different communities. It is known that the Independent churches are very strong in rural areas and mainline churches in the cities (Makhubu 1988). There is also a tendency for rural communities to be much poorer than urban communities. The Uniting Reformed Church, to which the researcher belongs, has congregations in rural and urban areas. The pastoral work approach of the church should be able to reach the people in rural and urban areas as well as all the groupings and communities inbetween. Therefore any pastoral work approach which takes praxis seriously must also take seriously the sociological reality of a diversity of communities. The reality is that most church members are in urban settings.

Many people are physically moving to the cities where they experience something of the modern spirit influencing their community.¹⁹ According to Kritzinger (1995:207), in South Africa this movement to the cities has specific features as a result of the apartheid history, namely, a housing backlog (2 to 3 million units), shattered family life, a breakdown of law and order and continuing poverty. Movement to cities generally results in people becoming more independent and individualistic, especially in societies where strong democratic values and a capitalistic economic system are promoted.

There also is, in the urban areas, a move away from the cities again to semi-urban and rural areas, especially among people who are economically independent. Many people also have an intense desire to experience more of a community life. Loneliness results in the wish of many to be part of a community of

says that the Western world is now in its third industrial revolution: after mechanization came electrification and now there is computerisation of production.

Furniss (1994:ix) uses the word "modern society" in referring to "contemporary industrial and post-industrial society". He argues that this does not exclude a postmodernist thrust underlying his sociological theories.

17. Modern communities also have many names. They are called "capitalist" or "bourgeois" or "technocratic" or "industrial" or even "post-industrial". Moltmann (1974:27-28) says that wherever one looks, a different feature of our modern world appears. The different names are in themselves a confirmation of how pluralistic society is that it cannot be brought under a single concept.

18. "In reality the transition from a purely rural community to an urban one, whatever may be the definition, is not abrupt but gradual; from an open farm through a small settlement of agriculturists, a hamlet with a slight admixture of a few non-farming people, a village, a small town, to larger towns and cities ... There is no absolute boundary line which shows a clearly cut cleavage between the rural and the urban community" (Sorokin & Zimmerman 1929. *Principles of rural-urban sociology* cited by Steyn & Van Rensburg 1990:179-180).

19. Kritzinger (1995:203) says that in 1950 only two of the seven cities with populations larger than 5 million were in the so-called Third World. The present trend is that by the year 2025 no less than 80 of the 93 cities in this class will be in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Over the past twenty-five years Africa's urban population has increased by 347%.

people. A post-modern and an ecosystemic understanding promotes a back-to-the-earth approach and an appreciation of the benefits of a communal life. People are moving into cluster homes, because they feel safer and often experience a sense of community, but do not have to give up their independence. There is an emerging need in our time for more viable and cohesive social structures like families, communities and churches "capable of tempering and managing social conflict and violence in humane and gracious ways" (Hunter & Patton 1995:43). Although this desire may be very strong, the individualistic spirit of modern society makes it difficult to think that people will really become dependent on each other and form close-knit communities again.

Hendriks and Ludik (1993:815) describe the influence of the urban environment as follows:

Die mees destruktiewe uitwerking van hierdie faktore van die moderne stedelike samelewing, is egter dat dit die hegte sosiale netwerke wat so kenmerkend van stabiele plattelandse gemeenskappe is, vernietig. Die kerk kan eenvoudig nie meer, soos in die verlede, daarop reken dat daar verhoudingsnetwerke tussen lidmate bestaan nie... Dit is veral duidelik dat die bedieningspatrone wat op die platteland die kerk vir jare lank gedien het, nie meer so goed in die stad werk nie. Dit is veral waar ten opsigte van die kerk se vermoë om 'n gemeenskapsgevoel by lidmate op die been te kry.

The church's pastoral work thus has to reach out in all these different scenarios. The response of most churches to urbanisation is to "modernise" their pastoral work in the direction of individual counselling. In this process the pastor becomes a specialised and trained counsellor who delivers a professionalised counselling service. The church community often become spectators as far as pastoral work is concerned (cf Couture & Hester 1995: 47-48). For more traditional communities, which in most instances are also economically the poorer section of society, the individual counselling model is often not applicable. Although there are many reasons for this, they fall into two main categories:

a) The way many poor people function, is often not at an individualised but at a community or group level (Kotzé 1993). The reasons for this are mostly economic, for example housing. The problems of people are thus less individualised and more related to the problems of the community as a whole. People in poorer communities find it difficult to attend individual sessions of counselling because they are used to solving problems within a community setup. At the same time the church still has an influence in the more traditional and poorer communities. People make use of the church and the church plays a definite role in these communities.

b) Individual counselling methods are not economically viable. Pastors in traditional communities often lack the skills necessary (because of fewer opportunities for training), or if they have the skills, the size of the congregations makes it very difficult for them to use those skills in an intensive counselling type of ministry. Poorer communities find it difficult to afford to let their pastors be trained for many years and poorer congregations are often much bigger with a lot less infrastructure.²⁰

20 . This is the situation in the URCSA and most probably also in other mainline churches.

Often the pastor in economically poorer communities is much more involved in what is known as diaconal work and spends less time on formal pastoral work. But of course, this is only true if one separates pastoral work from deaconal work.

It is important to accept that there are different types of communities. The social situation (urban or rural) will also influence people's paradigms (perspectives) and their world-views (perceptions). Not only are there many different communities, but modern society has an influence on how people think about and what they expect from the church. How must the church approach its pastoral work in all these different communities? It is sufficient to say at this stage that an ecosystemic approach is necessary to incorporate all the different paradigms and social contexts. The next section takes us one step further in explaining how society has changed.

4.1.2.1 Different world-views

I belong therefore I am (John Mbiti cited by Setiloane 1986:48)

The Cartesian dictum "I think, therefore I am" is changed by Mbiti to "I belong therefore I am". According to Setiloane (1986) this change of the well-known Western dictum explains the basis of the African world-view. Setiloane (1986:48) explains it as follows:

The primary centre of being is the community: it came first, and its demands to be preserved are primary in every situation, for it is only as it is so preserved that the people who make it up can survive. There is no being nor survival in isolation. By my reading, Africans have a tremendous difficulty with the concept "individual". Does such a thing exist?

Setiloane (1986:50) explains that it is this world-view that led the people living here in Southern Africa to accept the White person and his religion in their midst, so opening the door to subjugation. It is clear that the call for community from Setiloane derives from a world-view that is just as compelling as the individualism of Western society.

The call for *community* from a Western perspective is possibly motivated more by the experience of isolation and the need that is then felt for more community. The call for community from an African perspective has possibly more to do with the traditional world-view of Africa. The danger is that Setiloane, and so also many missionaries from the West, romanticise the so-called African world-view, in the sense that no pure world-view exists in either Africa or the West.

A community approach seems to be important and Africa could help the Western world to rediscover a sense of community, but it does not matter how eager we are to incorporate values such as community or humanity (which is also very strongly imbedded in African traditions), we cannot act as if modernity does not exist.

This does not mean that *community* as an important foundation of the African world-view could not be useful. We should value it and it should help the modern society. This is what post-modernism at one level tries to do. An ecosystemic approach, which is also strongly influenced by post-modernism, redirects the

attention to a more holistic approach of society and humanity. The emphasis on the concept of community, should be understood in terms of the modern society which influenced most people in this global village.

4.1.2.2 A changing society

In the earlier phase of social and religious development, the distinction between religion and secular spheres of life had been tenuous, and religion had tended to govern virtually every aspect of communal and personal life. For several people in modern-day Africa as a whole, this is no longer the case (Assimeng 1989:131).

In previous sections [cf p 153] it was established that we can talk about the sociological or empirical face of the church. To facilitate understanding of sociological changes in society, use will be made of the sociology of religion and specifically of Dekker's studies. It is necessary to reinterpret the information of the sociologists of religion in terms of the change we desire as practical theologians. According to Heitink (1993:217), the difference between practical theology and the sociology of religion can be seen in the fact that practical theology is interested in the improvement of the situation in the direction of the desired praxis.²¹ Furniss (1994:vii), a sociologist of religion, begins the preface of his book *The social context of pastoral care* with the following words:

It is time someone said it (loudly): Sociology is "in the air" of pastoral care. Hints of sociology are evident on all sides: the feminist critique of traditional pastoral care, the concern for the "relational self", analyses of cross-cultural pastoral care, the introduction of liberation theology, and perhaps most striking, the popularity of family systems theory, ...

Before considering the modern situation let us refresh our minds by looking back to previous centuries. Many of the actions in the church (church praxis) are based on the position and function of the church many years ago. Later in this section the influences of contemporary (modern) society²² on the church will be discussed further.

In the first centuries the people who belonged to the Christian faith and those who did not believe in Jesus Christ were clearly identified as belonging to two different groups. This situation changed drastically after the third century.²³ While dying, the once persecutor of the church, Galerius, declared the Christian faith a permissible religion in 311 AD. The Christian religion became a *religio licita*. The first Christian emperor,

21 . "De verbetering van de situatie in de richting van de gewenste praxis, is de eigenlijke interesse van praktisch-theologisch onderzoek in onderscheid van bijvoorbeeld godsdienstsociologisch onderzoek" (Heitink 1993:217).

22 . Dekker makes use of the word *society* in a homogeneous sense. He writes from the background of a homogeneous Dutch society. The present study is done from the background of a heterogeneous society, which is even further divided into two basic components, namely modern communities and traditional communities. The word *society* in Dekker's understanding refers, most of the time, to what is known in this study as modern community.

23 . "De christelijke kerk van de eerste drie eeuwen is een kerk van martelaren geweest" (Praamsma 1979:34).

Constantine,²⁴ took it further with the Edict of Milan in 313 AD.²⁵ The situation changed rapidly after that: in 315 AD a law was promulgated which gave the church permission not to pay taxes; in 321 AD another law was passed which recognised Sunday as a day of rest.²⁶ In Europe, the boundaries between church and state became a little less clearly defined.

Thereafter, and for ages to come, the church could often (often unofficially) be described as a "state church". Christian belief, spreading from Constantinople, became the unifying characteristic of the Western comity of peoples. This clearly influenced the functions of the church in society. The church also became the source of many services necessary to society.

Earlier the church building was in the middle of every village. The tower symbolised the dominant role the church played in Western society (Dekker). First the bells reminded people of the occasion to pray. Significantly, the incorporation of clocks into village towers indicated a change in society. People looked to the clock, in the church tower, to know what time of the day or night it was. The little village had started to develop into the city of today where time (a sign of a dehumanising and technocratic society), rules our lives. Even so, the church village tower was still for a long time the centre of society. (The church was also the only institutional caring agency in society.)

Since the seventeenth century the world has changed ever more rapidly. The seventeenth century was the beginning of a new chapter in the history of the Western world, known as the Enlightenment or *Aufklärung* - the coming of age of human reason. According to Storig (1972:345), the philosopher Kant (1724-1804) calls it "uittreden van de mens uit zijn aan hemzelf te danken onmondigheid".

Together with the Enlightenment a new phase in the history of the Western world, known as the "industrial revolution", developed during the eighteenth century. Traditionally, people laboured at home, producing food for themselves. The industrial revolution is known for the fact that factories came into being where products were mass-produced. People had to leave their homes for work. In time people moved closer to centralised industrial locations. Cities were born. The cathedrals and churches formed the centres of the old cities. Today skyscraper office blocks are dominant in our cities, which is symbolic of the changes that took place.

24 . Cf Kleynhans (1988:154-157).

25 . Praamsma (1979:40) says: "Christen zowel als al de anderen vrijheid zullen genieten om die godsdienst aan te hangen die hun voorkeur heeft".

26 . "Alle rechters, de bewoners van de steden en zij, die betrokken zijn in beroepsarbeid zullen rusten op de vererenswaardige dag van de zon. Aan landbouwers zal het echter vrijstaan hun land te bebouwen, omdat het dikwijls gebeurt dat geen andere dag zo geschikt is voor het zaaien van koren of het planten van wijnstokken, en de mensen de voorrechten hun vergund door de hemelse voorzienigheid zouden verbeuren, wanneer ze het geschikte ogenblik voorbij zouden laten gaan." (Praamsma 1979:72). According to Moltmann (1985:294), this legislation of the Christian Sunday came into action on 3 March 312.

The development of intellectual life in the age of the Enlightenment allowed a more independent establishment of scientific principles. Philosophical developments gave birth to scientific developments. The Industrial Revolution in the Western world changed family patterns and society as a whole.

Alan Storkey (1979:28-31) connects the developments of the Enlightenment and the Reformation's emphasis on personal and individual faith. Storkey (1979) blames these two factors for the growing individuality of humankind in the modern world. For Christians, this means a growing tension between awareness of their own identity and the fact that people are created to live in communion with their fellows. Storkey (1979:31) is highly critical of the individualism of the modern age because "there are biblical laws, to which man is subject, which express what this communion should be".²⁷

Storkey (1979:44-51) describes how the spirit of individualism is growing in the twentieth century. Existentialism,²⁸ liberalism and capitalism as well as the mass media play a major role in making people more individualistic. Storkey (1979:48) believes "individualism is opening up problems which, it seems, can only be solved by a stronger collectivist reaction". Storkey's (1979:152) negativity towards individualism is underscored when he says: "Individualism is a deep and pervasive modern, spiritual force".

- Dekker helps us to understand this movement to individualism better. Dekker (1971) uses the concept *differentiation* to explain modern society.²⁹ In earlier times every aspect of society was very closely related. The church played a dominant role and society was under the guardianship of the church. Because of differentiation the church is losing its position. (In a country such as South Africa this is happening right now, while in many European countries this has started after the Second World War.). The church is experiencing a loss of functions in society (Dekker 1971:7). Some of the functions of the church (e.g. education, health care, emotional care, and social care) are taken over by other institutions and professions (schools, medical institutions, psychologists, social workers). Dekker (1971:9) reminds us that the church still longs to be the dominant institution in society.

According to Dekker (1971:7-9), this loss of functions of the church can also be described as a change of functions. The church does not take over the functions of other institutions, but develops new functions. For

27 . The researcher does not support the negative way Storkey evaluates individualism. His implicit argument that it goes against creation is dangerous in the sense that it works with the idea of orders of creation ("skeppingsordeninge") (cf Durand 1982: 192-197).

28 . Existentialists emphasise autonomy. Every individual is left free to decide what he or she is becoming. No essence is to be found in the nature of things with which human beings should live in harmony (cf Grenz 1994:198).

29 . Heitink (1993:237) also makes use of the *differentiatieprincipe* and the *integratieprincipe* to develop a base theory for practical theology. He bases his use of the *differentiatieprincipe* on the praxis of the modern society.

this study and for pastoral work in general it is important to understand the reasons for the decreasing role of the church in society. Dekker (1971:18-19) mentions several factors which lead to the decreasing role of the church in society. We mention only three of them here:

a) Changes in society: Certain changes in the church and in society have led to a decreasing role for the church in society. The church used to play an important role as far as the social needs of people were concerned. In modern times the state executes many of these functions. There is more and more pressure on the state to move in the direction of a welfare state (cf Du Toit 1982).³⁰ People who had a relationship with the church, only because the church performed certain functions, left the church when the church stopped performing these functions or when they did not need the church anymore because these functions were taken over by other institutions [cf p 150].

In modern society the local community is in the process of becoming less and less important (Dekker 1971:34). Earlier the local community in which a person lived was the place of work, schooling and recreation. Today people do not live and work in the same close community any more. Living and working may be at totally different places.³¹

The problem is that the church is basically still structured according to the earlier model of the community. The result is that the church has little relation to the whole of society as the modern (global) village. In the light of the decreasing influence of the church community on society, it is to be expected that the church's role will also decrease in the greater society.

Dekker (1971:42) sees the fact that the church is mainly directed to the local community and not to society at large as the main reason for the situation in which the church finds herself today. People who are also community directed will make out a greater percentage of the church. According to research, this is exactly what happens - rural people, women and the "oude middenstand" make up the church. Urbanites, men and "nieuwe middenstand" are leaving the church. From a sociological point of view, Dekker (1971:43) describes the function of the church in modern society as follows:

We zeiden daar dat de kerk duidelijk een functie heeft voor de mensen die sterk in de bestaande samenleving in de zin van de-zo-geworden-samenleving geïntegreerd zijn en dat zij een geringere functie heeft voor de in een bepaald opzicht meer modern ingestelde mensen, voor de mensen die sterker op de samenleving-zoals-die-aan-het-groeien-is betrokken zijn.

30 . Greeves (1960:21) wrote from a British perspective many years ago:

In some countries great material prosperity, in others relative material progress combined with the development of a Welfare State, reduce almost to non-existence the *direct* corporate activity of the Church in the relief of basic physical needs. Both the charity and the ignominy of the soup kitchen are passing away; a swiftly growing army of social workers has largely replaced the amateur service of visitors 'from the church'. The development of both lower and higher education has made obsolete the general educational work which was formerly provided within and by the Church.

31 . Interestingly with the development of computers, modems and fax machines, more and more people are working from home again. This does not alter the reality that millions of people have no choice but to work far from where they live.

b) Structural developments in society: The process of industrialisation and urbanisation lead to a change in lifestyle. People are involved in many more relationships than previously. Because of the numerous potentials for relationships in society, it is not possible for an individual to be actively involved in all of them. So the relationships between people change. People are often in what Dekker (1971:28) calls 'latent relationships'. A latent relationship is one which people view positively but are not actively involved in. Because people are in many more relationships the intensity of the relationships is not the same. Often a relationship will be limited to only one aspect, namely to the main reason (function) for the contact.³² This is in a certain sense a self-defence mechanism.

Reference has already been made to the differentiation in society. Differentiation (as a consequence of fragmentation)³³ results in the functionalising of relationships. Differentiation leads to more specific and less total relationships. Not all relationships are limited to the specific. It is a person's free choice which relationships he/ she wishes to develop further. This type of functioning has become part of humankind.

This limited engagement even prevails among church members. People may be positive about the church and religion, but just do not commit themselves to being actively involved in the church or religion. The church as an entity, on the other hand, still expects the total response prevailing in earlier ages from people. Dekker (1971:37) puts it as follows:

Daardoor ontstaan moeilijkheden, want het kerkelijk leven is hierop niet berekend. De kerk veronderstelt eigenlijk in al haar activiteiten en vormen manifeste relaties, ze weet geen raad met een distantie in de relaties en zeker niet met een behoefte aan anonimiteit.

People do not form relationships with everyone with whom they come in contact. This has serious implications for the church and for the pastoral work of the church. The pastoral work of the church will find it difficult to promote the idea of "more relationships", but should try to develop "better relationships".

c) Cultural developments in society: The developments and influences of the sciences, the physical sciences and the human sciences, change people's outlook on life. It is possible to give a scientific

32 . "In de huidige samenleving hebben we - als direkt gevolg van de differentiatie - met veel meer mensen kontakt, maar de 'basis' van de kontakten is nu veel smaller, is zelfs meestal beperkt tot een funktie. Zo is de kans dat we iemand, die we van ons werk kennen, ook in kerkelijk leven of in het verenigingsleven tegenmoetkomen veel geringer dan vroeger" (Dekker 1971:36).

33 . Gerkin (1986:15) understands pluralism as the cause of fragmentation. He argues that even "language worlds among members of a social context" are fragmented.

The question can be posed to Gerkin how this fragmentation of language worlds influenced his hermeneutical theory of pastoral counselling as explained in his earlier work (*The living human document*). He (1984:) says in that work: "A hermeneutical theory will therefore come at the task of relating two language worlds, such as those of theology and psychology, to a specific human function, such as that of pastoral counseling, by first acknowledging the discrete boundaries of each world. Languages cannot easily or deftly be interchanged. Each comes at the interpretative task with a different set of formative images."

explanation for many phenomena. People do not look to the church to explain every phenomena or to have an answer for every question.³⁴ For example: when you become ill, its not because of your sin, but because of a virus or bacteria.

Because of differentiation, people are living in different communities at the same time. Because of this, people are confronted with the different values of the different spheres.³⁵ The individual must make sense of all these values for him/ herself. The result is that people are much more aware of their own subjective feelings about things. This results in a total change in the structure of the individual's consciousness.³⁶ One of the results is the democratising of society. People want to have a say in society, because they have their own subjective feeling about things. That feeling may differ from that of others and it is acceptable that people experience things differently.

A further change is a change in the faith of people. A new structure in the consciousness of people means also a new way of believing. People in the church have more and more problems with the hierarchical structure of the church. People start to question the so-called objective truths which the church proclaims. The monological character of the preaching of the church is also under fire (cf Lemmer 1990)

In a technological sense the church is unable to keep up with the changing times. The organisational ability of the church is often limited and does not succeed in keeping track of modern people who are generally on the move. The church has become outdated as far as technology is concerned.

Changes in society do not only influence the position of the church in society, they also influence the situation within the church. Dekker makes it clear that the place of the church in society changes and concurrently this also changes the relationship between people and the church. The evidence is clear that more and more people are leaving the church (cf Hendriks 1995). Research shows that not all the people who leave the church as institution lack faith. Dekker (1971:29-30) warns against using going to church as the only criterion to determine a person's relationship with religion. Dekker (1971:21-22) puts it as follows:

34 . How does that influence the theodicy question? (Cf Assimeng 1989:11). Bradshaw (1993:7-12) tells the beautiful story of missionaries who were involved in development work in an African village. They dug a well and analysed the water and found a high concentration of phosphate in it. The missionaries recommended that the water was not safe for human consumption. The villagers believed that an evil spirit contaminated the water and that the right ritual and prayer to the gods would solve the problem. Another story of Bradshaw explains how the missionaries believed that a certain woman could not have children because of her age. The local community saw her infertility as a sign of the gods.

35 . Cf Vorster (1994:17) who argues that the emphasis on community in the African cultures has as result that the community determines values and morality.

36 . "We hebben hier niet (alleen maar) te maken met veranderingen in de inhoud van het denken, van het bewustzijn, maar met een verandering van de bewustzijnsstructuur, van de bewustzijnsvorm van de mens" (Dekker 1971:38).

Er is geloof buiten de kerk, evenals ongeloof binnen de kerk. ... De verschillen tussen kerk en niet-kerk, tussen kerkelijken en buiten-kerkelijken zijn bovendien vaak gradueel. Bij veel buitenkerkelijken vindt men blijkens onderzoeken kerkelijke gedragingen of denkbeelden die met de kerk in verband worden gebracht zoals kerkgang, het instemmen met bepaalde geloofswaarheden, bidden en bijbellezen.

Dekker (1971) distinguishes between the "buitekerkelijke"; the "randkerkelijke"; the "selectieve kerkelijke" or "anders kerkelijke" and the "binnekerkelijke". Dekker (1971:23-31) sees the "randkerkelijke" as a new grouping in a changing society. These are people who are not involved in the church and do not attend the Sunday services, but will take part in certain actions of the church (cf Heitink 1979: 336-341).

Dekker's analysis of a changing society raises serious questions for the church's pastoral work: People's thinking changes, society changes, the position of the church in society changes. Does the church in its praxis take this into account? It becomes clear that the church should accept that it has lost its dominant role in modern society!

The pastoral work of the church should be aware of these changes in society. Certain societies (not all societies) have developed an individualism that will be difficult to change. The pastoral work of the church should take that into account. Because of this growing individualism, the relationships between people in society and people who live in the same geographical community has changed. People prefer to be friends and form a community with people they like and not necessarily with the people who live closest to them. This is visible in the growing tendency to move away from the forming of geographical congregations (cf L Heyns 1991).

The question is: Does the church as institution still have any role to play? And what pastoral role has the church to play in a changing society?.

Theologically different approaches to a changing society would be possible. There is the danger of a type of ghetto approach, where the church as *alternative community* receives so much emphasis that it starts to cultivate a ghetto attitude.

- The theologian, Pannenberg is very aware of the changing society and the secularisation process that goes with it. Pannenberg (1988:38) is not negative about the secularisation process. For him the pluralism of cultural life, the freedom of science and art, could be an enrichment. But he believes that the secularisation process also has, what he calls, shadow sides. He makes it clear that even in a secularised society, people have a need for religion. Pannenberg (1988:33-39) discusses three long-term effects (losses) due to the secularisation process:

First, the collapse of the legitimacy of the secular state. The old cultural order had religion as its moral foundation. Because of the divine dimension of religion, people felt that the moral base of social structures, being consistent with religious principles, could not be manipulated so easily. In modern secularised society social structures do not have the same legitimacy. In modern society social structures are based on natural law and the concept of equal freedom for individuals. In the process politics (politicians?) have taken over the power religion used to have. This means that it is not only the church that has lost its privileged

position, but also the state. (What does this mean in terms of a prophetic pastoral work approach?)

Secondly, Pannenberg maintains that the grounding of moral norms, independently of the religious tradition of Christianity, on the rationale of human freedom leads to a feeling of solitude in relation to the institutional order. People conform to moral norms without inner conviction. The institution of the family suffers the most, because people are no longer convinced of the value of marriage and family life. This can be one of the factors in the destruction of marriage and family life. (What implications do this have for the *family* metaphor?)

Thirdly, many people doubt whether their lives have any meaning because of the loss of a meaningful focus of commitment. Pannenberg refers to the theories of Victor Frankl and the importance of meaningful commitment in life. Pannenberg does not think about returning to the old order where religion played the dominant role in society. Pannenberg (1988:38) puts it as follows:

Most of us do not want to give up the positive values of tolerance, individual self-development and the plurality of cultural forms associated with this (modern period - FN). The question is whether there can be a renewal of the context of our culture with its religious origins which preserves the values of the modern cultural development while at the same time taking notice of the Christian shaping of our cultural tradition in present-day cultural and political life and restoring its validity as an index of the identity of our culture.

Dekker and Pannenberg help us to understand some of the changes which take place in society and in communities. These changes also influence the position of the church and its pastoral work. We live in a modern society (or postmodern society). Even traditional communities experience tremendous changes. There is a longing in modern church communities for more fellowship (Hendriks & Ludik 1993), but there is also a drive towards individualism. Pannenberg formulates something of this paradox of the "good and the bad" that comes with the changes in society. He sees it as a challenge to the church. People who have a close relationship with the church community has also relationships with other communities. **A paradoxical situation develops where modern people long for more community but where modern society (consisting of people) moves more and more in an individualistic direction.**

Furniss (1994) helps us to understand this paradoxical situation in terms of the concept of *plausibility structures*.³⁷ This refers to the complex social interactions that reinforce a world-view. The plausibility structures of modern society differs from that of traditional society. It means the social mechanisms have changed. People may still long to be part of a community or still have a desire to be religiously involved, but the social mechanisms of society (the *plausibility structures*) have changed and do not support communitarianism or religiosity.

To summarise: From an ecosystemic perspective the church and society are interrelated which implies that changes in society will have an influence on the church and her actions. The position of the church in

37. Furniss (1994:33) refers to the book of Berger and Luckmann *The social construction of reality* (1966).

society has changed tremendously, because society has changed. The response to these changes could either be seen as negative or as a challenge for the church. The basic structure of society has changed which implies that the praxis of the church should also undergo certain changes. The paradox is that modern society is not community orientated, although there is still a need for the communal. The praxis of the church should develop by taking into account both the need for the communal and the lack of structure in society.

4.1.3 A critical evaluation of the concept community

The sociologist Assimeng (1989:103-104) explains how traditional communities have changed in West Africa. Many factors played a role, especially economic factors. Subsistence economy, based largely on agriculture, ensured a certain kind of relative sameness. An entire community could be categorised as collectively economically better off or worse off, because the community could be compared with other communities. When members of the community begin to take part in the economic activity of society, internal social differentiation and class and status within the local community emerges. No longer is a community collectively categorised as better off or worse off. The interesting thing is the effect it has on religion. Assimeng (1989:104) explains that "... there emerges corresponding differentiation in religious values and mystical affinity, and even the manipulation of religious values and mystical ideas".

The blessings of the gods, originally sought in a group situation and for the welfare of the group, are now sought in aid of the individual or the social class. The goals and needs of people in a community may now differ. The person without a house needs a house and the person without a car needs a car.

Very important is Assimeng's description of modern social life in West Africa and the place of religion in West Africa.³⁸ Religion in West Africa has become more and more an individual rather than a communal affair, according to Assimeng (1989:130): "A remarkable aspect of religious behaviour in contemporary West African society is that religion as an institution has tended to become, as we have noted, an issue of private concern."

In 1973 Andrew Greeley wrote an article entitled *The persistence of community*. The question Greeley wishes to answer is: why all this emphasis on community? The obvious answer is that, because of the process of industrialisation and urbanisation and the accompanying loneliness people have a need to break away from the impersonal mass society.

Greeley (1973:26) believes that the obvious answer is not an adequate explanation and works with a romanticised and naïve description of the old community. Are people who belong to communities always happy and never really lonely? Greeley (1973:26) has his doubts about the quality of the interpersonal

38. The researcher believes that Assimeng's observation and research may also be, to some extent, applicable to a Southern African context.

intimacy in the old peasant village. He agrees that there were strong social support but also strong social control. Greeley (1973:26-27) puts it as follows:

The peasant village was not an open, honest and trusting place; it was closed, suspicious and rigid. Most of the enthusiasts for the new communes would have found the old village intolerable... There may be much more impersonality in human relationships today than in the past, but there is also more intimacy. The reason these two assertions are not contradictory is that the sheer number of human relationships has increased dramatically.

Greeley (1973:29) is of the opinion that the quest for more emphasis on community today is an attempt to create something entirely new, namely a culture consistent with openness, trust and explicit affection. It should not be an attempt to recover the community that existed in some mythological group. It is not always clear that people who emphasise the community concept realise that. Often they refer romantically to past stages in human history (Greeley 1973:29). What has prompted this quest for community today? Greeley (1973:27-29) mentions the following factors:

- a) The fact that people have more time to devote to other things than just staying alive. This is proved by the fact that the quest for intimate communities is very strong in the affluent upper middle class.
- b) Modern psychology with its often strong emphasis on personal relationships and self-fulfilment strengthens the need for more intimacy and provides human beings with the vocabulary to formulate these needs more explicitly.
- c) In the past people did not have many options about the community to which they belonged. You were part of the group into which you were born. Today one can choose where to belong. Affiliation is a matter of choice and thus also of responsibility. People have a different relationship with the communities they choose to belong to than in the past.

There is a real danger that a romantic notion of the past that sees society as made up of small organic closeknit communities lies behind the emphasis on community. This image works with the idea of an ideal type of community where people cared for each other and where everyone was happy and caring. It is a question of whether everything was really so good and caring in traditional communities.

With this in mind it seems important to look at the role of the concept *community* in some postmodernist writings.³⁹ The meaning of the word *community* differs in many instances. Postmodern writers are critical of the individualism of modern society [cf p 38]. At the same time they are also critical of moving backwards and trying to restore traditional society.

One aspect of postmodernism which is important for us is the importance of the concept relations. Postmodernism is at a philosophical level in discussion with modernism about the role of the individual in society. This is not an attempt to negate modernism, but is a movement from modernism itself. In

39 . I was made aware of this fact by Dr Danie Goosen of UNISA.

postmodernism there is a movement to take society seriously and to see the individual as part of society or in relationship with society. It is a move beyond the individualism of modernism (or liberalism) where individualism is the highest priority. It is not a movement back to the traditional community of pre-modern times, where the individual is of no importance and in all aspects subordinate to the community or society. Individual rights are still important but the individual is just not seen as a subject without relationships.

Postmodernists want to work with open systems and see the emphasis in modernism on the individual as a closed system. By giving more attention to the relationship between the individual and society postmodernism supporters give acknowledgement to the need for open systems. In this respect an ecosystemic perspective can find close ties with a postmodern perspective.

Several of the postmodernistic writer Jean-Luc Nancy's works were compiled and translated and appeared in 1991 under the title *The inoperative community*. His emphasis on community must be understood in the context of the postmodern criticism of a modern society dominated by a technopolitical approach. The importance of these contributions lies therein that they prevent us from thinking too concretely about a concept and solidifying concepts. Nancy, for example, confirms indirectly the ecosystemic idea of open systems. Nancy (1991:10) is suspicious of people's mourning for community:

But the true consciousness of the loss of community is Christian: the community desired or pined for by Rousseau, Schlegel, Hegel then Bak-ouine, Marx, Wagner or Mallarmé is understood as communion, and communion takes place, in its principle as in its ends, at the heart of the mystical body of Christ. At the same time as it is the most ancient myth of the Western world, community might well be the altogether modern thought of humanity's partaking of divine life: the thought of a human being penetrating into pure immanence.

Nancy (1991:10) is afraid that the desire for community might be nothing else than a response to the harsh reality of modern experience, namely that divinity was withdrawing infinitely from immanence and that community as the existence of the divine essence was impossible. For Nancy, community has to do with communication; community is something a person experiences (1991:31); it is finite (1991:26) and is also a sharing of finitude (1991:29). This means it is not something you can lose, because it is not an entity you possess. "Incompletion is its 'principle'..." (Nancy 1991:35). Community is something that is given to us and which must be communicated, it cannot be produced by work. Community is about communication which is about sharing, it is a resistance to immanence (Nancy 1991:35-42).

For Nancy, community is not something separate which must be created by us; we have to realise that we are part of community. At the same time community is not a flight into your own world or yourself, it is an outward movement to others - to communicate with others. Community is thus also not something we have to protect, it is finite in any case. When people die, community dies; as people are being born, community and thus shared communication is created.

With these remarks in mind the next section will critically discuss the notion of *community care*.

4.1.4 The term "community" revisited.

A central question is how to define the concept *community*.⁴⁰ As mentioned previously the term *community* is used in different ways. Froland (1982:260) states it as follows:

When we do, we run into the almost classic argument over the relevance of "place versus nonplace" attachments in community life. Are the relevant social bonds of an individual those bounded by geographical location or are people linked together into networks of interest determined by kinship, religion, occupation, or ethnicity, which may only coincidentally fall into geographical areas? The evidence from some general population surveys of helping patterns suggests that neighbourhood ties may have only a small part to play in providing support...

This study has referred to community as a concept which gives **expression to the different relationships in which people are**.⁴¹ These may be geographically inclined or socially or psychologically, culturally or religiously. This means that the community can be your neighbours and the people living around you and in the same area although many modern urbanites do not have any communication with the people who live around them and do not experience any "community" in their geographical area. It could be the people a person works with or the people who belong to the same congregation, or the same church denomination or the same religion. It may be the people you share with intellectually or emotionally.

The word *community* is used in many different contexts in everyday life. Some of the uses can be regarded as very negative. For example, it is possible to speak of a community of robbers. Hake (1989:47) calls the word *community* an "aerosol word", popularly sprayed into discussions. In South Africa it is often used by politicians⁴² referring to a certain geographical area⁴³ - recently we have heard in South Africa of community policing. Sometimes the word is used much more generally.⁴⁴ This makes it difficult to formulate a definition of the word *community*.⁴⁵

40 . Cf Lazarus (1988:109-113) on the problem of how broadly or narrowly to define "community psychology" in South Africa.

41 . Cf Chapter 3 of this thesis.

42 . "There is also a search for new communal forms that can reshape this high-tech world of impersonal markets and systems of compulsion. This communalism manifests itself in popular movements for liberation, democratic rule, human rights, and global justice. Thus, communal rebuilding is at least one, if not the most central component of the new religious and political forces that are shaking the foundations of our world" (Winter 1989:2).

43 . Anderson (1983) deals with the question of nationalism and defines nation as an "imagined political community". The word "imagine" refers to the fact that most members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, yet in their minds they see them as fellow-members and have an image of communion (Anderson 1983:15). Language as such has the possibility to generate imagined communities (Anderson 1983: 122 cf also Alexander 1989: 9).

44 . The *Sunday Times* (26/2/95) in South Africa had an article about the difficulty defining the word community. Persons and organisations can apply to start "community radio stations". A limited number of radio stations can be allowed because of the limited

The vagueness of the term *community* does not alter the fact that the word plays an important role in the church. For Pityana (1989:107), a call to community is a call to neighbourliness because the community is more than just the aggregate of individuals who make up the whole. He reminds the reader that the church is built of people and not of walls. He refers to the biblical idea of "the ark of God" which dwelt among the people.⁴⁶ He sees the church in the same light and as a sign of God's immanence in this world.⁴⁷ Pityana (1989:109) also reminds us that the Western philosophical mindset perceives a dichotomy between the sacred and the secular. Within this mindset it is "natural" to divide society and the church into two separate entities. Richards (1971:139), in another context,⁴⁸ puts it beautifully when he writes:⁴⁹

What then is the strategy we must adopt to reach the world we live in? Not to shape 'the Church' a powerful institution, whose voice will be heard in the counsels of men but to go back to the **simplicity of community** (my emphasis - FN). To build again a church which will be 'the Church': His body, a womb for **nurturing relationships** (my emphasis - FN) and ministries within which Christ can be formed in each and every one of us.

The references to community life by Pityana and Richards sound like a call to get back to our traditional roots and *community* becomes a solution to some of our problems today. The danger is that such a view understands communities to be static institutions because they have always been there and because they used to be the structure which cared for people.

frequencies available. Applicants must prove that the community will benefit from such a radio station. But who is the community?

45. Hake (1989:47) says "Attempts to bring theology to bear on community are hindered by the difficulty of reaching a working definition."

46. Krützing (1974:81) uses the image of "the ark of God" in a different context: "Dit is vir my moeilik om in te sien hoedat die 'swakkeres' anders sterk kan word as deur die heilsame verontrusting van die Bybelse eis vir kerkwees in die wêreld. In elk geval kan die eensydige roep dat die kerk weer die ark van Noag moet word nie sonder meer aanvaar word nie, omdat dit die swakkeres eintlik in hulle swakheid onaangespreek laat."

47. "Communities dwelt in by God are spiritually privileged. At the heart of the community, God shares in the struggles and the hopes of his people" (Pityana 1989:107).

48. The context in which Richards writes this book is not primarily the context of pastoral work but more of evangelisation. Because it is not possible or wise to distinguish sharply between these contexts all the time, his words are also relevant to the context of this study, namely pastoral work.

49. Cf Louw (1980:141).

Hake (1989:47) understands the word as referring to the **personal relationships between people in groups in society, in the general framework of the total human community** (cf Gustafson 1961:5).⁵⁰ This study supports this definition of Hake, because of the reference to "personal relationships" which confirms the idea of individuality in the community, and the reference to the "total human community". In a sense all communities should be placed within the broader context of humankind and human community. All the definitions can be reduced to two basic approaches: community as a geographical area, locality or neighbourhood; and community as a **network** of social interaction and support (Orford 1992:9).

John Perry Barlow (1995:30), co-founder of the Electronic Frontier Federation and a director of Whole Earth 'Lectronic Link (WELL) argues that there is a sense of community in cyberspace. Barlow (1995) describes how optimistic he was and how he finds the "new locale of community" in the 1980's, in cyberspace. After a few years he felt disillusioned because it was a community without a spirit. It was a community without genuine adversity. If the going gets rough in cyberspace, you can simply find another bulletin board service to hang out in.

Barlow (1995) tells how his wife died unexpectedly in 1994. He announced it on WELL by posting a eulogy. It struck a cord for many people. Barlow (1995:30) puts it as follows:

Over the next few months I received almost a megabyte of email, mostly from faceless strangers. They told me of their own tragedies and how they had survived them. As humans we shared death with an openheartedness that would have caused uneasiness in the physical world, where the topic is cloaked in denial. Those strangers, who had no arms to put around me nevertheless saw me through. As neighbours do. Does virtual community work? Does it supplant the real or is there, in it, reality itself? It doesn't matter. We are going there whether we want or not. When we are together in cyberspace we will see what the human spirit, and the basic desire to connect can create there.

It is clear that there is no standard definition of the concept *community*. The term is used in many ways. The problem with a definition is that it helps to promote a mechanistic understanding of the term *community*.

The basic conviction of this study is that persons are internally related to one another and to the rest of the universe (person-in-community-and-society) (cf Daly & Cobb 1989:169).⁵¹ The researcher prefers a person-centred approach, which makes the need for a definition of the concept *community* less important. People perceive themselves as the centre of their social network, which means that for each person community will be his or her **network of relationships**. For those who have strong family ties the term

50. Pityana (1989:108) defines a community as "an organisational unit that devises common strategies, promotes **dialogue** (my emphasis - FN) within and externally, with institutional forces and engages in action for change and mutual fulfillment."

51. Moltmann (1989b:9) puts it very strongly when he says "... we can only develop our personalities in relationships and community".

community may be their family or extended family. Others may have weak family ties and strong friendship links. The concept of neighbours is another aspect that may signify community to some people (Skidmore 1994:6). The term *community* may also change for people from time to time. A person may feel, while in a foreign country, that the country he/she comes from is "home" where there are family, friends, colleagues, where you can express yourself in your home language, where you feel secure and where people know you (although most people do not know you; and you do not feel very secure every day).

This study understands a community to be more than just a group of people living in the same geographical area or sharing the same interest or belonging to the same club or church. A community is more than just a static entity. **Without communicating, no real community can exist.** A community exists where people (individuals) communicate with each other.⁵²

This means that in pastoral work the pastoral worker will define and redefine the term *community* all the time. A person-centred community approach is important. The idealistic image of community cannot be created artificially for therapeutic reasons. Some people prefer their own company. There is a danger in believing that community care is the only successful way to deal with people in need.

In the context of pastoral work, a community will be where people respond to the needs of others and society. Inherent in the word *respond* is also the idea of communication. Respond is not only to answer, but to answer in such a way that people experience it as caring.⁵³ The following understanding of the concept "community" can be proposed: **the concept community refers to people who are in a communicative relationship with each other and society and respond to the needs of one another, society and the universe.**

4.1.4.1 Community care

The emphasis in this chapter is on the caring aspect of being a community. This study works on the assumption that only when the church takes the position as serving community interconnected with the rest of society, will it be able to reach people. The serving attitude is an underlying assumption throughout the study. According to Acts 2:44-45: "All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need" (NIV). According to Langan (1991:4): "Only a small minority of Christian congregations over the centuries has attempted to live precisely in the manner proposed in the famous description of the Jerusalem church in Acts 2".

52. "Life is communication. The life of creation is the communicating community of creation" (Moltmann 1989b:57).

53. Holy communion may communicate caring. Symbols and rituals may thus also be a way of communicating.

In an article in response to *Faith in the city*,⁵⁴ Pityana (1989:107) suggests a model of the church which "raises theological possibilities for pastoral care". Pityana (1989:107) describes one of the possibilities as follows:

A significant one is that of an interaction between the Church (as the gathered ecclesial and eucharistic or charismatic community) and the wider community which it seeks to serve, such that the people of faith are indistinguishable from their community save in the deeper spiritual understanding of witness and service which undergirds their participation in community.

Pityana works with the church as charismatic community, which implies a certain commitment and unselfishness from the congregants who make out the church. That is the ideal and should be the vision of the church. Does that happen in modern society? According to Assimeng (1989) even traditional communities have internal struggles and are less caring than we often suspect.

Furniss (1994:90-95) explains, from a sociological perspective, the dynamics of religious communities in ancient and modern societies. In its first phase (charismatic phase) religious communities are vigorous in their beliefs and oppose all worldly concerns in favour of transcendent objects and goals. With time this charismatic stage undergoes significant changes and some accommodations are made with the *world*. Furniss (1994:91) calls this, in following Weber, the "routinization of charisma".

This sociological understanding of phases in the development of religious communities open new perspectives for us. In the first place it gives us an insight in the way the Bible describes the emerging Christian communities in the New Testament. The desire in many Christian's hearts to repeat the situation of Acts within Christian communities who exist for many generation may be frustrated by "unwillingness" of fellow Christians to follow the example of Acts 2. There is also a second implication, namely that the religious character of the charismatic phase which causes this total commitment and unselfish behaviour is often accompanied by a withdrawal from so-called *worldly* acts and involvement. This may be the point which Pityana (and many other people) missed. Attempts to reconstruct a Biblical situation or to construct communities where people will care with unselfish vigour for one another may result in charismatic communities not interested in the wider world outside their community. What we are looking for are communities where people care for one another but also for the wider society.

Skidmore (1994), a community psychologist, works with a much more realistic perspective. He also wishes to promote a community approach to care. But he is also very critical about the way the term *community* is used as if it will solve all problems. Community care refers in the first place to natural care.⁵⁵

Natural care takes place every day, even in modern societies. According to Skidmore (1994:84), people have a need to feel that they belong. This need is so great that most people will become involved with

54. *Faith in the city* is a report drawn up in 1985 in the UK, by the Archbishops' Commission on Urban Priority Areas.

55. It seems to be the same as mutual care (cf De Jongh van Arkel 1991b:103).

other people and form a community. Skidmore (1994:84) reminds us that "if community did not exist man would create it". These modern communities may even be stronger than the pre-industrial communities because they are built on a **relationship of choice**. Skidmore (1994:84) describes modern communities by the term *network*. A network is an extension of the family and can be understood as a type of extended family. Skidmore (1994:87) believes that those who are part of our social network will receive care based on some kind of return. In Skidmore's (1994:85-89) understanding of care, people care for those who help them to feel good and secure and will care for them. Natural care is self-selected care. People will care naturally for those they have selected to care for - family, friends, and so on. Natural care flourishes because of its lack of formality.⁵⁶

Skidmore (1994:101) supports community care because it has the possibility that the person in need will take more responsibility for his/her condition. People feel that they have more control. Research has shown that more self-referrals to community psychiatric services take place than to hospital-based services (Skidmore 1994:101). But it is important to be aware that there are difficulties and problems with community-based caring (cf Biegel & Naparstek 1982). Community care opens up several other problems which must be kept in mind. Pattison (1994:154-155) is critical of the notion of community care as propagated by the politicians and the civil servants in England, because the community is often practically defined as anything outside an institution and "money has not followed patients out of the hospitals into the community" (Pattison 1994:156).

A feature of modern society is professionally trained people involved in caring actions. Professional carers have people referred to them. The relationship is much more formal and timetabled (Skidmore 1994:90). To be interested in a person means that one has to like him/ her. Professional care will always be at a different level. Skidmore (1994:90-91) explains it as follows:

If a person has entered a diabetic coma he/ she cannot be counselled out of it, no matter how caring a person is. Similarly a person who feels disconnected from his community cannot be "treated" in a purely biological sense. Holistic care attempts to place care of the total person on each practitioner. In reality the 'care' of a person should be viewed as a team effort. Real care can only be delivered by real carers. Professional care is hampered by its artificiality and consequently requires those natural carers who excel in offering support on this basis. It is ludicrous to expect all professionals to be able to develop this skill. In an ideal world all professionals would care for their clients,...

Professionals are trained by institutions and carry part of that institutional world with them. People in need may feel more **threatened** by professionals intruding into their world. Some people would prefer to keep professionals at a distance. A certain group of people may even become totally **dependent** on the carers because of their closeness. They may consult the carers on every decision they have to make. Skidmore (1994:102) is of the opinion that institutionalisation is not only created by institutions. The solution is not to

⁵⁶ . Cf De Jongh van Arkel (1991b:103) who says: "The more care is professionalism, the greater the risk of inhibiting the spontaneity of mutual care."

transfer people from the institution to the community. "Institutionalization is the consequence of 'dispowering' people when they should be empowered" (Skidmore 1994:102).

Skidmore (1994:98) emphasises the importance of informal carers and lay counsellors. The problem may develop that informal carers may be abused by investing them with a policing function.⁵⁷ In using them in this way it formalises the relationship. It removes the motive of wanting to spend time with the person who needs care to having a duty to carry out. The person in need starts to believe that he/she is a burden for their community. The move to give a person care in the community also sends **contradictory messages** to people. Either the person is not ill enough to merit care in an institution or is beyond help and sent home to die.

Skidmore (1994:102) believes that care in the community must employ **empowerment**. It is only through empowerment that a person can make decisions about his/her own life. There should also be a realism that some people will react very negatively to attempts to empower them; some people may prefer to be dependent. A person may learn to be helpless in his/her own home, which is even worse than passivity in an institution like a hospital.

Chronic care differs from acute care. The need for the maximum empowerment of people in need of chronic care is even more essential. The objective should be to help people with chronic needs to take full responsibility for their own care and educate their family to play a supporting rather than a caring role (Skidmore 1994:103).

For Skidmore (1994:102), the most important principle is that care in the community is **about people and not about conditions**. People react in different ways to the same condition. The problem is that people are trained to relate to conditions and not to people, because that is the most effective way of dealing with large numbers. It is thus necessary to train community carers to relate to people.

Skidmore (1994:87-105) makes a distinction between care in and care by the community. Care by the community does not necessarily mean enlisting informal carers to carry out the role of the professional. Care by the community is, in essence, the transference of responsibility of care into the world of the person in need. This will involve a major programme of education and training and is not a cheap alternative if it is to be successful (Skidmore 1994:104). People's needs differ and some may feel very threatened by allowing members of their community to become involved in caring for them. Froland (1982:256) also discusses care in the community and care by the community, and defines them as follows:

Care *in* the community promises equity and reliability with public responsibility for meeting needs, while care *by* the community argues for responsiveness and self-determination; in many ways each sacrifices what the other argues for.

57 . Skidmore (1994) is referring to the need that someone makes sure that a person takes his/ her medicine and so on.

Froland (1982:256-257) suggests that care *with* the community may foster shared responsibility for care.⁵⁸ It could also help to bridge tension between voluntary workers, community organisations, families and professionals. It means that the informal help provided by families, friends and neighbours is recognised by public service agencies and supported within a collaborative partnership where responsibility is shared among equal partners.

Caring for the carers is important in a community approach. People in a community who act as carers will have additional stress introduced into their lives. The professional can at least switch off when off duty, the informal carer may never feel off duty. The professional has knowledge to support him/ her intellectually and emotionally while the informal carer often have only limited knowledge as well as other priorities. Community carers should be educated and also offered counselling facilities.

According to Skidmore (1994:112), caring has no universal meaning. The concept *care* will have different meanings for different people and range across a continuum of caring to non-caring. The amount of care which a person can feel towards others will be the product of his/ her experience of caring. One has to be given care to develop an understanding of care. Caring cannot be created artificially. Mechanical care is care offered through a sense of duty, emotional care is care delivered through affection for the person. There are limits to the emotional care a professional can give to a person.

From Skidmore's perspective, the idea of community care is important. But Skidmore understands community care as a natural process which is part of being human. Community care is not the solution to all the problems and cannot provide for all people's needs. For Skidmore, it is important that the idea of "community care" should not become an ideology as if all problems will be solved by introducing community care. The emphasis is on **empowerment**.

By introducing community care, opportunities are created for empowerment for the sick and the needy. This is from a certain perspective the opposite of the church's approach. Particularly in the more charismatic approaches where you can find that the pastoral workers feel more empowered by visiting those in need. The problem is not so much with the form of care as with the attitude or mind-frame of the pastoral workers and the careseekers. An ecosystemic world-view may help to form a bridge. It can "intermediate" between formally organised forms of care and the comfort of reliable and spontaneous care.

58 . Cf Couture and Hester (1995:47-48) who say:

As pastoral care and counseling split off from the congregation, some chaplains and pastoral counselors developed a different structure of accountability and an alternate vision of reality. This relocation offered parishioners a private place, a pure environment which could facilitate their healing. Furthermore, souls beyond the reach of congregations could be cared for. Removing severe human struggle from congregational life, however, meant that congregations less often had to grapple with the intense pain of their neighbors. As a result, the congregation's theological vision of humanity may have been distorted.

4.1.4.2 Reframing community pastoral work

We must not romanticize community support systems and long for the golden days of yesteryear when family, friends, and community were sufficient to provide for individual needs (Biegel & Naparstek 1982:311).

From a counselling point of view, the need for a more comprehensive method of pastoral work is growing together with the importance of an ecosystemic approach to care. Reference to *community pastoral work* is an attempt to give expression to the idea that pastoral work includes more than just the individual and is an encompassing activity which takes society and the environment seriously. In essence it refers to the ecological character of pastoral work. It could also be called holistic pastoral work or ecosystemic pastoral work or political pastoral work.⁵⁹ The reference to *community pastoral work* is not an attempt to suggest that the church or the church's pastoral work should try to reconstruct pastoral communities in the original sense.

Society is changing. In America people are talking about "a nation of strangers" (cf Warren 1982:5) when referring to the disappearance of community and mutual help systems. The position of the church in society is changing all the time, the position of the people within the church is changing. These changes are not only taking place in more modern communities, those known as traditional communities are also evolving communities, experiencing drastic change.

Take, for example, the concept of *ubuntu* which is well known in traditional African communities and which is a useful concept because it describes more than just a way of living, it describes an attitude and a type of relationship towards people .but because of changes in society this concept has lost its meaning for many modern Africans.

The modern world is a pluralistic world. The pastoral work of the church should develop along lines which keep in mind the situation now and also what the situation will probably be in ten or twenty years' time. From an ecosystemic perspective, it is important to remember that existent communities are always contemporary and a pastoral work model which does not take future evolution into account will be inadequate.

South Africa is a good example of a country where both traditional and modern communities can be found. The situation in traditional and modern societies should be reflected in the pastoral work of the church. The importance of giving serious attention to the experience of basic communities in Latin America must not be underestimated. At the same time it would be a mistake not to look forward to the future. Hopefully we have reached the end of political oppression in South Africa. The poor communities are not politically oppressed any more, but still suffer under economic oppression which may take many years to change. However, change is in the air...

59 . This does not mean that any term is acceptable. The researcher is deeply aware that our language and our words give expression to how we see and understand reality.

Pastoral care should be able to reach those in rural areas and those in urban areas. The fact that the church has lost its central position in many societies has serious implications, but this should not be an unusual situation for the church. The early church was also a minority in society. The implication is that the church and religion have lost their *plausibility structures* which maintained a religious outlook on life [cf p 248]. How should the church respond to this as far as its pastoral work is concerned?

One way to respond is to wish that society would change back to the times when the church was the centre of society. This wish is usually accompanied by a wish that traditional communities of people who care for one another could be founded.⁶⁰ The church must never stop trying to motivate people to form communities of caring people. In reality many people will not become part of such a community of people who are geographically close to one another. Lewis (1982:301) explains it as follows:

The fellowship that we have come to associate with the Garden of Eden is ideally what most people would wish to see in their own neighborhoods. Unhappily, as Janice Perlman observes, neighborhoods today do not resemble Edens. Often they are inhospitable and lacking in sociability, reflecting a gap in our democratic strivings.

Eventually it is important to realise that realities are created and co-created. The same with the idea that people should function more communally or more as individuals. It is necessary to give people the freedom to make use of common wisdom (cf Müller 1994) and to decide for themselves what is the best way of communicating. An ecosystemic metaparadigm can play a role in this regard. As metaparadigm it is not a prescription how people should live, it is a broad concept that helps people to understand that there are different frameworks. Ecosystemic thinking proposes a framework where everything is interconnected and interrelated. This thesis is not so much a call for a particular pastoral work model, namely community pastoral work, as for pastoral work to become ecosystemic in approach. There are, inevitably, different narratives, symbols and myths which have a bearing on each other and help to form a certain value system. An ecosystemic approach signifies an integration of total reality and not single-dimensionality.

The fact that the church is not a major role player in modern society does not mean that it has no role to play in the community. The role of the church has changed. People's need for pastoral support is still there. Some people may need the church perhaps less and less to help them in their physical needs, others still need the church to help them physically. Modern society is also a lonely society. The need for people to receive and also to give care is tremendous. The church can, to an extent, fulfil this need if it has an interrelated ecclesiology [cf p 227].

Part of this change in the role of the church is also the role of the pastor in the church. He/ she is no longer the main person in the community. The role of the pastor as far as pastoral work is concerned should also change; he/ she should see the need for a more comprehensive approach where the church as community takes over pastoral care.

60. "Ironically, however, this 'restored' community is always a very artificial creation of society. A 'restored' community is a man-made community, and lacks all that which is praised as constituting its natural growth" (Moltmann 1974:62).

The church has a richness of people with gifts. These people with their gifts are often neglected in a situation where the pastor is expected to do all the pastoral work. This study wants to emphasise that there is a tremendous need in modern communities for a more comprehensive pastoral work model which involves the total community, not in opposition to but linking up with the individual counselling model.

Within the next few years the major illness of our time will be AIDS. It will put tremendous pressure on all communities and on the pastoral work of the church. Thousands of people will be in need of pastoral support: support which the pastor will not be able to provide. AIDS as a challenge (Kübler-Ross) thus also challenges the community aspect of pastoral work.

This study wishes to emphasise that pastoral work is lived out in all life's relationships - individual and community. Cone (1985) develops a pastoral care and counselling model making use of systemic thinking and uses the concept *empowerment* as a metaphor for her model. What is important in her model is the fact that a person is an autonomous and thus also a responsible being and also embedded in a social context and environment (Cone 1985:243). Cone (1985:243 ff) is of the opinion that fulfilment and happiness in life is the ability to live in a complex society and to have a sense of autonomy and a sense of belonging. Denial of autonomy may lead to a loss of self by disintegration. Denial of contextuality may ultimately lead to a loss of meaning (Cone 1985:244). This emphasis on empowerment as part of an ecosystemic approach will be discussed further in chapters 6 [6.1.1.5.2] and 7 [7.4.1].

We live in a complex society where both lay and professional services are needed to meet human needs adequately. It is sometimes mistakenly assumed that only the community offers services to its members or only the professional has the expertise to meet human needs⁶¹ (Biegel & Naparstek 1982:311-312). A community approach to pastoral work will also include trade-offs. There may be less equity, efficiency and accountability, but more responsiveness, involvement and empowerment. Something cannot be everything (Froland 1982:266). An ecosystemic approach to pastoral work is aware of the need to include the community in pastoral work, but has room for more individualistic and professional care. Such an approach will serve our pluralistic diversity better.

It is important that from an ecosystemic view the idea of community should be seen in terms of **relationship and communication** and not in terms of a geographical community of people. According to a mechanistic view, things are primary and relations to one another secondary and determined by natural laws (cf Moltmann 1989b:57-58). From an ecosystemic view, things and relationships are complementary phenomena like waves and particles in an electro-magnetic field. From this communicative interconnections could be derived. This will also incorporate the idea of modern communication where people in different countries are linked by telephones, fax machines and computers. People on the internet

61 . Cf Van Schalkwyk (1996:50-52) who discusses human needs in terms of development and liberation. The following categories of needs exist according to this model: subsistence; protection; affection; understanding; participation; idleness; creation; identity and freedom.

who share the same interest may form a community of people. Earlier [cf p 254] we referred to people who shared their emotional feelings with one another on e-mail!

This study proposes that the best way to describe an ecosystemic pastoral work approach, which takes both the community and the individualistic character of traditional⁶² and modern communities into consideration, is by the word *networking*.

It is necessary to make it clear that in the researcher's understanding of community pastoral work the community is not the object of the pastoral work.⁶³ A subject-subject relationship should develop between those in need (careseekers) and those offering care (pastoral workers). In terms of an ecosystemic paradigm, it seems as if *networking* may be a better term to describe the community action of care. *Networking* gives us a way to investigate religious communication in the church as the basic action of the church. *Networking* may include emphasis on communities, but makes room for people to form communities (networks) which are not geographically linked.

Van der Ven (1993a:117; 216) reminds us of the importance of *networking* in our times [cf p 149]. *Networking* is consistent with the principle of group (or community) forming. Every person who belongs to different groups (one of the results of having many roles in the modern urbanised style of living), may bring all those different relationships to every group he/ she belongs to. In the process the different groups interact with one another and form a strong network of interaction. Ecosystemic pastoral work wants to give the term "*networking*" a central focus [cf p 17]. *Networking* is a way to describe community in terms of open systems and make sure that community is not necessarily understood in terms of geographical community.⁶⁴ It describes both the importance of the community and the individual. *Networking* describes the comprehensiveness and interrelatedness of society which an ecosystemic pastoral work perspective wants to promote.

What of the need many people have to be part of a geographical community of people who care? It seems as if the recent development of "cells" is complementary to the idea of "*networking*" [cf p 224].⁶⁵ Many churches, even in more rural areas where communities are closer to each other, have started cell groups.

62. Although traditional communities are communally orientated, they are not without individualistic features. The power in these communities are often in the hands of one or a very few individuals.

63. Cf Van Wijk's (1992) view on community psychology.

64. De Jongh van Arkel (1992c: 463) defines a network in terms of a "fokuspersoon en verbindings met mense wat vir jou belangrik is ... 'n sosiale ondersteuningsisteem ... wat as [n] buffers [buffer] teen psigososiale stres kan dien en/ of help om by stresvolle situasies aan te pas". De Jongh van Arkel (1992c:463) warns that although a social network may be a source of support, it may also be a source of stress and conflict when the same people are responsible for your stress in the first place.

65. For more information about the use of the "cell group" in the church, see Neighbour (1990); George (1992), Potgieter (1995).

Cell groups may be people who are geographically close to each other, but may also be groups who share certain interests and have things in common and who come from different geographical areas to form a cell.⁶⁶ The cell-group idea brings the *koinonia* aspect of the church much more to the fore. Heitink (1993:269) feels strongly that the concept *koinonia* can help the church to function in a pluralistic world.⁶⁷

Cells are much smaller units than communities normally are and at the same time the people in the same cell may come from totally different backgrounds and have contact with a bigger world outside the cell. Cell members form a network of relationships with many other people who are not part of the cell. Lewis (1982:301) does not refer specifically to cell groups, but says:

Whether neighborhoods produce sociability or discordance depends primarily on the quality of the smaller constituent units that make up the local informal support networks and the wider community's disposition toward them.

A network approach to pastoral work which include cells of people who meet each other in very small groups, can also be used in the more rural areas, where people are closer to each other and more dependent on each other. The network effect can help groups in rural areas to become aware of a bigger world with which they can link up.

The challenge is tremendous with much that is paradoxical in it. Moltmann (1974:62) says that a feature of modern society is that it has become a mere society of interest. Traditional communities were often communities for the survival of the group. How does that differ from modern communities of interest? The challenge to pastoral work is to make use of this feature (interest) but to put it in an ecosystemic context. That is why pastoral work cannot function without an interrelated ecclesiology and anthropology. The ecosystemic metaparadigm should help pastoral work to see the challenge clearer. The base theory should help pastoral work to approach the challenge from a different perspective. Network communities should not become sexist and racist communities. The network community will be a community of interest, but should be more than just a community of interest. It should also develop into a caring community. To do that is the task of the church and the pastoral work actions of the church.

66 . The "cell group" could be in certain contexts just another word for the "small group". Hendriks (1993) discusses the tendency that people move from the mainline and traditional churches to the independent and charismatic churches. Hendriks (1993:548) describes it as follows:

Die hipotese wat hier uitgespreek word en wat wetenskaplik verdere ondersoek verg, is dat hierdie groei hoofsaaklik voorkom onder huiskerke of *fellowship* georiënteerde onafhanklike kleingroepkerke. Dit sal inpas by 'n wêreldwye tendens. Dit dui ook op 'n bepaalde behoefte wat aangespreek sal moet word in gevestigde kerke se bedieningspraktyk.

67 . "Dit lijkt de enige weg om een situatie van pluraliteit positief te hanteren, wat opnieuw een konkrete bijdrage zou betekenen aan het *koinonia*-karakter van de kerk" (Heitink 1993:269).

4.1.5 Conclusion

A church alive and aware of its changing societal context can become a center of transformation where people can learn how to live the abundant life in this turbulent, exciting moment in history (Clinebell 1984:45).

What is meant by the term *community pastoral work*? In the light of the previous sections it is possible to come to some summation. In a pluralistic society we have different types of communities. Rural areas have traditional communities in which people live closer to each other, are more dependent on each other and often need each other to survive. People often deal with their problems at a communal level. The church may have a strong influence or functional role in many traditional communities. Pastoral work could quite easily be community structured because of the communal structure of society.

These traditional communities are not always truly instruments of healing. The community has absolute power over the individual and the community functions as a closed system. Often people only exist as members of the community, which means that to be separated from the community is not to exist at all. Emotions, purposes and meanings are derived from the community (cf Cobb 1977:35). The African culture with its emphasis on the philosophy of *ubuntu* could form an important bridge in South Africa between modern and traditional societies. A holistic approach as propagated in this study, connects very well with the concept of *ubuntu*.

In urban and semi-urban areas people still live in geographical communities, but people tend to live more independently from each other. The poorer people will still be more dependent on each other for survival than those who are more economically independent (Kotzé 1993). Pastoral work in richer urban areas will become more individualistic because of people's independence and the better infrastructure available. In these areas the ratio of pastor to church member is also often more conducive to individual care and pastors are often specifically qualified and trained to deal with individual problems.

There are many other possible combinations of possibilities between these two scenarios. From an ecosystemic perspective, it is important to see that these scenarios are not totally independent of each other. A move back to the community set-up of previous centuries is unthinkable and perhaps even undesirable for those who view traditional communities as undemocratic, autocratic and coercive. From an ecclesiological view, the church has a strong communal character. Often Acts 2 is mentioned as an example of how the church should function (cf Moltmann 1989b). An interrelated ecclesiology asks for pastoral work to become less individualistic but also more aware of the total person in a global world.

Often caring by the community for the community will take place more or less automatically. This does not mean people in traditional communities are totally unselfish and automatically more caring. One must, however, not lose sight of the problem of those without power being dependant on those with power. Caring with the community may be the direction to go. It should reflect the subjective position of the pastoral worker and the community, a subject-subject situation. The pastoral worker may be a professional caregiver or a lay person. There are also other factors, such as fewer pastoral workers per community in the form of full-time pastors because of money restraints. People and communities are not static; they are constantly moving in new directions. Because of the openness underlying the ecosystemic perspective it

is possible to accept that systems differ and that some careseekers are part of traditional communities and others are part of modern communities. The inductive approach underscoring ecosystemic pastoral work is also open to different social and hermeneutical options (cf Fumiss 1994:104) and is a helpful tool in paradoxical situations.

An ecosystemic perspective is an attempt to form a world-view which is built on a more holistic understanding of society, which is different from the modern as well as the traditional understanding of society. Modern societies have often lost the desire for a community life, while traditional communities are often too rigidly structured.

From an ecosystemic perspective, the direction pastoral work should take is a "community" pastoral work approach. Community is then understood to be formed by mutually participating people. Community should then be seen in terms of networks of people caring for each other in smaller cells. To give expression to the broader understanding of the concept *community* the researcher often refers to an *ecosystemic perspective* or even *ecosystemic pastoral work* in the next chapters. Ecosystemic pastoral work is at its basis communal. *Community* refers to both the individual and his or her relationships with the wider community. In terms of the modern world the term community should be described in terms of *networking*.

5. EMPIRICAL STUDY: QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH

This study understands practical theology as an operational science, which also requires empirical research. Practical theologians make use of the critical hermeneutical framework put forward by Habermas. This includes empirical, hermeneutical and critical interests (Pieterse & Dreyer 1995:36). The aim of the operational science approach is to establish theories of praxis, to evaluate, improve, refine and inquire into the theories which underlie religious communicative actions (of Dreyer 1991:217-218). Pieterse and Dreyer (1995) emphasise the importance of empirical research if practical theologians want to be involved in social transformation. The empirical approach goes beyond the traditional biblical-hermeneutical approach which simply deduces biblical principles and applies these to a situation. The empirical approach acknowledges the possibility of a discrepancy between idealised praxis as inferred from exegesis and dogmatics and real-life situations (Dreyer 1991:217). "The empirical approach is concerned with describing and explaining hermeneutic-communicative praxis as it occurs in reality" (Van der Ven 1993:77).

Although description, as a research aim, is done quite frequently in practical theological research, there is also a need for exploratory research. Exploratory research does not only describe and classify phenomena, but is also committed to analysis and understanding of phenomena (Dreyer 1991:214). "Since relatively little empirical research has been done in practical theology, exploration is an important objective of practical-theological empirical research" (Dreyer 1991:214). This chapter would like to emphasise this exploratory dimension of research.

This study proposes an ecosystemic pastoral work approach as part of an ecosystemic world-view. Quantitative research is thus also done within the framework of a preconception that guides the inquiry, namely that of an ecosystemic approach as metatheory. An ecosystemic metaparadigm puts empirical research within a certain context where quantitative research is seen as a far more relativistic project, influenced to a considerable extent by social ideologies and paradigms. Research is therefore not understood to lead to exact predictions or theories that comprehensively describe the material world. The theories developed through research enterprises should be seen in context because "studies have revealed in striking ways the extent to which seemingly objective theories are both culture-dependent and subject-dependent" (Mooney 1991:294).

Sells, Smith and Sprenkle (1995) argue for the importance of an integrative research methodology which includes qualitative and quantitative research methods. Sells et al (1995:201) concede that "it is not altogether clear how one should carry out such an integration". They (1995:200) call such a co-operative approach a *multi-method approach*. Quantitative methods were, at a stage, presented as the only valid means available to access information scientifically. Research without measurement is seen as empty and that "theory yields no knowledge until its concepts are operationally measured and empirically tested" (Sells et al 1995:200). The response to this view was the extreme opposite, which criticised all quantitative research as linear and reductionistic, ignoring the context. The implication of this debate was that the two methods were seen as mutually exclusive and incompatible (Sells et al 1995:201).

This chapter describes a quantitative research project within the context of the broader thesis. The present study is critical of the individualistic and mechanistic approach to pastoral work in the church and also of the Western positivistic and reductionistic approach to science. The researcher believes that pastoral work should move beyond its individualistic and denominational mould and become an encompassing activity which interacts with the underlying patterns, connections and relationships between individuals, their community and the broader society. It may mean that pastoral workers should make a paradigm shift. This study describes it as a shift from non-ecosystemic thinking (mechanistic thinking) to ecosystemic (holistic) thinking.¹

In this study mechanistic (non-ecosystemic) and ecosystemic approaches are often set against each other but in reality they are more two points on a continuum with many in-between positions. This shift in paradigm should influence the way pastoral workers think about the church and pastoral work. Chapter 2 describes the idea of an ecosystemic metaparadigm and its interaction with the physical sciences as well as developments in the social sciences. Chapter 3 takes the connection between care and the church further when the researcher describes an ecclesiological base theory for pastoral work from an ecosystemic perspective. It is referred to as an interdependent and interrelated ecclesiology [cf p 211].² Chapter 4 describes the community or network aspect of pastoral work from an ecosystemic perspective and calls it community pastoral work.

5.1 RESEARCH DONE FROM AN ECOSYSTEMIC PERSPECTIVE

A quantitative research project is viewed and valued differently from an ecosystemic perspective. It could be argued that a linear type of research does not fit into a study that takes an ecosystemic perspective as metatheory. The argument could also be put forward, though, that creating a metaperspective or ecosystemic view does not always yield the type of specific detail and depth created by linear research, which could also be useful for research from an ecosystemic perspective.

1. This is certainly not the only way to describe this shift. For example, Bosch (1991) describes it in terms of a shift from modern to postmodern. In terms of Habermas's action theories, it could be described as a move to critical theory; contextual theologians would describe it as a shift to liberation; Ackermann (1996) describes it in terms of a shift towards feminist theology and in Pieterse's (1993c) terms it is a shift away from positivism. This does not mean that they all have exactly the same paradigm shift in mind. But many features of the different paradigm shifts overlap. The term "ecosystemic" is broad and could include all the above-mentioned paradigm shifts. Martin (1987:372-373) is of the opinion that the holistic movement has moved into a post-critical phase as far as interpretation is concerned.

2. By these terms the researcher wishes to describe the type of ecclesiology in general. These terms also reflect the ecosystemic perspective in this description of an ecclesiology. It is possible to use other terms, like a critical ecclesiology or a political ecclesiology, but they already have a specific connotation and do not describe the ecosystemic perspective so aptly, because they would tend to delimit a ecclesiology.

Carr (1991:140) uses the example of a wide-angle lens and a microscope to explain the difference between research done from a linear perspective and a systemic perspective. There is a need to combine both perspectives. An either-or approach will mean the loss of certain information and the loss of certain resources offered. Interestingly, Carr (1991:141) is of the opinion that the statistical results of research handled within an ecosystemic perspective could function as a feedback loop. An all-encompassing approach can capitalise on the strengths of each approach and can minimise the inherent weaknesses of each approach.

This implies that research done from an ecosystemic perspective is not against quantitative research, but is critical about the way the data are interpreted. The ontology (nature of reality) of the scientific paradigm is realism (the belief that there is one solid, unchangeable reality that can be known precisely and absolutely). The epistemology (relationship between knower and knowable) of the scientific paradigm is objectivism (belief that it is possible for the observer to remain separate from the observed; that there can be bias-free observations with valid and reliable instruments). An ecosystemic perspective is ontologically more relativistic in the sense that it does not work with the concept of an ultimate reality (there are multiple socially constructed realities). It is epistemologically more subjectivistic because it believes that the researcher cannot take an objective position towards the matter that is in the process of being researched (the observer cannot be separated from the observed). Steier (1991a:8) says the rejection of objectivism and absolutism should not be seen as the acceptance of the so-called opposites, namely subjectivism and relativism:

Hence, a rejection of the grounds for objectivism need not imply any subjectivism (or vice versa), nor, as Steedman notes, should a rejection of the grounds for absolutism imply a relativism, since a relativism may be predicated on an absolutism to which it must be compared.

Steier (1991a) explains his argument further by questioning the assumption that B (i.e. subjectivism) is the opposite of A (criticism against objectivism). This assumption is part of the either/or logic that forms the bedrock of an approach that if A is problematic, B must be the solution (cf also Bernstein 1983:230).

A critical realistic approach views theories as partial representations of limited aspects of the world as they interact with it (Barbour 1990:99). Models are selective but indispensable attempts to imagine the structures of the world that give rise to these interactions. From an ecosystemic approach, the purpose of an empirical study is not to prove anything, but to **probe** (cf Bosch 1991:353; Bateson 1972). The main goal is not the accumulation of facts, but the establishment of a so-called theory where theory is defined "as postulated relations between constructs" (Coetzee 1991:1).

The question is how to do such research in the context of the ecosystemic perspective which this study proposes? Carr (1991:99) makes an important remark when he refers to the contemporary situation where researchers who are working from an ecosystemic perspective rejected linear research methodology, but did not come up with any viable alternative model or methodology which would generate research consistent with ecosystemic thinking. **There is no research method known as ecosystemic research.** This empirical study is thus not ecosystemic research or an exploration of alternative methodologies and

methods of doing research (cf Dicks 1993:58). The empirical research done in this chapter is done **from an ecosystemic perspective**. Process, patterns and contexts are the central elements of an ecosystems perspective to research (Dicks 1993:65).

The researcher agrees "that knowledge is a matter of intersubjective agreement ..." (cf Dreyer 1991:225 and also Van der Ven 1993b). Quantitative research could be a way of sharing knowledge and ideas with others,³ particularly if it is done from a perspective where the researcher is not the knower and the respondents the uninformed. The respondent could become the *knower* who shares his/her information with the researcher, by telling his/her story or even completing a questionnaire (sharing knowledge in a more structured form). Quantitative research could thus help to introduce a certain reflexivity to empirical research.

In this study quantitative research is not seen as a "proof" for anything. It may confirm or not confirm the surmises of the researcher, but it cannot prove something in a dogmatic and objective way as the "answer" or the "solution" or as the "truth". Quantitative research is also not seen as the only available key to unlocking knowledge to us. Although this study makes use of quantitative research methods, they are used within an ecosystemic world-view. They are used to provide distinctions and ideas from which ecosystemic hypotheses can be developed. The information gathered through quantitative research should not be seen as independent, objective, theory-free information as if the world can be observed objectively. It is impossible to isolate people from their context. All attempts to isolate research participants for better objective results could be viewed as an attempt to control them.

From quantum physics we know that the influence of the observer is crucial to the outcome; the object observed may be altered by the **process** of observation itself. This is particularly problematic in the micro-world and the complex networks of ecosystems. Every experiment is an action in which the participants are also agents and not just observers. The observer is a participant-observer⁴ inseparable from the object of observation and part of an interactive system.

From an ecosystemic perspective, this means that the researcher should be aware of his/her influence on the research data gathered through either qualitative or quantitative research. The researcher should also be sensitive to the patterns that connect; the circular process involved; and the ever-continuing complexities involved in all data. This means an attitude directed at linking, relating, bridging and connecting in order to get a sense of the whole incorporated in the parts. Research creates worlds, through the questions being asked "coupled with what we and others regard as reasonable responses to our questions" (Steier 1991a:1). This leads to a certain reflexivity in research. According to Woolgar and

3 . Cf Jackson and Van Vlaenderen (1994:9-10) about participatory research.

4 . Cf Maton and Rappoport's (1984) study. They make use of a combination of the participant-observer method and the quantitative method to capture the empowering aspects of religious experience.

Ashmore (1988:8), "one source of antipathy to the reflexive project⁵ is the assumption that such work is incompatible with good (serious) research practice".

A questionnaire, for example, should not be seen in terms of theory-free questions or statements. Theoretical assumptions enter the selection, reporting and interpretation of what are taken to be data. Theories do not necessarily arise from a logical analysis of data but from acts of creative imagination in which analogies between patterns often play a role. The interpretation of the data is paradigm dependent and even more so in religion (cf Barbour 1990:21).⁶

An agreement that nothing is value-free does not mean that everything is speculative. Tremendous constraints are placed on theories and data collected because of our interaction with this universe. Scientific predictions are neither always correct, nor always wrong. To reject objectivism totally does not mean an acceptance of relativism. Such a move would be short-sighted if we seek to acknowledge the wholeness of life. According to Barbour (1990:79), data should be intersubjectively reproducible, even though they are theory-laden. Criteria should also be impartial and shared by the community of inquiry although they are difficult to apply. Inquiry should involve participation and interaction and not detachment.

5.2 PLANNING THE EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

Although much time has been spent in planning empirical research and using proper methods, the words of Gergen (1985:14) are kept in mind, namely that it is an erroneous idea to believe that "the assiduous application of sound method will yield sound fact..." [cf p 107]. That is why this empirical study is described as probing, which is not the same as looking for objective facts. The researcher is deeply aware that he cannot do research from the "outside". The self-recursive nature of human systems makes the researcher aware that in the total process of researching he is probably saying more about himself or what he presents than about the phenomena he is researching. The researcher is therefore as much a co-creator of realities as an explorer and discoverer.

Having said all this does not mean that proper planning is not necessary or that there is research that can be executed on an *ad hoc* basis.

5.2.1 Aim of investigation

The purpose of this quantitative research is to do some "probing" and not really to "prove" anything. The researcher is looking for patterns of interrelatedness in order to gain some idea of whether pastoral workers' views of the range and nature of pastoral work relate to their views of the range and nature of the church.

5. Woolgar and Ashmore (1988:8) describe the social study of science in terms of three phases: the pre-Kuhnian, the relativist-constructivist and the reflexive phase. It seems as if this reflexive phase fits well with the social constructionism of the psychological movement.

6. "There is a greater use of *ad hoc* assumptions to reconcile apparent anomalies, so religious paradigms are even more resistant to falsification" (Barbour 1990:21).

The assumption is that ecclesiology and pastoral activities are the product of a specific world-view and this in itself expresses a certain world-view. Although in this study it is stated formally in terms of categories, namely ecosystemic and non-ecosystemic perspectives to ecclesiology and pastoral work, this is not to suggest how it functions in reality. The researcher believes that the way things function is much more complicated than a linear understanding can explain. Unfortunately, for the sake of research we have to categorise, minimise and reduce concepts to a level where it is possible to investigate them in terms of our limited resources.

This probing for patterns is, in effect, nothing other than an attempt to "freeze-frame" the relationship between people's view of ecclesiology and of the church's pastoral work at a specific moment in a specific context. This attempt can thus only be a fleeting approximation of the dynamic process that exists in reality. There are certainly various levels of such a possible relationship. People's thinking can and will change and develop with time. This study will remain only one attempt to capture pastoral workers' understanding of pastoral work and their ecclesiology.

To limit the study so that it is practically executable, it was decided to explore only the relationship between pastoral worker's view of pastoral work and their view of the church (ecclesiology). The researcher is well aware of other possible relationships in need of further exploration, for example the relationship between world-view (metaparadigm) and ecclesiology, or the relationship between world-view, ecclesiology and pastoral work. The question under investigation represents but a small sampling of a long list of questions (relationships) that the researcher might have taken up. It is to be hoped that other researchers will consider some of these relationships in future research projects.

The original aim was to follow up the quantitative study with interviews with some of the respondents, particularly those with opposing ideas or who made interesting suggestions. It became clear that this aim was not financially viable, especially after the original population was broadened. It would also imply an extension of the research project in time and volume and has the potential to become an independent project in itself.

5.2.2 Research questions

Right at the beginning of this study, it is stated that pastoral care should be understood as the caring actions of the church community [cf p 29]. Pastoral care is thus indissolubly connected with the church community or the *church*.⁷ Chapter 2 of this study discusses the importance of an ecclesiology as a base theory for practical theology and thus also for pastoral work. It is thus a premise of this study that there is a connection between "church" and "pastoral". Gary Furr (1985) makes the same connection in his study

7. In this study the terms "church community" or "the people of the church" are preferred to the term "the church" because the emphasis is on the fact that the church consists of people involved in faith actions [cf p 344].

*Ecclesiological models in contemporary pastoral counselling.*⁸ Community pastoral work and the interrelated ecclesiology as described in the previous chapters of this study are the product of an ecosystemic approach to pastoral work and ecclesiology.

This quantitative research project gives the researcher the opportunity to verify statistically whether a relationship between pastoral workers' ecclesiology and their understanding of pastoral work can be traced.

To put it in question form:

Is there a relationship between people's understanding of the bigger picture (or system), the church, and their understanding of the smaller subsystem, pastoral work?

The assumption that the church is the bigger system and pastoral work the smaller system is a construct of the researcher. An investigation into the relationship between pastoral workers' views of the church and of pastoral work was not intended to be the main aim of this study as stated, in chapter 1; the need to verify this assumption statistically developed in the course of the study. This is also an example of the recursive pattern involved in research.

Moltmann (1989a) challenges theology⁹ and also practical theology. His challenge connects with Bosch's (1991) challenge to the church to move beyond the thinking of the Enlightenment and modern society, as discussed earlier¹⁰. With Moltmann and Bosch's challenges in mind as well as new developments in the physical and social sciences, this study takes as its point of departure that all people, also pastoral workers, work with a certain world-view (perception) informed by an underlying metaparadigm or perspective (chapter 2). The quantitative part of this study would like to investigate this underlying metaparadigm pastoral workers work with. In chapter 1 the researcher formulated the research problem for the study as a whole as follows:

The church and its pastoral actions (work) are individualistic and denominational. Pastoral work is directed mainly to the psychological needs of individual church people. The pastoral work of the church seems unable to respond properly to pastoral needs within a wider social context.

8. Furr (1985:51-59) mentions at least three reasons for this connection, namely: the important place ecclesiology occupies in twentieth-century theology; the clear indications in the history of pastoral care and counselling that pastoral counsellors work with different ecclesiologies, and the controversy in pastoral counselling which centres on issues of pastoral authority and identity (which specifically refer to the role of the minister). According to Furr (1985:58), "Such concerns are fundamentally issues about the relationship of pastoral counselling to the church, and indeed about the nature of the church".

9. Moltmann (1989a) challenges theology to become more ecumenical; to move away from an Eurocentric approach and become part of a world community; and to move away from mechanistic thinking.

10. Bosch (1991) mentions seven features of the Enlightenment to which the modern church responded very positively: the belief in scientific absolutism; dualistic approach; causality; progress thinking; individualism and objectivity.

The research problem is based on the following assumptions:

- (a) There is a relationship between the church and pastoral work.
- (b) Pastoral workers have an individualistic and limited view of the range of pastoral work. This implies a non-ecosystemic approach to the church and pastoral work.

The question under investigation in this quantitative part of the research is (a) the relationship between pastoral workers' views of pastoral work and of the church, and (b) how ecosystemically or non-ecosystemically pastoral workers think. It is impossible to undertake this investigation without making the following assumptions:

- Pastoral work and the church are, for this analysis, identified as two constructs which could be investigated through statements in a questionnaire.
- Ecosystemic and non-ecosystemic are, for this analysis, identified as two opposite constructs (of course from an ecosystemic perspective they are points on a continuum). This means that the more ecosystemic pastoral workers' views are, the less non-ecosystemic their views are.

This investigation into the relationship between pastoral workers' views of the church and of pastoral work is, in effect, an investigation about praxis and theory, which is at the centre of all practical theological endeavours. Finding out more about pastoral workers' views on the praxis and theory aspects of practical theology should be helpful in future in the formulation of theories of practical theology.

From an ecosystemic perspective, it is fundamental that truth is not simply logical. Nor is the understanding of truth reached purely by logical processes (Hawkes 1984:47). Any hypothesis or research question always remains open to revision and is always an approximation of rather than a complete description of reality.

5.2.3 Description of sample population

The population changed because of a change in the composition of the original population. The original population consisted of the pastors of the Dutch Reformed Mission Church. Because of the merging of this church with the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa in April 1994, before the questionnaire could be sent out, the population changed to include pastors of the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa.

In February 1994 the researcher wrote to the scribe of the Dutch Reformed Mission Church (DRMS) to request permission to hand out a questionnaire at the Synodical meeting in April of that year. (That would be the last Synodical meeting of the then DRMS). The researcher did not succeed in finalising the questionnaire in time for the Synodical meeting and could not conduct the investigation at that time.

For practical reasons, the researcher decided in January 1995 to choose as available population (cf Dreyer 1992b:321) the ministers of religion in the Southern Transvaal Synodical region of the Uniting Reformed

Church of Southern Africa (URCSA).¹¹ According to the statistics in the 1995 *Jaarboek* of the Dutch Reformed Church family, there are 78 full-time pastors of the URCSA in this region¹² and 592 in the whole of South Africa. In March of that same year the researcher decided to also approach the Northern Transvaal Synodical region for permission to let the questionnaire be completed at their Synodical meeting in April.

The researcher requested both the moderamen of Southern Transvaal and Northern Transvaal of the URC, in writing, for a time-slot in one of the sessions to distribute and complete the questionnaire during a session of the Synod in sitting. The scribe of Northern Transvaal made it clear that their schedule would not allow such an opportunity, but that the researcher could distribute the questionnaires during a lunch break or tea time.

The Commission of Orde of Southern Transvaal referred the letter to the new moderamen elected on the first day of the Synod in May 1995. The moderator gave the researcher the assurance that they would look into the matter and find a suitable time to deal with it. On the second last day of the Synod the researcher realised that such an opportunity would not be granted and asked for permission to distribute the questionnaire during one of the sessions. Unfortunately, only 30 questionnaires were returned, of which 28 could be used while two were totally spoiled.

The researcher decided after the Synod to send questionnaires to the whole sample population, thus to all the pastors in the Uniting Reformed Church except those in the Southern Transvaal region. An address list with address stickers was ordered from the Belhar office of the URCSA. Five hundred and thirty-six questionnaires, each furnished with a stamped self-addressed envelope, were distributed country-wide during the last week of May and the first three weeks of June 1995. All the questionnaires were in both Afrikaans and English. Most of the pastors had to answer the questionnaire in their second or third language [cf Table 3].

The whole target population was sampled. Only 110 questionnaires that were returned could be used. This could cause bias, since the pastors who took the trouble to fill in the questionnaires, might have qualities or ideas that are different to those who don't return the questionnaires.

11. The researcher is located in this area and attended the Synodical meeting as a representative.

12. At the Synod of May 1995, 98 pastors took questionnaires. It may be that the information in the Yearbook is incorrect. Another possible explanation is that pastors who are in the tentmaking ministry attend the Synod but do not appear in the Yearbook. It may also be that some of the evangelists at the Synodical meeting decided to take questionnaires.

5.3 DEVELOPMENT OF RESEARCH VARIABLES

The first step in the development of the questionnaire was to identify ecosystemic and non-ecosystemic features of the church and pastoral work. These features were conceptualised and later operationalised in terms of questions. This section [5.3] describes the development of the variables, while a next section [5.4] will discuss the administration of the questionnaire.

5.3.1 Development of concepts (conceptualising)

It is necessary to discuss the concepts in the research question more extensively (Van der Ven 1993b:128 ff).

(a) View of the church or ecclesiology:

By ecclesiology is understood a view of the church: what the church is and how it functions. The assumption is that all people work with an implicit theoretical framework; in this case, a framework of the church. The researcher does not ask pastoral workers to choose a specific church model although there are several ecclesiological models available. Avery Dulles's models are the best known and are used in practical theological research by Burger (1991a).¹³ Pieterse's (1991a) ecclesiological "model", where kerygma, koinonia and diakonia are the most important markers, correlates with three of Dulles's models of the church, namely herald, body of Christ and servant. Furr (1985) investigates the ecclesiologies of three pastoral counsellors in terms of Dulles's ecclesiological models.¹⁴

In the light of all these uses of Dulles's models, it is necessary just to mention his models very briefly. His models are interpreted in terms of the concept "ecosystems". This does not imply that Dulles ever consciously thinks in terms of ecosystems. Dulles (1976) describes the following ecclesiological models:

(i) The church as institution.¹⁵

13. Burger (1995a) revisits Dulles's models. He is of the opinion that thinking by way of models tends to open up the future and help us to understand that there is more than one possibility or option for the church. "In my opinion this is a major benefit of thinking by way of models" (Burger 1995a:2). This statement of Burger sounds problematic. The problem is that models tend to become fix ways of thinking. From an ecosystemic approach "patterns" visible in the church are more important than models of the church. It may be that it is more a case of semantics and that Burger is actually looking for patterns and not so much for fixed models.

14. Furr (1985:150ff) is of the opinion that Hiltner works with "the church as mystical communion" model; Wise with "the church as sacramental fellowship" model and Clinebell (Furr 1985:176ff) with "the church as a servant of human growth" model. Furr (1985:221ff) opts for a sacramental-incarnational ecclesiological model for pastoral counselling.

15. In this model Dulles (1976:31) defines the church primarily in terms of its visible structures, especially the rights and powers of its officers.

This model correlates at several points with a non-ecosystemic ecclesiology: it is hierarchical and triumphalistic and has a dualistic relationship with society.

(ii) The church as mystical body of Christ: 16

This model relates, on the one hand, to an ecosystemic approach to an ecclesiology with its emphasis on the interrelatedness. On the other hand, the strong emphasis on the "mystical" against the "ontical" fits more into a non-ecosystemic ecclesiology. The emphasis on the mystical as such may correlate with certain trends in an ecosystemic view of ecclesiology where the symbolic plays an important role [cf p 214].

(iii) The church as sacrament: 17

* Distinction between institutionalism, which means a system in which the institutional element is treated as primary, and the institutional side, which refers to the fact that the church has certain organisational features (Dulles 1976:32).

* The institutional outlook believes that the church is a perfect society and that the church as perfect society is not mingled in any way with any other society (Dulles 1976:33).

* In the institutional outlook the church is hierarchical and not democratic or representative of society. The fullness of power is concentrated in the hands of those to whom it is given to sanctify, teach and govern (Dulles 1976:35).

* For the institutional model, it is crucially important that all tests of membership be visible, that means juridically applicable (Dulles 1976:37).

* The ecclesiology is triumphalistic. The church is an army against Satan (Dulles 1976:36).

* The beneficiaries of the church in the institutional model are its own members - when it serves others only by aggrandises itself (Dulles 1976:38, 39).

16. The image of the church as the body of Christ and people of God plays an important role here.

* Dulles (1976:52-55) emphasises the "mystical body" dimension of the church. It is clear that he is in defiance with the institutional model where the emphasis is on the church as institution.

* Dulles (1976:54-55) believes that the body of Christ model has ecclesiastical value because it promotes informal, spontaneous, interpersonal relationships and will restore warm and vital interrelationships in the church.

* Dulles (1976:55-57) is also critical of this model. It does not give the church a very clear sense of mission. It is directed inwardly and not outwards to those who are not part of the mystical communion. It may also lead to the idea of an ideal type of human community.

17. * Dulles (1976:61) understands a sacrament as a sign of grace. But it is not a mere pointer to something that is absent, it is a sign of something that is present. It is the visible form of an invisible grace. It contains the grace it signifies and confers the grace it contains.

* Dulles's (1976:62) emphasis on the corporate character of the sacrament is important. It is not merely individual transactions, it is a communal symbol of the presence of grace.

* For Dulles (1976:64), the sacrament has an event character and is dynamic.

* For Dulles (1976:65) the church as sacrament means that the church is not only a sign, but also becomes an event of grace.

* The church as sacrament is a motive for loyalty to the church and for striving to adhere to its discipline.

* Dulles (1976:69) recognises the possibility that the church as sacrament neglects the service aspects of the church and lacks a commitment to social and ethical values.

Dulles's Catholic background is visible in his description of all the models. The church as sacrament is specifically a Catholic view of the church. The corporate and symbolic character of the church implied here may refer more to an ecosystemic-orientated than a non-ecosystemic ecclesiology.

(iv) The church as herald:¹⁸

Dulles describes this as a model which is strongest in the Protestant church tradition, encouraged especially by a person like Karl Barth. On the one hand, this model reveals some characteristics of an ecosystemic approach to ecclesiology with its understanding of the church as an event and its emphasis on the church as a humble witness. On the other hand, the authoritarian characteristics which may be revealed in this model are more in line with a non-ecosystemic ecclesiology.

(v) The church as servant:¹⁹

This ecclesiological model of Dulles's best fits the ecclesiology proposed in this study. Dulles is of the opinion that in his proposed models the relationship between the church and the world is different, because it breaks through the strong subject-object scheme. The service aspect of the church is also broadened to include all of humanity and not only the members of the church community.

18. * This model emphasises faith and proclamation over interpersonal relations and mystical communion (Dulles 1976:69).

* The church is essentially a kerygmatic community (Dulles 1976:72).

* The church is an event. Dulles (1976:73) agrees here with Barth.

* The church is not the same as the Kingdom of God.

* The gospel is understood not as a system of abstract truths but as an event of proclamation itself (Dulles 1976:77).

* The form of the church order is congregational. This means that the church is regarded as complete in a single local congregation; but structural links between local congregations may however be desirable to promote mutual interaction and mutual admonition (Dulles 1976:77).

* The goal of the church in this model is to herald the message (Dulles 1976:78).

* Dulles's (1976:82) criticism is that this model of ecclesiology focuses too exclusively on witness and neglects action in the form of service.

* The church takes an authoritarian role, proclaiming the gospel as a divine message to which the world must humbly listen (Dulles 1976:83).

19. * In all the previous models the church is seen as the active subject and the world as the object on which the church reflects (Dulles 1976:83).

* Dulles (1976:85-89) discusses the dramatic changes that took place under Pope John XXIII and the Vatican Council II. The Catholic Church starts to take the world as a properly theological locus and seeks to operate on the frontier between the contemporary world and the church.

* The servant task of the church is emphasised. The church must serve as Christ has served. This is tied up with the idea of the church as the body of Christ.

* Dulles (1976:91) describes the church as servant and says that in this model the beneficiaries of the action of the church are not exclusively the members of the church itself, but rather all those brothers and sisters the world over, who hear a word of comfort or encouragement or receive some material help in their hour of need from the church.

* This model reflects a church that is not turned in upon itself, but one which is increasingly concerned about others.

The research done by Burger (published in 1991) on the ecclesiology models preferred by practical theologians in South Africa, is very interesting. Burger (1991a:48) makes use of Dulles's models, because of their general acceptability to most theologians. He asked respondents to choose one model out of the five that was the most acceptable for them. The results were very significant: 73.9% chose the church as servant as their model. Burger (1991a:48) found it interesting that the respondents did not reflect their own confessional tradition in their choice. He (1991a:48) summarises it as follows:

Dat 17 van die 23 Praktiese Teoloë kies vir 'n kerkbegrip wat getipeer sou kon word as "die kerk as dienskneg" is 'n beloftevolle teken van hoop wat as basis sou kon dien vir uiters sinvolle interkonnessionele gesprek en samewerking. 'n Mens moet realities wees en in gedagte hou dat die 17 teoloë seker nie presies dieselfde begrip het as hulle praat van die kerk as dienskneg nie.

In this study respondents were not asked to choose between church models. The problem with the using of clearly defined models is that this tends to form a closed system where people must choose for or against the whole model. Burger (1991a:48) had this problem when one of his respondents chose two of Dulles's models. In all fairness it must be said that Dulles realises that there is this tendency of models to become fixed entities. Dulles (1976:9-10) accepts the limitations that come with any form of typological analysis, as inevitable, and sees his models not as fixed entities and says that the number of models may vary from person to person. The church as a complex reality cannot be described by only one model.²⁰ The term "church" should thus be understood not to mean the church as institution but to refer to the people in the church in general as well as the people making up the local congregation.

(b) Pastoral work:

Pastoral work refers to the pastoral or caring actions going out from the church community. It is used as an all-encompassing concept in this study. It includes all forms of caring, mutual care, pastoral care and pastoral counselling as well as service (diakonia) as a form of care.

This study does not make use of a specific pastoral work model to investigate pastoral workers' views of pastoral work. Models are less available in pastoral work than in ecclesiology. Most of the time certain approaches are followed in pastoral work by certain individuals.²¹ Patton (1993:4-5; 15ff) identifies what he calls three paradigms in pastoral work. There is the classical paradigm, which emphasises the message aspect of pastoral care and was the strongest until the advent of modern psychology. Then there is the clinical pastoral paradigm, which emphasises the persons involved in giving and receiving pastoral care and counselling. The latest trend is the communal contextual paradigm, which emphasises the context of

20 . "In order to do justice to the various aspects of the Church, as a complex reality, we must work simultaneously with different models. By a kind of mental juggling act, we have to keep several models in the air at once" (Dulles 1976:8).

21 . Furr (1985), for instance, compares Dulles's models with the works of individuals in the pastoral counselling movement like Seward Hiltner, Carroll Wise and Howard Clinebell.

pastoral care. It can be associated with the new ecumenical spirit and a shifting in ecclesiastical authority away from the clerical to Christian communities.

Patton's different paradigms can be compared with Van der Ven's remark that practical theology is now in its third phase [cf Introduction p 4]. Van der Ven (1993a:9) says practical theology and the church are now placed within the broader context of society.²²

This study clearly relates to this third phase of practical theology as described by Patton and Van der Ven. This study describes it in terms of an ecosystemic metaparadigm for practical theology. The following chapter will outline such an ecosystemic approach to pastoral work.

(c) Pastoral workers

The term "pastoral worker" refers to anyone who is involved in caring activities going out from the church community. It includes the ordained minister and all those who see themselves as part of the Christian community. Pieterse (1993c:42) includes the whole congregation in the actions of the church:

Die gemeente word nou gesien as die geloofsgemeenskap, die *community of faith*, waaraan pastores en gemeentelede 'n gelyke deel het... Die praxis wat die praktiese teologie bestudeer, is dus nie slegs die handeling van die pastor nie, maar die handeling van alle gemeentelede.

For practical reasons, the pastoral workers who were asked to fill in the questionnaire in this study were ordained ministers of the URCSA.

(d) Relationship

The concept *relationship* refers to a "connection". This word "relation" does not necessarily point to linear causality. The direction of this relation is not specified in the research question, which makes it possible to still understand this relation as recursive and not only linear.

(e) Ecosystemic and non-ecosystemic

The term "ecosystemic" refers to a very broad category. It refers to an awareness of the fundamental interconnectedness and interdependence of all phenomena and also to the imbeddedness of individuals in society. It is a way of thinking; it is a certain understanding and interpretation of all spheres of life. It understands society in terms of recursive or circular relationships. An ecosystemic approach is more interested in patterns than in models.

22. "De kerk werd in de context van de maatschappij geplaatst teneinde door haar evangelische praxis tot de bevrijding van mens en maatschappij bij te dragen. Als voorwerp van de praktische theologie fungeerde sederdien: de praxis van de kerk in de context van de hedendaagse maatschappij" (Van der Ven 1993a:9).

The term “non-ecosystemic” refers to a dualistic, reductionistic, mechanistic and static way of thinking, as well as to a hierarchical, patriarchal and objective way of understanding society and reality. The terms “ecosystemic” and “non-ecosystemic” do not refer to models or theories but should be seen as the two ends of a continuum or two points in a circle. Between the two ends many options are available; some will be more ecosystemic and some more non-ecosystemic. **Reality cannot be understood as purely ecosystemic or purely non-ecosystemic. The church or pastoral work also cannot be understood as purely one or the other.** People may think both ecosystemically and non-ecosystemically. This questionnaire was only intended to investigate the way pastoral workers of the URCSA think of the church and of pastoral work, and not to try to determine anything in terms of “either-or” categories.

5.3.2 Ecosystemic and non-ecosystemic concepts

It is not possible to define the concepts “ecosystemic” and “non-ecosystemic” in an absolutist way. Considering the research reported in the previous chapters the researcher decided to identify certain features of the church and of pastoral work as more ecosystemic and others as more non-ecosystemic. There is no generally agreed upon features known as ecosystemic and non-ecosystemic, because it is more a way of thinking than fixed categories. The features of the Enlightenment were taken as the basis for the identifying of non-ecosystemic features. Others may differ with the researcher’s selection of ecosystemic and non-ecosystemic features of the church and of pastoral work. These features are conceptualised in terms of statements which form the items in the questionnaire.

An ecosystemic approach to the church implies that:

1. the church is an open entity which interrelates with other Christian traditions and with other religions (statements: 26, 35 and 11, 31)²³
2. the church is interrelated with society (statements 10, 23, 32 and 13, 38, 46)
3. ecological concerns are part of the task of the church (statements 14 and 43)
4. the church is influenced by social and contextual factors and thus is a subjective entity and not an objective or neutral entity (statements 20, 39 and 9, 16)
5. the church is a community of equals which should ignore the tendency to become more and more individualistic and hierarchical (statements 28, 34 and 22, 42)
6. the church should be humble about its position in society as servant and not triumphalistic (statements 18, 29, 41, 45 and 12, 24, 37, 40)
7. the church is not the same as the kingdom of God (statements 19, 27, 44 and 15, 30, 33)

23 . The second group of numbers are statements with a non-ecosystemic implication.

8. dogma and ethics are interrelated (statements 17, 25 and 21, 36)

An ecological approach to pastoral work implies that:

1. pastoral work is an all-encompassing activity which includes involvement in social (statements 60, 69 and 49, 53) and community issues (statements 47, 52, 65 and 59, 62, 63) and in diaconal activities (statements 56 and 76), as well as a sensitivity to the ecology (statements 66 and 71)
2. pastoral work could be a non-expert activity (statements 51, 67 and 57, 61)
3. pastoral work is a multi-disciplinary and inter-religious activity (statements 58, 73 and 48, 68)
4. pastoral work is also a community process (statements 75 and 72)
5. pastoral work is also a subjective process (statements 55, 70, 74 and 50, 54, 64)

5.3.3 Operationalisation

In this study pastoral workers were asked to respond to certain statements, according to the Likert scale. According to the Likert scale, "each statement is accompanied by a continuum scale on which the respondent can indicate his (her - FN) affective position" (Van der Ven 1993b:137).

This gives respondents the opportunity to identify the different elements with which they agree. People do not have to choose a specific model. The researcher is thus more interested in the **direction of pastoral workers' views (ecosystemic or non-ecosystemic) than in a definite choice for a specific model**. The same method was followed in regard to pastoral workers' views of pastoral work.

It is also necessary to make sure that the statements meet validity and reliability criteria (Van der Ven 1993a:138-139; Coolican 1994:50-57). The validity of a measure is the extent to which it does measure what it is intended to measure (Coolican 1994:152). The Likert scale is an appropriate instrument with which to measure people's approach (view) or attitude to a matter (cf Chow 1992:36). According to McIver and Carmines (1994:155), the Likert scale is "subject-centred". A systematic variation in responses to the statements is interpreted as a difference among the respondents.

Likert scale:

I fully agree	I agree	I am not sure	I disagree	I totally disagree
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Although the Likert scale is an appropriate instrument for our study, it is not faultless. Coolican (1994:140) mentions the following weaknesses of the Likert method: (a) Data should be treated as ordinal²⁴ because

24 . Ordinal level of measurement represents a position in a group. It tells us who or what is 1st and 2nd and 3rd, but nothing about the distance between the positions.

the scores on the scale only have meaning in relation to the scores in the distribution obtained from other respondents.²⁵ (b) The "undecided" item on the scale is ambiguous because it could mean that the person is neutral and has no opinion or that the respondent is torn between two feelings and cannot make a decision. c) As a result of the above (b), total scores that lie in the middle of the distribution (say a score of 50 out of 100) are also ambiguous, because they may reflect a host of undecided answers. They could also reflect a collection of "strongly for" and "strongly against" answers. This means that the scale may measure two different attitudes, according to Coolican (1994:140).

To make sure that it also meets the criteria for reliability, namely producing the same results on different occasions, it is necessary to make certain that the statements meet the following criteria (Van der Ven 1993a:137):

- (a) The meaning must be simple and precisely formulated.
- (b) The statements must be value-neutral and correspond to the respondent's experience, knowledge and cultural level.²⁶
- (c) The statements must cover collectively all the concepts concerned.

The questions are formulated as statements which either support an ecosystemic perspective or statements which reflect a non-systemic perspective. The researcher was aware of these criteria for reliability for the Likert scale when he formulated the statements. It is difficult to determine if the statements comply to these criteria, especially criteria (a) and (b). In a culturally diverse country like South Africa it is even more important and difficult to formulate statements which comply with all the criteria. The researcher's own frame of reference may have biased the statements to an extent. A factor analysis would be an appropriate instrument to use to find out if the statements meet the reliability and validity criteria. For that a sample of up to five times the number of questions would have been required. To summarise: the instrument, namely the Likert scale, is valid; the internal validity of the statements as such is more difficult to determine.

5.4 ADMINISTRATION OF QUESTIONNAIRES

Eighty-five questionnaires were received back and six questionnaires were returned by the post office. The addresses of those congregations had apparently changed. In total only 110 questionnaires could be used

25. This is not so much criticism against the Likert scale, but more a warning about the way the data is treated and interpreted.

26. Van der Ven (1993a:135) makes it clear that in theology the process of operationalisation does not mean operationalism. This means that the surplus meaning of concepts should be accepted. Referring to operationalism, Van der Ven (1993a:135) says: "If this requirement of operationalism were implemented, the creative practice of a scientific discipline would be impossible, and applying it to theology would cause theology to degenerate into a rigid, inflexible, closed system reminiscent of the worst form of neo-scholasticism."

in calculations. (Although some items were left unanswered in some of these 110 questionnaires). The first questionnaires were received back before the end of June 1995 and the last one was received in the third week of October 1995.

Table 1: Responses received (N=110)

	SYNOD	POSTED	TOTAL
NUMBER ISSUED	98	536	634
CORRECT ADDRESS	98	530	628
RECEIVED USEFUL	28	82	110
RECEIVED SPOILED	2	0	2
RECEIVED UNANSWERED	0	3	3
PERCENTAGE RECEIVED	30.6%	16.0%	18.3%
PERCENTAGE USEFUL	28.6%	15.5%	17.5%

The return figure of 18% is lower than the researcher had hoped for and hampered the study in a serious way.²⁷ The implications are that the respondents may not be considered as a random or representative sample of the group of pastors who received the questionnaire. Those pastors who responded may have certain common characteristics which they do not share with the non-respondents. The respondents may also be overrepresentative of one sector or group, but underrepresentative of another. Any analysis will only pertain to the group of respondents.

The reasons for the non-response are uncertain. Duma (1995:98) cites Moser and Kalton (1978:268) who say that "response is correlated with interest in the subject of survey". It may also be that the questionnaire was too long or that the questions asked were too difficult, given that many respondents (45%) completed questionnaires in their second or third language. It could have been because of these reasons that subjects just did not bother to complete it.

The researcher gave each respondent an ID number before typing it into the computer at UNISA's Computer Services Department in October 1995. The scoring of the questionnaires was done by the researcher himself. The biographical information was scored according to the number supplied in the questionnaire, except for questions 2 (age) and 6 (years of service) where the number of years were filled in. Statements 9 to 76 were scored according to a five-point Likert scale. A response in the "fully agree" block was given a value of 1 and a response in the "totally disagree" block a value of 5. Where more than one block was marked by respondents, the item was not scored at all and interpreted as a missing value.

27. De Jongh van Arkel (1992c:456) reported that the HSRC sent out 12 855 questionnaires to professional people such as psychologists, pastors, social workers, medical doctors and school principals. "Die predikante was uiteindelik die swakste groep respondente: slegs 6.75 persent van hulle (243 uit 'n groep van 3600 predikante uit sewentien kerklike denominasies) het die poskaarte teruggestuur".

A staff member of the Computer Services Department (Me B Kemp) processed the data for the first time in the last week of October 1995. The researcher together with the co-promoter met with a consultant of the Department of Statistics (Me R Eselen) after the questionnaires had been processed to help with the interpretation of the analysed data. The researcher also met several times in February 1996 with the consultant to get clarity on certain aspects of the data and results. The planning of the questionnaire and the interpretation of the responses were thus done by a team²⁸ although the researcher takes responsibility for it.

5.5 ANALYSIS OF PARTICIPANTS' RESPONSES

The purpose of this quantitative research is merely exploratory and not to test a certain theory. No null and alternative hypotheses were formulated for the study as such. (The researcher was not interested in proving anything, but more in finding out about the respondents' views of the church and of the pastoral work of the church community. The influence of variables (e.g. age, qualifications, geographical area, extra pastoral work training) on responses were also computed. To calculate the relations and differences between subjects' responses, several hypotheses were formulated to do an analysis. It should be noted that due to the large number of hypothesis tests which were done, only p-values which were smaller than 0.05 were considered significant, even though $\alpha=0.05$. It is possible that when a vast number of hypotheses are tested that a false value in the area of 0.05 could appear.

The questionnaire consisted of eight biographical questions and sixty-eight statements. Questions 1 to 8 required biographical information. Items 9 to 76 took the form of statements and dealt with an ecosystemic - non-ecosystemic approach to the church and pastoral work. Items 9 to 46 were about the church while items 47 to 76 were about pastoral work. In the researcher's understanding, half of the items could be described as ecosystemic and half as non-ecosystemic. Nineteen of the items about the church were formulated negatively and fifteen statements about pastoral work negatively. The respondents were asked to respond to the statements arranged from 1 to 5 on a Likert scale. A one stands for "fully agree". This means that if the respondent fully agrees with the statement he/she will get a value of 1 for that item and when totally disagrees a value of 5. This was true for both ecosystemic and non-ecosystemic statements. It means that a "fully agree" answer on a non-ecosystemic statement has the opposite meaning of a "fully agree" on an ecosystemic statement. The consultants proposed that the values of the responses on the non-ecosystemic statements be turned around (recoded)²⁹ by the computer. This implies that as far as the analysis is concerned a value of 1 (fully agree) reflects ecosystemic thinking while a value of 5 (totally disagree) reflects non-ecosystemic thinking for all statements used in the analysis.

28 . Cone and Foster (1993:195-198) discuss the use of consultants to help with statistics. They emphasise the importance of the researcher taking the final responsibility for the interpretation and any errors that may occur. "... whether you actually perform the analyses or not, you must know what was done, inside and out, and be responsible for the accuracy of the results" (Cone & Foster 1993:197).

29 . A one becomes a five and a five becomes a one, for non-ecosystemic questions.

With the help of a Cronbach Coefficient Alpha test the internal reliability was computed. The purpose was to find out how consequent respondents were in responding to the statements. A standard variability of 0.834 for the church and 0.691 for pastoral work was measured. A value higher than 0.75 could be interpreted as reasonably significant. The value of 0.834 is also significant while the value for pastoral work is acceptable but not so good. The reason for the difference is uncertain. One reason may be that respondents grew tired and answered the latter part of the questionnaire which contains the pastoral work questions less consistently.

For every ecosystemic statement a contrasting non-ecosystemic statement was formulated. If the statements and opposite statements were truly mirror images of each other, and if the respondents answered the statements consistently, the researcher could expect the value of every statement minus the value of the opposite statement to be equal to 0 on a t-test. Only statement 13 and its opposite statement 32 had a probability of 0 on the t-test. There may be many reasons for this. The most obvious reason is that the statements are not true opposites, are formulated ambiguously or do not make a clear distinction between concepts. Statements could also measure a sub-dimension of the dimension intended to be measured by them, or the respondents' opinions on those dimensions were not very strong.³⁰

Another reason could have to do with the difficulty to answer questions, framed negatively, in a second or third language. Take, for example, the case of statements 68 and 73 which are the same, except that statement 68 is put in the negative and statement 73 in the positive. It could be expected that the percentage for these two statements would differ markedly. This was not the case: 87.2% of the respondents felt that pastoral workers should not involve members of other professions in pastoral counselling, while 95.4% felt that members of other professions should become involved.

We already mentioned that the differences on the Cronbach Coefficient Alpha test indicate that respondents answered the questions about the pastoral work less consequentially than the questions about the church. This may also have played a role in the score for only one pair of statements being = 0 on the t-test.

5.5.1 Biographical information

When the research problem was formulated the influence of biographical information was not taken into account although the possible influence thereof was realised. In the analysis the importance of biographical factors became clear. The importance of quantitative research is actually emphasised by the statistical analysis of biographical factors. In qualitative research it is impossible to give expression to the influence of biographical factors. In qualitative research it is impossible to give statistical expression to the influence of biographical factors.

30 . This was suggested by the consultants.

5.5.1.1 Gender

Ninety-nine percent (99%) (N=102) of the pastoral workers who answered the questionnaire were male and 1% (N=1) female. (Seven values missing.) This is a realistic reflection of the ratio male : female pastors in the population (URCSA) investigated, but not at all a representative reflection of society as such.

Ackermann (1996:40) criticised empirical research which does not take feminist research methods into account. This critique is to a certain extent valid for this study, because the researcher did not take specific feminist issues in account when he planned the research. According to Ackermann (1996:40-41): "Emancipatory feminist research aims at being reciprocal, encouraging deeper self-reflection and understanding on the part of the researched and researcher in a relationship of mutual subjectivity". This research project was planned and executed with an awareness of the (male) subjectivity of the researcher and the reciprocal influence between researcher and the researched.

5.5.1.2 Age of respondents

The youngest respondent was 27 years and the oldest 71 years old. Three people above 65 answered the questionnaire. The distributions of ages is quite even, with the biggest group of respondents being between 35 and 44 years of age. The mean age of the respondents were 45.7 years. In the light of the years of study needed to become a pastor in the URCSA and the retirement age of most pastors at 65, the mean age of 45.7 could be, in the case of a normal distribution, a fair reflection of the average age of the sample population. It seems possible to say that the respondents were as far as age is concerned, a fairly good representative sample of the population.

Table 2: Age of respondents (N=104)

AGE	f	PERCENTAGE
27 - 35	21	20,2%
35 - 44	30	28,8%
45 - 54	25	21%
55+	28	26,9%
Total	104	99,9%

5.5.1.3 Years of service

There is a positive correlation of $r=0,8244$ between age and years' of service in the ministry. In most instances, the older the person, the more years of service he/ she has completed. These were most

probably people who entered the ministry at a late age. People who left the ministry before 65 would not be part of the sample, because only pastors still in the ministry received questionnaires.

The respondents were pastors in congregations for between 2 and 44 years. The mean for the years of service of respondents are 14.8 years. The church calculates pensions on an expected 40 years of service (25-65). This means that, in the case of a normal distribution, the average respondent had done about a third to a half of his/ her service in the church. This gives an indication that the respondents were a fairly representative sample of the population.

5.5.1.4 Language

All 110 respondents answered the question about language. Six respondents filled in more than one language, which makes it impossible to identify which language is their home language. One possible inference is that some people have more than one home language and that it was difficult (if not impossible) for them to identify only one language as their home language. It is unclear why no responses were received from representatives from three of the official languages (i.e. Ndebele, Tsonga and Venda).

There is no information available about the distribution of languages in the URCSA, although 75% of South Africans have one of the African languages as home language or first language. It is also unclear how strongly the different language groups are represented in the church as such. It is known that the URCSA represents all language groups, and that the particular composition of the URCSA results in mother tongue English speakers not being extensively represented in the URCSA. The information in the table, referring to the use of home languages in South Africa³¹ should be seen in this context.

Table 3: Language (N=104)

LANGUAGE	f	PERCENTAGE	PERCENTAGE OF LANGUAGES SPEAKERS IN SA
Swati	1	1%	2.57%
English	1	1%	9.01%
Zulu	5	4.8%	21.96%
Tswana	6	5.8%	8.59%
N Sotho	8	7.7%	9.64%
Xhosa	9	8.7%	17.03%
S Sotho	18	17.3%	6.73%

31 . Cf South Africa's new language policy (sa:5).

Afrikaans	56	53.8%	15.03%
Ndebele	0	0	1.55%
Tsonga	0	0	4.35%
Venda	0	0	2.22%
Total	104	100.1%	100%

The language distribution of the sample confirms the earlier statement that the respondents may not be representative of the URCSA population. There is clearly an overrepresentation of Southern-Sotho and Afrikaans speaking pastors.

More than 71% of the respondents were either Afrikaans or Southern Sotho speaking. Although no statistics are available on the distribution of languages in the URCSA, it is apparent that the respondents do not represent the general use of language in the church. A possible explanation for the high percentage of Southern Sotho speaking respondents could be due to the way the questionnaires were collected.

The Southern Transvaal is mainly a Southern-Sotho area. The questionnaires were first distributed during a Synodical meeting of the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Transvaal in May 1995 of which the researcher was a member. Twenty-eight of the 110 questionnaires (28.6%) were collected at this Synodical meeting.

A possible explanation for the high percentage of Afrikaans-speaking respondents could be found in the composition of the Uniting Reformed Church. Until April 1994 the Dutch Reformed Mission Church (DRMC) and the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa (DRCA) were two separate churches. The members of the Dutch Reformed Mission Church are mainly Afrikaans speaking. It is realistic to infer that the Afrikaans-speaking respondents belonged to the previous DRMC before the two churches merged.

The researcher was a member of the DRMC before the two churches merged and knows most of the pastors of the DRMC personally because of the way the church was structured.³² This may have influenced the high percentage of responses from the Afrikaans-speaking part of the church. It is difficult to say whether it plays any role in the outcome of the study. The majority of the pastors of the DRMC studied at the University of the Western Cape (UWC). Of those who did not study at UWC the majority studied at the University of Stellenbosch. The researcher studied at both these universities.

It may be controversial to say, and even more difficult to confirm, but the high number of Afrikaans-speaking respondents may also point to a different cultural attitude towards this specific way of gathering

32. The DRMC's congregations were concentrated in the Western Cape and the church only had a General Synod and no Regional Synods. That means that all pastors in the church came together at least once every four years and came to know each other.

information. It may also be that the Afrikaans-speaking component of the sample population is higher qualified, which relates to the social-political history of the country. People with post-graduate qualifications may tend to be more willing to fill in questionnaires.

To summarise: It seems as if the fact that the researcher is known to the Afrikaans-speaking section and the Southern-Sotho-speaking section of the church; had an influence on the disproportional number of respondents from these groups. Again it is difficult to say what, if any, role this played in the study as a whole.

5.5.1.5 Qualifications

It seems important to know how the qualifications of the respondents compare with the qualifications of the population, namely pastors in the Uniting Reformed Church. The only source containing relevant information is the *Jaarboek van die N G Kerke* (Yearbook of the Dutch Reformed Churches). This is not a hundred percent accurate source and information may be outdated if congregations and pastors did not send their latest information to the compilers of the *Jaarboek*. The degrees issued at the different universities also differ and the researcher had to use his discretion in this matter. For example: If no degree is specified in the *Jaarboek* it is taken to mean that the person has a diploma in theology. The University of the Western Cape (UWC) confers an honours degree and many other universities in SA a licentiate in theology for the same qualification. All licentiates and diplomas for theology are thus taken as honours degrees.

Table 4: Qualifications compared (N=104)

	DIPLOMA	BACHELOR'S	HONOURS	MASTERS	DOCTORATE
URCSA	57.6%	10.9%	21.2%	6.5%	4.1%
Respondents	29%	18.7%	28%	17.8%	3.7%

The above table makes it quite clear that the respondents are better qualified than the pastors of the church as a whole. This again confirms the earlier statement that the respondents in this study may have common characteristics. Higher qualifications bring people more into contact with research and specifically with empirical research. Higher qualified people may tend to be more positive about empirical research and thus more inclined to fill in a questionnaire.

In sociology the concept *breadth of perspective* is used as a basic personality characteristic which describes how people conceive social reality (Fumiss 1994:106). Some people tend to conceive social reality in fixed and absolute terms. Others have a wider *breadth of perspective*, they see the "social order as a human construction open to change" (Fumiss 1994:106). The wider breadth of perspective correlates with an ecosystemic approach. Fumiss (1994:106) says: "Some association exists between higher educational level

and wider breadth of perspective". Educational level may have an important influence on the subjects' responses.

5.5.1.6 Extra pastoral work training

Twenty-two (21.7%) percent of the respondents answered yes to the question about extra pastoral training and seventy-eight (78.3%) percent in the negative. There is no information available about how many pastors in the church did receive extra pastoral work training. It is thus not possible to know if the respondents were representative of the population or not, although it is highly unlikely that 22% of the population of pastors received extra pastoral training.

Respondents were given the opportunity to specify the type of extra training they received. From this it became clear that some respondents misunderstood the question. Several mentioned further education such as a teaching diploma or B Ed, which could not be classified as "extra pastoral work training". This confirms that people understood questions/ statements differently from what the researcher intended. It may mean that the question or statement was not formulated clearly enough, or that the respondent had something different in mind, because of his or her background and context.

5.5.1.7 Geographical location: Urban/ rural

The distribution of respondents from congregations in urban and rural areas is fairly similar. Again, no statistics on the geographical distribution of the congregations in the church are available for comparison. It is interesting that the majority of the respondents came from a rural area. No definite explanation for this is possible, except that the majority of the congregations of the church may be in rural areas.

Table 5: Urban and Rural (N=107)

Urban/ Semi-urban	Rural
43% (N=46)	57% (N=61)

5.5.1.8 Time spent on pastoral work

The majority of respondents (46.2%) spend 30% or more of their time in the ministry doing pastoral work and only 7.5% spend less than 10% on it. There are no comparable statistics available for the URCSA. It is possible that pastoral workers who spend more time doing pastoral work would be more inclined to answer a questionnaire on the subject of pastoral work than the rest of the population.

Table 6: Time spent on pastoral work (N=106)

	f	%
> 10%	8	7.5
10% - 20%	19	17.9
20% - 30%	30	28.3
30% +	49	46.2
Total	106	99.9

It is important to keep in mind that the type of actions viewed by the respondents as pastoral work actions differ. The responses to the statements in the questionnaire reflect this. For example: 91.7% of the respondents fully agreed that the caring activities of the church include the diaconal task of the church, while just 68% fully agreed (another 22.7% agreed somewhat) that helping unemployed people to get work was part of the pastoral care of the church. Seventy-eight percent (78.7%) fully agree that it was not part of the caring task of the church to be involved in the distribution of food and clothes. For some respondents the distribution of food and clothes will be part of their pastoral work while for others pastoral work refers only to visiting the sick and those in distress.

The following contingency³³ table shows the time spent on pastoral work by different age groups:

Row Pct ----- Col Pct	10% - 20%	20%-30%	> 30%
27 - 34 years	19.05 16.00	28.57 20.69	52.38 23.40
35-44 years	27.59 32	41.38 41.38	31.03 19.15
45-54 years	32 32	28 24.14	40 21.28
55-71 years	19.23 20	15.38 13.79	65.38 36.17

33 . "A contingency table is a cross-tabulation of two categorical or ordinal variables or an arithmetic variable which has been divided into class intervals" (Steffens 1992:64). The most common analysis of such a contingency table is the chi-square test for the independence of the two variables.

The hypothesis, that time spent on pastoral work was the same for all age groups, was tested by a χ^2 -test (chi-square test). The null hypothesis could not be rejected (p-value = 0.216). There is thus no relation between age and time spent on pastoral work.

5.5.1.9 Summary

The biographical information should help the researcher to determine if the respondents are a representative sample of the population. Except for the limited information in the *Jaarboek*, there is no other specific information available about the population. This makes it very difficult to determine if the respondents were a representative sample of the population.

A summary of the biographical information indicated that the respondents were most probably not representative of the population as far as language, qualifications and extra pastoral training is concerned. The respondents seem to be reasonably representative as far as sex, age, years of service and urban/ rural area are concerned. Although the researcher went to great lengths to get a representative sample, the sample was most probably not representative of the population. Generalisation from the sample to the population would be impossible. This means also that the external validity of the research is in question. "If the results of a research project can be generalised to all similar cases, we say that the results have *external validity*" (Dreyer 1992b:327).

5.5.2 Determining the relationship between respondents and their views

The information in the questionnaires was statistically analysed. The results of one part of this process led to further analysis, which eventually led to even more analysis. In this process the statistical analysis and the information wanted by the researcher were in a reciprocal relation with each other and formed a recursive pattern. This recursive pattern is difficult to present and may not be so visible in the following description, which may give the impression that a linear process was followed.

5.5.2.1 Determining frequencies

The first step in the analysis was to determine the frequencies of questions answered by respondents answered.

5.5.2.2 Determining underlying constructs

A following step was to determine underlying constructs in the statements to see if the distinction between ecosystemic statements and non-ecosystemic statements could be verified statistically. The way to do this would be through factor analysis,³⁴ because factor analysis helps to identify internal concepts which can

34. Coolican (1994:149) describes the purpose of factor analysis as "to find factors (hypothetical constructs) which might explain the observed relationships between people's scores on several tests or subtests". Factor analysis covers a variety of techniques which

not be measured directly, such as intelligence, ambition, racial prejudice and economic expectation (Everitt & Hay 1992:112).

Unfortunately, it was not possible to do a factor analysis to find out if the statements really represent different concepts, because of the small number of questionnaires (N=110) received back, or alternatively, the vast number of items in the questionnaire. Cone and Foster (1993:195) suggest that a ratio of five subjects (respondents) for every item is ideal for factor analysis.³⁵ This means that about 340 (68x5) subjects would have been needed for this study.

A possible option was to reduce the number of items which measure the same constructs, because it was not practically possible to increase the number of respondents. To do that the difference between responses for each pair of statement were calculated and a t-test done to see which items scored significantly different from 0.

For each pair of statements, the hypothesis that the difference in scores = 0 against the alternative hypothesis that the difference \neq 0, was tested, using a t-test.³⁶ The null hypothesis was rejected (p-value < 0.05) in 33 of the 34 pairs of statements. The exception is statement 13 and its opposite statement 32. This implies that the data did not support the hypothesis that the scores of the responses to 33 of these pairs were = 0. Because of this it was not possible to reduce the number of questions (for the purpose of factor analysis) without the danger of seriously compromising the end results. However, as the number of items could not be reduced it was not possible to determine the underlying constructs statistically. The researcher's perception that the statements in the questionnaire measure ecosystemic/ non-ecosystemic concepts, or view of the church/ view of pastoral work, could not be verified statistically through determining underlying constructs. This may also have influenced the external validity of the research (cf Coolican 1994:53). This is a serious shortcoming of this quantitative project.

try to find an explanation for the correlation between observed variables (Everitt & Hay 1992:112).

Coolican (1994:149) describes the steps involved in factor analysis as follows: 1. A large sample of people is measured. 2. Correlations are calculated between pairs of tests and arranged in a matrix. 3. This matrix of correlations is fed into a factor analysis programme which looks for groups of tests or subtests which correlate well. 4. The researcher sets the programme to look for a certain number of factors or mathematical concepts which account for the possible correlation found.

The 'explanation' is statistical and does not prove that the factors exist. It merely provides supporting evidence for the researcher and must still be interpreted by the researcher.

³⁵ The consultants suggested that a factor analysis could be done if at least three times more subjects than statements were needed. For this study, then about two hundred and ten responses (68x3) would have been needed.

³⁶ A t-test is particularly useful when the researcher wants to examine differences between groups (Cone & Foster 1993:178).

5.5.2.3 Relationship between pastoral workers views of the church and pastoral work

Is there a relationship between pastoral workers' views of the church and of pastoral work? One of the aims of the quantitative part of this study was to determine if such a relationship exists [cf p273]. The mean value of the scored responses to statements about the church and statements about pastoral work was computed.

The hypothesis, that the mean for scored responses on pastoral work equals the mean for scored responses on the church, was tested using a paired t-test. The sample mean for the scored responses relating to pastoral workers views of the church is $\bar{X}=2,3541$ and for pastoral work is $\bar{X} = 2,1688$. The means scored responses regarding for both "church" and "pastoral work" are in the range of 2.1-2.4, which indicates little difference between the two scores. (It is necessary to keep in mind Coolican's (1994:140) warning that the Likert method of investigation may reflect a lot of undecided answers, or very high and very low scores which cancel each other out).

To see if there is any relationship a Pearson's³⁷ correlation coefficient was calculated. A positive correlation of 0.70584 between pastoral workers' views of the church and of pastoral work was established ($r > 0.70$). A correlation coefficient of 1 means that there is a perfect positive linear relationship between the two variables concerned and -1 means a perfect negative linear relationship. As the correlation coefficient moves closer to 0, it means that there is no linear relationship between the variables concerned (Van Lill & Grieve 1990:7.5). This statistical correlation only gives an indication of the statistical relationship between variables and does not mean that the one causes the other.

There is thus a significant positive correlation between pastoral workers who make out this sample, view of the church and their view of pastoral work. This was confirmed through probability testing where the null hypothesis was that those who think ecosystemically about the church think also ecosystemically about the pastoral work of the church. The null hypothesis was not rejected, which indicated that the respondents of this sample who think ecosystemically about the church also think ecosystemically about the pastoral work of the church and vice versa.

A separate Pearson's correlation analysis was done on the first twenty-eight responses and on the responses of the eighty-two respondents who received their questionnaires through the mail to see if the different situations in which the data were collected made a difference. The positive correlation between church and pastoral work for the twenty-eight respondents was 0.693 and for the eighty-two respondents 0.712. No significant difference was found between the two groups. The mean for the twenty-eight respondents was 2.53 for "church" and 2.29 for "pastoral work" while the mean for the eighty-two respondents was 2.29 for "church" and 2.12 for "pastoral work".

37 . This is also known as the "product moment correlation coefficient" (cf Van Lill & Grieve 1990:7.8; Huysamen 1990:78).

5.5.2.4 Relationship between biographical data and views of pastoral workers

Do respondents' age, years of service, and qualifications play a role in their views of the church and pastoral work? A direct relationship is impossible to determine, because of the many possible variables. What is possible to determine is if there is a difference between respondents' age, qualification and years of service and their answers to the statements about the church and pastoral work.

A F-test³⁸ was done to see if biographical and contextual factors such as age, qualifications, years of service in the ministry, and the geographical area where the congregation is situated, play any role (make any difference) in pastoral workers' view of the church and of pastoral work. The results can be tabulated as follows:

Table 7: p-value Church and Pastoral Work

	VIEW OF CHURCH	VIEW OF PASTORAL WORK
Age	0.0001	0.0001
Qualification	0.0001	0.0009
Years Service	0.0030	0.0301
Location of Congregation (Rural/Urban)	0.1269	0.6989

A result of less than 0.05 ($\alpha=0.05$) is significant. The results of 0.0001 and 0.0009 are highly significant. It indicates that age and qualifications do play a role in pastoral workers' view of the church and pastoral work. A result of 0.0301 is on the border of significance, while 0.0030 is clearly significant. It does seem as if years of service (and thus also age) play a role in pastoral workers' view of the church. It appears as if the location of pastoral workers congregations do not influence pastoral workers views of the church and the pastoral work of the church (0.1269 and 0.6989 are not significant).

5.5.2.5 Ecosystemic/ non-ecosystemic views of the church and pastoral work

The second important aim of this study was to determine how ecosystemic or non-ecosystemic pastoral workers views were. To that end it was necessary to first determine a cut-off point which would divide the responses into two groups. As indicated before, a large positive correlation exists between pastoral workers'

38 . The result of an F-test is the same as that of t^2 (Downie & Heath 1983:209). An F-test is used to test data involving multiple means. The F-test is named in honour of R A Fisher who derived the sampling distribution of the F statistic in 1924 (Fallik & Brown 1983:379). The t^2 -test is appropriate for testing the equality of a whole set of group means.

views of pastoral work and of the church for the group of respondents, based on their averages for the items on pastoral work and the corresponding average on the church items. This information was used to compute how ecosystemic or non-ecosystemic the respondents' views were.

An "arbitrary" cut-off point for ecosystemic and non-ecosystemic values based on the means³⁹ of the scores of all respondents and the means for the categories "church" and "pastoral work", was selected.⁴⁰ This made it possible to divide the respondents into two groups. Contingency tables were drawn up by using the "arbitrary" cut-off point to divide the sample into two groups, namely an ecosystemic and a non-ecosystemic group.

Table 8: Relationship between ecosystemic and non-ecosystemic variables

VARIABLE	MEAN	STD DEV	MINIMUM	MAXIMUM
Church	2.3541	0.514756	1.28947	3.42105
Pastoral Work	2.1668	0.395238	1.36666	3.20689

Small values (close to 1) show ecosystemic views while larger values (close to 5) show non-ecosystemic views. Not a single respondent could be considered totally ecosystemic namely with a value of 1, although some came close to it, with the lowest mean score for church being 1.2894 and for pastoral work 1.3666. None of the respondents scored totally non-ecosystemically by getting a mean of 5.⁴¹

The researcher's assumption that the pastoral work of the church is non-ecosystemic is not confirmed by the analysis of the responses of the respondents. The researcher does not find it surprising because this corresponds with his personal observation of the population, namely pastors of the URCSA, of which he is a member.

39 . Coolican (1994:313) says: "You might have reduced what was once interval level data down to a dichotomy ... with the above the mean/ below the mean calculation. Here the dichotomy is said to be 'artificial' because there is an interval scale lying underneath".

40 . If view of church pastoral work < 2.5 then ecosystemic. If view of the church pastoral work \geq 2.5 then non-ecosystemic.

41 . The highest mean score for an individuals' responses on the statements of the church was 3.4210 and for pastoral work 3.2068. It is interesting that the statements regarding the variable church got both the lowest and the highest score. This is confirmed by the standard deviation. Although the variable church got the lowest score for the construct ecosystemic, it also read higher ecosystemically on average than pastoral work. Respondents are thus slightly more in agreement about their views on pastoral work than about their views on the church.

5.5.2.6 Relationship between biographical data and pastoral workers' ecosystemic/ non-ecosystemic views.

Do biographical and social factors make a difference in how ecosystemically or non-ecosystemically pastoral workers think? Contingency tables together with chi-square tests and probability tests were used to analyse the data of the respondents.

Contingency table 9 shows that younger people tend to think more ecosystemically (71.4% of the respondents in the age group 27-34 years think ecosystemically) and older people less ecosystemically (28.5% of the respondents in the group 55 and older think ecosystemically). It is interesting that 41% of respondents who chose more ecosystemic items than non-ecosystemic items are in the age group 35 - 44 years. The χ^2 -value = 21.8 with a p-value = 0, indicating that ecosystemic and non-ecosystemic differ significantly in terms of age group. (H_0 : Age and ecosystemic and non-ecosystemic thinking are independent of each other).

Table 9: Age: ecosystemic and non-ecosystemic

Row Pct Col Pct	27-34 years f=21	35-44 years f=30	45- 54 years f=25	55-71 years f=28
Ecosystemic	23.81 71.43	41.27 86.67	22.22 56%	12.70 28.57
Non-ecosystemic	14.63 28.57	9.76 13.33	26.83 44	48.78 71.43

The same procedure was followed in analysing the relationship between respondents' years of service and ecosystemic or non-ecosystemic thinking. Only 7.69% of the respondents who think ecosystemically have more than 26 years of service, while 26.15% of the respondents who think ecosystemically have 2-5 years of service. It is interesting to see that the group that thinks the most ecosystemically (30.77%) has between 11-15 years of service.

The χ^2 -value = 17.9 with a p-value = 0.001 indicating that years of service and ecosystemic and non-ecosystemic responses are dependent (not independent). (H_0 : Years of service and ecosystemic and non-ecosystemic thinking is independent of each other). Ecosystemic/ non-ecosystemic thinking are influenced by years of service, which in its turn is influenced by age. The relation between "years of service" and ecosystemic/non-ecosystemic categories are also indicated by contingency table 10.

Table 10: Years' service: ecosystemic and non-ecosystemic

Row Pct Col Pct	2-5 service f=22	6-10 service f=20	11-15 service f=27	16-25 service f=17	26 + service f=22
Ecosystemic	26.15 77.27	20 65	30.77 74.07	15.38 58.82	7.69 22.73
Non-ecosystemic	11.63 22.73	16.28 35	16.28 25.93	16.28 41.18	39.5 77.27

Qualification does play a role in the way respondents think. Respondents with master's and doctorate degrees also tend to think more ecosystemically than people with diploma qualifications and BA degrees. The χ^2 -value = 18.8 with a p-value = 0.000, indicating that qualifications and ecosystemic/ non-ecosystemic responses are dependent (not independent). (H_0 : Qualification and ecosystemic and non-ecosystemic thinking are independent of each other.)

Table 11: Qualifications: ecosystemic and non-ecosystemic

Row Pct Col Pct	DIPLOMA f= 31	BACHELORS f= 20	HONOURS f= 30	M & D DEGREE f= 23
Ecosystemic	16.92 35.48	16.92 55	40 86.67	26.15 73.91
Non-ecosystemic	51.28 64.52	23.08 45	10.26 13.33	15.38 26.09

From the above tables it seems clear that there are relationships between age, years of service and qualifications and the views of respondents. Older people, and people with more years of service and lower qualifications think less ecosystemically. There is not a direct relationship. The age group that thinks the most ecosystemically is between 35-44 years old, while those with honours degrees think the most ecosystemically. Although positive relationships were identified, direct inferences are difficult to make. For example, in all the age groups there are respondents who think ecosystemically and non-ecosystemically, so although age may be important, it should never be isolated as if it were the only factor that determines people's way of thinking.

To summarise: Younger respondents and respondents with higher qualifications tend to think more ecosystemically. Respondents with more years of service tend to think less ecosystemically.

5.6 INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

A researcher following an ecosystemic approach is particularly wary of interpreting statistical *results* as if a numerical world exists out there at a distance independently of the researcher's world and the physical or social worlds respondents live in. In no way do the researcher's findings exist apart from his involvement as researcher in the research. The researcher co-produces the results by the statements asked, the selection of a specific group or community as a sample group to answer the statements, deciding what calculations the statisticians must make and how to portray it. The researcher is thoroughly aware that his values play a role in the construction of the study and the data received are thus also loaded with values "imposed" by the researcher.

From a linear perspective, the measurable results or outcome of empirical research are very important. An ecosystemic perspective values the whole process and the interactions involved in the process. All research is seen as a search for patterns which could only be understood in the context of meta-patterns rather than mere measurable facts. Results in an ecosystemic approach are not regarded as

confirmation of some objective fact, but rather as patterns and are interpreted in the context of an ongoing co-evolving process of creating knowledge.

From an ecosystemic perspective, it is very important to realise that not all things that could be considered numerically precise are true, and not all truths are numerical. Research data expressed statistically and as statistically significant from a certain perspective may be less significant from a less linear and more narrative perspective. Research data acquire meaning when understood in terms of ideas suggesting connections, patterns, relations and recursiveness and not as isolated variables and phenomena. The interpretation of research data should lead to co-created ideas and not just to declaring a hypothesis as true or false. In the interpretation, the influence and context in which the study is done should be kept in mind. The specific consensual domain⁴² from which specific data arose should be kept in mind (cf Carr 1991:96). Research should be seen as a narrative describing the co-evolved reality co-created by the researcher and participants in the research process (cf Carr 1991:97).

An example is the research done by the psychologist Carr (1991:100-103). He believes that research can be therapeutic in value without being intended to be therapeutic. Carr (1991:102) emphasises the influence of research and the research questions on the people who answer the questions. A research question may have a therapeutic effect; it can change people's perceptions and even their behaviour. According to Carr (1991:102), this might apply to questions in general, but would apply even more strongly to reflexive and circular questions. Carr (1991:103) believes that this is in line with Heisenberg's uncertainty principle where the "act of observation influences the phenomena under observation".

The distinction between ecosystemic research and traditional linear research can be found in the way the outcome is recognised as a result of collaboration between researcher, participants and also other systems. This outcome is communicated as a product of the collaboration (Carr 1991:103). As stated before: **in this view, the goal of research is not to prove right or wrong but to understand.**

With this in mind a few remarks about the data presented should be made:

- **The collection and interpretation of data:**

All the respondents were from one denomination, namely the URCSA, which makes it impossible to apply the information collected to the church in South Africa as a whole. The limited tally of responses makes any interpretation for the URCSA as a whole very difficult also because of the uneven spread of languages (53.8% Afrikaans and 18% Southern Sotho which is 63.5% from two language groups) and because of the high proportion of respondents with post-graduate qualifications (49.5% in the sample against 31.8% in the population). The data received thus have a limited value in terms of universal application for the URCSA or for the church in general. Generalised conclusions are thus impossible. All conclusions are only valid for the sample and may only give an indication about the thinking of the sample.

42 . When two or more observers agree on their observations, they have co-constructed a particular reality or consensual domain (Carr 1991).

The data were collected from May - October 1995. South Africa had its first local government (community) elections and the campaigning for the elections during this period. Although this may, for many people, be an insignificant happening, for others it was a major sign of sure democracy. Churches may have experienced some tension during this time because of the local nature of the election and candidates. Candidates of different parties, or their families, may belong to the same church congregation.

To what extent could a social event like elections have influenced responses? Could it be the reason for some of the paradoxes in the responses? Take statements 13 and 32 for instance: 75.3% of respondents fully agreed and agreed somewhat that the church was not really influenced by things that happen in society, such as violence for example, while 77.7% believed that an election could have a significant effect on the church.

The influence of all these factors are uncertain and difficult, if not impossible to determine.

- **Correlation between the variables pastoral work and church:**

There is a reasonably strong relationship, statistically, between respondents' views of the church and their views of pastoral work [cf p 295]. The researcher interprets this as a sign of a holistic approach in pastoral workers' (in this case ordained pastors in the church) understanding of the church and its actions. This is confirmed by the tendency towards ecosystemic thinking in the majority of the responses.

The researcher suspects that when people think less ecosystemically they will also tend to think more dualistically. It would be interesting if a follow-up research project could identify a group of respondents that think less ecosystemically, to see whether that influences their view of the relationship between the two variables *church* and *pastoral work*.

The positive relationship between pastoral work and the church, also confirms the need for an ecclesiology as base theory for pastoral work.

- **Reductionistic or holistic approach to pastoral work:**

It was determined, through the statistical analysis, that the respondents were more ecosystemic than non-ecosystemic in their views [cf p 297]. This ecosystemic view of pastoral work, supported by the respondents, does not confirm the researcher's premises/ surmise that pastoral work is individualistic, reductionistic, denominational and directed mainly to the individualistic psychological needs of church people [cf p 39 & p 274]. It does support the view of the researcher that pastoral work should be done within an ecosystemic metaparadigm.

Unfortunately, it is difficult to come to conclusions, as the respondents cannot be considered a random sample of the pastoral workers of the church [cf p 293]. It is impossible to generalise and to say that pastoral workers in general in the URC are thinking more ecosystemically than non-ecosystemically. The respondents are also overrepresentative of certain sectors of the population as far as language and qualifications are concerned. It is also determined that age, years of service and qualifications do play a

role in respondents' ecosystemic/ non-ecosystemic views.

The researcher is of the opinion that the social context may play a role in this outcome and believes this emphasises the importance of not decontextualising research. It would be interesting to repeat this project in a more affluent and Westernised society.

The context may help the researcher to understand the patterns that emerged. The URCSA consists mainly of people from the poorer part of the South African society and from the black and so-called coloured communities. Poorer societies are much more community conscious (Kotzé 1993:40) because people need to co-operate to overcome the severe burden of poverty (Kotzé 1993:103). Poorer people live less individualistically because they are more dependent on others to survive. It seems as if the pastors working in these circumstances have developed a more holistic (ecosystemic) approach or are more susceptible to a holistic approach.

It seems clear that more factors than just the circumstances and social context play a role. Not all pastoral workers have exactly the same tendency towards ecosystemic thinking. The indications are that age and qualifications make a difference in respondents' views also open other explanations for the tendency of the respondents to think ecosystemically.

The influence of and exposure to modern theology, liberation theology, as well as post-modern philosophy may have played a role, together with the social situation. The younger pastors could be influenced by a more contextual theology than the older pastors. A more contextual theological way of thinking is likely to make pastoral workers more aware of the contextual situation in which they operate and should influence the way they understand the praxis of their ministry.

The older pastoral workers may have received a more traditional theological training, which was more missionary inclined and dualistic in approach. Which means that although a person works in a context of poverty the context could have less influence on his/ her praxis when the spiritual and the contextual are separated from each other. It means that although the person grew up and works in a situation which is more conducive to holistic thinking, he or she may think more dualistically, because of the impact of university training which confirms what he/ she has learned in Sunday School and in sermons. Other pastoral workers may change their views because of further training, even if it means that some of these views are in conflict with their upbringing and the sermons they have heard in the church. From different perspectives on the same reality different inferences can be made.

These are speculations, because it is practically impossible to determine all the factors involved, because of the recursive and comprehensive nature of these factors.

- **Tendency towards an ecosystemic understanding:**

The ecosystemic approach proposed in this study is a move away from individualistic and Cartesian thinking where the spiritual and the physical worlds are separated, where absolutist thinking and a linear approach reign. Ecosystemic thinking is also understood as a way of integrating patterns and is often

focused on integrating theory and praxis, dogmatics and ethics, which is the main thrust of contextual and liberation theologies (cf Nel 1989). This study, for example, is interested in the integration of individuals and the communities with whom they identify. Ecosystemic thinking is an awareness of the underlying systems in all actions.

In a way this integration of thinking was confirmed by the respondents (and by the empirical research project as a whole), although very few respondents may have any knowledge of terms such as "ecosystemic" or "non-ecosystemic". The study also emphasises the different patterns that are visible and the different ways these patterns can be interpreted.

An ecosystemic approach emphasises the importance of different systems and their influence on one another. It is thus meaningful and notable that there is a positive correlation ($r=0.70584$) between respondents' views of the church and of pastoral work. This reinforces the idea of bigger and smaller systems which are interdependent. It may also point to the relationship between praxis and theory. Although the questionnaire investigated "views", several statements were formulated in terms of praxis. It may mean that to influence people's behaviour one should start with influencing their view and understanding of the bigger systems. It emphasises the importance of moving away from fragmentation and specialisation to complementarity and generalisation. Because of the interrelatedness of systems it is also important that fields of study that on the surface seem to be unrelated start combining efforts in approaching the (pastoral) challenges of (church) society.

- **Multiple perspectives of reality:**

The responses to some questions in the questionnaire are difficult to understand. Statements 25 and 36, for example, show a discrepancy: 93.6% of respondents think that peoples' actions and what they believe are of equal importance', while 49.8% think that it is more important to believe correctly than to act correctly. Neuger (1995:135) refers to the influence of multiple perspectives of the truth in contrast to absolute objective truths. She uses as example the 1980 poll in the USA about abortion where 73% of Americans were in favour of full abortion rights and 77% percent regarded abortion as killing, if not, indeed murder.

It may also be that respondents gave unreliable responses by not concentrating on the statements asked or the responses given. Some statements may not raise strong feelings or opinions and respondents may not have cared how they answer these questions.

From an ecosystemic perspective it is important to emphasise the multiple perspectives involved, and keep in mind that this may be one of the reasons why people answer different statements with the same direction and intention differently while they answer questions with opposite directions and intentions as if they were the similar.

- **The role of the researcher-observer:**

The researcher's influence on the research data is difficult to "verify", although the research was conducted properly according to general acceptable criteria. A questionnaire was sent to all members of the

population, namely pastors of the URCSA. The sample was constructed by means of self-selection, as respondents decided for themselves if they wanted to be part of the sample or not, by returning the questionnaire (cf Coolican 1994:40-41). A valid instrument was used in the form of the Likert scale which is suitable for the aims of this study. This study is also reliable in the sense that the instrument used, namely a questionnaire, could be used again to repeat the research.

Many unknown factors could have influenced the responses. It would be valuable to know if the respondents would respond differently if somebody else conducted the research. Although the statements are not particularly dependent on these times, it would also be interesting to repeat the research at a later stage to see what influence changes in the South African political and social spheres have had on pastoral workers' views.

Although the researcher conducted the study and takes the responsibility for the final analysis, this was done in co-operation with the promoters and with consultants from the Department of Statistics at UNISA. In the researcher's opinion it is nearly impossible to interpret data without the help of consultants. Such assistance should be an important dimension of quantitative research apart from the importance of collaboration for an ecosystemic perspective. With hindsight, even more could have been done to involve other disciplines in this study.

- **The way ahead:**

The time has come to further explore an ecosystemic approach to pastoral work. It seems as if younger and more academically trained people are already exposed and attracted to a more ecosystemic metaparadigm as far as their ecclesiology and their pastoral work approach are concerned. As far as the respondents to the questionnaire are concerned, their inclination is clearly to a more holistic world-view. If it is taken into account that the pastors who completed the questionnaire belong to a church which represents the poorer and underprivileged section of the South African society, it seems as if a holistic approach is also relevant in the South African social context.

This is especially important for the last part of this study, which will put into practice the ecosystemic approach by applying it to the AIDS situation in South Africa. There is a certain importance, also from an ecosystemic perspective, to take matters further than just theory and to integrate theory with praxis..

5.7 CONCLUSION

This empirical research was done from a certain perspective and more by way of probing than of being locked into a process where everything is data dependent. Quantitative research done from an ecosystemic perspective may demonstrate to be beneficial for practical theology and pastoral work. From a linear perspective a cause-effect type of conclusion is important and also essential. From an ecosystemic perspective, a conclusion is much more difficult to formulate.

Collecting data is an expensive exercise. The most obvious place to do it in the church seems to be at Synodical meetings. But this is also problematic, because the researcher is dependent on the goodwill

of the church leadership. The leadership in the URCSA (Southern Transvaal) has not yet realised the important role of data about peoples' views for the church. This may also be true for many other churches. The researcher will be cautious in future about relying on Synodical meetings to collect information. It seems as if the church leadership needs to be educated to make them more aware of the importance of this type of research for the church. The need for more information about the pastors in the church is also necessary to determine if subjects are representative of the church.

The empirical research done in this study has many shortcomings. Many factors could be identified which may have influenced the statistical outcome of the questionnaire:

- ☞ Statements may not reflect the main question clearly, although the researcher did everything possible to incorporate all the qualifications required and to ensure the reliability of the questionnaire.
- ☞ Respondents may have understood the questions differently. Some people completed the questionnaire during the meeting of the Synod ("captive respondents"), while others completed it after receiving it through the post. However, a separate analysis of the twenty-eight questionnaires and the eighty-two questionnaires shows no significant difference in terms of view of pastoral work and of the church.
- ☞ People may have a specific expectation and respond in a specific way to create a good impression. The personal information asked as well as the request to fill in names and addresses (although not mandatory) may have influenced some respondents.
- ☞ Some respondents indicated that they would like to qualify or elaborate on some (or all) of the statements.
- ☞ The limited range of options in a fixed-option question may make information obtained superficial (Chow 1992:32). Several respondents indicated that they found it difficult at time to make a choice.
- ☞ Some respondents might have chosen the same response, but for different reasons. Other respondents may have reacted differently to statements because of implicit qualifications, while being in agreement with the main value implied by the statement.
- ☞ Respondents' ability to understand specific nuances, especially when statements were not in their home language, may have played a role.
- ☞ Items left unanswered pose difficulties in data analysis and interpretation.
- ☞ The limited number of questionnaires returned made certain important statistical calculations impossible.

In the light of the above-mentioned factors, and also from an ecosystemic perspective, the interpretation of the data in total was more important than specific answers on specific items. This study concentrates on the total picture created by the data and gives little emphasis to the readings on specific questions. (The

specific percentages on each question is available as Addendum 1.)

The knowledge that, at least for the respondents, a relationship between their views of pastoral work and of the church exists, emphasises the importance of an ecclesiological base theory for at least some pastoral workers. The knowledge that the respondents do think ecosystemically about pastoral work and the church emphasises that at least for some pastoral workers the discussion is not any more about ecosystemic or non-ecosystemic pastoral work, but about the implications of ecosystemic pastoral work. The next chapter (chapter 6) will discuss the implications of an ecosystemic perspective for pastoral work. Chapter 7 will put it in the context of the AIDS epidemic.

6. A COMMUNITY PASTORAL WORK APPROACH FROM AN ECOSYSTEMIC PERSPECTIVE

The church as the salt of the earth has a role to play in this world. One of the functions of the church is to care. This function does not take place in isolation. The researcher takes as his point of departure the challenges already faced by the church's pastoral work and that will be faced even more as we enter the twentieth century, not to mention the specific challenges faced by the church in South Africa.

The premise of this study is that our world-view has an influence on the way we see, understand and interpret the Bible and thus also on our theology, in this case specifically our ecclesiology and anthropology. In chapter 2 the researcher proposes an ecosystemic metaparadigm as a way to look at this world. An ecosystemic perspective is a move away from reductionistic thinking, but is also *complementary* to the mechanistic, atomistic, linear, individualistic and so-called scientific way of understanding reality. This paradoxical way of putting it is necessary because of the recursive nature of thinking, nothing starts from nothing in our minds.

Küng (1989a) discusses "paradigm change" in theology in detail. His conclusion is that paradigm change in theology, as in the so-called natural sciences, is not a total break away. In every paradigm change, there is a fundamental continuity despite all the discontinuity (Küng 1989a:29). Paradigm switches are never as complete as the definition may imply. Furthermore, "rival paradigms never amount to entire alternative world-views" (Küng 1989a:30). Although ecosystemic thinking is therefore not the same as mechanistic and reductionistic thinking, and is even opposed to mechanistic, reductionistic and linear thinking, there are still many continuities as well as discontinuities between the ecosystemic and the reductionistic world-view. Sometimes the mechanistic understanding of reality is necessary to understand the way certain things work. When a person switch on a light a very mechanistic process of cause and effect is initialised, which allows the electric current (invisible) to flow through the electric wires. The end result (a burning light) is very predictable if every part of the closed electrical system is connected and in working order.

The discussion in chapter 3 is about a base theory for practical theology. The theological aspect of an ecclesiology and anthropology for an ecosystemic view of reality are discussed in detail. An interrelated ecclesiology developed from this discussion. Chapter 4 discusses the idea of a community pastoral work approach in the light of a changing and pluralistic society. *Community* refers to both the individual and his or her relationships with the wider community.

The researcher comes to the conclusion that an ecosystemic perspective (thus an integrated and interrelated pastoral work focus) would prompt pastoral work to move beyond the concept *community*, which may limit the scope of pastoral work. The concept of *networking* is introduced. The term *network* broadens the scope of the community approach by including an active awareness that in modern pluralistic society people are involved in many other relationships, live in different places and are more individualistically orientated. Community in the modern pluralistic society is not a close geographical community. Networking is a way to describe community in terms of open systems and to make sure that community is not necessarily understood in terms of geographical community. Networking describes the comprehensiveness and interrelatedness of society. The concept "**community**" should be understood

in terms of networks of people. Even the church as community should be understood as people connected to each other but not necessarily living in a close geographical area. A community approach to pastoral work opens the opportunity to move from an individualistic approach to an integrated approach in pastoral work by broadening the scope of pastoral work to include all networks involved. Community pastoral work wants to promote comprehensive care and interrelated pastoral care.

Chapter 5 takes the qualitative research in this study a little further by including a quantitative research project. A questionnaire explored pastoral workers' view of the church and of pastoral work and how ecosystemic/ nonecosystemic pastoral workers views. This specific sample of pastoral workers (pastors of the URCSA) are more ecosystemic inclined than nonecosystemic. There is also a positive correlation between these subjects view of the church and of pastoral work.

This chapter is a culmination of chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5 and further explores out the meaning and implications of an ecosystemic-orientated perspective on a community pastoral work approach. The ecosystemic perspective refers to the paradigmatic point of departure (world-view) of practical theology followed in this study. The community approach refers to the all-encompassing character of pastoral work done from a certain perspective. This must be understood within the broader context of the pastoral work traditions in the church and also within the social context. This means that this study ventures an approach to the ministry of care that attends simultaneously to the needs of persons and to the broader social realities that play a role.

The purpose of this study is not to produce a *model* for pastoral work. A comprehensive, integrated theory for pastoral work has not been explored because it is a task too great for a study of this kind. This study is merely an attempt to develop a framework for the development of an all-encompassing approach to pastoral work from a very specific perspective. This should be seen as a springboard for further exploration. It would also be a mistake to think that community pastoral work is only discussed in this chapter. The entire study has been an experience in community pastoral work in the sense that the whole study is a search for, an attempt at and hopefully a creation of a holistic but open nexus. The result is a circular approach within the study. The same matters and concerns come up time and again and are sometimes discussed under different headings.

Community pastoral work done from an ecosystemic perspective is not a specific technique; but an approach to pastoral work. Anything could thus form part of the pastoral approach (cf Müller 1991b:94). It is, in essence, a reflection on and exploration of the relationship between individuals, between people and God (spirituality), between people and nature and between people and society. It was interesting to discover how many people are already doing this reflection and exploration although sometimes from different perspectives.

6.1 THE NATURE OF ECOSYSTEMIC PASTORAL WORK

Pastoral work is heavily influenced by pastoral counselling with the emphasis on the assessment and modification of behaviour, emotions and the cognition of individuals. This means that pastoral workers

often think largely in terms of what is wrong with people and how they can help them to change themselves. Traditionally, counselling is seen as the treatment of individuals in terms of their personality traits, self-concepts, mental disturbances and adjustment disorders. Counselling goals are viewed as primarily "self" orientated.¹ Accordingly, counselling techniques are aimed primarily at the individual. The epistemology behind it is that people exist as isolated beings with the ability to direct themselves and **change is viewed as occurring within**. Behaviourism challenged this view of internal control by addressing the effect of environmental influences on behaviour. But the therapeutic process is still focused on the individual as identified patient (careseeker) where the therapist has authority over the patient (Cottone 1988:359). Graham (1992:12) puts it as follows:

I was mistaken to think that pastoral care in the sixties and earlier was orientated to social change as well as to personal healing. In pastoral care and counseling circles, there was little or no attention paid to addressing larger social and political issues. Social critique was minimal in the literature and practice of pastoral care and counseling.

Family therapy helps counsellors to become aware of the broader system, namely the family involved, and to think differently about counselling. Unfortunately, this thinking is not really extended to consider seriously the influence of workplace, school, neighbourhood, community, media, housing conditions, working conditions, unemployment and so on. Family therapists developed new positions in terms of their therapy. The constructivistic position taken by some psychologists and pastoral workers and the social constructionism supported by others could help to broaden pastoral workers' thinking also as far as ethics are concerned because the individualistic approach to problems also furnished an individualistic approach to ethics.

Although community psychology could play an important role to broaden people's perspectives, there is little evidence in South Africa (and elsewhere, for that matter) that community psychology really influences pastoral workers. Previous sections of this study [cf p 91] refer to the lack of epistemological understanding among community psychologists to base their move from the individual to the community.

A community pastoral work approach aims to correct this individualistic bias by considering people within the contexts of the social settings and ecosystems of which they form part of and which influence them.² This is no easy task for a number of different reasons. Actually, it is much easier to work with individuals as

1. "For those of us who have invested years of professional training in putting on the intrapsychic glasses, it usually requires strenuous effort to also see people through the interpersonal-systemic glasses. But the glasses for seeing intrapsychic dynamics, which we have learned to wear, provide a much more meaningful picture of human beings when the interpersonal-systemic way of perceiving is added" (Clinebell 1981:217).

2. Cottone (1988:363) states this as follows:

... social systems theory place behaviorism in context, while better accounting for behavior in triadic social relationships or larger social contexts. Behaviorism is analogous to Newtonian physics, which applied well in an earthly context but failed in a universal context; whereas social systems theory is analogous to Einstein's physics, which accounted for Newtonian ideas and also applied to larger physical systems.

closed units. The fact that relationships between people and their environments almost always turn out to be reciprocal, adds to the complexity.

The theme running through this section is that individuals are profoundly affected by the settings in which they find themselves, but so, too, are settings created and shaped by their occupants. From an ecosystemic perspective, human beings are not only the result of their social conditions but are also involved in their social conditions. In a world full of discrimination and prejudice this is important for pastoral care too. It opens up new possibilities. It will require from pastoral workers the openness and willingness to move from one level of thinking to another and from one system to another.³

It will also require a more relative stance rather than an absolutist approach, which imposes one set of dominant norms; a respect for diversity and an awareness of the influence of power and control and the importance of empowerment (Maton & Rappaport 1984; Cone 1985). It can also be described as a seeking mode of pastoral work (cf Orford 1992:9). This means that the pastoral worker is not content to wait for individuals to make contact, but rather tries to identify needs and to understand how problems are generated in a specific community, and where possible, to anticipate and prevent them (cf Maton & Pargament 1987).

A community pastoral work approach should include a desire to share with others. In the church context, this refers specifically on the one hand to a wish to work interdenominationally or ecumenically and also interdisciplinary.⁴ This should go hand in hand with the ecosystemic perspective that "expertise" resides principally amongst people themselves. There should be an acknowledgement of this and people should get the opportunity to use their "expertise" for the benefit of the whole community. This is very different from the perspective adopted traditionally in pastoral work and other helping professions (e.g. psychology and social work), where the therapist or pastoral worker is the expert.

3. Orford (1992:27) discusses four levels of systems. Micro-level - systems of which the individual has direct experience on a regular basis e.g. home, school, work, club. Meso-level - consisting of two or more micro-level systems and the links between them e.g. home-school; hospital-patient; mother's family - father's family after separation. Exo-level - systems which influence a person and a person's micro- and meso-level systems, but which the person has no direct experience, e.g. parents' work; school governing body. Macro-level - systems on a larger scale which determine the prevailing ideology and social structure within a person's micro-, meso- and exo-level systems, e.g. rate of unemployment; gender roles in society and so on.

4. Data obtained from the quantitative study done (chapter 5) give an unclear picture about pastoral workers' (in the URCSA) willingness to work interreligiously. Eighty-four percent are willing to involve a Muslim spiritual leader in a counselling situation where the one partner is Muslim (Q 58). When the question was put in terms of just "another religion" 55% of respondents indicated that they would not involve the religious leader of the "other religion" (Q 48).

Ninety-five percent of respondents agree that pastoral workers should work with members of other professions (Q 73). When the question was put negatively (Q 68), 87% agree with the negative statement that pastoral workers "should not involve members of other professions". Possible reasons for this discrepancy are discussed in chapter 5 [cf p 295].

The church's role in society may have an influence on the type of pastoral needs church members encounter. The church's approach to these needs will be influenced by the ecclesiology of the church. Because of the less functional position of the church in society, [cf chapter 4, p 251] it becomes all the more necessary to have some clarity on the ecclesiology underpinning the church's actions, especially when the functions of the church in a secularised society become more limited. The importance of an interrelated ecclesiology has already been discussed [cf chapter 3, p 212].

6.1.1 A way of thinking about pastoral work

From the previous discussions it should have become clear that the term *ecosystemic-community pastoral work* refers in essence, to a specific approach to pastoral work done from a specific perspective. The term *community pastoral work* includes other approaches like "contextual pastoral work"; "holistic pastoral work" or "ecological pastoral work". The notion of "community" fits⁵ with the Biblical view of the church and the corporate dimension of human beings and its relational position in the universe (cf Grenz 1994). It is an emphasis of the importance of the total human being and all his/her relations. The ecosystemic perspective emphasises that this approach is also deeply imbedded in the changes which take place in scientific and social thinking.

Researchers are becoming more and more aware of the influence of socio-economic and political systems on people's behaviour and perceptions (cf Fumiss 1994). We know that this industrial society as such puts a lot of pressure on individuals, groups and families to act in a specific way. Pastoral workers often cannot directly affect the prevailing economic, political and historical forces. The community approach proposed here is not a model, but a heuristic framework, enabling pastoral theologians to ask a wide range of questions and explore various problems. It is not a blueprint for doing pastoral work. It is not in the first place about a way to do pastoral work, but rather about a way to think about doing pastoral work.

It has become unthinkable that pastoral work can proceed in its caring actions without a grasp of the ubiquity and devastating consequences of certain patterns in society, like violence, injustices (politically and economically), ethnicity and sexism. Part of second-order cybernetics is that the researcher is part of this thinking about doing pastoral work. Patterns in society do not only influence the careseekers and their families and relationships but also the pastoral worker and his/ her way of perceiving society. This study does not wish to give the impression that there is an obvious and straightforward application of the ecosystemic approach. It is much more a challenge for all of us to go and see how this approach can be applied in real-life situations.

A few important main features of a holistic approach will be discussed, namely involvement in community and society issues and the sensitisation (or empowerment) of the church community as part of the pastoral task of the church. In the next chapter this approach will be applied to a real-life situation of our time,

5 . In terms of a more subjective understanding of Scripture it is difficult to infer precise models of the Bible.

namely AIDS. Community pastoral work operates in terms of networking (for the sake of simplicity just called community pastoral work) done from an ecosystemic perspective, can be identified by the following features:

(a) This is a comprehensive way of caring for those in need, going out from the Christian community. Because it is a comprehensive way of caring, it will include mutual care, pastoral care and pastoral counselling. It includes all forms of care: emotional, psychological, spiritual and physical.

(b) It is a multidisciplinary type of care. Theology, philosophy, psychology and sociology could be used to understand the context and analyse the situation. The interdisciplinary encounters proposed by an ecosystemic approach have broadened the understanding of pastoral care beyond the psychological into the sociological field of understanding. In his book *The social context of pastoral care* Furniss (1994) leads the way to a total new way of viewing the pastoral care situation; In future it will be much more difficult for pastoral workers to ignore the social context of careseekers.

(c) It is an all-inclusive (non-denominational; all people) view of care. Although it is care going out from the church community, the care is not directed only to the church community.

(d) It takes into account that people belong to different communities at the same time. A networking approach to care is not only care in the church community, but endeavours to become care in a comprehensive sense because it reaches further than just the boundaries of the church milieu.⁶

(e) It is reciprocating care. This means pastoral work should be characterised by a spiralling effect - a going back and forth between stages and thus seldom a single-directional movement from A to B. In the modern world reality is far more complex and a reciprocating process of much value. In terms of community pastoral care, it means that it is care from the church community to any community of people. It could be care which emanates from a specific community to its component members and beyond to society at large.

This awareness of the influence of other systems emphasises the reciprocal relation between the individual and the group. Furniss (1994:57) combines family systems principles and sociological principles (reference group theory). He believes that such a combination could be useful in counselling situations. According to Furniss (1994:57), "Comparative studies of dyadic and group contexts for attitudinal change show that the one-to-one traditional counseling mode achieves far less effective new learning than group contexts".

(f) It is an interconnected way of caring. Whatever the pastoral worker does, he or she must be aware that systems are interconnected. Any change in one system or change in behaviour or attitude from the people who make up the system (i.e. congregants) will evoke responses (not always change) elsewhere in the system and the other systems.

6. Louw (1980:90) mentions the attitude of the church which is to just take care of people in the church milieu, but not at the places where people are sustaining hurt, such as the workplace.

Developments in ecclesiology and anthropology emphasise the interconnectedness and interrelatedness of the individual with society. Because of the secularisation process (which is part of the pluralistic society), the church is actually in a better position to be critical of society. The church is also more aware that society is not automatically providing the *plausibility structure* to encourage religion. There is thus a growing awareness of the prophetic task of the church. All these elements necessitate the church's redefining its position and emphasising and redefining its ecclesiological framework. An ecosystemic perspective to pastoral work is thus a call to look afresh at its ecclesiology and anthropology and to redefine it in terms of the broader society. An individualistic view of the church or the people in the church then becomes very difficult to defend.

(g) An ecosystemic perspective to pastoral work wants to emphasise that pastoral work is process-oriented. This means that single stage models of pastoral work are questioned. The community approach to pastoral work is deeply aware of the need to look for underlying patterns and the wider context of pastoral problems. Pastoral workers are often compelled to focus on what appear to be the most pressing problems. Sometimes (often?) appearances can be deceiving. What may apparently be the most pressing may not be the most significant problem. The urgency of some problems may prevent the pastoral worker from getting to the more fundamental and underlying issues of which the problem of the moment is only the symptom.

(h) Community pastoral work wants to emphasise the importance of relationships in an industrial world (post-industrial world?) where people become more aware of the need for quality relationships. Through systemic family therapy it becomes clear that relationships are of great importance. People and their relationships (communication) need attention in any pastoral work approach. Systems theory and family therapy emphasise the importance of the bigger systems with which the individual interacts. An ignorance of the broader systems involved in every careseeker's life can only point to a total unawareness of newer developments in the psychological and family therapy fields.

(i) Because it is care going out from the Christian community, the whole Christian community should be involved.⁷ It should include lay people.⁸ Although it is voluntarily based (care), it could include trained community members (pastoral care) and trained professionals from the community (pastors, psychologists and social workers).

7. "But the stress on relationship rather than knowledge forces us to ask whether any person may not be a pastor to another simply from the depths of his or her own humanity, and whether the male, clerical dominance of the field from the past up to the present time may not be still obscuring many of its richest resources" (Campbell 1981:10-11).

8. "Pastoral care, on the other hand, often has been seen as a ministry exclusive to the clergy. In the area of caregiving, lay people are often unrecognised, frequently unappreciated, and usually neglected. Yet they have an abundance of undeveloped resources for caring. Lay people are the greatest untapped potential of the church" (Detwiler-Zapp en Dixon 1982:6). Cf also De Jongh van Arkel (1988a:5).

6.1.1.1 The postmodern and narrative character

Holifield (1983) discusses the transformation of Protestant pastoral counselling in America. Holifield (1983:12,64) discovers a clear line of development⁹ from the ideal of otherworldly salvation and self-denial to one of self-love and self-realisation. There is a need to move beyond self-realisation and to understand that nobody lives on an island. For this world and for this earth to have a future will mean that people take responsibility for one another and for this world.¹⁰ This must also become clear in the pastoral work of the church. In a sense it is a call to pastoral work to move beyond the fragmentation and individualism of liberalism, existentialism¹¹ and modernity. It is not a call to move backwards again; it is in any case not possible to reconstruct traditional communities. It is necessary to put individualism in a new context where relationships become important again.

Community pastoral work is not an attempt to turn the clock back to the previous centuries and go back to pre-modern times. But there is a certain awareness of the importance of a holistic approach to the world and life. Community pastoral work emphasises the importance of a caring and therapeutic situation where culture and community structures receive some attention. At the same time a concept like *culture* may recall images of traditionalism and conservatism.

The ecosystemic paradigm provides us with a framework for the emerging postmodern culture (Fensham 1990:iii). Modern society is fragmented and has lost the sense of community, but even more than that, it is losing all track of realities like culture (Dueck 1987:247). The individualism of modernity is "afraid" that culture and structures will impose bonds on people which will be oppressive. It is also the influence of an existentialistic view where ritual, symbol [cf p 73] and tradition are seen as irrelevant also for the therapeutic process (Dueck 1987:250). We understand this type of individualism and the reasons for it quite well as Westerners because we grew up in this intellectual climate.

The postmodern culture which accepts plurality as given and moved beyond the rationalistic tendencies in Western thinking is much more in line with the ecosystemic metaparadigm proposed in this study. The postmodern spirit created a space in which an ecosystemic metaparadigm can function. Unfortunately, it often leaves people with a kind of postmodern nihilism. Pastoral work must go further than speculating about pastoral actions. Although pastoral workers who work with an ecosystemic perspective know that all

9. It is obvious that his study is linear in approach.

10. D Smit recently (1994b) wrote an article about the need for a theology of responsibility.

11. The problem is that existentialism as a theological approach totally privatises Christianity. It tends to ignore the historical role of doctrinal teachings and confessions which always have been central to Christian life (cf Mooney 1991:304).

actions are just temporary they should accept the paradoxical situation that even temporary actions from a certain perspective are also for real.

A community pastoral work approach thus functions within a postmodern framework, but is aware that the paradoxes of life need an *interface*¹² to make it develop further than the sceptical and nihilistic tendencies of certain postmodern approaches. A *fusion of the horizons* between the *reality* (whatever that may be) of people in need and the temporality of all actions is necessary.

Earlier in this study the researcher refers to Gerkin's opinion of the narrative character of pastoral work [cf p 23]. This narrative character is emphasized by several other practical theologians. The researcher wishes to suggest that for a community pastoral approach, this narrative character of pastoral work should be explored further as an interface.¹³ A connection between narrative and postmodernism can free us from dogmatism and scepticism, or inactivity and careless activities.¹⁴ It is not easy to describe what is meant by the term *narrative*.¹⁵ This is a debate on its own. The researcher believes that an ecosystemic approach could identify with the following description by Hauerwas and Burrell (1989:177-178):

There are many kinds of stories, and little agreement on how to separate them into kinds ... Experts will want to anatomize narrative as well, of course, but for our purpose let it be the connected description of action and of suffering which moves to a point. The point need not be detachable from the narrative itself; in fact, we think a story better that does not issue in a determinate *moral*. The 'point' we call attention to here has to do with that form of connectedness which characterizes a novel. It is not the mere material connection of happenings to one individual, but the connected unfolding that we call *plot*... we can nonetheless identify it as a connection among elements (actions, events, situations) which is neither one of logical consequence nor one of mere sequence. The connection seems rather designed to move our understanding of a situation forward by developing or unfolding it. We have described this movement as gathering to a point. Like implication, it seeks to make explicit what would otherwise remain implicit; unlike implication, the rules of development are not those of logic but stem from some more mysterious source. The rules of development are not logic rules because narrative connects contingent events... Narrative is not required to be explanatory, then, in the sense in which a scientific theory must show necessary connections among occurrences. What we demand of a narrative is that it displays how occurrences are actions.

12 . West (1985:449) proposes liberation as an interface for biblical scholars.

13 . "It is our belief, however, that attention to the narrative display of Christian convictions can and should help to avoid these uncritical apologetic moves that ultimately result in a vulgar relativism" (Hauerwas & Jones 1989:4).

14 . Vosloo and Smit (1995:585) cite for Hauerwas and Burrell who said: "Just as science strives to free the experiment from the experimenter, so ethically, if we are to avoid unchecked subjectivism or relativism, it is thought that the moral life must be freed from the peculiarities of agents caught in the limits of their particular theories".

15 . Cf Smit's (1990b:110-111) description of different understandings of narrative theology. The main question is if narrative theology is about story-telling or is it in itself story-telling. "Oor die algemeen kan 'n mens egter sê dat narratiewe teologie normaalweg as 'n teëpoel gestel word teenoor rasionele, logiese, tydlose, abstrakte, beginsel-denke" (Smit 1990b:110).

Campbell (1985:56) in his criticism on professionalism in pastoral care emphasises the importance of stories in pastoral care. Campbell (1985) accepts the need for and the value of professional help for people in distress. There is also a need for structured counselling because it may improve the quality of care. Campbell (1985:71) also argues for the need just to be with a person and to listen and to share a person's story; the type of action which is often too time consuming for the professional counsellor, but in which the church community can share. He (1985:56) is of the opinion that love can best be communicated not by theory, but by stories: "By sharing in another's story one is 'being with' rather than 'doing to'".

There is great simplicity in pastoral care that enables others to tell their stories. But it also demands a discipline. It is not a passive listening, but a creative participation in someone else's story, out of a genuine commitment to the other person. In stories the dialectic between the meaning of the part and the meaning of the whole emerges strongly. Every event in a story must be viewed contextually. The story of our lives is always related to the larger stories within which we see ourselves. Moreover the stories of other persons' lives disclose new possibilities for our own lives. Stories change our attitudes and actions (Hauerwas 1981). Christian ethics do not consist of applying principles in discrete moments of decision but in our ongoing patterns of response shaped by stories (Barbour 1990:72). Vision is embodied in stories rather than concepts or principles.

Barbour (1990:201) holds that stories give meaning to life. They offer people a way of understanding themselves and of organising their experience. Often stories relate to primeval times or the origins of the world or the source of human alienation, suffering and death. Stories help people respond to individual and social stress and crisis. According to Barbour (1990:202), stories aid "adaptation and social stability".

The role stories play in people's lives and in the way they deal with life cannot be isolated from the role of ritual and religious experience. These elements have been of human history from the earliest times (Barbour 1990:202). Stories often include cultural elements. Barbour (1990:202) refers to Karl Jaspers, who named the period from 800 BC to 200 BC the axial period. In that time all the major religions in the world developed - Confucius, Gautama the Buddha, Zoroaster, and the Hebrew prophets. Influential documents were written and Christianity and Islam were derived from Hebrew monotheism. Culture can acquire a different meaning if it is related in a narrative way rather than a dogmatic way.

The narrative element brings together the individual and the community. The person who tells his or her story is historically linked with millions of other people with similar experiences and stories. The religious story is also repeated through those who tell it to others to comfort them in their distress. The narrative element can help to bring a culturally diverse modern society together, when people start to listen to one another's stories. The narrative element leaves room for difference but can prevent us from ending in total nihilism. It is a move away from sure and exact facts without relativising everything to the point of no meaning. A community pastoral work approach that take cognisance of the postmodern times we live in should combine the narrative element with the postmodern element.

6.1.1.2 Paradoxicality

A community approach to pastoral work is, in essence, a holistic approach which looks beyond the individual to the whole universe and its interconnections. The importance of the idea of paradox was discussed earlier in this study [cf p 67]. Pursuit of paradoxicality means to look for the contradictions and also to accept the contradictions of life. Sometimes equally clear options which are exactly the opposite of each other are possible and should be developed further. Many problems are dialectical by nature and will necessarily yield many divergent rather than convergent options. An inability to think dialectically will cause us to create a one-sided and institutionalised approach to solutions. It is an approach where we accept that only one solution is possible. Social positivistic science has taught social scientists to search for one single solution. Given the nature of problems, there is often more than one option. The challenge is to continue to seek out the paradoxical. One particularly difficult field in theology is the theodicy question.

The theodicy question often crops up in discussions about pastoral work. This is understandable because pastoral work often includes caring for the terminally ill, the dying and people in severe distress. It is beyond the scope of this study to discuss the theodicy question in depth. In the light of the ecosystemic metaparadigm insistence where everything is interrelated some reference to the theodicy question may be necessary. Right from the beginning discussions about AIDS were afflicted with the question whether AIDS is God's wrath and judgement against sin.

Rudolf Siebert describes himself as a critical political theologian. He is in the critical school of Habermas, Horkheimer, Adorno and Benjamin and a follower of the communicative action theory of Habermas. Siebert (1984:8) is also critical of Habermas and prefers the way Helmut Peukert and Edmund Arens "break through the aporia of Jürgen Habermas's theory of communicative praxis...". Siebert promotes an open, universal and democratic society where the intersubjective and communicative action between people, society and creation would be a witness of the existence of the Other. Although Siebert never uses the term "ecosystemic", his theological approach is against the positivistic, individualistic and closed consumer society. In many ways his perspective comes close to what this study describes as ecosystemic.

Siebert (1994) is concerned with the theodicy question and the lack of proper thought about it in both the Protestant and Catholic traditions. He believes that the only way to understand it is to discuss it not only in a discursive but also in a narrative way.¹⁶ Siebert (1994) makes use of a narrative approach by telling his own life story. His wife was diagnosed with cancer and he tells how he and his wife wrestled with the theodicy question. One of the paradoxes was that they experienced "the absence of God in his presence; (and) the presence of God in his absence" (Siebert 1994:72). The God which Siebert discovers is different

16 . "Narrative and discursive theology are the two wings, on which alone a critical political theology can elevate itself beyond the world as mere structure of facts, and can touch upon the existential themes, that it has in common with critical theory: the longing for the totally Other, absolute justice, personal sovereignty, universal solidarity, non-possessive love, and the liquidation of death" (Siebert 1994:11).

from the God which modern society would like to sell to people, the powerful God who has the power to do anything that he pleases to do. Siebert (1994:111) puts it as follows:

Of course, religion is not allowed to be anthropomorphic, and to say, as e.g. Christianity does, that God himself has become a man, and even a poor man, and a victim, and has shamefully been executed on the cross. If God is weak enough, to have to succumb to death, he is not the "all-powerful", ageless God, whom religion claims to profess. It is more important, that God is powerful than that he is love.

For Siebert, at the time of the death of his wife, Margarel, it was important to hold like a good juggler to the paradoxes of God's presence and his absence: to rejoice in Psalm 46 and Psalm 73, to question God's absence and to accept His presence. Siebert (1994:412) says "In any case, the one who survives must forget nothing: neither the most cruel abandonment, nor the faithful, hopeful, and loving trust in God's providence, held on to by the innocent victim, in spite of no divine countermovement, whatsoever".

According to Siebert (1994:412), faith remains inseparable from doubt. For Siebert, repressed doubt distorts faith and leads to an authoritarian personality, and to a military-industrial society with monopoly and individualism at its centre. On the contrary, faith which preserves doubt strengthens the democratic personality with aspirations of personal sovereignty and universal solidarity and with an orientation to the future of the "unlimited communication community beyond the boundaries of particular groupings - races, nations, genders, age groups, social classes ..." (Siebert 1994:413).

Siebert (1994) did not look for a specific answer to the theodicy problem. His own experience of suffering helps him to reflect on the theodicy issue in a rather paradoxical way: as a sufferer, but also as a theologian and philosopher; as a believer in the Other and the Transcendence but also as a modern being who believes in modern medicine and treatment. In a way, that reminds the researcher of the second-order cybernetics found in family therapy, Siebert (1994:420) explains how he holds together the "Divinity as negation of negations, desire of desires, denial of denials, as well as longing of longing, and love of love".

Siebert (1994) believes that an open view to the future and eternity is necessary for anyone who wrestles with the theodicy. The theodicy should not be understood in an individualistic sense, but always in a universal sense. Who suffers, suffers with millions of others in the present, but also in history. Suffering in a dialectic and circular way calls on God to be present, but also calls on humankind to take responsibility for the injustices of this world. God's presence and his absence must be acknowledged in suffering. To Siebert's understanding, God does not become the source of suffering, God is also not the "wonder worker" in suffering, but God is also not absent in suffering.

Siebert's paradoxical approach to important questions in his life could be an important tool for the pastoral worker and could help the pastoral worker to look at life and its enigmas from an ecosystemic and thus interrelated perspective. In a crisis we tend to separate things to make them easier to understand. The action of breaking issues up into small units often leads us to lose sight of the bigger picture and the interrelatedness of all things. God, cancer, I and the universe become separate entities. Siebert tries to look at his own situation from a global perspective. His wife's suffering of cancer becomes part of the suffering

of many other people in an unjust and cruel world.

There are people who would criticise such an approach. Van Niekerk and Van Aarde (1991), for example, accuse the supporters of a new paradigm (people who are part of the holistic and post-modern movement) of pantheism. Although an ecosystemic approach is against a dualistic view of the cosmos and supports an interrelated view of creation, it does not mean that everything is the same. The relational nature of our relation with God and creation does not make human beings, God and creation to be the same.

The question to the Western world-view is whether Jesus' healing and other miracles are normal or exceptional. In a more primal world-view people are the victims of the divine. An ecosystemic and holistic world-view does not organise the universe around the seen or unseen, the physical or spiritual, sacred or secular. In a paradoxical way God is part of creation like in the primal world-view, but there is also a clear distinction between God (creator) and creation (angels, humans, animals, plants, matter). Created elements - seen or unseen - are mortal and fallen. They exist apart from the Creator. God is working redemptively through the entire creation - Colossians 1:15-20 (Bradshaw 1993:34). God sustains and redeems the seen and the unseen elements of creation. God became part of creation when he sent his son to die on the cross.

Biblical holism regards many human activities as part of God's reconciling work in creation. God's role in creation in general and through particular action is normal, on the one hand but also miraculous. Death, for example, is also paradoxical. The Greek way of looking at death was as something positive, because through death the soul was released from its cage. The way Jesus saw death was different. Jesus did not portray death serenely. Jesus anguished over his death. He anticipated that the resurrection would eventually overcome death. The resurrection brings new life, not death, yet at the same time death is necessary to start a new life.

An acceptance of the paradoxes in life and also in our faith may release a lot of tension in pastoral workers. The insistence of modern scientific society to be so-called "reasonable in our faith" has put a lot of strain on pastoral workers, especially in situations of life and death. The choice is often made out to be between reason and irrationality. The complexities of real life are often ignored. A community approach to pastoral work, done from an ecosystemic perspective, could help to move beyond the individualistic question of "false" or "true". Life and the problems of life are part of a much bigger picture.

The AIDS crisis which faces the world and South Africa emphasises questions regarding life and death, because so many people will die at a very early age. It also will raise more and more questions about God and the mercy of God, specifically as more and more babies will die in the years to come from Paediatric AIDS, and more and more parents will die leaving their children as orphans. Pastoral workers will have to face this challenge.

6.1.1.3 Environmental sensitivity

We are in fact encountering a major shift (paradigm shift in Kuhn's terms) in science. We are probably moving through one of the most radical shifts in the history of

science. Wittingly or unwittingly our world view is changing from a mechanistic to a holistic world view. In short, both epistemologically and ontologically we are going through a change of what we perceive as reality. This, amongst other things, explains the current interest of theologians in matters such as ecology (Vorster 1987:preface).

Post-colonial development is seen as primarily aimed at human upliftment and progress. In all this one misses a holistic theological concern for the *liberation of creation*, for the church's task of earthkeeping (Daneel 1991:99).

How does caring for people relate to environmental issues? W S Vorster (1987) edited a book entitled *Are we killing God's earth?* From a pastoral work perspective it could be asked : Do we care for Gods earth?¹⁷ Loader (1991:53) writes (in a missionary context) that "the first missionary commission is the *mandatum dominii terrae* in Genesis 1:28, the assignment to care for the world". Conradie (1993:55) makes it clear that the environmental crisis has, on the one hand, led to the belief that Christianity could and should make a contribution towards a more adequate relationship between human beings and the environment. On the other hand, it "has also led to a critical reassessment of some core elements of the Christian faith" (Conradie 1993:55). A community pastoral work approach is more than just caring for people, it should also be part of this critical reflection about the environment.

Today's environmental crisis¹⁸ started to develop between 1500 and 1700.¹⁹ The mechanistic world-view which replaced the organic conception of the cosmos, forms the basis of today's environmental crisis because it reinforced and accelerated the exploitation of nature. In the dualistic attitude of the mechanistic model, human beings and nature are seen as opposite parties.

According to Bradslaw (1993:104), research has shown that people who attend church have a lower view of non-human life and the environment than those who do not attend church. Kritzinger (1991:5-8) refers to several authors who blame the Western world-view, which is closely connected to Christianity, for the devastation of this planet. Kritzinger (1991:8) summarises it by saying "All this is true. The roots of our

17 . The researcher prefers not to refer to "God's earth" because it is also our earth and we should take responsibility for it. "God's earth" may emphasise the wrongly held idea that God must look after this earth and that we are only visitors on this earth.

18 . "Ecology is the study of life-forms in their mutual relationships and in relation to the non-living aspects of their environment. It is thus the study of *relationships* and of the interrelatedness of the living (or biotic) aspect of nature and its non-living (or abiotic) aspects.... Ecology is also the study of the interrelationship of living organisms among themselves, that is, of the impact of plant communities, determined as they are by abiotic elements, on animal life and vice versa. This includes a study of the impact of the most successful predator mammal, *homo sapiens*, on the environment, that is, on its non-living though life-sustaining natural resources and also the effect of *homo sapiens* on the living species sharing the environment with humankind. Precisely because the human species has been so 'successful' it has placed such pressure on the environment that it has caused what is now commonly called the 'ecological crisis'. This is not so much an ecological crisis as an environmental crisis *described by ecology*" (Loader 1991:45).

19 . "... aangesien die mens se kosmologiese betragting tot ongeveer die vyftiende, sestiende eeu primêr in 'n organiese beskouing gesetel was, [kon] hy hom nie noemenswaardig van die natuur gedistansieer het nie ... Die Renaissance het egter 'n omwenteling in die verband teweeggebring ..." (Erasmus 1990:1).

present ecological crisis indeed lie in the philosophical and religious principles, beliefs and attitudes which undergird Western industrial society. This realisation has confronted Christian theology with an unavoidable challenge to rethink its roots and fruits".

For many the earth is disconnected from spiritual redemption and becomes an object that God created primarily for humanity to exploit. Only the spiritual is worth saving and matter contributes nothing essential to the process of salvation. This Cartesian dualism is deeply entrenched even in modern theological thinking.²⁰ Newton (1642-1727) believes that the universe functions like a giant clock (McDonagh 1990:112). God is the omnipotent and transcendent clock-maker, but once he finished his work he wound up the clock and more or less abandoned the universe. He is living in his own perfection, outside the universe and not touched by what is happening in creation. Hulley (1991:140-141) refers to the objectivation tendency in modern society. People and the environment are objectified, that is why people's lives have become so cheap and also the environment (1991:141).²¹

Attempts to place human beings outside the web of life, that links together all the creatures of the earth, are grounded in Cartesian thinking where a dichotomy between spirit and matter exists (cf McDonagh 1990:48).²² In this view humans are seen as superior to every other creature and not organically linked with the rest of creation. This is the prevailing view in the Western world with its reductionistic scientific and technological world-view. The world is viewed as a lifeless machine. This reductionistic scientific view has contributed enormously to the devastation of many vital ecosystems of the earth. From an ecosystemic perspective, human beings are an integral part of the whole intricate interdependent web of relationships that make up creation.

The idea that human beings are an integral part of creation is implied in the story of the creation (cf Hulley 1991:139-140). Although humanity shares a common origin with nature, human beings have a certain uniqueness (Robinson 1991:149). Loader (1987:24) makes it clear that the special place of the human being in nature should not be denied. This does not negate the fact that there is a bond between Adam (earthman) and *adama* (earth). Emphasis on God's active involvement in creation should realise that this is also a paradox, because while God and creation cannot be put against each other, there is also a

20 . Kitzinger (1991:13) says that signs of this dualism are even visible in the work of modern theologians like Heim, Gogarten, Barth, Moltmann and Altner.

21 . Hulley (1991:141) connects it to attitudes of insurance companies towards HIV positive people.

22 . McDonagh (1990:48) cites James Schall as an example that some people do not understand this interrelatedness between humans and the rest of creation. Schall writes that "there is no reason to suppose that man is at all ultimately dependent on plant and animal life. Space technology already has pioneered ways to bypass many of these natural systems, or imitate them in man-made environments. In the last analysis, plants and animals may be destined for our enjoyment and pleasure, not for our survival by consumption".

transcendent dimension to this relationship. Creation as we know it is not final but awaits a new creation (Kritzinger 1991:15), promised by the God who is present and transcendent.

A community approach to pastoral work should be sensitive to the whole of creation. Implicit in ecosystemic thinking is the conscious notion that human beings do not live on their own, but are part of a bigger creation. Olivier (1987:106) says that within "a holistic perspective we thus come to see the Christian faith and its views on reality as part of a system of views of reality influencing life on a global scale". Olivier (1987) works very strongly with a holistic view of reality. He believes that a holistic view of reality can be found in the Bible in the "interplay" between the two concepts *image of God* and *God's rest on the seventh day* (Olivier 1987:111). Olivier is of the opinion that humanity's relationship with non-human reality is influenced by the concept *image of God*. Non-human reality exists as a sphere in which humans give expression to their relationship with God and with other humans. This concept "image of God" gives expression to the relationship between humanity and God. It covers the individual's entire life - the whole individual in all of his/ her living. Every facet of human existence is claimed by this relationship, it thus cuts into the fibre of every aspect of life. "It is truly a holistic concept in which each facet of human existence, in its interrelatedness and interdependence with others, is of importance ..." (Olivier 1987:110).

The concept of *God's rest* can be found throughout the Bible (Gn 2:2; Heb 3:17-4:11; Ps 95:11). It is symbolic of completion and perfection as the number 7 in Genesis shows. It is a rest not only for humans but also for creation as the Sabbatical Year and the Jubilee Year confirms. It refers to wholeness and completion and perfection and blessings. "It fulfils a cosmological rather than an anthropological function ... it serves to explain ... how God felt about his creation: He regards it as complete and perfect, and to acknowledge it - God stopped".²³ Olivier (1987:115) says that

it implies that human beings, in their relationships with one another, as well as with non-human reality are called upon in their cultural activity, to so integrate and interact within the greater whole of existence that the greatest possible harmony between all facets of reality can be realised, in anticipation of the day when God will be 'all in all'.

Many theologians give some attention to environment issues (cf Vorster et al 1987; Moltmann 1989b; König 1982b).²⁴ If caring is the essence of pastoral work, it seems inevitable that pastoral workers should also ask themselves about caring for the environment. How can we connect the environment to pastoral work? From an ecosystemic perspective of interrelatedness many pastoral problems could be traced back to economic problems. Solving environment problems is like solving hunger problems (Bradshaw 1993:107).²⁵ The Enlightenment's dictum that growth means success and wealth has depleted the earth of

23. Cited by Olivier (1989:113) from Bacchiocchi, S 1980. *Divine rest from human restlessness*.

24. Cf Conradie (1993:52-104) and (1995a&b:27-64) for an extensive bibliography on Christian theology and ecology. Cf also his latest book (1996). *Rus vir die hele aarde*. Cape Town: Lux Verbi.

25. Cf the first chapter of McDonagh's book (1990:9-37) "International debt is killing the poor and the earth itself".

many of its essentials, which again, leads to economic hardship for many people. Conradie (1993:54) refers to the situation that very little of the literature about the environment, from a Christian perspective, ever takes the economic realities of a modern industrial economy into account.

Community pastoral work, more than individualistic pastoral work, could help to make people aware of the symbiotic relationship between people and their environment. People could be taught that just as they need one another for support and for emotional and physical survival, they also need the rest of creation for survival. It could be part of an ecosystemic pastoral work perspective to develop liturgies woven around tree-planting and harvest festivals. It could help to raise a consciousness about what is happening in the environment. Tree nurseries could even be established on church properties.

The pastoral worker who is also involved with poverty and unemployed people will sometimes find it very difficult to look beyond the visible cycle of unemployment visible and to ask how that relates to bigger economic and also environment issues. A prophetic stance from the side of the church community (including pastoral workers) will sometimes be necessary because many governments and multinational companies are only interested in short-term gains. The impact of projects on the environment is often ignored in favour of short-term profits and, for example, job creation. It is also important to realise that it is the poorer communities who usually experience the most ecological problems surrounding water and air pollution and so on, problems that they do not necessarily cause (Conradie 1993:54).²⁶

Robinson (1991:148), rightly so, says that the ecological crisis takes place in both mechanistic and organicist societies because of exploitation or ignorance and neglect. The key to this paradox can be found in Africa, for example, in the population growth since the outset of the colonial era.²⁷ The causes for the population growth can be related to modern technology and science through insecticides and antibiotics.²⁸ Kritzinger (1991:4) refers to Timberlake (1985), who says that before development programmes started in Africa, Africa was self-sufficient as far as food is concerned. With development, a Western paradigm of thinking was introduced and with it new technology. The organicist societies are not in a position to resist the economic pressures of the mechanistic societies (cf Nümberger 1994). The Enlightenment has fostered a deeply ingrained faith in progress and continuing material prosperity and an ability of science and technology to satisfy this consumption-oriented way of life. Traditional communities are often in a catch 22 situation between their traditional interaction with the environment and modern society's pressure to understand the environment as unrelated to daily life.

26 . Cf Kandusi (1991:56) who says about environmental affairs that "these concerns are evidently subscribed to by Third World theologies. Moreover, Third World theologies know that those who suffer most because of the disintegration (of the environment - F N) are the poor and oppressed".

27 . (Cf Bell 1987 in Anderson & Grove (eds), *Conservation in Africa*, as cited by Kritzinger 1991:5 note 1).

28 . Birch 1988. The scientific-environmental crisis, in *The Ecumenical Review*, 40(2): 185-193, as cited by Kritzinger 1991:5.

That is why empowerment is necessary. Traditional communities should be empowered to work out their own future in terms of their world-view, which is often much more holistic than the world-view of the Enlightenment brought by missionaries and developers (with very good intentions?). An ecosystemic world-view can help pastoral workers to develop a further sensitivity to the environment and also towards traditional communities where a holistic approach to life is often nurtured.

It is important that empowerment never replace exploitation as a new form of exploitation. Therefore empowerment should always be understood in the context of responsibility or stewardship (cf Hulley 1991:140; Robinson 1991:149). Stewardship is people's first responsibility. Stewardship should be the central element in a theology of responsibility. People should be empowered to be stewards of the whole of the universe. Loader (1991:54-55) shows how the writers of the Old Testament described creation as wonder, amazement and adoration. This element of wonder leads to the motif of responsibility (Loader 1991:55).²⁹

Environmental issues should not be seen in isolation. The well-being of humanity is inseparably linked with that of all life on earth. This became specifically clear in the World Council of Churches (WCC) programme, known as the Justice, Peace and Integrity of all Creation (JPIC) process. Olivier (1991:20) responds as follows to the programme:

In my opinion the WCC's focus on justice, peace and the integrity of creation as interdependent and interrelated issues in this crisis not only represents us with specific and apt approach to a complex problem but also touches the very nerve of the crisis facing us: our lack of a truly holistic concern for, and approach to, life on earth.

The pastoral work of the church should follow a holistic approach to life. Life as a network of interrelationships should form the basis of pastoral work. That would include a ministry of ecology. A community approach should thus also be directed to the environment. Care for people should include care for the world (cf Graham 1992) and for the universe. Community pastoral work with renewed emphasis on the Christian community's role in pastoral care could play an important role in this respect. Church communities could be motivated and activated to be environmentally sensitive and to run projects in their geographical community to make people more aware of the environment.³⁰

Congregations and individuals can also network with environmental groups in this respect. This is one field where people of Christian faith and other religious groups can work together. Loader (1991:54) reminds us that there is a deep spiritual dimension to nature. The more the interrelatedness of nature is discovered, the less we can dispense with God, "since the more we have to marvel at" (Loader 1991:54). Moltmann

29. "In fact, the psalm of wonder, Psalm 8, and its prose counterpart in Genesis 1 bring about exactly that when they link the sense of wonder to the responsibility of the human viceroy" (Loader 1991:55).

30. The church community to which the researcher belongs has been running a recycling project for the last five years, in which non-church members have also taken part. The same church community has a tree planting ceremony on the first Sunday in September every year. For the last two years trees have been planted in the community.

(1989b:66-69) believes that Christ's reconciliation includes reconciliation with nature: "Cosmic reconciliation is the restoration of justice in the cosmos" (Moltmann 1989b:67).

The quantitative study undertaken by the researcher had four statements which deal directly with environmental issues; two (Q14 and Q43) about the church and the environment and two (Q56 and Q71) about pastoral work and the environment. The responses to the statements are interesting. The respondents answered as follows:

		FULLY AGREE	AGREE SOME= WHAT	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	DISAGREE SOME= WHAT	TOTALLY DISAGREE
14	We should demonstrate concern in the church about the depletion of the ozone layer in the atmosphere.	56.7	22.5	13.7	4.9	2.0
43	Recycling programmes (e.g. paper and glass) should not be part of the church's activities.	45.1	17.6	15.7	11.8	9.8
56	Organizing the recycling of paper and tins may be part of a pastoral worker's task.	25	34.3	13	11.1	16.7
71	The place to discuss environmental issues is the ethics class and not the pastoral care class.	32.7	28	10.3	18.7	10.3

There is a clear discrepancy in the way the respondents answered statements 14 and 43. The overwhelming majority (79.2%) responded positively to statement 14 and a clear majority (62.7%) responded positively to statement 43, which is the opposite of statement 14. It might be that the negative in statement 43 was overlooked and that respondents actually thought that they were supporting recycling and not the opposite. It might be that respondents feel that a global issue (ozone layer) should be addressed by the church, but a more domestic issue is not the task of the church (although the recycling of paper and other materials could also be viewed as global issues).

It is very interesting that these two statements (14 and 43) scored the highest "neither agree nor disagree" percentage of all the statements in the questionnaire. This may be an indication of the high level of uncertainty that respondents experience with these statements. Again these statements were answered very inconsistently. Almost as many people (59.3%) answered that the pastoral worker should be involved in environmental actions as those (60.7%) who believe that environmental issues should rather be dealt with as part of ethics than a pastoral care issue. Again the "neither agree nor disagree" scored the highest percentage of all the statements about pastoral work, which indicates an uncertainty from the pastoral workers' side.

Because of the discrepancy in responses, it is difficult to say whether the population who filled in the questionnaire connect environmental issues with pastoral work.

6.1.1.4 Community orientated

In modern societies our disciplines of care and counseling have become increasingly specialized and separated from one another" (Browning 1983b:11).

It was mentioned earlier that we are living in a modern and pluralistic society. This, together with the

tendency since the Enlightenment towards reductionistic and atomistic thinking, influences the pastoral care and counselling in the Western world towards individualism, specialisation and a Cartesian approach. This is visible, for example, in the absolute separateness between fields like religion and science and between subjects in the social sciences (cf Browning 1983b:13).

Specialisation brought many benefits to society. Unfortunately, though, over the years it also bred a culture of non-involvement. Many people simply do not see themselves capable and qualified enough to care for those in need. People wait for the specialists to do the caring. Not only as far as others are concerned, but also in people's own personal lives a certain apathy has developed. This apathy together with the medical model of classifying all illness into a category have caused many people to refrain from trying to solve their own problems, conflict, stress and emotional discomfort. People have started to look to specialists to solve their problems for them.

Interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary forms of working together between the different disciplines became obscured. Co-operation is often minimised to an absolute minimum. This is also due to the financial implications involved for the different disciplines.

This study proposes a community pastoral work approach. A community pastoral work pattern should be understood in terms of the ecosystemic metaparadigm (chapter 2) that this study proposes. A community approach refers in essence to a non-individualistic, non-reductionistic and non-dualistic (or non-Cartesian) approach to pastoral work. Community pastoral work (care actions going out from the church community) implies a non-dualistic view of the relationship between the church and society (chapter 3).

(a) Community pastoral work is systems orientated:

A community approach is not against therapy and counselling, but against therapy being applied in isolation. Family therapy done from a systemic perspective is thus helpful. Van den Blink³¹ (1984:82) explains the importance of systemic thinking as follows:

De in de gezinstherapie gehuldigde idee van het systeem, volgens welk de verschillende gezinsleden niet worden beschouwd als op zichzelf staande individuen, maar als een groep van mensen die in dynamische interactie staan en zekere balans zoeken, is natuurlijk niet alleen toepaselijk op pastorale gezinscounselen, maar op allerlei soorten pastorale zorg die betrekking hebben op verschillende systemen en subsystemen, inclusief de plaatselijke kerk als geheel. De ervaring in de gezinstherapie maakt steeds weer duidelijk dat men een kostbare prijs betaalt als men geen oog heeft voor de dynamiek van een systeem, of het nu gaat over een gezin of over de kerkeraad" (Van den Blink 1984:82).

Wood and Stroup (1990) discuss the importance of a systemic approach to premarital counselling. What makes it so important for pastoral work is the fact that much of premarital counselling is done by pastors. Premarital counselling may also be the beginning of a relationship between the counsellor and the couple which may last for a long time if the couple stay in the specific church for several years to come. Again, a

31 . He calls himself a "pastoraal-theoloog" (pastoral theologian).

community pastoral work approach would help to interconnect for example premarital counselling with the congregation and perhaps with other pastoral needs the couple may have later on. Often something like premarital counselling is seen as something completely separate from the rest of a pastoral worker's work. An ecosystemic view could encourage an awareness of the importance to link all these activities.

From an ecosystemic perspective it is actually a very small step to move from the family as a system to the congregation as a system. Community pastoral work is thus an extension of family therapy to include the congregational situation (cf Cosgrove & Hatfield 1994). Lee (1988) goes even further and makes a leap from families to congregation to larger social organisations. For Lee it is important that the "ecology of ministry" be understood. The congregation itself is comprised of a diversity of families. The congregation as a social organisation is a "family of families" and will have a typical design. But it is possible to go one step further and apply the family concept to more comprehensive social organisations like the community, for instance (Lee 1988:33). Lee (1988:32-35) uses different typologies for families, namely open families, closed families and random type families, and apply them as possible typologies for congregations or communities.

Pastoral work with individuals or families takes place within a wider system. The congregation as such is also a system as well as the community. Although it is not possible to claim that everything from systems family therapy can be applied to other systems like congregations or communities, it seems like an avenue which could be developed further by pastoral workers. The interrelatedness of all systems, which is a very basic principle in systemic thinking, could be used by pastoral workers when attending to pastoral problems. The AIDS issue is a good example. Pastoral care to the individual who is HIV-positive should not take place in isolation. Every individual is connected to other systems like a family and friends as well as to other communities of people like people at work, people who take part in the same recreational activities, other HIV-positive people and so on.

b) Community pastoral work refers to an interrelated ministry:

The church community is sociologically part of society although it has lost its dominant position in modern society. The people who make up the church are also part of society. The idea of the church as something separate and on its own is not a sign of devout spiritualism, but of Cartesian and reductionist thinking. The pastoral work activities constructed from the church can often not be isolated from other actions of care in society. Care for one's neighbour should permeate all levels of life: personal, vocational, family, church, social relationships (Brister 1964:32).

This interrelatedness is not only between the church community and the rest of society, but also between different Christian traditions and between different religions. The comprehensiveness and cohesiveness of Christ's ministry challenges the partial concerns of many churches and congregations. Divisions within the church between the pastoral and diaconal tasks of the church could be a sign of atomistic thinking. The

different actions³² of the church should move closer to a unity perspective, where preaching, diakonia, care, instruction and development³³ move closer to one another.

Take an HIV-positive person as example again. The caring should be at all levels: emotional, spiritual and physical (to make the traditional distinction). Pastoral care and diaconal care should be interrelated. The church community and the medical community should interact. The so-called profane and spiritual spheres should interrelate.

Another way to describe this interrelatedness is by the term *holism*. Community pastoral work should be a holistic ministry. Bradshaw (1993:16-18) makes a distinction between holistic and comprehensive ministry. He believes that a comprehensive ministry still works with a dichotomy between the spiritual and the physical aspects, but tries to incorporate both. A holistic approach does not make such a distinction. Therefore the whole person with all his/her dimensions should be the object of care.

The underlying interaction between anthropology and ecclesiology should make community pastoral work aware of dehumanising activities like sexism, racism and injustice (economically and socially). An interrelated pastoral approach should develop a sensitivity to the above-mentioned and should also be aware of the connection between an individualistic anthropology and dehumanising activities.

(c) It is a relational-system approach:

In terms of an ecosystemic approach all systems including the earth and the universe are seen as living systems in relation to one another. The focus is on relationships. Community pastoral work refers to a process of interaction between the individual and the community. In individualistic counselling the pastoral work focuses mainly on personality traits and success is viewed as the remedying or accommodating of ability deficits or personal disorders. Community pastoral work views how people fit into social systems

32 . "In the church, each aspect of ministry - preaching, evangelism, administration, and education - is to be viewed *pastoral*" (Brister 1964:32).

33 . Many churches in Third World countries are involved in development projects as part of their diaconal task. Many missionaries in the nineteenth century were involved in building schools and hospitals. In South Africa many churches will become involved in the RDP. A dualistic approach will bring tension between development and evangelism in the church (Bradshaw 1993; Steward 1990). Mpumlwana (1994:66) describes development as "love beyond charity and welfare".

non-verbally and contextually. Counselling consists of assisting the careseeker to link up with others in relationships³⁴ which would assist in connecting the person to larger societal systems.

A community pastoral work pattern may be particularly appropriate for pastoral workers. Pastoral workers are often part of the communities they serve and the people who visit the pastoral worker are often part of the same church, geographical or spiritual community in which the pastoral worker serves. The pastoral worker (minister of religion or lay worker) may have a distinct advantage over the psychologist or community psychologist in this regard. On many instances pastoral workers may have a better understanding of how relationships in the community function.

It is so that the so-called traditional nuclear family of mother, father and children might be the ideal, but in pastoral ministry the pastoral worker must come to grips with a diversity of families, like divorced or remarried couples, those who have never been married and intend to remain single, those who choose childlessness as a voluntary state, dual-career families and single-parent households. Seen from a systemic perspective, the family is viewed as a relational unit interacting with and adapting to its social environment (Lee 1988:28). This means that the family is not a system on its own. Those who are not part of a traditional family system could be part of another system which could function as a relational system.

(d) Community pastoral work is contextual:

It goes without saying that community pastoral work is contextual. Pastoral work cannot be extricated from the fabric of relationships, processes and ideologies which provide the matrix of all support or (religious) change. It is possible to speak of a macrocontext,³⁵ a mesocontext and a microcontext. Different factors involved in pastoral work, like cultural, social, personal and religious factors, could carry different values or weights according to the particular situation. In some instances, the social mechanisms of group control may be so effective that they overshadow the influences of culture, person and religion. In other situations, the religious sphere is the dominant force and thus overshadows the others. In community pastoral work all these dimensions should be given serious consideration and the pastoral worker must be aware of the

34. Cottone (1988:362-363) understands relationship also in terms of a person's relation to his/ her genetic pools and as a relation between a person's physical-neurological system and social system. For Cottone (1988:362-363) it means:

... for instance, that when a counselor interprets an intelligence test, he or she is not interpreting 'intelligence' as an entity. Instead the counselor is interpreting the degree of engagement between a client in relationship to the social and linguistic tradition of those who developed, marketed, sold, and administered the intelligence test. ... Accordingly, an individual represents a link between genetic pools (systems of relationships) and the social/ linguistic tradition of his or her cultural and social system. We are born of relationship, nurtured in relationship, and educated in relationship.

35. A macrocontext includes world environment; political systems; ecological factors; economic systems and transnational factors. Mesocontext includes those aspects which mediate between the macro- and microcontexts, like local government, regional politics and economics. Microcontext focus on the more personal world such as family, friendship, vocation and other aspects of a person's life that have a direct impact on the person's thoughts, feelings and actions (cf Rambo 1989:53).

relevance and potency of each domain. It is important for pastoral workers to be aware of the context because it will also help them to understand and identify the underlying patterns.

I had been increasingly aware that pastoral counseling as a ministry to individuals, marriages, and families was incomplete in itself because the social and cultural context within which these individuals, marriages, and families were living was also contributing to their problems. Pastoral care would not be balanced until it also included in its ministry this larger environment (Hulme 1973:7).

(e) Community pastoral work is communication orientated:

Because of the interrelatedness of community pastoral work, it should emphasise communication. The context provides the avenues of communication in pastoral work. Communication creates "communio" (community) (Blom 1981:260). Blom (1981) makes a very important point when he refers to the need for metacommunication in pastoral work. Metacommunication is communication about communication. He makes use of Watzlawick's idea that there are behind communication other patterns (of communication) that influence communication.

These patterns are often formed in the family as a system where children learn certain ways of communicating to ensure the family survival. These patterns may also be learned in other systems, like the school, church or community, in which a person lives. What is necessary for such a pattern to emerge normally is a close relationship of dependence. Many religious people have such a relationship with the church, for instance.

It is often necessary for the pastor to help families to change harmful patterns. This could take "forceful effort" (Blom 1981:261). Community pastoral work should emphasise that not only the pastoral worker's involvement is important, but the whole church community should intervene to change patterns where they are clearly harmful to real communication in the family. The church community should also help prevent the creation of such harmful patterns within in the atmosphere of the church. These patterns, sometimes based on myths, have as their purpose the survival of the system (family) but in the process the individual, who learns to live with these myths, is harmed. The church may also be a culprit in creating such harmful patterns. In terms of AIDS, harmful myths about sexual issues and sexual orientation may be created within the church community.

Bruwer (1994a), who is involved in the development actions of the church, describes the importance of listening before action is taken as part of the bottom-up process. Listening is important for good communication. The problem with professionals are that because of their training, they often are unaware that their knowledge does not connect with the needs of the very people they want to reach. True communication will include the ability to listen.

6.1.1.5 Prophetic care

An important aspect of a community approach to pastoral work is to emphasise the prophetic character of care. Earlier this study referred to the prophetic dimension of the church [cf p 171]. The caring and

prophetic dimensions of pastoral work are not in opposition to each other, but complementary.

The prophetic dimension of pastoral work is a vast topic, which could make out a study in itself. Hulme (1973), Gerkin (1991) and others have already explored it in more detail. The interplay between the individual and society and the church and society gives rise to an interrelated ecclesiology where the church (i.e. the people who form the church) is influenced by society, but can also play a role in influencing society, even though the church is no longer the centre of society. Prophetic care should materialise where injustices and discrimination become evident.

Prophetic care can take on many different forms. Campbell (1985:17-18) cites a totally different situation, when he tells the story of a hospital pastor who acted prophetically. An elderly woman did not want to undergo an operation, but agreed to it at the urging of her doctor and son. After the operation she did not regain consciousness and was placed on a life-support system. Her condition neither improved nor deteriorated. The hospital pastor, who was well aware that she had only agreed to the operation to please the doctor and her son, felt that she was holding on to life out of a sense of duty. In one of his visits to the unconscious woman he told her that it was all acceptable for her to die if she wished. Shortly afterwards she died. Campbell (1985) sees this as a prophetic action of the pastor to, in a sense, challenge the modern hospital setting where everybody try their best to keep a person alive and refuse to accept that dying with dignity may be the best option for some people. As Campbell (1985:18) says, "... a humane medicine also knows when to let people die, but frequently the prophetic voice of independent pastoral care is needed to save medicine from an enslavement to its own technology".

From an ecosystemic perspective it is difficult to agree with the phrase "independent pastoral care", because it is actually the interdependence between pastoral work and the work of health workers that should be emphasized in a case like this. But the crux of the matter is significant, namely that the prophetic task of pastoral workers has many dimensions and should be heard in many fields, not because it is such an independent voice, but a voice that takes cognisance of the fact that human activities are interconnected and that there are interactions between all aspects of humanity, also between life and death as in the above-mentioned example.

Reflecting on the prophetic dimension of pastoral work also means contemplating the influence of pastoral work on a society where the church does not occupy the dominant position. The prophetic dimension is therefore also visible where the church or individual, through pastoral actions, make people aware of certain issues.

6.1.1.5.1 Conscientisation and sensitisation

Conscientisation or awareness-raising is "an awakening of consciousness", a change of mentality. The church community can play an important role and should see it as part of their pastoral work to conscientise people. Becoming aware that one is living according to forces outside of one's choices, occurs through a change in consciousness (Lazarus 1983:54). The church community must conscientise people about certain values. In the process the rest of the community and, hopefully, also a part of society will be

reached. This is also the implications of a critical theology [cf p 20].

Brueggemann (1978:13), an Old Testament scholar, believes that the prophetic task of the church is to conscientise people. The church community (and the pastoral work of the church) has a nurturing and criticising task in dismantling the dominant conscience. An ecosystemic way of thinking is in opposition to the Cartesian-Newtonian approach of the Enlightenment at many points and is, thus in itself a challenge to society's dominant conscience.

One way of conscientisation and sensitisation is through the church as a *learning community* (cf Heitink 1993:268-269).³⁶ The church community must by example and actions teach people. Hendriks and Stoppels (1986) came up with a "learning model" for practical theology as part of the church community's prophetic task. The idea is not a fixed model but rather a holistic approach directed at the whole person. Hendrik and Stoppels (1986:98) put it as follows:

Tamelijk recent wordt in verschillende contexten - bedrijfsleven, kerken, emancipatiebewegingen - de nadruk gelegd op het leren als weg om tot verandering te komen en problemen op te lossen. Bij 'leren' moeten we niet denken aan allerlei schoolse vormen, maar aan groei, ontwikkeling die òn de hele persoon (denken, voelen, willen) òn de organisatie raakt.

The "learning model" they suggest is an all-encompassing model and includes the whole person in all his/her relations (cf Hendriks & Stoppels 1986:98-105). Hendriks & Stoppels (1986:77) write about the intention of pastoral work and say that the church should not become an "educational body", but the place where people are challenged: "Daarvoor is vooral ook van belang dat zij de gemeente aan het denken zet, d.w.z. vragen stelt die uitdagen om de situatie waarin kerk en samenleving verkeren te vergelijken met de bedoeling van de Heer met zijn schepping".

Carrick (1991:42) reminds us that the "end-product of all education lies in making conscious and calculated changes in relationships and relatedness between people and creatures of every description, from atoms to whales". Carrick (1991:42) believes that such relationships could promote a holistic outlook.

This study suggests that the church community should conscientise and sensitise people towards an integrated ecclesiology and anthropology. This means that community pastoral work does not stop at active involvement in a certain action, but involves the sensitisation of people to a bigger world and all its needs. To make people sensitive - to sensitise people - is the pastoral task of the church. The church and the congregation are thus involved in an educational process of sensitisation.

An ecosystemic pastoral work approach has, as its starting point the intention of making the church community aware of the need for a new way of thinking about the world and life. Church people should be aware of the importance of *wholeness*. Community pastoral care means that Christians will be brought to realise that, to be truly themselves, they must recognise what is greater than they are, yet what does not

36. Heitink (1993:268-269) connects the concept of *koinonia* with the idea of the church as a *learning community*.

negate their individuality. Such paradoxes point to the richness of living and being. People must learn about the need to look holistically at the needs of persons and society. All people have physical, emotional, cognitive and interpersonal experiences. People must be sensitised to see the interrelatedness of these experiences and the patterns that emerge as a result of this interrelatedness.

Instruction is a basic element in all mainline churches. A community pattern includes therefore teaching³⁷ and learning in and through the church community. The church community has an educational role to play, not only in terms of church dogma and Biblical events, but also in terms of world-view. A community pattern of pastoral work should broaden the content of instruction to include:

- an awareness of the importance of a new way of thinking about the world.

The church can help people think more systemically and holistically about life, by making people aware of the fact that all things are interrelated and that what they do at present will influence the future. People should be made aware of the responsibility of society to care for each other and for the earth.

- an awareness that there is more than one way of looking at things and that life is full of paradoxes
- sensitivity to other people and their needs
- values (pastoral work and ethics should be seen as interrelated).

An important aspect of conscientising is to teach the community "how to learn". Conscientising should be a reflexive action. Learning about learning should also improve the ability to cope of those involved. The prophetic task of pastoral work should become visible through the conscientising actions of pastoral workers. This is only possible if pastoral workers do not see their task from an individualistic perspective.

6.1.1.5.2 Empowerment and prevention

From an ecosystemic perspective the learning process, which forms part of sensitisation, should also be part of prevention. Kunst (1992) has a holistic approach to pastoral care. He calls it a liberating approach and link it with the theology of the liberation theologians who also take the whole of society seriously (cf also Clinebell 1984 and Graham 1992). He reaches the conclusion that such an approach can only work if you educate your congregation towards an all-encompassing approach. It is important both in preaching and teaching to help the members of the church to take responsibility for society as well and to be involved in local and global social concerns. As has already been said, it is part of a community pastoral work approach to teach people to be sensitive to the needs of the rest of the world [cf p 344]. Kunst (1992:166)

37. "We are becoming increasingly aware that our contemporaries are engaged in an individualistic search for truth which reacts against all claims to an inerrant teaching authority. Yet the tradition sees teaching as an integral aspect of pastoral care" (Campbell 1981:4).

sees prevention as part of the pastoral task of a congregation and describes the task of prevention as follows:

Primary prevention means that the Church must be about the business of fostering a place of wholeness in which families and individuals (perhaps even peoples and nations) are nurtured and strengthened, rather than a dysfunctional community which looks more *like* the world than *different* from it. Secondary prevention suggests that the Church also ought to play a role in treating some kinds of emotional difficulties and providing a context in which persons are met and cared for in the depth of their need. Secondary prevention also suggests that the Church has a role in advocating changes in those policies which sustain oppression in the world. Tertiary prevention call us to develop the lay counseling programs, food banks, shelters, and organizations which deal directly with those who are broken and in need of the healing touch of Christ through the Church.

Mann (1978) discusses certain very important changes in the mental health strategy made in the USA to develop a community model of prevention. They made some very serious mistakes in the process. They took it for granted that communities believe in the dictum *prevention is better than cure*. "The model itself tends to assume that prevention is a shared value" (Mann 1978:110). The model assumes that the community changing process is a function of rational decision-making. It overlooks existing patterns as well as expectations and how long it takes for changes in communities to occur (Mann 1978:11).

It seems as though the sensitisation process should not stop with prevention as part of the learning process. Prevention is based on other views. This study proposes that prevention should be connected with empowerment. In her study on black school children's alienation and estrangement in a school setting Lazarus (1983:168) has found that this could be overcome by enabling individuals to achieve a sense of power and community. Lazarus (1983:163) puts it as follows:

No sense of power or community was experienced in the local communities (townships) or the society at large. Nevertheless, a feeling of belonging to 'black Africa' was strongly expressed. The majority of students found that **religion and/or church involvement had not helped, and often hampered** (my emphasis - FN), the development of a sense of community and power.

Changes in society occur when large numbers of individuals suddenly realise (become empowered) that society does exist independently of them, but is in stead a human-made creation for which they can be responsible (Lazarus 1983:54). Community pastoral work should teach values (sensitisation) by connecting actions of pastoral care with empowerment. This may sound contradictory because from an ecosystemic perspective pastoral work is directed at compassion and not at power for the pastoral worker.

The influence of psychology on pastoral work has steered pastoral work towards power for the pastoral worker. The more training people receive, the more powerful they became. The Kingdom of God is not without power, but has at its centre Jesus Christ, the one who died on the cross, an act of powerlessness. His is a kingdom where compassion, not power reigns. His Kingdom is a kingdom with room for all and an open door to the world (Bruwer 1994a:109). There is no reason why the poor, the destitute, the homeless, the suicidal, the depressed, the terminally ill, the sexually assaulted, the unemployed and the like, should not feel at home in his Kingdom. Life in the Kingdom is supposed to be an empowerment of those without

power and that is the paradox of the gospel. Those with power should become like people without power and those without power should feel empowered.

The empowerment of the powerless can only take place with their full participation, free from any form of manipulative pressure from those at the more powerful end of the line (Bruwer 1994a:109). A community pastoral approach should connect prevention with empowerment. This implies that prevention is not what those with power want for those without power. When careseekers become empowered, they can give content to the concept of *prevention*. Empowerment should also go with the idea of responsibility as already mentioned [cf p 336]. In the next chapter empowerment and responsibility will be dealt with within the context of the AIDS crisis [cf p 413].

In the sections that follow a prophetic pastoral work approach is taken one step further to include gender and cultural differences.

6.1.1.5.2.1 Gender sensitivity

Feminist theologians maintain that theology has to again become communal and holistic (Fiorenza as cited by Ackermann 1993:23).

A community pastoral work approach is sensitive to the issues of society. The prophetic dimension will sensitise pastoral work to gender issues. From an ecosystemic point of view (which includes social constructionism), all forms of injustice and discrimination should be dealt with. Feminists have made it clear that sexism is rooted in the mechanistic world-view. A prophetic approach, embedded in an ecosystemic metaparadigm will thus take discrimination and injustice very seriously. Gender discrimination is even more widespread than other forms of discrimination. It is not uncommon for societies experiencing discrimination (like colour) to also practise discrimination against the women of that society. In many instances women of colour are doubly oppressed, also by their fellow countrymen.

Carolyn Merchant believes that, because women are seen as being closer to nature than men,³⁸ the death of nature because of the mechanistic world-view and the industrial revolution has had an important influence on the position of women in society. Merchant (1980:132) puts it as follows:

The upheavals of the Reformation and the witch trials of the sixteenth century heightened these perceptions. Like wild chaotic nature, women needed to be subdued and kept in their place.

38 . This becomes clear in expressions like "Mother Earth". Merchant (1980:144) describes it as follows:

Anthropologists have pointed out that nature and women are both perceived to be on a lower level than culture ... Because women's physiological functions of reproduction, nurture, and childrearing are viewed as closer to nature, their social role is lower on the cultural scale than that of the male.... In early modern Europe, the assumption of a nature-culture dichotomy was used as a justification for keeping women in their place in the established hierarchical order of nature The reaction against the disorder in nature symbolized by women was directed not only at lower-class witches, but at the queens and noblewomen who during the Protestant Reformation seemed to be overturning the order of nature.

According to Merchant (1980:161), the dualistic thinking of the seventeenth century plays a role in the position of women in society. Descartes, for instance, believed that the male semen endowed the egg produced by the woman with a soul. Women contributed the material element (that is of less importance) and men the spiritual element (that is more important than the material). According to Merchant (1980:162-163), this type of thinking was not confined to the previous centuries. In the nineteenth century Darwinian theory correlated evolutionary progress with the greater physical and mental variation in males. Scientists compared male and female cranial sizes and brain parts in an effort to demonstrate that females are intellectually inferior to males. This difference is explained by the need of women to direct more energy toward pregnancy, leaving less available for the higher functions associated with learning and reasoning. Even in the twentieth century science is applied to maintain women's position in society. Women who display high intelligence, competitive behaviour, leadership traits and executive abilities are portrayed as women with abnormally high levels of androgen (Merchant 1980) or are judged to be unnatural, aggressive and disruptive (Schüssler Fiorenza 1995:135).

Schüssler Fiorenza (1995:134-136) is of the opinion that the emerging scientific approach in theology since the nineteenth century, that insisted on an objectivist method and a value neutral method of research, provided the context for the further masculinisation of all disciplines, including theology. Virtually every academic discipline operates on the unreflected assumption that male reality is the same as human reality. Women have to accept this reality and in their studies internalise this constellation of beliefs, values and shared world-views as guidelines for thinking before they are accepted as scholars. In this process women students experience severe contradictions which they often internalise as personal failure. Merchant (1980:163) summarises it as follows: "For women, this aspect of the Scientific Revolution did not bring about the presumed intellectual enlightenment, objectivity, and liberation from ancient assumptions traditionally accorded it (sic?)".

Community pastoral work done from an ecosystemic perspective would therefore be sensitive to the sexism in society. Although sexism may seem to be an isolated case in point, it must not be undervalued. Many careseekers might relate their problems to sexism in society. Many pastoral workers might witness that they are also victims of sexism even in situations where they have to offer care to others.³⁹ Sexism like racism does not only influence those on the receiving end but also those on the giving side because of the interrelatedness human beings experience in negative and dehumanising relationships.

39. Graham (1992:124-128) relates how a woman pastoral worker was confronted with a chauvinist. The pastoral worker explained her feelings as follows (Graham 1992:127):

I don't know why I reacted so strongly to this encounter ... I'm not really sure of the reasons behind that sudden emotion except that I felt powerless and run over and disgusted that he stuck his hand into my dress. I am angry at myself, that my own issues got in the way of effective ministry, and that some deep down childhood view of what it means to be a minister, or Christian, allows me to play the victim. I was careful not to misunderstand or 'reject' him, and in doing so denied my own power and feelings. Yuck. I am angry at sexism - that I am a young, female chaplain to people who don't respect me as a woman ...

6.1.1.5.2.2 Transculturality

Entrenched in the Enlightenment are the superiority of the Western world-view as well as its values. Community pastoral work should be aware of this tendency and also recognise the validity of indigenous cultural elements including those elements expressed rationally and transrationally such as dreams and ancestors. An ecosystemic approach will seek to facilitate relationships between these elements by understanding the intrinsic (transformational) value of cultural elements.

This does not mean that a community approach will merely accept everything without consideration to the impact of the different views on the pastoral process. One such difficult issue has to do with people's view of time. In a Western dualistic world-view with its existentialistic character, we are determined to find solutions for the present. In the African world-view the past plays an important role. Looking into the genealogy along paternal (and maternal?) lines is common, to see if the spirits are not unhappy about something that happened in the past. An ecosystemic pastoral approach which sees things as being relational will give some attention to the past, but will also be careful that the past does not become a deterministic force that keeps people imprisoned. The past may be important but should not prevent people from living with an eye on the future. This is also important for the counselling process. The concept "complementary" may be useful in a counselling situation to be aware of the past without letting the past determine the future in a deterministic way. A practical example is the manner in which the family therapist, Lynn Hoffman (1993) uses songlines in therapeutic sessions.

It is very important in terms of AIDS to give attention to the different cultures, because prevention of the spread of the disease should take different communities and cultures ways of living in account. Barnett and Blaikie (1992:13) says: "Each society shapes its own particular AIDS epidemic". Customs, beliefs and values plays an important role in the way people understand and interpret things. It would be to easy to just dismiss people's behaviour as irrational if they do not behave according to certain expectations. The "solution" to the AIDS pandemic should be looked for within the cultural context of communities. Attempts should be made to incorporate peoples customs, beliefs and values in possible solutions. Daneel (1991; 1992, 1995) describes how the beliefs, customs and values of the people in Zimbabwe are used to promote the planting of trees. Empowering of other cultures is thus necessary.

6.1.1.6 Pastoral work as networking

Chapter 4 discusses the idea of community pastoral work in the light of a changing society and comes to the conclusion that the word *networking* explains better an ecosystemic perspective (an integrated and interrelated pastoral work focus) to pastoral work in a modern pluralistic society [cf p 271] than *community*. The term *network* is useful in broadening the scope of the community approach by including an active awareness of the fact that in modern society people are involved in many relationships, live in various places and are more individualistically orientated.

Networking gives expression to modern reality where people belong to many different communities. Bourgault (1992), a district education officer, emphasises the importance of networking for schools. Bourgault (1992) proposes a network approach to define the relationship between parents and teachers in

the British school system. In a network system different schools may work together to establish a local network. Parents and children with similar problems are brought together in self-help groups. Talented students are grouped together and students in need of remediation are organised for extra tutoring sessions.

Such a network could provide assistance, friendship, encouragement and support for a group of people who are guaranteed to have doubts, anxieties and feelings of helplessness in their personal lives or at least in the raising of teenage children (Bourgault 1992:42).

The network system has an empowering influence on those involved. Bourgault explains how the relationship between the school and the parents used to be one of distance because both parents and teachers viewed them as different independent communities. Parents see the school and the teachers as the educational experts in charge. Teachers feel that parents should not interfere with the classroom processes and should be supportive of the school. Parents are often labelled as "supportive" or "non-supportive". What starts as a network process to bring children with specific difficulties and their parents together ends up in a major improvement of the relationship between the schools and the parents.

Networking can also refer to the multiple relationships people enter into in their attempts to solve a problem. In a pluralistic society, people seek help, solve problems and meet needs in different ways. Family, friends, neighbours, clergy, neighbourhood organisations and professionals, like psychologists, social workers and trained caregivers, can all provide meaningful assistance in times of need and are all part of the community support system.⁴⁰ These different groups can give preventative help, be involved in treatment or play a rehabilitative role. From an ecosystemic perspective it is important to realise that the pastoral worker should not be the only person who is approached by the person in need. Helping is thus a network process. Warren (1982:16) explains this network process as follows: "What is critical about helping networks is that a variety of resources is assembled by the help-seeker much as one puts together a model of an atom or molecule. Thus, the simultaneous use of helpers is a critical dimension in the system of helping networks". An ecosystemic perspective opens up community pastoral work by broadening the community image to include all networks involved.

6.1.2 A way of thinking about the pastoral work of the church

Pastoral care is exercised both *within* and *by* the church (Campbell 1985:64).

A community pastoral work model can only be understood within the context of the church. Earlier this study referred to the church possibly becoming an entity on its own, if the church as institution is not

40. Research in Detroit shows that 41% of people contacted a friend, 37% a relative, 28% a co-worker and 27% neighbours with their problems. The same research shows that less than 10% of people contact professional people like the doctor, clergyman, counsellor and teacher. More than half (62% of people) use two or more different kinds of helpers. According to this research, people sought an average of 2.7 unique kinds of help per problem experienced (Warren 1982:9-10).

identified in terms of the people who make up the church. The opposite is also possible namely that pastoral workers could become separated from the church community they represent. Pastoral work does therefore not only involve the activities of an individual. Every action of an individual, committed to the church community, should be interpreted as if the church community is involved. The church community itself is involved through the people who form the community. The individual is not only connected to a specific church community, but also corporatively to all the church communities. Heitink (1990:122) says: "Pastoraat is een functie van de christelijke gemeente en laat zich in die zin nooit volledig inpassen in andere samenlevingsverbanden. Maar ook van deze geloofsgemeenschap geldt dat zij volop een helende gemeenschap genoemd mag worden".

During this century the pastoral work of the church has developed from a congregational based approach to an institutional based approach (Couture & Hester 1995). Pastoral work is developing more and more as a specialised activity separate from the church community. Pastoral workers and counsellors often demonstrate their competence in a medical model of therapy derived from psychology and psychoanalytic theories by creating a distance between themselves and the church community.

What this study proposes is to relook at the basic assumptions of pastoral work from an ecosystemic perspective. The basis of pastoral work is the Christian community and not only theological training. Pastoral work cannot be "pastoral" if it is disconnected from the Christian community. It forms part of the individualistic and reductionistic thinking, which led to the separation between pastoral workers and the Christian community in the first place. In reaction to the Enlightenment, theologians first attacked reason as unimportant (with pietism as a response). A later reaction was to declare theology itself a science and to privatise theology (cf Bosch 1991). The way pastoral workers were involved in institutions is a case in point. They were often seen as individuals (professionals) acting in their personal capacity, even if they were placed at an institution by their churches. This has a positive impact on pastoral work.

The quality of pastoral work has improved dramatically, particularly because of more intensive training programmes. Pastoral work is also being taken out of the narrow understanding of care as the "saving of souls" into the broader context of helping human beings in distress. It became interdisciplinary, particularly with regard to psychology.

Unfortunately, many of the most competent pastoral workers have moved away from the local church into institutions (Couture & Hester 1995:47). From an ecosystemic perspective the involvement of pastoral workers in institutions other than the church should be welcomed, but the interrelatedness between pastoral workers and the religious community they represent must not be neglected. Pastoral workers in the USA have often experienced a certain tension between their theological position and the institution they work in (Fumiss 1994:115-140). According to Fumiss (1994:137), there is actually a movement back to "parish-based clinical pastoral education". This re-established connection between pastoral workers in institutions and their congregational or presbyterian base has become particularly visible through the involvement of chaplains in church structures. Full-time pastoral workers, like chaplains, are again moderators of presbyteries and synods (Fumiss 1994:137).

It is not clear in what way this movement back to the church community involves a change in perspective or with economics. Both Furniss (1994) and Couture and Hester (1995:47-50) refer to the role economic realities play in institutions. Furniss (1994:142) says that pastoral workers (chaplains) realise that they do not have any power base in institutions. "In terms of cost-benefit equation, we are expendable", says Furniss (1994:142). Couture and Hester (1995:49) say the economic laws mandate only profitable practice. Whereas previously the demand was for pastoral workers to be scientific and professional in their praxis, more recently the demand is that they be economically viable.

The situation in South Africa has not developed to the same extent as in the United States where pastoral workers are an essential part of many social institutions, such as hospitals, prisons, and military as well as community centres. But there are signs that a tendency in South Africa could develop where pastoral work is separated from the church community. In South Africa pastoral workers in hospitals are paid by the churches. The researcher is of the opinion that most of these pastoral workers are not deeply involved with the local church community as such and often function separate from the local church community.⁴¹ Financial constraints on a broader level have also led to a drastic reduction of posts. Pastoral workers in prisons and the defence force are paid by the state. These posts have also been considerably reduced over the last few years. Fortunately, new developments in hospital pastoral care are visible. More and more lay people are being trained by churches and by full-time pastoral workers to become involved in hospital pastoral work.

This study acknowledges the important role economics also plays in the pastoral work of the church. In chapter 4 this study refers to the importance of a *plausibility structure* for the church's functioning in a pluralistic society. Couture and Hester (1995:47) also believe that the modern approach to pastoral work often moves pastoral workers, and particularly chaplains and counsellors, away from congregations and in the process they risk becoming isolated from the *plausibility structure* that originally gave them the legitimacy to function as pastoral workers.

From an ecosystemic perspective the involvement of pastoral workers in institutions is important. A community pastoral care model should not be seen as an action which only takes place in the Christian community, but as an extension of the church community with regards to those in need.

6.1.2.1 The social role of pastoral work

I have said that pastoral care is Christian response to humanity's hurt (Brister 1964:32).

The church as institution and every church community (congregation) are part of society and function as systems within systems. In some societies the church community still plays a role, particularly if many of the people in the society belong to the church, although some people may just be nominal members and not actively involved in the church community.

41 . The researcher is referring specifically to the full-time hospital chaplaincy.

From an ecosystemic point of view the whole world is implicated in the death and resurrection of Christ. Since God is constantly active in the world and since it is his purpose to establish *shalom*, the church community is called to recognise and proclaim what God is doing in the world. The church community may be tempted to believe that the activities and presence of God are confined by the boundaries it draws around itself. An ecosystemic approach should warn against any tendency in church communities to isolate themselves.

Ecosystemic pastoral work as community pastoral work (understood in terms of networking) wishes to emphasise the involvement of pastoral work in societal issues without overestimating the role the pastoral work of the church can play in changing the direction of society. Each time a person is harmed, tortured or destroyed, death is at work and each time someone is a true neighbour and lives for others, the life-giving action of God is discerned (cf *The church for others. Final report of the WCC 1967* as cited by Campbell 1972:224). Kunst (1992:159-160) makes the point that if the general theology of a church is not directed to the needs of people, the caring activities will also not be directed in a holistic way to the whole person: "As such, the church's *community life* in worship, fellowship, and caregiving must also be rooted in this theology".

Although it is always necessary to give attention to the immediate problem, pastoral workers who think ecosystemically should, at the same time, ask themselves about the larger systems and subsystems involved in the problem and its solution. Heitink (1983a:69) describes the need for awareness of the role of the social systems in pastoral work. "Pastoraat, dat zich alleen bezig houdt met het verzorgen en oplappen van de slachtoffers en zich niet richt op bewustwording en maatschappelijke verandering speelt de bestaande samenleving in de kaart en houdt deze mee in stand".

The pastoral role of the church community should take place at several levels simultaneously:

(a) One level is that of the local geographical community (cf Browning 1983b:14-15). Browning believes that even in a secularised society a local community may expect the local churches (congregations) to be involved in the taking of decisions or to give moral direction to the community. In *Power to the powerless* (1987), Laurie Green explains how their congregation, St Chad's, was involved in problems of the urban community (Metropolitan District of Birmingham) in which their congregation functions. As church they approached the local authorities on behalf of the whole community. The church realises that it is important to play this role as servant. This lengthy quotation gives an idea of how they saw their task:

We had in the past campaigned and won the battle against the City Planning Department for certain roads, which had been made one-way only, to be reopened to the community. We had run a number of schemes by which local residents were made aware of our commitment to the Gospel of Christ and encouraged to join our worship. We had taken a leading part in pushing for the provision of a Community Center in the locality separate from the church and this had enabled the church to remain in the servant role rather than for it to appear itself to be the center of the community. It seemed to us, in our secular urban setting that to purport to be the center of the community would have contradicted the New Testament mandate to be the servant (Green 1987:33).

The pastoral work of the churches in the local community and those of the social workers may

overlap.⁴² There is no need for conflict and again a "fusion of horizons" would be appropriate. Claessens (1983:129-146), for example, writes about a joint project between the theological faculty in Tilburg and the social work faculty. They decided to start a joint project called *maatschappelijk dienstverlening - levensbeschouwing*. He (1983:129) describes the reason for this project as follows:⁴³

Soms zoeken deze mensen hulp in de maatschappelijke dienstverlening, soms in het pastoraat. Wat maakt ons, maatschappelijk dienstverlenenden en theologen, om krachtiger, zinniger en meer samenhangend te werken ten bate van deze mensen?

In 1964 AC Smith wrote a book titled, *The rural priest as social worker*. It becomes clear from Smith's book that in previous centuries the minister of religion did play the role of social worker (1964:126). Writing from the context of the English welfare state, Smith (1964:129) makes it clear that even in the more modern context the parson is often involved in social problems and often works together with the social services. The church's involvement in social services can complement those of other social service organisations, voluntary as well as statutory. The church community, for example, may be in the position to supply the social worker with voluntary workers to help him/ her in the work.

Smith (1964:133) also points out that local church communities can play a part in making local welfare services more democratic by involving more people in the decision-making process. The involvement of churches in welfare issues could promote the idea that people themselves are in the first instance responsible for their own welfare and not the state. The church community should feel itself responsible for those in need (the Good Samaritan) and should work together with other organisations and institutions in this regard. The extent of the church community's involvement could be influenced by the social role of the state. In modern society the state has an obligation to supply certain services. How far this obligation of the state stretches is a debatable point and also depends on ideological orientation.

Becoming involved in the welfare of the community means that the church community is busy with its pastoral task. It is founded in an interrelated ecclesiology where the diaconal task (servant) and the caring task (shepherding) is part of the church's fellowship (koinonia) dimension. In practice, it means that pastoral

42. In discussions between the researcher and pastoral workers about the possibility of a community approach to pastoral work, the possibility that the church would overstep its boundaries and take over the role of, for example, the social worker, was often mentioned. This argument implies a dualistic way of thinking, namely either the social worker or the church. It also employs the idea of the church being the dominant institution, maintaining that where the church is involved all other organisations must withdraw.

43. The co-operation takes place although the philosophy of life between social work and theology may differ.

Aan het einde van de cursus, namen wij de beginvraag van onze practica op. Toen vroegen wij ons af: 'Wat maakt ons, maatschappelijk dienstverlenenden en theologen, van (deze) mensen. Is het vermoeden juist dat de levensbeschouwende oriëntatie in ons als hulpverleners alles overstemt dan wel dat onze levensbeschouwing verstomt als we 'aan het helpen slaan'? Tussen overstemmen en verstommen hoefden wij vertellend niet meer te kiezen, evenmin tussen confessionaliteit en seculariteit (Claessens 1983:145-146).

workers should sometimes exchange their consulting rooms for workshops and their ties for overalls. Care should become visible, not only next to the bed of the person who is dying or the couple with marriage problems, but also within the community within which the local congregation is situated. Involvement in community issues like refuse removal, rent boycotts, housing, clinics and recreational facilities may be part of the pastoral worker's and church community's caring activities.

(b) The involvement of the church's pastoral work may stretch further than just merely the local level. Heitink (1983a) writes about what he calls *political pastoral work*.⁴⁴ Heitink (1983a:68-70) describes it as a mode of pastoral work which takes society and the problems in society much more seriously than traditional pastoral care and counselling. Heitink (1983a:70) summarises it as follows: "Samevattend meen ik, dat op het eerste niveau een integratie van politieke en maatschappelijke factoren in het pastoraat van grote betekenis is". For Heitink, the term *politics* refers to society and the importance of the renewal of society. "Wanneer in deze lijn gesproken wordt over de politieke betekenis van het pastoraat, wordt bedoeld dat het niet alleen mag gaan om de bevrijden van mensen, maar daarin ook om vernieuwing van de sameleving" (Heitink 1983a:67). He (1983a:71) believes that pastoral work should give attention to repressive structures in society and particularly to structural violence. Healing does not mean merely helping people to accept their circumstances.⁴⁵

Although Heitink is of the opinion that critical societal analysis can be very profitable, also to pastoral work, he finds it very difficult to identify himself with a specific ideological stance. Heitink believes that society is much too complex to understand it only in terms of, for example, a class struggle or a preferential option for the poor. His main argument is that such choices may lead to exclusiveness in pastoral work by excluding certain ideas and people (Heitink 1983a:74-76).

Heitink's prudence could be understood. It is also a typical pastoral approach that one is not allowed to show one's own preferences. From an ecosystemic metaparadigm, a totally neutral stance, also in pastoral work, is questioned. All pastoral workers subconsciously make a choice. It sounds as if Heitink is careful about specific ideologies, such as Marxism for example, because he specifically refers to the choice of a class analysis. But what about capitalism, liberalism, socialism, liberal socialism, and so on? An ecosystemic approach accepts that pastoral workers must be aware and critical of their political preferences and attentive to the dangers of any form of absolutism.

44 . "Ik kies daarom die vraagstelling, die blijkens de inzet van dit artikel naar mijn mening voor de tachtiger jaren een hoge prioriteit verdient: die vraag naar de politieke dimensie van het pastorale handelen. Anders gezegd: Hoe verhouden zich pastoraat en politiek?" (Heitink 1983a:67).

45 . "Helen mag niet betekenen mensen helpen zich aan te passen aan de bestaande sameleving. Bijstaan in uitzichtlose situaties mag, wanneer hierbij maatschappelijke factoren in geding zijn, niet betekenen: helpen berusten in machteloosheid. Eerder vraagt dit een solidarisering in protest en verzet" (Heitink 1983a:73).

In terms of social constructionism, pastoral workers are allowed to feel uncomfortable with certain people and ideologies and may even decide not to counsel certain people if they feel uncomfortable with them.⁴⁶ Church communities may also take certain decisions in terms of justice and peace and take a decision to direct their pastoral support to specific causes. For many people such a choice would be problematic, but that may be the consequence of a prophetic ecclesiology. It is to be doubted whether the church community, from a prophetic ecclesiological perspective, should always choose the neutral position road of peacemaker. The church community should reject the injustices in society in very strong terms. This context will also influence the pastoral activities. In a strife torn society a prophetic stance may be to play the role of peacemaker and to overcome divisions through pastoral activities that include all the people.

Heitink's (1983a:70) reference to *political pastoral work* is an indication of the need for pastoral work to move beyond the individualistic approach to human suffering⁴⁷ and identify the need for moving beyond an individualistic approach to care. Pastoral work should also take into account the role social structures could play. Pastoral workers must be willing to be involved in the protest against injustices and oppression in social structures. Heitink (1983a:70; 73) makes it clear that there is a need to work out specifically and theoretically what is meant by *political pastoral work*.⁴⁸ The community pastoral work model proposed by this study links up very closely with Heitink's call for political pastoral work. The ecosystemic metaparadigm could help pastoral work to be politically (or socially) orientated without carrying all the ideological baggage that may go with the term political pastoral work.

Pastoral work may become a very stressful activity, particularly in politically tense situations or when the relationship between the state and the church community is strained. Assimeng (1989:225-226) describes the uneasy relationship between the church and the political administrations in West Africa. Church

46. The quantitative research undertaken by the researcher refers particularly to such situations in some of the statements. The statement "It is impossible for pastoral workers to be politically neutral" was answered as follows: 53.7% fully agree or agree somewhat and 36.8% totally disagree or disagree somewhat; 9.4% neither agree nor disagree.

The statement "As pastoral worker I may refuse to counsel certain people if I am uncomfortable with their attitude towards certain issues (e.g. sexism, racism, violence)" was answered as follows: 36.8% fully agree or agree somewhat and 56.6% totally disagree or disagree somewhat; 6.6% neither agree nor disagree.

The responses are interesting. The majority of respondents feel that it is impossible to be politically neutral while the majority feel that you may not refuse to counsel somebody with whom you feel uncomfortable.

47. Lewis (1982:307) states that in "an individualistic-orientated society such as ours, respect for the individual's dignity is often dependent on the economic and political status of the person. The power professionals have accrued because of their specialised knowledge is gained, not only through extensive education, but through the dependent position in which their clients are placed when seeking professional help".

48. "Wanneer we op dit niveau pastoraat en politiek met elkaar verbinden, worden andere accenten gelegd. Accenten, die in de huidige theorievorming van het pastoraat zeker niet ontbreken, maar voor mijn besef nog te weinig systematisch en in onderlinge samenhang zijn doordacht" (Heitink 1983a:73).

organisations were deeply involved in the provision of social amenities and of education, medical services and child care activities. This brought about that the church communities believe that they have a right to be outspoken on issues related to the so-called secular spheres of life. Tension developed because politicians expected the church to be silent on issues which they define as "state related issues".

Pastoral work should take the social situation in which church communities function very seriously. No church community functions in isolation. A caring church community would also be concerned about the social issues that influence the church. Could the reason for the lack of social interest in many church communities possibly point to a lack of caring and caring activities in the church community?

It is also clear that a strong distinction between the caring and the diaconal task of the church will lead to a caring attitude without action and action without caring. The Liberation theologians protested against Western theology which has separated systematic theology and ethics. The problem in pastoral work is that we have separated the individual from society. In the process we have separated the conversational actions from social actions. Traditionally, conversational actions belong to pastoral work and social actions to the diaconal task of the church.

This study works with the premise that it is possible to say that the church community's social pronouncements on society should strongly be influenced by the church's pastoral attitude. Thus for the church to be socially involved in society, it would have to be involved at grassroots level in communities or through networks of people. It is through involvement that the church will pick up the needs and hurts of people.

Take, for example, the situation in South Africa where sections of the church protested against the policy of apartheid while others (even within the same church tradition) supported these policies. A lack of pastoral involvement may play an important role. Many of the people who were involved with the victims of apartheid changed their opinions and took a much stronger stand against the political system. For many of those who were against apartheid it was clear that these policies hurt people physically, emotionally and economically. From there it was only a small step to describing these policies as unjust. Many of the supporters of these policies (and the politicians who designed and implemented the policies) argued that people benefited from them "unaware" of the hurt these policies caused to people. There are many things which may influence a person in deciding whether something is unjust or not. From a pastoral work perspective the church could, for example, identify hurt as one of the most important criteria to evaluate and analyse public policies as well as the behaviour of an individual or a community.

6.1.2.2 The church as a healing community

Chapter 4 refers to the role the church can play as a healing community [cf p 240]. This study wishes to underwrite this idea, but also to qualify it to a certain extent. The role of the church in a modern pluralistic society has changed, meaning that the influence of the church is less visible than in traditional societies where the whole community belongs to the church. The notion of the church as a healing community should be understood in terms of the modern tendency to professionalise caring activities, also in the church.

Community pastoral work is a holistic approach which should include the church community as a healing community in its pastoral activities.

This does not mean that the church has no role to play, but that the church should understand the nature of its role. The church's prophetic role through the sensitisation of society has already been referred to in previous sections [cf p 344]. From an ecosystemic point of view, the church community as a healing community should have sensitivity for those in need, even if they do not belong to the church community.

Campbell (1985:60) argues that pastoral work should take the reality and pervasiveness of sin seriously. The reality of a sinful world, torn by war, racial conflict, economic injustices and oppression, is that often we cannot offer someone anything more than love and listen to the other person's story. Community pastoral care should question easy solutions that ask no involvement of the pastoral worker but an objective stance and keeping a distance from the real issues.

Involvement will include some risk-taking and therefore the pastoral worker needs the support of the church community. From a systems perspective, the church community could be an important support system for both the pastoral worker and the people receiving (professional) counselling. The church community could form the caring system which is so necessary for counsellors who work with a systems approach. Campbell (1985:65) makes the point that the church as caring community should exercise its ministry of care in such a way that the church community itself experiences growth and is challenged to be vulnerable.

One way to do it is to enhance everyday caring by the priesthood of all believers. The whole church community should be involved in the caring of people. The leadership for caring should not rest completely on the shoulders of the ordained pastor who might have training in counselling. This is often the case when specialised counselling becomes normative for pastoral care (cf Campbell 1985:59). People argue that they are not trained and withdraw from all pastoral activity. This does not mean that there is no place for professional counsellors. Professional training and counselling should enhance everyday caring. And the church as caring community should be a support base for the professional pastoral worker and the careseekers.⁴⁹

49. "... there is a place for counselling within the ministry of the whole church, it is a place different from that often accorded to it at present. The division between professional clergy and laity which has been problematic in ministry for so long has been replaced by a division between the professional counsellor and everybody else. It is imperative that this be replaced by a theology of ministry in which all members of the body of Christ are seen as sharing in pastoral ministry. This alone will provide an adequate foundation for specialist counselling" (Bridger & Atkinson 1994:9).

50. This thesis does not want to enter into the debate about professionalising pastoral counselling. It is a very important and relevant debate (cf. Nelson 1992), but also an ongoing one (cf Kae-Jé (1993:65-72); and the response from Woodruff (1993) and Childs (1993)). According to Van der Ven (1993a:279-280), pastors feel a need to be recognised as professionals and experience pressure from the institutions they are involved (e.g. hospitals, prisons and the military) in to prove that they actually do deliver a professional service. Van der Ven (1993a:281) makes it clear that, contrary to what some people might

Pastoral work will only become the task of the church community if the position of the full-time pastor as the only pastoral counsellor receives some attention. This does not mean that counselling as part of the training of ministers of religion must be neglected. It is necessary and also important that clergy are trained in counselling theory and methods, but it is very necessary to develop a new attitude towards the position of the clergy as the only skilled persons in the congregation involved with people's needs.

The emphasis in the church should be the development of a wide variety of courses in lay training and education and not the creating of a counselling elite within the church. Leadership in *koinonia* and *diakonia* should be sought in the entire congregation. Those with counselling expertise should use it as a gift and not as a status symbol. The full-time paid pastoral worker (often the pastor with some training) could still play a major role, though not as the only expert, but to encourage the caring ministry of the whole church community (cf Campbell 1985:110). To this, must however, be added that a community pastoral work approach should be an integrated approach and should not separate psychological help from other forms of help as community psychologists normally do.

A holistic approach in pastoral work will give a dimension to care that has been unprecedented up to now to most professions. Community pastoral work is not only holistic in terms of a holistic view of human beings, but it also sees the person as a person in relation to other people and systems. The total person and the different systems with which the person interrelates with should be included in the pastoral work approach. To implement such an approach means that the communities in which the person is involved should also be included in the pastoral approach.

Orford (1992), a community psychologist, makes it clear that the need for psychological help in the UK is much bigger than the service that the clinical psychologists can provide. In real life many people do not come into direct contact with a psychologist or psychiatrist while they are in distress. It is often people of other helping professions who attend to many of these problems.

The researcher believes that in a country like South Africa only a very small percentage of people will see a professionally trained person when in distress. The pastor with his/ her limited training in counselling is not able to deal with all the people with problems in his/ her church community and the wider geographical community. From an ecosystemic perspective and in terms of a community pastoral work approach, it is very necessary for the church to be a healing community for people in distress.

There is a resistance to involving laity in caring situations, sometimes because the more professional care becomes, the more difficult it becomes to admit that not all pain and despair and problems can be solved. There are also those who believe that it is not advisable to share something like psychological expertise too widely, because that would dilute its impact (Orford 1992:137). Such an argument confirms the powerful and controlling position in which many psychologists place themselves. This is also true of the full-time pastor who wishes to be the only person qualified to deal with people in distress in his/her church community. It is true that quality control would be difficult if every second person were to believe that he or

she is able to deal with psychological and psychiatric problems. This problem should be addressed in the training phase, as well as the type of attitude that should be developed by pastoral workers in knowing their restrictions and limits.

A community pastoral work approach is by no means against professional training and the need for professionals in the human or helping sciences.⁵⁰ But it does not adhere to the idea that it is only people with professional training who are "able" to help other people or would be ethical in their support. This forms part of our modern understanding of knowledge as something objective and the established truths, which also says that only professionals are capable of helping others.⁵¹ This attitude is particularly visible in the medical profession. From a Cartesian perspective, there is a refusal to entertain as meaningful any point of view but one's own (Cannon 1993:463). According to Cannon (1993:466) this results in

... a breakdown of common sense between one academic professional specialty and another, between faculty member and student, between professional and lay person, and even between colleagues within the same professional specialty - all through the emergence and consolidation over the last century of academic professionalism.

The church in its pastoral work must move beyond the Cartesian way of thinking about professionalism.⁵² Alastair Campbell (1985:9) does not work explicitly with an ecosystemic approach, but his book *Professionalism and pastoral care*, raises some very important points. Campbell (1985:14) is aware of the underlying naiveté of those who try to put love into practice without the discipline of training. He is also defensive about the need for skill, competence, consistency and dedication which he has observed amongst professional people. He describes his paradoxical feelings very aptly when he says: "I find the

51. Pastoral workers of the URCSA responded to the questionnaire sent out by the researcher as follows (details are in chapter 5 and Addendum 1):

		FULLY AGREE	AGREE SOME= WHAT	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	DISAGREE SOME= WHAT	TOTALLY DISAGREE
57	It is essential to have professional training before you can become involved in pastoral work.	9.1	13.6	4.5	28.2	44.5
67	Church people should become involved in pastoral work even without professional training.	55.6	23.1	3.7	4.6	-
51	I think that it is very important for the whole congregation and not only the clergy and the elders, to take part in the caring activities of the church.	89.9	6.4	-	2.8	0.9
61	The congregation's caring activities are the sole responsibility of the clergy.	69.7	10.1	3.7	4.6	11.9

52. "It is for this reason that finding ways of sharing psychological formulations and interventions with workers in human services has become one of the main preoccupations of community psychology. From the community psychology perspective, what goes on between nurses and their patients in the general hospital, between police and the victims of family violence, or between teachers and their more troublesome pupils, is of greater significance for the psychological health of a community than the relative small number of individual treatments that can be delivered by psychological specialists" (Orford 1992:137).

idea that pastoral care should be regarded as a professional activity both attractive and unacceptable". Campbell starts his book with two case studies of people who definitely need psychiatric treatment, but are also in need of care, understanding and love. "What is the church's task in this situation?" Campbell asks.

According to Campbell (1985:40-41), the church needs to develop the gifts people have and encourage them to share these gifts with others. The church community as a whole also has a role to play as a healing community, a place where people can experience peace, warmth and love. **It is only when the pastoral work becomes the task of the whole church community, that it will become a healing community.** When the church community takes part in the pastoral responsibilities, the pastoral work of the church will move beyond the borders of the church into the geographical community in which the church is situated, and also into other communities like sport clubs, and work communities, for instances. The people of the church should form a network of care which reaches beyond the boundaries of the local community.

Campbell (1985:47-57) mentions several problems with the emphasis on the professionalising of care. Some of these problems could be addressed by a community approach done from an ecosystemic perspective. Campbell's first problem is the traditional ground rules of professionalism, that determined the respective positions of the counsellor/ therapist/ helper/ pastoral worker and careseeker in a counselling situation. This forms part of the philosophy that the counsellor must take an objective stance. For Campbell, this relates to a situation of inequality.⁵³

Campbell's second problem should be seen in relation to the first. According to Campbell (1985:49-51), the problem of control and power is a real problem of pastoral care. He (1985:51) says that "by professionalising pastoral care we fall into the grave danger of perpetuating the dominance of middle-class attitudes towards the church's ministry of care within society". This often leads to the position where the professional will only serve those with money who come to see him/ her. The profession is learned in the aseptic atmosphere of the counsellor's office and not "in the dirt and the stench of the hidden wildernesses of the affluent society" (Campbell 1985:56). The church has a task to care for the poor and the marginalized in their real-life situations.

Campbell's third objection is the resistance to radical social change from professionals. Professionals tend to become conservatives who protect the status quo that brings them security. Will the pastoral worker as a professional be willing to be a prophet as well? Hand in hand with this goes the neglect of the communal dimension and thus the individualisation of care, in the fourth place.

The intensity of the one-to-one encounters of professional practice appears to create a blind spot with respect to the sociopolitical context of care. ... Pastoral care can never be concerned solely with the adjustment of the individual or with the promotion of personal fulfilment (Campbell 1985:52-53).

53 . "Unlike the safe detachment of most professional care, pastoral care must struggle to redeem love in a way that risks the self for the other's sake" (Campbell 1985:70).

Campbell (1985:53) believes that the "safe anonymity" of the consulting room cannot be the normal arena for pastoral care. Pastoral care should take place in the heat and the dust of daily life where destructive forces crush the weak and where groups and individuals suffer injustice or lose all hope. Fishburn (1991:182) reminds us that the beliefs and values associated with a particular tradition are often carried into the congregation by the pastoral worker. If pastoral workers are not willing to move out of their offices into the homes of those in need, the ministry of the congregation may also get stuck in professional mode so that members feel they are not able to witness, to preach or to lead a prayer meeting.

Professionalism is also a necessary and understandable way of self-protection. If the ordained pastor must take the full responsibility for the pastoral care of the congregation, it may amplify the need to become more professional and be more at a distance as a way of self-protection. A community pastoral work approach assumes that the more the congregation as a whole becomes involved in pastoral care, the more "relaxed" the clergy will become in their need to professionalise pastoral care and counselling.

Why does pastoral care so often mean care given only by pastors? According to Fishburn (1991:151), the dualistic way of thinking has caused the spiritualisation of pastoral care. Many people specifically want the pastor to call on them when they are in need of pastoral care although more pastors are able to generate excitement in worship than commitment to ministry among members (cf Fishburn 1991:23). Pastors are also reluctant to train lay pastoral workers because they are afraid that they will lose their "expert position" in the community. Fishburn's (1991:154) opinion is that it is "more important for the spiritual well-being of a congregation that a pastor facilitate (sic) mutual ministry than that the pastor become (sic) a specialist in pastoral care. When members are involved in caring for others, a foundation has been laid for reflection about *all* work as Christian vocation".

A pastor can train and supervise lay ministers in virtually every aspect of pastoral care. There are crisis situations where the pastor is expected to have the specialised skill and experience needed. But it is legitimate for the pastor to facilitate home calls and pastoral care by involving members of a congregation who have gifts in pastoral care. The full-time pastor should teach the church community to recognise the capacity of every member for pastoral care. It is only when the church community is involved in care that the church can become a healing community.

Religion based communities are not healthy communities per se and could be unhealthy in structure as well. The church as a healing community should also work towards integration and interrelatedness with the rest of society, because a close community that does not reach out to the rest of the world could become an unhealthy community. That is why the idea of community should be complemented with the idea of networking. It is only a community with an open heart, an open eye, and a vision to the future which could be a healthy community and thus also a healing community.

6.2 OVERVIEW

This chapter emphasises the importance of pastoral work done from an ecosystemic perspective. To move beyond the individualistic approach to pastoral work, is called *community pastoral work*. A community

pastoral work approach must be understood in terms of the pluralistic society in which we live, where traditional societies may function in terms of community principles while modern societies often function more in terms of networks of relationships.

This chapter describes the nature of such a community pastoral work approach in terms of an ecosystemic framework and perspective. Certain features of a community pastoral work approach are dealt with, though not in an absolute way, because community pastoral work is more a way of thinking than a fixed programme that should be followed. This is also in agreement with an ecosystemic perspective.

The pastoral work of the church should take place at several levels of life at the same time and will include a ministry of ecology, of healing, and of justice and liberation. Community pastoral work is pastoral work emerging from the church community. The pastoral worker as individual plays an important role not in an individual way but as person who belongs to the church community.

From a certain perspective specialised and personal pastoral counselling is certainly the ideal, but quite often may reflect the ideals of (wealthy?) Western dualistic thinking. It is an expensive and time-consuming type of counselling and way of caring. The training of therapists/ counsellors or pastoral workers in this mode is also very expensive. One person can counsel only a limited number of people. But even if would be affordable to train enough people, the pastoral worker should not neglect the importance of a community approach. Both the pastoral worker and careseeker are in need of the support of a community of people (or network of people) who care. This is where the church community can play a very important role in caring. Often more than only emotional or spiritual care is necessary. The pastoral worker who works from a community perspective has access to a greater richness (even in a poor community) of options than the individual who works from a consulting room, isolated from society, could ever imagine.⁵⁴

The importance of a holistic approach in pastoral care is gaining recognition and support. Pastoral care as an integral part of the functioning of the community has the potential to be fully holistic care. A pastoral care model that takes care of those in need is different from the medical model where a person must go for help after having been diagnosed. In this instance a community pastoral care model is much more appropriate than a pastor-orientated model. The reality of AIDS, that will be straining all resources and human power to their limits, emphasises the need for a community-orientated care model, both for the HIV-positive persons and the pastoral workers involved.

The next chapter (chapter 7) develops the notion of a community pastoral work approach further by applying it to the challenge poses by AIDS to society, the church and the pastoral actions of the church. The last chapter (chapter 8) describes a community pastoral work approach as just the beginning of a process of thinking.

54 . The issue here is not "the consulting room" but the "isolation from society" .

7. AIDS: A CHALLENGE TO PASTORAL WORK

We are living in a global environment where the fears of people are also globally inspired. Nuclear or thermonuclear dangers, toxic pollution, deforestation, soil erosion, economic instability, world terrorism, global weather patterns and the world-wide AIDS threat are only a few of the things ordinary people hear, read and worry about. The pastoral work of the church, that is involved in the caring and supporting of those in need, is particularly challenged¹ by this global picture and the fears evoked by it. This chapter focuses on the challenge AIDS poses for the pastoral work of the church.

In the first place theology as such is challenged. "It even forces the church to reflect on God and his providential care" (Louw 1990:38). Some theologians responded by declaring or implying that God created AIDS specifically for the purpose of punishing certain groups in society (Amos 1988:52). Statements were made which define AIDS as God's judgement on the world and specifically those suffering from the disease (Murphy 1994:3).² From a certain perspective it may be true, but this is also a sign of reductionistic thinking that pronounces judgement in an individualistic way. Saayman and Kriel (1992:10) call this an arbitrary system of judgement where the breaking of God's other commandments apparently go "unpunished". Theologically speaking, the whole of the earth is suffering because of our sinful nature and the whole world must seek salvation from all their sins (cf Lk 13:1-5).

Without getting involved in this important theological debate,³ this study takes as its point of departure the caring actions of the church. Any challenge directed at theology is also a challenge directed at pastoral work. The pastoral work of the church focuses on people in need and is called to respond in the ways God responded in the person of Jesus Christ (Jn 4). His ministry consistently took him into the lives of tax collectors, publicans, lepers, prostitutes, the poor, the dispossessed, the sick, and those cast aside by the community.

Earlier it was made clear that all theology takes place within a certain context and is accompanied by a certain world-view. AIDS also challenges the Enlightenment thinking in society and in the church. The Enlightenment world-view is an individualistic, reductionistic and dualistic view. The church community and

1. Cf De Jongh van Arkel (1994). He describes *challenge* as a mode of pastoral work. The challenge to challenge is prompted by the contextual situation and the need for a prophetic element in pastoral work which would overcome the dualism between the prophetic and priestly modes of care.

2. Louw (1990:47) cites J Douma (*AIDS - meer dan een ziekte* 1987) who wrote "AIDS is een oordeel van God over een manier van leven die helemaal in strijd is met die bestemming die God aan het lichaam en de geest van de mens heeft gegeven. Dat ook onschuldigen (men name kinderen) getroffen worden, besef ik als ik dit neerschrijft, heel goed. Ook in de bijbelse voorbeelden van Gods oordeel worden in veel gevallen de goeden met de kwaden getroffen". Louw's (1991:103 footnote 1) comment on this statement is: "This is a harsh statement, which does not take into consideration the complexity of the theodicy problem".

3. Cf Van Wyk (1990) for a more detailed discussion of the systematic theological debate concerning AIDS. Cf also Louw (1991:94-96).

thus the actions of the church are challenged to move beyond the individualistic and dualistic understanding of the world to a more holistic understanding. A more holistic or ecosystemic world-view will also in itself create new challenges. According to Perelli (1991:11), AIDS poses a threat to the physical and emotional health and welfare of modern society. The church and the pastoral work of the church are challenged⁴ to care and counsel those afflicted with Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome⁵ (AIDS), AIDS Related Complex (ARC), and those who test positive for the antibodies against the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV+) and their families and friends.⁶ Louw (1990:37) says that the difference between "the AIDS patient and others lies in the fact that the emotional trauma and social crisis are more intense and far reaching".

Bandura's (1989:137) comment that "personal change occurs within a network of social influences" is very important.⁷ Any attempt to change attitudes should also include a study of social influences. That is also why a community pastoral work approach is necessary which includes the notion of empowerment. Empowerment is a combination of individual and social factors which influence one another.

Although the nature of AIDS makes it a challenge to many disciplines, it also poses a particular challenge to the pastoral activity of the church community. From an ecosystemic perspective the global extent of the challenge should be recognised and incorporated in pastoral approaches.

7.1 AIDS AS A CHALLENGE TO THE TRADITIONAL SCIENTIFIC PARADIGM

The success of 'Newtonian science' gave rise to the second factor that determined the nature of modern medicine, namely the general acceptance of the natural scientific method as the only expression of human rationality ... A third factor, rooted in the 18th century philosophy of the Enlightenment, was the idea of progress ... This belief also underlies the search for a physical (biological) solution to the AIDS epidemic (Kriel 1991:42-43).

... VIGS (het) die optimisme van die menslike geloof in sy kennis, wetenskap en tegniek aan skerwe laat spat... Die suksesmoraal van die optimistiese vooruitgangsgeloof in die prestasie van die tegniek, het homself teen VIGS bloedneus gestamp (Louw 1988b:69-70).

4. Cf Kübler-Ross (1987) *AIDS: The ultimate challenge*.

5. AIDS is not a single disease, but a syndrome that differs from a disease in that it is a set of symptoms that reflect a diseased state (Hall & O'Grady 1989:73).

6. This study does not discuss HIV and the different illnesses associated with it in any detail. That kind of information is readily available elsewhere (see for example Greif & Golden 1994). A very short reference to HIV is made in the section on the clinical aspects of AIDS to emphasise the need for scientific information within an ecosystemic paradigm.

7. "Depending on their nature, social factors can aid, retard, or undermine efforts at personal change. This is especially true in the case of sexual and drug practices" (Bandura 1989:137).

The referral to a *scientific paradigm* does not refer to the so-called natural sciences specifically, but to a specific paradigm of thinking by people in all walks of life, thus by so-called natural or physical scientists and so-called social or human scientists alike.⁸ This approach is reductionistic and based on objectivity and neutrality, primarily making use of the cause-and-effect way of understanding reality. It goes out from the perspective that scientific research is objective and neutral, and can render us independent and objective truths. It does not take into account so-called non-scientific factors such as ethical and religious considerations (Kriel 1991:42).

From an ecosystemic perspective everything is interrelated and all people and systems are related. What happens in one part of the universe has an effect on the rest of the universe AIDS has an impact on society. The understanding of that impact is not so easy to evaluate and will depend on the perspective of those doing the evaluation. AIDS seems to be the one field where the so-called physical sciences and so-called social sciences (a distinction the researcher makes reluctantly) should work closely together, not only in the process of understanding the spreading of the disease, but also in all efforts of prevention.

Medical science is often challenged to develop cures for illnesses. In the case of AIDS, a successful treatment or vaccine is either unobtainable or far into the future. Even if a vaccine were to be developed, it is still unthinkable that a disease with such a social nature could be eliminated solely through attempts at treating individuals. For example: A vaccine for hepatitis B has not been effective in eliminating that disease. Effective treatment strategies for syphilis and gonorrhoea have not reduced the incidence of those diseases (cf Mays, Albee & Schneider 1989:91). Barnett and Blaikie (1992:7) refer to the need to understand and study AIDS not only as a medical phenomenon:

However, behind these [sexual] practices lie the way in which a particular society structures sexual relations - the expectations of marriage, cohabitations and other liaisons, and of favours received and given in sexual encounters whether hetero- or homosexual. Here the analysis moves away from medical science to epidemiology, and in the study of these contextual structures, to sociology and anthropology.

The human or social sciences are thus specifically challenged to work together with medical science in the field of prevention. It remains the urgent task of the human and social sciences to develop effective methods that would affect attitudes and belief systems that influence risky health-related behaviour. "High-risk sexual activity frequently involves behaviors heretofore not openly discussed. If past behavior is the best predictor of future behavior, the history of sex education in the United States does not generate much optimism for change in sex education curriculums" (Mays, Albee & Schneider 1989:92).

8. The true division between the social sciences and the natural or physical sciences is not the field of study, but the paradigms used. Turner (1995:17) says "the real division therefore is not between sociology and medicine, but between those paradigms which see illness and disease as social facts in the Durkheimian sense, and those who regard illness and disease as conditions of the individual, especially the isolated organism invaded by germs and disorder".

Patton (1990:6 ff) warns us that many different ideologies play a role in the understanding of AIDS. Even the so-called facts are riddled with ideological biases and articulate certain power relations.⁹ According to Patton (1990:3), it is necessary to ask why some minimise the consequences of the HIV epidemic, while others go totally overboard in their description of the extent of this epidemic.¹⁰ The role of politicians, the medical fraternity and industry, the media, as well as the AIDS service organisations should be put into perspective (Patton 1990:3). Particularly the way the media project the AIDS epidemic plays an important role in people's perception and understanding of AIDS and of the people living with AIDS.

It is beyond the scope of this study, and warrants a separate study, to discuss all the different ideological influences. Patton (1993) explains how views surrounding heterosexuality and homosexuality became an ideology which, on the one hand, stigmatises AIDS as a "gay disease" and on the other, puts the heterosexual women at risk of contracting AIDS by ignoring important information. It is important that we take note of the complexity of the issues surrounding AIDS. From an ecosystemic perspective we should also be aware of our own biases.

Earlier the metaparadigm of this study was made clear. It is an ecosystemic metaparadigm wishing to supplement the traditional scientific paradigm as represented by the Newtonian and positivistic approach to science. "For it is positivism which positions the issue of AIDS as apolitical, the clinician and client as de-sexed, as gender neutral, stripped of class, age, ethnicity. It is positivism that encourages the clinician to categorise and diagnose, to research and treat objectively" (Ussher 1993:134).

This study shares Ussher's (1993) critique against a positivistic approach. The situation is actually quite complex. Take for example, the referral to *risk groups* (gay men; prostitutes, IV drug users) which creates a paradoxical situation.¹¹ On the one hand, it creates a situation where people are put into categories. The term *risk groups* may give the impression that the HIV selects certain groups of people, which is not true. Like all diseases, AIDS has followed multiple infection paths wherever the opportunity created by human behaviour and geographic proximity has allowed transmission. AIDS has affected diverse segments of

9. "Any framework offered for understanding 'the AIDS epidemic' is laden with historical references and assumptions which relate our lived experience to particular social institutions. Discussions of AIDS as a holocaust, as a CIA biomedical experiment, as an act of holy retribution all promote and justify particular community and policy responses, because each refers to broad forms of social power relations which, in our collective Western history, have deep and equivocal meaning" (Patton 1990:2).

10. "Sources of funding as well as attitudes towards funding will be determined largely by political factors and views expressed by those perceived to be authorities in the field. Opposing views are already resulting in confusion with respect to how to perceive this particular syndrome. The virus is being portrayed by some powerful and influential members of the scientific and political fraternity as a runaway killer disease. Others urge caution and place the AIDS statistics into a different perspective" (Hall & O'Grady 1989:86).

11. Research done by Jack (1990:39) amongst school pupils in the USA shows that "adolescents in general do not understand the difference between risky behaviors and risky groups".

society, recognising only behaviour boundaries and ignoring socially constructed definitions of people or differences like race, creed, sexual orientation, age and income, to a certain extent. On the other hand, it is true however, that cultural norms, sexual orientation, gender, ethnicity, economic status or religion may affect sexual behaviour and thus may either facilitate or hinder HIV transmission. All people are equal, but all people do not behave the same sexually. It is risky behaviour that puts people at risk. Gay men, for instance, are not inherently at risk, just as women are not automatically free of it. A prostitute who routinely practices safe sex may be at lower risk than a married woman who has unprotected sex with her unfaithful heterosexual husband (cf Pearlberg 1991:37).

The paradox becomes clear. On the one hand, the categorising of people into groups is a positivistic-scientific model. Everything must be categorised and diagnosed to be analysed eventually. It is part of the philosophy that by breaking things up into smaller units they become easier to understand. On the other hand, not to refer to the differences between things or to ignore the differences caused by a specific context (i.e. poverty) is part of the scientific ideal where things are dealt with as objects, unrelated to a specific context and situation.

From an ecosystemic perspective, it is important to criticise an approach that tries to categorise everything and ignore the interrelatedness of the universe. A move away from the medical-diagnosical model of looking at illness is long overdue. Reference to risk groups may just be another way to implement the medical model.¹² It is also important from an ecosystemic perspective to be critical of an approach that ignores the context and tries to analyse things objectively, constructing a causal deterministic framework of thinking. This paradoxical situation should not discourage pastoral workers from working from an ecosystemic perspective, but actually shows why an ecosystemic perspective is so necessary.

The question is who benefits the most from all the scientific research on the subject of AIDS. Ussher (1993:130-131) refers to the amount of research done in the discipline of psychology alone. "There are certainly more research papers on AIDS published in Britain than there are individuals with AIDS. More eager researchers than PLWAs."¹³ It is easy to see why many PLWAs have become cynical and bitter

12. Turner (1995:9-10) mentions the following features of the medical model:

- Disease is regarded to be the consequence of certain malfunctions of the human body conceptualised as a biochemical machine.
- It assumes that all human dysfunction's might eventually be traced to specific causal mechanisms.
- All disease and illness behaviours are reduced to a number of specific biochemical mechanisms.
- It is exclusionary in that alternative perspectives are seen as invalid.
- It presupposes a clear mind/body distinction where the causal agent of illness would be located in the human body.

13. An acronym for *People Living With AIDS*.

about what appears to be an 'AIDS industry', which seems to operate irrespective of their needs" (Ussher 1993:131). The expectations raised by all the research is enormous, but very little has come of it. Not much of it is integrated into policy and service improvements, and very little direct benefits for careseekers¹⁴ and those caring for them are visible. There may be many reasons for this. Ussher (1993:132), a psychologist, says:

It seems as if the psychologist, following the ideal of objectivity, reduces the aspect of AIDS he or she is studying to a few cut-and-dried epithets, ignoring the complex ambiguities of human conduct or the context in which the behaviour is occurring or being observed, simplifying complex issues in order that they fit into the research agenda, and thus making many of the research questions which were addressed meaningless. This means missing the opportunity to move outside the narrow boundaries often created and maintained by tradition...

Ussher (1993:132-133) suggests that empiricists in psychology used the AIDS crisis to boost the idea of empirical research because they believe more data equal more findings and more findings equal more knowledge. This prevents psychology from becoming more innovative. Real issues "are sacrificed at the altar of empiricism; or that researchers choose to look to the easily quantifiable subject of attitudes, rather than to widen their agenda and ask many of the questions which would be more useful" (Ussher 1993:133).

From an ecosystemic perspective, problems are not only located in the private domain, but also in the public or political domain. This does not mean that the individual should be ignored, but that nobody should be seen as living in a social vacuum. The positivistic-scientific approach to AIDS from the perspective of the social or human sciences has caused people living with AIDS to be dealt with in a certain manner and attempts to prevent the spread of AIDS also being approached in a certain manner. For example: if people receive more information they will cease with their risky behaviour, or condoms will prevent the spread of AIDS.¹⁵

The pain of the individuals living with AIDS, their families and loved ones is often missed in the positivistic-scientific approach. Inherent to this scientific paradigm is the emphasis on the individual at the expense of sociopolitical or institutional influences (Ussher 1993:135). Ignoring the political issues involved and the insistence on viewing the individual and society as rational objects and not interrelated, have hampered attempts to change attitudes and the spread of the disease. The issues of sex, sexuality, age, class, ethnicity, values, religion and many others are often in the forefront of the experiences of those who are HIV positive or living with AIDS, but are either ignored by scientists or abused by labelling.¹⁶

14 . The researcher uses the term in a comprehensive sense. It includes HIV+ people as well as people living with AIDS and their families.

15 . Green (1994) makes it clear that although condoms prevent the spread of the disease, this does not seem to be the only solution in the African context where the use of condoms is very low.

16 . Patton (1990) makes us aware of how the term "African AIDS" is misused by scientists, while Green (1994) shows how the ignorance of the African situation causes Western solutions to be "dumped" by sponsors on Africa.

Ussher (1993:137) describes how this positivistic-scientific approach influences clinical psychologists. They are transposing the difficulties of HIV positive patients onto a psychological register, psychopathologizing the individual "and thus ensuring that any difficulties are seen as amenable to particular expert technologies, which maintain the role of experts and remove the responsibility from the individual person or the society". Power and prestige have been reified by this scientific discourse; the person becomes the neutral subject, psychology as a science is emphasised and the farce of objectivity goes on.

The individual is often viewed as ill and with symptoms that can be classified. This classification often ignores gender, race, class and cultural biases in society. The subjectivity of the therapist is ignored in the scientific approach. AIDS often raises tremendous issues like sexual abuse, sexual orientations, adultery, betrayal, death and illness and many others. Is it possible for the therapist or pastoral worker to merely examine all of these on an abstract level, removed from his/ her own experience and values? This top-down (scientific?) approach often serves to **disempower** the careseekers.

The community pastoral work approach done from an ecosystemic perspective allows a reconciliation of the criticisms levelled at the Newtonian-scientific approach to the need of people to receive quality help and support. A community approach is deeply aware of the context and the subjectivity involved in all forms of care. The race, class, gender and cultural biases of society should be recognised. It allows for the subjective experiences of the pastoral worker being acknowledged. The trained pastoral worker who works from a community perspective should not function as an isolated expert, but should **empower** the careseekers and society to become involved in the therapeutic process. This move away from the pastoral worker as the objective expert would make it possible to make use of lay people and could also lead to an acknowledgement of many of the questions currently denied attention because they cannot be Newtonian-scientifically investigated. This does not mean that research should not be done and that information from the so-called physical sciences should be ignored. Much of the information in the following sections has been gathered and researched by the medical sciences and is important information for the pastoral worker.

7.1.1 Understanding AIDS from a clinical perspective

A discussion about the clinical aspects of AIDS and the history of AIDS could be controversial. AIDS highlighted the questions about the so-called objectivity of scientific research. Power relations determined whose knowledge is accepted as real and as objective (Patton 1990:53). Patton (1990:62-64) is of the opinion that conflicts between virology and immunology are visible in the so-called scientific debate and that the greater financial and scientific power of virology over immunology could be observed.

... by ignoring the power of metaphoric analogues between science and society, we reproduce notions of scientific advance without understanding how shifts in research ethics affect research methods, and how research frames affect the concepts of the body and person on which scientific and ethical theory rest" (Patton 1990:69).

The so-called *factual information* regarding AIDS should be understood in perspective and not as objective knowledge. The need for a recursive pattern of thinking is necessary when dealing with information

regarding AIDS and HIV. Information should not be viewed separate from its source and its context. In a recursive manner information and society's way of thinking (world-view, paradigm, ethics) should be brought in relation to each other. This does not mean that clinical information or observations about the virus should be ignored or relativised to the point of uselessness as long as users of the information understand it as a certain perspective.

In 1981 cases of *Pneumocystis carinii* pneumonia occurring together with Kaposi's sarcoma were reported in young men in America.¹⁷ It was realised after a while that these people were immunocompromised. It was not until 1983 that the virus, now called the human immunodeficiency virus or HIV, was discovered.¹⁸

The human immunodeficiency virus is a retrovirus, which means it can insert itself into the host cell nucleus. It is a virus containing a viral enzyme known as reverse transcriptase, which enables it to force the cell to make a DNA copy of its own RNA genetic material which gives it the power to be incorporated into the host cell. This could lead to a take-over of the T₄ lymphocytes which play an important role in the normal immune response. It is the destruction of the T₄ lymphocytes which accounts for the immunodeficiency effect of the virus. The T₄ lymphocytes divide on antigenic stimulation and procure lymphokines or growth factors which promote B lymphocyte growth and antibody production. The AIDS virus appears in many forms, it mutates rapidly, invades immune cells and turns infected cells into producers of more viruses. It may remain latent for long periods. Antibodies to HIV (currently the only way to diagnose infection) only appear weeks to months after exposure; this is called the *window period*. At the time of acute infection stimulation of antibodies against the virus occur; this leads to an acute seroconversion illness similar to glandular fever with muscle aches, joint pains, swollen lymph glands and sore throat. This acute infection may, however, be asymptomatic.

The clinical features of HIV infection are a consequence of the immune deficiency. It may appear many years after the infection. Full-blown AIDS is a series of opportunistic infections and/ or tumours and may manifest neurologically due to the infections and tumours or due to the virus itself (Hall & O'Grady 1989:85).

To date there is no cure for AIDS and it is quite apparent that eradicating this disease is going to require more than restoring a patient's competent immune system. Considering it's baffling biological properties, the quest for a vaccine (that is being developed and tried in various centres) that will provide protective immunity against the changing forms of this virus is likely to be a lengthy and frustrating one. Because the viruses merge genetically into the host cells, the task of developing antiviral treatments that can kill the

17. According to Patton (1993:166), by the end of 1981 the emerging syndrome was dubbed Gay Related Immune Deficiency (GRID) or the 'gay plague' by reporters and researchers.

18. The human immunodeficiency virus was first described in an article in *Science* magazine in 1983 (Hall & O'Grady 1989:72).

AIDS virus without destroying the host immune cells is a formidable one. Even the more limited goal of keeping the condition in check with antiviral drugs presents an immense challenge.

Fortunately, the HIV is not an efficient virus. In most instances it takes frequent and sufficient contact with HIV for infection to occur. In certain subpopulations, such as haemophiliacs, repeated and substantial contact with HIV-contaminated blood products have caused a high rate of infection (Cochran 1989:311).

Science, medical technology and psycho-socio-economic forces should work together towards a solution. There are signs that multifaceted psychosocial programmes, which include items like protective knowledge, effective personal control and social support, produce substantial reductions in risky behaviour (cf Bandura 1989:140).

7.1.1.1 Ways in which HIV infection is not transmitted

- Being bitten by mosquitoes, other insects or an animal.
- Eating food handled, prepared or served by somebody with HIV infection.
- Sharing toilets, telephones or clothes.
- Sharing forks, spoons, knives or drinking glasses.
- Touching, hugging or kissing a person with HIV infection.
- Attending school, church, shopping malls or other public places with HIV-infected people.
- Participating in sport together. Sweat from an HIV-infected person will not transmit the HIV. The only danger is bleeding, in which case the injured person should be requested to stop playing.
- Kissing. It is known that a small amount of HIV may be present in the saliva of some infected people. There are people who warn that "French" kissing or deep kissing might hold a small amount of risk of transmitting the HIV.

7.1.1.2 How the HIV is transmitted

The HIV is in the blood, semen or vaginal secretions of an infected person.

- HIV is most often spread by unprotected sexual intercourse with infected individuals and the use of contaminated needles by intravenous drug users.
- Pregnant women can pass HIV to their new-born babies before birth or during birth. However, a baby can also become infected by being breastfed by an infected woman.
- Quite a number of people get the HIV through blood transfusions. This risk has been reduced since mid-1985, as all blood is tested and blood donors are screened. There is a very small risk that a person can

get HIV through organ and tissue transplants and artificial insemination. As with blood transfusion, all donors are tested and carefully screened.

7.1.1.3 The prevalence of AIDS

The incidence or inception rate is the number of new cases that arise in a specified population during a specified period of time for a particular phenomenon. Prevalence refers to the total number of active cases present in a specified population (Orford 1992:38). The World Health Organisation (WHO) predicted in 1991 that by the end of the century about 40 million people in the world will be infected and 10 million people will be living with AIDS (Squire 1993:188). About 9 million of the 10 million people will live in developing countries (Wolffers 1992:14). Another 10 million children will be orphans. According to Green (1994:9), there have been signs in South Africa of both Pattern I and II spreading of the HIV between 1982 and 1993.¹⁹

According to surveys, the prevalence rate for HIV seropositivity in South Africa was about 7.57% of the population at the end of 1994. The estimated doubling time was about 15.5 months. An extrapolation from these results suggests that before March 1996 about 2.4 million people will be HIV-infected. Mother-to-child transmission is thought to be responsible for up to 20% of new infections in South Africa (McIntyre 1996:27). This means that in South Africa about 50 000 children could be HIV-infected in 1996.

According to the Editorial in the AIDS Bulletin (SA) of December 1995 about one in five sexually active people are being infected with HIV (Editor of AIDS Bulletin 1995:3). A report in *Business Day* of 7 May 1996 cited the latest survey of the Department of Health which says that 10% of South Africa's adult population is HIV-positive.²⁰ These results are, according to an AIDS consultant "in line with expectations" (*Business Day* 7 May 1996:2). The number of AIDS cases in South Africa in 1996 is estimated at between 40 000 and 80 000 (McIntyre 1996:27).

19. Pattern I refers to countries where the HIV began to spread extensively in the 1970's and where most infected people were homosexual or bisexual and the ratio male to female in the range 10:1 to 15:1. In Pattern II countries the spread is predominantly heterosexual and the male to female ratio 1:1. Pattern III countries experienced the epidemic much later and it is likely that the virus was introduced in the mid 1980's (Barnett & Blaikie 1992:9).

20. A telephonic conversation with Dr HGV Küstner, from the Directorate of Epidemiology of the Department of National Health, on 21 May 1996 confirmed these results. According to Dr Küstner, the November-December results of research in antinatal clinics shows that about 14.44% of women in the age group 15-59 are HIV+. Inferences made from this estimate that in November-December 1995 about 1.8 million people in South Africa were HIV+. At the end of 1995 only 8 784 cases of full-blown AIDS were officially reported to the Department of National Health.

7.1.2 An ecosystemic perspective

As was previously mentioned, AIDS is a global issue, which is also why some people call it a pandemic. An ecosystemic perspective seems to be of the utmost importance to understand the AIDS context. The AIDS pandemic cannot be approached through a dualistic view of human beings. In a holistic approach the total person must be encountered. Auerswald (1968:205) explains the importance of the ecological systems approach especially for community programmes.

In addition, the use of this model in planning has demonstrated its many implications for the design and operational implementation of delivery systems, especially for community programs ... The ecological systems approach ensures that the entire process of planning for a community is rooted in the realities and needs of that community.

An ecosystemic perspective would emphasise

- the awareness of the fact that society is a whole and that the parts within a system simultaneously act on one another;
- the awareness of the importance of mutual, reciprocal interactions;
- that interactions are embedded in things like language through which humans construe realities, which represent their ideas, and
- that living systems are unstable and in a process of evolution. Circularity evolution and the complex interdependence between the elements of an ecology or system also imply unpredictability.

This is important for the scientific research being done on the HIV. The evidence so far points to the fact that none of the scientific community's attempted interventions have significantly altered the course of the epidemic (Campbell & Williams 1996:55). One of the reasons may be the lack of integration between the different approaches. An ecosystemic perspective can help to promote the dialogue between the social and natural sciences²¹ and also between science and theology.²²

An ecosystemic approach is also important for the educational and prevention programmes that are being conducted. Paul Freire (1972), author of *Pedagogy of the oppressed*, writes about the need for educationists not to deposit knowledge in the minds of people, but to **empower** them to solve the problems

21 . "The number of papers devoted to technical matters has remained steady ... but the contribution of social sciences has increased dramatically over the 12-year period, reflecting the increasing awareness that technical solutions are unlikely to be found in the near future and that greater emphasis needs to be placed on social issues that were neglected in the early years of the epidemic" (Campbell & Williams 1996:56)

22 . "The world of science and that of the humanities, previously separated by the use of mutually incompatible explanatory frameworks ..., now become joined in a consistent and unbroken epistemologic continuum" (Sperry 1992:248).

they have within their cultural situations.²³ Problem-solving education is thus of more value than just the conveying of information, which is based on the premise that the educationist is the knower and the other knows nothing. People should be able to relate information to the reality of their lives. Educational plans should meet people's needs, incorporate their experiences and knowledge and involve them as active learners and problem solvers (Bradshaw 1993:97).

It is also important for those involved in the field of care that an ecosystemic approach is followed. From an ecosystemic perspective, it is important to actively change the focus of care in AIDS from a traditional cure-based approach to a psychosocial approach (cf Bennett 1995:98). In the mind-frame of the Enlightenment, progress (cure) is of the utmost importance. This creates an enormous amount of tension in carers and careseekers when they are in a situation where there is no cure available.

Psychosocial interventions refer to caring actions which prepare a person emotionally and physically for death. It is not the traditional view of hoping for a cure but rather a care that fosters and maintains a sense of hope related to the quality of time left and an appreciation of life. This means that the carer facilitates a process whereby the careseeker can take time to prepare for death by enjoying life. The carer, and in the case of this study the pastoral worker, would facilitate a communication process where the careseeker tells his/ her family or friends about the diagnosis of HIV+/ AIDS. The careseeker should be motivated to draw up a will, make sure that his/ her friends and family know his/ her wishes for the funeral, learn to enjoy small things like a pain-free day, an outing or involvement in anything he/ she likes. Meaning should be discovered not in terms of a hope of being cured, but in the things that make life worthwhile.

An ecosystemic approach should also help to facilitate more community awareness in society. The Canadian, Schafer (1991), discusses the reaction of people towards those who are HIV+ or are living with AIDS. He said that a "plague mentality" is developing and is visible in victim blaming; xenophobia; irrationality and desocialisation. Schafer describes the Canadian society as an individualistic society in the sense that individual rights and liberties, privacy, independence, personal autonomy and self-fulfilment are seen as important values. But the Canadian society is also less individualistic than the American society, for instance: (a) people are involved in their communities and are socially involved with one another; (b) social programmes like Medicare and public education are supported by society.

Schafer (1991:10-11) is of the opinion that the biggest danger of AIDS is not in the field of the economy or the health-care system, but on the level of common humanity. A process of desocialisation has begun. By creating a situation of fear and suspicion, people are busy eroding compassion and trust in societies. "When people develop negative feelings about their fellows, they become less public-spirited" (Schafer 1991:11).

23 . "Implicit in the banking concept is the assumption of a dichotomy between man and the world: man is merely *in* the world, not *with* the world or with others; man is spectator, not re-creator. In this view, man is not a conscious being (*corpo consciente*); he is rather the possessor of a consciousness; an empty 'mind' passively open to the reception of deposits of reality from the world outside" (Freire 1972:49).

This study works with the supposition that the AIDS crisis can only be dealt with from an ecosystemic perspective (cf De Jongh van Arkel 1992d: 103, 105, 110). The following sections are a further elaboration of this theme.

7.2 AIDS AS A CHALLENGE TO THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN SOCIETY

The HIV/ AIDS epidemic is still not widely perceived as a threat to general society. This is despite its having reached projected epidemic proportions and having achieved significant impact on our health, social welfare services and insurance industry. Why is this so? (Editorial: *AIDS Bulletin* 1995:3)

Some people question whether HIV/ AIDS is really such a problem to the world. Development workers claim that social-economic upliftment is far more important (Wolffers 1992:13).²⁴ An international conference on Health in Southern Africa, held in Maputo in Mozambique in April 1990, drew up a document on AIDS known as the: *Draft Maputo Statement on HIV and AIDS in Southern Africa*. The *Draft Maputo Statement* (1990:69) says "HIV/ AIDS is a social disease and should not be approached in a narrow biomedical fashion. Economic, political and social factors are major determinants of the rate of development and extent of this epidemic." Barnett and Blaikie (1992:104) summarise the findings of the impact of AIDS in Uganda in the following table:

- loss of income-earning opportunities in both agriculture and non-agricultural sectors;
- diversion of productive labour time of still-healthy family members to caring for the sick;
- diversion of cash to medical expenses, both palliative and in a vain search for a cure for afflicted household members;
- diversion of food reserves to funeral ceremonies and cash for coffins and other funeral expenses;
- withdrawal of children from school to reduce cash expenditure and increase available labour time on the farm;
- altered patterns of consumption and production by households receiving orphans from other households which no longer have adults capable of caring for and looking after children.

a) The role of economic factors in most people's lives is clearly visible when the price of, for example, petrol rises. The important role of the economy, also in the caring field, is acknowledged by Couture and Hester (1995:44) when they say: "As we prepare for the twenty-first century, psychological questions are giving way to economic ones". AIDS is an economic issue and will also influence the economic upliftment of disadvantaged communities. This human tragedy will influence many people's lives.

24. Wolffers (1992:13) refers to a personal interview with an anthropologist from Uganda who believes that the problem is not so serious and that information about HIV/ AIDS in Uganda is exaggerated.

The generation aged between 15 and 45 is mainly affected, but this is also the generation that represents the spine of the labour force (Barnett & Blaikie 1992:14). Except for the loss of human lives, there will also be other consequences. The consequences are unthinkable especially in poor and developing countries, where people in key positions may die without anyone to replace them. The cost of care and lack of productivity will also be tremendous. In some areas the percentage of people who test HIV positive is so high that the economically and sexually active population is likely to be decimated by the turn of the century. This means that the surviving population will consist mainly of the very old and the very young.

The economies of whole regions will virtually be destroyed. The cost of funerals for poor communities and the absence of people from work in communities where about four funerals a week are held (in parts of Uganda) should also be calculated. In rural areas in Africa people work on their own land and are responsible for the production of their own food. The number of funerals every week leads not only to a reduction in productivity, but also to further food shortages.

Some insurance companies are withdrawing their business from high risk groups and even from certain geographical areas where the mortality rate is unacceptably high (Hulley 1991:141). Pinington (1995:9-10) makes it clear that insurance always will be available, but that the costs involved in group schemes will rise tremendously (between four- and five-fold) as the risk for the insurance companies rises. It will depend on employee groups what level of inequities will be acceptable to them. Some employees may find that an HIV-infected colleague would effectively be favoured if he/ she were to receive the same benefits from the group scheme as the rest of staff, but dies earlier and thus contributes less. Other employee groups might feel this to be unfair and may elect to forgo cover or to restrict the comprehensive nature of their group cover. According to Saayman and Kriel (1992:1), one of the biggest insurance companies in South Africa, Sanlam, expects R100 million payouts on AIDS-related policies by the turn of the century.

b) This will definitely have a tremendous impact on both primary and secondary health care systems. The cost of health care is tremendous. According to American figures, the first 10 000 Aids cases cost 1.6 billion dollars in hospital costs. The medical costs in 1991 were US \$8.5 billion, lost wages US \$ 55.6 billion, and research and blood-screening US \$ 2.3 billion. In developing countries the cost will be far less, but that does not alter the fact that it is a tremendous financial burden. It is clear that governments will not be able to care for people and that HIV/AIDS patients will also not be able to afford care. In countries like Tanzania and Uganda people are sent home from hospitals with a few aspirins because there is nothing else hospitals can offer patients. The only solution as far as care is concerned is that families, friends and communities should be prepared to care on a voluntary basis for people. Even this may become a problem. In some areas in Uganda family members are already looking after so many orphans and sick people that they are not able to take on any more responsibilities (Barnett & Blaikie 1992:12-13).

One projection suggests that health care costs of people with AIDS in South Africa could account for 34% to 75% of total health care expenditure by the year 2005 (Kinghom, Lee & Karstaedt 1995:20). This may eventually lead to a reduction in medical service for non-HIV patients. Research done at the Baragwanath Hospital in Soweto indicated that outpatient treatments costs about R112 per HIV/AIDS patients per visit

(Kinghorn *et al* 1995:21) in 1992. These costs increase dramatically when patients are admitted for hospital treatment.

c) AIDS could have an influence on the political situation in some countries because economic instability and labour problems could "lead to economic and political instability" (Wolffers 1992:14).

d) Certain changes take place in customs and cultures. Barnett and Blaikie (1992:107) mention, for example, the changes in funeral practices. Previously, in Uganda, a mourning period of three days was compulsory. That has changed to a one-and-a-half-day period.

7.2.1 AIDS and poverty

Much literature on AIDS fails to identify the context in which HIV is transmitted: high levels of preventable disease, inadequate health resources, and a background of poverty, rapid urbanisation, commercial sex, social upheaval, and community marginalisation (Zwi & Cabral 1991:1528).

The previous section highlights the fact that AIDS could promote poverty. Poverty could also play a role in the spread of the HIV (cf Evian 1993; Van Niekerk 1994). AIDS or the HIV virus does not select a specific group of people but certain social conditions influence the spread of the disease. Poverty is one such a condition, particularly if poverty results in migration to the city. Poverty often leads to displacement. This does not mean that AIDS is a problem of the poor while the rich will be spared the ravages of the epidemic (cf Saayman & Kriel 1992:11).²⁵ Zwi and Cabral (1991:1528) emphasise how important it is to identify high risk situations to promote change in social, political, and economic characteristics of society.

There are very few communities that are able to survive outside a cash-based economy. In communities where a subsistence economy functions, people have to leave the community to seek work in distant towns and cities. Finding work in a city where a person has no contacts and little skills and formal education is difficult. Finding a place to stay could also be difficult, if not impossible. People migrating from the poorer rural areas are often in competition with the people in the cities for scarce opportunities and resources.

Many people who migrate to the cities end up with nowhere to stay, no food, no job and devoid of the traditional cultural mores and constraints. Many of these people end up in either prostitution (commercial sex workers)²⁶ or casual relationships in exchange for food and shelter. Some end up in the South African context in single sex hostels as migrant workers on the mines. The single-sex hostels are a hostile

25. Saayman and Kriel (1992:11) rejected the idea that AIDS is a problem of the poor, but mention (1992:54-56) migrant labour and prostitution as social factors that should be addressed. The researcher agrees with their reluctance to connect AIDS with poverty, because such a link could be misunderstood and misused by people. It seems to be the reality that poverty does play a role in the spread of the disease, because poverty has an influence on people's behaviour and activated survival behaviour in people.

26 Cf Schurink *et al* (s a:70-76). Poverty is not the only reason for people to become involved in prostitution, although money plays an important role in most commercial sex workers' decision to become involved in prostitution.

environment and living there often goes with a high alcohol intake and little opportunities for leisure and entertainment. Sex together with alcohol is often used as a substitute for other ways of entertainment or as a way of experiencing a sense of pleasure and belonging. At the end of the day sexually transmitted diseases are rampant among people who have become displaced from their usual and normal family and cultural life.

Poor people have less access to health care and thus also less access to facilities for the detection and treatment of sexually transmitted diseases and for the provision of condoms (Evian 1993:635).

Many poor people have little or no opportunities for schooling or educational training. This, together with a high level of illiteracy, makes it even more difficult to get a job. It also makes it more difficult for them to gain a clear understanding and appreciation of the seriousness and the silent nature of HIV infection.

According to the Second Carnegie Inquiry into Poverty and Development in Southern Africa, poverty in South Africa is pervasive (Wilson & Ramphela 1989). According to the Carnegie Report, in 1989, 50% of people in South Africa were living below the subsistence level.²⁷ One-third and in some areas two-thirds of all black children below the age of 14 years are growing up underweight and stunted for lack of sufficient calories.

This just confirms that a pastoral work approach in South Africa should take the realities of the socio-economic situation seriously and its implications for the pastoral work of the church.²⁸ The AIDS issue is also a social issue and should be seen as such. A comprehensive pastoral work approach which takes also the diakonia task of the church seriously is thus necessary (cf Coetsee 1991; Kritzinger 1996).

7.2.2 AIDS and Africa

AIDS will affect every community and every grouping, although some risk groups like prostitutes, gay people and drug abusers are identified. AIDS will also affect every continent and every society. It is impossible to ignore the fact that this study happens to take place on the continent Africa. The idea is not to paint a picture of a disease that is typically African, although it is impossible to ignore the situation on this continent. Although the situation and impact of AIDS may differ from country to country and community to community, the human experience of illness and death is universal.

Patton (1990:77-98) objects to what she calls "African AIDS". Patton (1990:77) protests against the way the western world described Africa as a homogenous socio-political block.²⁹ This type of description is very

27 . In 1985 the minimum living level was estimated to be R350.

28 . For a detailed discussion of the reason for the poverty in South Africa, see Wilson and Ramphela (1989:189-249) and for a theological discussion of the reasons, see Kritzinger 1996.

29 . "Suiwer lewensbeelde waarop die invloed van ander nie merkbaar is nie, het nog nooit bestaan nie, behalwe in sommige volkekundiges, sommige sendelinge, sommige fundamentaliste en sommige denkers se koppe" (E van Niekerk 1994:89).

useful for the Westerners because Euro-America then becomes the *we* who also set the norms and Africa the *them*, who have different norms.³⁰ Patton (1990:78) is convinced that the way the Western world describes the AIDS crisis in Africa is undergirded with what she calls *colonialist science*.³¹ The epidemiology³² of HIV in Africa relies on tests and clinical definitions developed in the West and which assume a Northern hemispheric distribution of pathogens. The HIV antibody tests used in the beginning cross-react with the antibodies to malarial plasmodium which is endemic in certain parts of Africa, resulting in huge numbers of false positive results (Patton 1990:80). Barnett and Blaikie (1992:4) say: "the way in which some epidemiologists describe and classify the particular pattern of a stigmatizing disease such as AIDS may itself reflect the same social and cultural prejudices that have made the disease shameful in the first place".

Patton (1990:80) refers to the blood samples found in Kinshasa which have become the anchor to claims that AIDS began in Africa. According to Patton (1990:1980), these samples have no patient history attached to them. There is no proof that these samples belong to an inhabitant of Africa (cf Green, J & Miller 1986: 40-49 and Gordon & Klouda 1988:13). Saayman and Kriel (1992:3) are also convinced that the allegation that AIDS originated in Africa is unfounded and that it has something to do with perceptions in the Western world that Africans have "bizarre sexual relationships".

Patton (1990:82-89) believes that the Western attitudes towards Africa³³ as an undeveloped continent are visible in the type of HIV vaccine trials they plan to run in Africa; vaccine trials that they would not be allowed to run in the Euro-American countries. Patton (1990:89) says when it suits the Western world they refer to a different type of AIDS in Africa, but when they want to test vaccine they work with the assumption that AIDS in Africa and AIDS in the West are the same.

For Patton (1990:96) the issue of AIDS in Africa and the scientific community and politicians' way of explaining things again prove the point that "The scientists, policy-makers, and media tycoons have the power to produce masks of otherness which create discrimination against people with HIV and AIDS. They have the power to thwart prevention by allowing people to ignore the necessity of speaking about sexual practices out of a false sense that HIV is somewhere else" (Patton 1990:96). Saayman and Kriel (1992) cite Prewitt (1988) who says:

30 . De Jongh van Arkel (1992d:105) says it is important that the *they* becomes *we*. "It is a different way of thinking in which we move away from an 'us and them paradigm' to a 'we paradigm' so that we can say 'we have AIDS'".

31 . "It is believed to have originated in Africa, and to have spread from there to Haiti, North America, and then Europe. This hypothesis, whether or not it turns out ultimately to be correct, has great appeal to those who associate 'the dark continent' with sexual incontinence and primitive behaviour" (Schafer 1991:3).

32 . The study of the incidence and distribution of diseases, and of their control and prevention (cf Oxford Dictionary).

33 . Cf Van Niekerk (1994:37).

The world's image of that troubled continent [Africa] is linked to AIDS. Public discourse about AIDS in general, but especially about AIDS in Africa, is clouded by the persistent, pernicious presence of racial stereotypes, moralistic reasoning, and xenophobic policies ... [according to this view] AIDS is a disease of the immoral; in the United States, of the homosexual, the prostitute, the drug user, and in Africa, of the sexually promiscuous.

Although it is difficult to agree with everything Patton (1990) says,³⁴ it is important from an ecosystemic perspective to be aware that no form of science is objective and that so-called scientific truths should be understood in perspective because there is often more than one truth.³⁵ Patton's (1990) feeling that the reaction of the West to AIDS in Africa is distinctive of their paternalistic and colonialistic attitudes towards Africa cannot be ignored without seriously considering all the underlying implications.

Edward Green (1994) is specifically concerned with the spread of AIDS in Africa. He is convinced that condoms are not the solution for Africa, because most condom promotion programmes "failed to make a dent in the epidemic" (Green 1994:1). The condoms are often used wrongly and the available products are of poor quality because of inadequate storage and transportation under tropical conditions. The percentage of men regularly using condoms in Uganda, after an intensive programme, was about 3% in early 1993.³⁶

Green believes that what is necessary is to connect AIDS with sexually transmitted diseases (STD's) like gonorrhoea, syphilis, chlamydia and chancroid. This is neglected in almost all programmes while the highest risk group are those with STD's.³⁷ Green (1994:2) has found that STD's are often regarded as an

34. Ijsselmuiden (1995:13), for example, explains why Africa has been targeted for Phase III vaccine trials. According to Ijsselmuiden (1995:13), populations with a high incidence of HIV infection are preferred since this would reduce the sample size and the time needed to determine vaccine efficacy. "In the developed world such populations are only found among intravenous drug users and even then the numbers are not very large. Consequently, Africa and other developing countries are now being targeted since there is almost a limitless number of high incidence populations".

35. "The 'truths' of AIDS are often like the truths Nietzsche would unmask. Often posed as objective, detached assessments, the 'truths' about AIDS carry with them marks of their own allegiance and empire. The 'spread of AIDS', the 'protection of the public health', the 'foreign threat of AIDS', the 'social impact of AIDS', all bear moral imprints that interpret the epidemic even as they 'describe' it. Any analysis of AIDS must therefore consider not only the official 'truths' but also the moral and cultural preconditions that make those 'truths' possible" (Murphy 1994:3-4).

36. Van Dyk (1991:198-200) found in her research of UNISA students that some students, because of the political distrust, see the use of condoms as a family planning strategy of the government. Van Dyk (1991:200) decided to only analyse the use of condoms for the group of students who indicated that they practise high risk behaviour, namely those with multiple sex partners. Van Dyk (1991:199) came to the conclusion that "daar is geen beduidende verskil tussen kultuurgroepe se persentasie kondoomgebruik tydens hoë risiko-gedrag nie". Only 3.7% black people belonging to this high risk group always use condoms. Less than 14% make use of condoms half the time.

37. "Intercourse with an STD-infected partner is probably the surest way of getting AIDS in Africa, yet there will be no preventative education on this if the risk chart is followed" (Green 1994:4).

area of particular competence by African healers. Most people go to traditional healers with their STD problems and to Western hospitals with their tuberculosis or cholera. Although Green (1994) follows a completely different strain of argument than Patton (1990), he also emphasises that there is a "failure to recognize and address some of the central facts of the epidemiology of AIDS in Africa".

From a holistic perspective, the integration of traditional healers in any programme to combat AIDS seems to be necessary. Problems exist about who should be included as traditional healers, partly because of the differences between the herbalists, religious faith healers, alternative healers and diviner-mediums (Green 1994:18). Green (1994:21) sees it as important that indigenous knowledge should not be viewed as inferior and necessarily be replaced with modern and scientific-based knowledge.

7.2.2.1 A world-view

The role of the true healer is to help people to live ... and to die. This is both a medical and a priestly function. It is reasonably easy for the doctor to help people to live, but difficult to change tack and help them to die as part of the service of healing. If the doctor cannot do this, others must be equipped to provide a total service of healing (Allwood 1989:120).

The nature of AIDS makes it even more important to take a holistic approach. This emphasises the importance of holistic medicine. In Africa (and also in the Eastern countries) a holistic approach is part of the world-view of the inhabitants and also of their approach to sickness and healing. Allwood (1989:118) points out that although the people of Africa are holistic in their view of disease, they did not find the crossing to Western medicine difficult to make. But often people would consult both the doctor trained in Western medicine and the traditional healer.

There is a big difference in world-view between the traditional healers and the scientific paradigm of the medical community. This tension is aggravated by the competition for prestige and economic resources. Some contemporary healers have developed financially lucrative practices in urban areas where Western-style medicine is available (Green 1994:27). Many governments in Africa are against indigenous practitioners and even involved in the persecution of healers. This could be the result of a Western education, that makes traditional healers out to be witchdoctors. It could also be that traditional healers are viewed as very influential and some politicians are afraid of them and their influence in communities. Saayman and Kriel (1992:42) also say that the African elite who came into power after independence were negatively inclined towards traditional medicine.

The traditional healer often plays a holistic role, incorporating physical needs with emotional and social needs. Green (1994:32) puts it as follows when he refers to those who see the traditional healer as archaic and dysfunctional:

What such a view fails to recognize is that traditional systems may be well suited to the social, psychological, and other needs of participants in these systems; that traditional systems may be a greater source of comfort to Africans undergoing rapid culture change, providing security and continuity in an unpredictable, changing world; and that traditional systems tend to be genuine functioning systems whereas the same

cannot as yet be said of the modern-urban alternative.

The inability of Western-trained doctors and the Western approach to illness as an attempt to improve the medical situation in Africa is formulated from different directions (Green 1994; Berinyuu 1988). The main cause of this inadequacy can be found in the world-view of those who practise medicine from a Western perspective.³⁸ The scientific model used in Western medicine is "end-goal" orientated and is a linear process from information gathering to compilation and evaluation to diagnosis to referral to approved therapies or actual treatment. The end-goal is far removed from the physician and patient. In a holistic model the goal and the process are one. The eliciting of information is part of the healing process, the treatment prescribed at the end of the process is almost irrelevant.³⁹ The Africa world-view sees illness as person-centred in contrast to the Western view where an illness is disease-orientated.

Green (1994:33-38) discusses the points in favour and against collaboration between the medical profession and traditional healers. Green (1994:38) agrees that though there are very good reasons for traditional healers not being included in health care programmes, he is convinced that to exclude traditional healers would do more harm than to include them. Apart from the fact that they are accessible, affordable, culturally appropriate, have credibility and respect in communities, they are also holistic in their approach:

African healers make little distinction between body, mind, and spirit in therapy; the whole person is treated. The holistic perspective of African healers has led to considerable insight and success in treating a wide variety of illnesses that have a psychosomatic component. While there is a movement in modern medicine toward recognizing the psychosomatic component in *all* illness, most physicians are ill-equipped to deal with a patient's psychosocial problems (Green 1994:38).

Green (1994) did research in South Africa with traditional healers that convinced him that the involvement of traditional healers in both the prevention of the spreading of AIDS and caring for AIDS sufferers could make a difference. Although Green (1994) is not against the promotion of condoms, he believes that a disproportionate amount of financial and human resources were put into the promotion of condoms (cf Nicolson 1994:243). Green (1994:247) believes that even groups who are most inclined to oppose the promotion of condoms, like religious groups,⁴⁰ should become involved in campaigns to prevent the spread of the HIV because these are often groups with the best grassroots outreach and credibility and authority in communities. AIDS prevention programmes in Africa should, in addition to healers, make use of "church and religious leaders - both orthodox and syncretistic - as well as traditional political leaders... Churches and other indigenous, nongovernmental organizations have been denied their share of foreign

38 . "This is because the western-trained doctor, with his/her sole biophysical approach and pharmaco-medical equipment, offers an incomplete approach in the treatment of some of the sick in Africa" (Berinyuu 1988:58).

39 . According to the African integrated world-view, the healer is a person who could heal body and soul.

40 . According to Nicolson (1994:241), there are different opinions in the Catholic Church about the use of condoms to prevent the spread of AIDS.

donor support for AIDS prevention unless they have agreed to actively promote condoms" (Green 1994:247-248).

It seems as though Africa could be the point where the biomedical and more holistic models of medicine could come together. It is not only in Africa where the biomedical model is in dire straits. In the Western world the cost of medicine and the emphasis on technique over person is also criticised. The positivistic scientific approach to medicine with its narrow curative intention and its emphasis on the clinical and physical does not fulfil the needs of the people of Africa or the Western world.

There is very little doubt, in terms of the metaparadigms of this study, that co-operation between the Africa traditional systems and the Western scientifically orientated systems is very necessary, particularly in the field of AIDS. Although condoms are still the most effective protection against the HIV for many people, they also have their limits in terms of prevention. Nicolson (1994:242) summarises it aptly when he says: "Condoms are a technical, mechanistic, Western-type response to a health problem. What is needed is a more holistic, personal, community-involving healing model ...".

7.2.3 A community approach

The effectiveness of such organizations (community-based - FN) reflects their critical links with and trust from the community, whether the community is defined by ethnicity, geography, or sexual orientation (The Final Report of the National Commission on AIDS in the USA, June 1993, in Bellenir & Dresser 1995:152).⁴¹

Nowhere is the role of the community more important than in a time of crisis (Amos 1988:59). The need for a community approach to tackle the AIDS issue is emphasised by many people in many different ways. A community approach would be a more holistic approach and more aware of the social influences. Bandura (1989:138) explains it very well in the following quotation:

Social influences rooted in indigenous sources generally have greater impact and sustaining power than those applied by outsiders for a limited time. A major benefit of community-mediated programs is that they can mobilize the power of formal and informal networks of influence for transmitting knowledge and cultivating beneficial patterns of behavior. A community-mediated approach is a potentially powerful vehicle for promoting both personal and social change in several ways. ... Moreover, behavioral practices that create widespread health problems require group solutions that are best achieved through community-mediated efforts.

A community approach can activate more resources than an individualistic approach. This need is emphasised by the delegates to the *Maputo Conference on HIV and AIDS in Southern Africa*. The draft statement says "We need to involve worker, youth, women's, religious, political and other community-based organisations at all levels of work on HIV infection and AIDS. We should assist these organisations to

41. The Surgeon General's Report (USA) emphasised the importance of a community approach: "Community action is a very powerful weapon. The strongest educational and prevention efforts are those that involve all parts of the community: businesses, schools, civic and volunteer groups, religious organisations, and individuals" (in Bellenir & Dresser 1995:23).

recognise the importance of the epidemic. Wherever possible, committees to develop a response to the epidemic and related problems should be formed within organisations and communities" (Maputo 1990:70).

A community approach emphasises the importance of interaction between the different systems in society. The draft statement, therefore, proposes co-operation between the macrosystems in society and the more smaller systems like the community. This interrelationship seems to be important.

When the community is involved, the chance for empowerment is better. This is formulated as follows in the draft document. "A multisectoral community-based approach is needed to effectively tackle HIV infection. Communities must have control over activities and resources. Representative structures must ensure accountability" (Maputo 1990:71).

To empower people means to allow them to be involved in their own future. A community approach is basic to this and can help to develop a bottom-up process to the AIDS crisis. Campbell and Williams (1996:59) confirm that grassroots organisers and workers have much experience but that this experience has not found its way into the academic literature because of a top-down approach. What is necessary is self-sustaining structures in the community. Therefore, it is necessary for people to learn to make use of their own resources and knowledge.

The learning process which Campbell and Williams (1996:58) propose is a participatory skills-based process rather than the traditional information-based model.⁴² Such a participatory learning process implies more involvement. Jack (1990) did research on school pupils' knowledge and attitude about AIDS and the influence of education. He made use of a questionnaire, and tested pupils knowledge and attitude before and after a lecture on AIDS. When he tested the group again after the lecture, there was an improvement on many of the items, but not on all items. On some items the improvement was not really significant. His conclusion was that an ongoing process of education is necessary, but also a community approach. Jack (1990:128) puts it as follows:

Results of this study helped to validate the need for a community approach to AIDS education. Such an approach would involve parents, teachers, school board members, community leaders, churches, local recreational facilities, health facilities, detention centers, emergency youth shelters, teen clinics, and merchants. This comprehensive approach to AIDS is believed to be the only way to educate adolescents about AIDS.

A movement away from caring to prevention is emphasised by some. In mental health the attention is shifting away from mental illness prevention toward mental health promotion (Plaut 1982:91). If prevention is an aim: "Community support systems clearly can play an important role in preventive mental health programs" (Plaut 1982:95). Competence-building programmes are one major strategy in mental health promotion. They cover a broad spectrum of activities, ranging from the teaching of social and interpersonal

42 "... facts have little rational or predictable connection with behavior... In fact, in most parts of the country (USA - FN), high-school and college students demonstrate fairly extensive knowledge about AIDS, most of which has come from the media, yet few practice safe sex" (Patton 1990:109).

cognitive problem-solving skills to affective education for school-age children (Plaut 1982:91). Again it is important to follow a community approach and not an individual approach.

AIDS infection occurs within a specific context. It points specifically to the sexual culture of a society. The tendency to see prevention as an individual action, for example, misses the point. Cultural ways of doing should be taken into consideration in any attempt to change people's attitudes (cf Patton 1990:84 ff; Van Niekerk 1989).⁴³ It is known that in the beginning, as part of their outreach, some gay groups informed people in communities to use condoms. Some of these communities were totally against any form of contraception and responded very negatively.

Patton (1990:84-85) cites Christakis in saying that in cultures where people are less individualistic, the consent process may shift from the individual to the family or the community since "obtaining consent in this context may often involve working with community leaders, whose own interests in cooperating with researchers might be complex". Sexuality is much more than using condoms. More imaginative educational interventions are needed in some cultures to reform people's perceptions and to change the context and culture in which people make decisions about sexual behaviour. A community approach could help to identify and be sensitive to the cultural issues involved.

A community approach could help overcome the separation of the world of action, productivity, and achievement from the world of effect, emotion and personal experience (Plaut 1982:94). The human side of people may come forward and people may be seen as human beings and not as objects to be studied.

The counselling process should improve if a community approach is followed. Seeley and Kajura (1995:81-83) refer to the importance of counsellors being local people. They believe (1995:82) that people in the communities would be better able to build long-term commitments and also to cope with people's resentment because the "counsellors are local people whose own lives are affected by AIDS-related sickness and death" (Seeley & Kajura 1995:82). In the process counsellors can even help to reduce the stigma attached to AIDS. Seeley and Kajura (1995:82) explain their experience as researchers in Uganda as follows:

The emphasis has been upon *community*-based counselling in recognition of the fact that HIV/ AIDS is one factor among many that influence the lives of people in rural areas in Uganda, as in most places. Economic, social, perhaps political factors may impinge upon the way people react to HIV infection and death. By encouraging family and community members to discuss AIDS, by providing information and by giving practical examples of care, counsellors have an opportunity to reduce the stigma attached to AIDS and in a way make the lives of affected families easier.

43 . The researcher agrees with Patton's (1990:84-87) warning that the issue of culture can be taken too far. Cultures are not isolated systems and interact with one another in a pluralistic society. Patton (1990:85-87) makes it clear that often "cultural sensitivity" is a farce because the dominant Western scientific approach is used to understand other cultures or minority groups.

If counsellors come from the particular community and are willing to identify openly with the people that are HIV+ or people living with AIDS or their families, it communicates a strong message to the rest of the community. This approach is different from the non-ecosystemic approach where counsellors should be objective and keep their distance not to become too involved.

Another reason why the community approach is of specific importance in terms of the AIDS crisis is that being ill with AIDS has deprived many people of one of the most basic needs given by God at creation, that of **interaction** with others. Many careseekers' family and friends distance themselves from people living with AIDS.⁴⁴ AIDS is a sickness of isolation and withdrawal because of the stigma attached to it. A community approach could be part of the process to counter this tendency towards isolation.

A community approach to care would recognise the important role which the extended family network plays in some cultures. The extended family in Africa provides social and economic support for its members in times of need. This could be seen as a strength which should be used by pastoral workers. The AIDS crisis also prompts questions about the limits of the extended family. The possibility exists that the AIDS burden has over-exploited the means of the extended family to care for those in need. Research done by Seeley et al (1993), in a small community in Uganda, found that in many cases those who care for AIDS patients receive very little assistance from the extended family. Many reasons for this could exist. It seems that family resources are worn down, not only financially, but also emotionally. It is often breadwinners who die and leave behind the old and young. Seeley et al (1993:122) come to the conclusion that "blanket statements about the role of the extended family in Africa as a safety net need to be questioned and assumptions that the extended family will be ready and able to assist sick members, treated with caution".

This is a very worrying state of affairs because it means that the AIDS pandemic is busy wearing out the natural resources and the natural ways of caring for the sick and terminally ill. The familial support network has been a key element in African life, but seems not to be sustainable if too much pressure is put on the human and financial resources. It seems as if people who care for those who are sick need more than only financial and material support, but also moral support and encouragement. The church community should be well aware of these needs in its own commitment to care for those in need.

7.2.3.1 A community approach to sexual ethics

What Christian ethicists have been unable to do is provide an account of sexual ethics that is clearly based on an agenda central to the Christian community's own self-understanding. They have been unable to do so because they have failed to see that any discussion of sex must begin with an understanding of how a sexual ethics is rooted in a community's basic political commitments (Hauerwas 1981:182).

Our children have to see that marriage and having children, and the correlative sexual ethic, are central to the community's political task. For only then can they be offered a

44 . Bennett (1995:89) says that for the majority of AIDS patients the family of origin is less available and that "this causes a greater drain on others for support".

vision and an enterprise that might make the disciplining of sex as interesting as its gratification (Hauerwas 1981:183).

It is impossible to speak about AIDS without mentioning the word sex. "The very presence of AIDS within our society means that the church and its leaders must struggle once again with the issue of sexuality and sexual practices" (Amos 1988:102). Aids combines one of humankind's greatest pleasures (sex) with one of its greatest dreads (death) (cf Allwood 1989:123). It is impossible to talk about sex without being confronted with an enormous number of ethical questions (extramarital sex, premarital sex, sexual orientation, contraceptive use and so on). Louw (1990:37) says that because "of this connection between AIDS and ethics, counselling the person with AIDS is much more complicated than with any other disease".⁴⁵ It falls totally outside the scope of this study to try and give answers to all the questions regarding sexual ethics which people and church traditions have been struggling with for ages.

Hauerwas is critical of the Enlightenment's approach to ethics which tries to formulate universal true and objective ethical answers. "Die etiek moet volgens Hauerwas van die reduksionalistiese elemente van die modernisme bevry word om sodoende 'n ryker fenomenologiese beskrywing van die morele lewe te kan bied waarin die verhaal van die morele agent verdiskonteer word" (Vosloo & Smit 1995:585). Hauerwas pleads for an ethics which is not based on isolated decisions, but which involves the acting people and their stories. Hauerwas's ethics cannot be separated from his call for a narrative approach to theology.

From an ecosystemic perspective, Hauerwas's (1981:175-195) criticism of the general approach of those (individuals and churches) who respond to the issues raised about sex seems very relevant. Both those who work with a conservative and romantic view of sex and those who work with a liberal and realistic view take as a starting point that sex is a private matter.

Hauerwas (1981:189) believes that we cannot begin "to develop an adequate Christian ethic without starting with the insistence that sex is a public matter for the Christian community". Sexual ethics cannot be developed separate from political ethics. The way we order our lives daily cannot be separated from our sexual behaviour and beliefs. Hauerwas (1981:187) cites William Everett, who says that "an ethics of sex must, therefore, be co-ordinated with an ethics governing the relations among institutions - familial, economic, ecclesial and political".

Hauerwas (1981:189-191) refers to the important role singleness played in the early church. The church was a church between the times. To be single meant more in the early church than giving up sex. It meant giving up heirs, giving up family and relying totally on God and on the church as the family of God to look after you. Marriage and procreation were symbols of the church's understanding that the struggle between the times would be long and arduous. It was a sign that God had not abandoned this world and because people had confidence in God they had confidence to bring new life into this world. There is thus a certain

45. "The HIV infection is certainly challenging the Church to look objectively at the whole God-given gift of sexuality and the various co-creative ways of offering this gift one to another" (Kirkpatrick 1988:96).

tension or paradox between the church's acceptance of singleness and marriage as equally valid modes of life (Hauerwas 1981:191).

We have lost this paradox in our modern ethics. Often we just think from the perspective of marriage or from the perspective of the individual. Therefore a Christian sexual ethics cannot develop separately from an adequate ecclesiology. A private type of ecclesiology would also lead to a private type of sexual ethics (cf Hauerwas 1981:188). Our ecclesiology must, of necessity, allow us to chart alternatives to our culture's dominant assumptions.

An ecosystemic way of thinking should help us to develop a different view of the relationship between the questions people ask and the answers given. An interrelated ecclesiology could lead to these questions about sexual behaviour being viewed by the church as part of bigger patterns of behaviour. The question is not whether this or that form of sexual activity is right or wrong as if such an activity could be separated from the whole of life. Hauerwas (1981:195) explains it as follows:

The issue is not whether someone is chaste in the sense of not engaging in genital activity, but whether we have lived in a manner that allows us to bring a history with us that contributes to the common history we may be called upon to develop with one another. Chastity, we forget, is not a state but a form of the virtue of faithfulness that is necessary for a role in the community.

A broader perspective on ethical questions should show that sexual ethics is part of society's struggle for survival in-between the times. Sometimes a paradoxical approach is necessary like the early church's acceptance of the importance of both singleness and marriage.

The danger exists that AIDS could be misused by the church to build monogamous sexual values on people's guilt feelings and death anxiety (cf Louw 1990:49; Kirkpatrick 1988:85). AIDS did play a role in emphasising society's and the church's homophobia (Kirkpatrick 1988:17-21) and in so doing revealed theologians' heterosexual bias in exegesis and hermeneutics (cf Szesnat 1995). The church's understanding of Scripture concerning homosexuality could also be related to the patriarchal systems of society.⁴⁶ Szesnat (1995) argues convincingly that a fear of androgyny (i.e. fear of gender confusion)⁴⁷ plays a role in some theologians' view on homosexuality.

AIDS brings sexual ethics within the sphere of survival. It is not a question of right or wrong any longer. It is a question of life and death. How is society going to survive this pandemic, also economically? AIDS makes sex a public issue. AIDS thus challenges the church, the pastoral work of the church and society as a whole to rethink their ethical assumptions and their practical applications.

46. The issue surrounding homosexuality is just noted but will not be further discussed because it is a study on its own (cf Joubert et al 1980; Dannecker 1981; Batchelor 1980).

47. See Anthonissen (1989:107) for a further explanation of the concept *androgyny*. The word is comprised of *andro* referring to male and *gyn* referring to female.

Community pastoral work could play a role in making people aware that ethics is not only an individual issue, but a community issue, even if the people who form the community live all over the world. Sexual ethics is also intertwined with other ethical issues. Take, for instance, the tremendous growth of pornography on the internet and people who are involved in "hate speech" on the internet.

The question is whether the training of church leaders and parish pastors enables them to address these global situations. Until very recently the theology taught in our seminaries, by and large, focused mainly on the personal and inner person. Pastors were trained to deal with personal problems at a personal level. Pastors are rather well-equipped to proclaim the gospel of God's grace to individuals burdened with guilt. But we live in a global world with global needs. The church and the pastoral work approach of the church need a global vision. A community approach to ethical issues and particularly sexual ethics is very necessary, specifically if the church community wishes to become involved in the crisis surrounding AIDS.

A community approach to ethics would help to make ethics less sterile. Ethics would become more than just the exegesis of a few Bible verses or a systematic theological treatise. AIDS is making us aware of human suffering and pastoral work should create a atmosphere of caring. Sexual ethics, in the context of AIDS, should not be disconnected from care and compassion.

7.3 AIDS AS A CHALLENGE TO PASTORAL WORK

In the mission of healing the sick there needs to be innovative thinking by the Body of Christ. This will involve theologians, laity, and health care professionals of all kinds: nurses, doctors, social workers and psychologists. There need not be a national policy with a vast bureaucracy, but small dynamic flexible groups of Christians who respond appropriately to the cry of their neighbours. Healing comes through a loving heart, an outstretched hand, and a cup of cold water in the name of Christ (Allwood 1989:124).

... I am convinced that no other issue has the same potential as this disease to change the face of pastoral ministry (Amos 1988:11).

The idea of *shalom* in the Bible gives expression to a more holistic approach. *Shalom* means fullness, wholeness and integrity. In recent decades we have been fascinated by the results of the scientific method and its amazing advances in curative and preventative medicine. Unfortunately human beings are often viewed as machines. Not to cure people has become unthinkable. Enlightenment thinking sees death as a failure. Health workers (doctors, nurses and other) have started to move away from healing as a holistic concept, healing in terms of *shalom* (Allwood 1989:119). Allwood (1989:124) cites De Gruchy who says "A concern for health cannot be separated from a commitment to social justice and transformation. Hence the connection in the Bible between social justice and 'Shalom'. A healing ministry requires a prophetic-critical ministry; the one without the other distorts the gospel of judgement and grace".

Pastoral workers of the URCSA responded on the questionnaire sent out by the researcher as follow:

		FULLY AGREE	AGREE SOME= WHAT	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	DISAGREE SOME= WHAT	TOTALLY DISAGREE
52	Pastoral workers should be involved in AIDS prevention programmes in their community.	83.3	10.2	3.7	0	2.8
59	It is the taks of social workers and health workers, not pastoral workers, to care for people with AIDS.	56	21.1	7.3	6.4	9.2

The respondents were quite in agreement that pastoral workers should be involved in AIDS prevention programmes, according to the responses on statement 52. The most respondents (77%) believed that it is the task of social workers and health workers to care for people with AIDS (statement 59). It is not clear why the respondents responded differently on statement 52 and 59. As indicated earlier, the negative formulation of statements, such as statement 59, might be an explanation. The other explanation may be that respondents might feel that pastoral workers should be involved in prevention, but not in caring for the person with AIDS.

Research done by Crawford et al (1992) under African-American Baptist ministers showed that most of the clergy of the sample did not perceive HIV as being a significant risk to their communities, although they are aware that it poses a concern to their communities. It seems as if this group of ministers are more concerned about drug abuse in the community, because it is a more visible problem (Crawford 1992:307).

AIDS brings a new challenge (cf Allwood 1989:123) because of the limited possibilities that a cure will be found. It gives the opportunity for pastoral work to start a conversation with health workers about a holistic approach to medicine. Holistic health is not only directed at cure, but also at comfort and relief; at helping people to live and to die; at being critical about society and the attitudes of governments and policy makers.

Perelli (1991:11-12) makes the interesting observation that the church has generally tried to respond compassionately to those suffering from AIDS. At the same time the church community stands very judgmental towards those who have contracted AIDS, especially through homosexual activities. This double message produces confusion, anger and rejection, particularly towards the institutionalised church, but often also against the pastoral worker as representative of the church. Here an interrelated ecclesiology may be of much importance; an ecclesiology which includes an anthropology that sees people as made in the image of God. Such an interrelated view would be able to see people as a part of God's creation, irrespective of their sexual orientation. An anthropology which is not dualistic but includes spirituality is also important. The pastoral worker has a task to make both the church community and people living with AIDS aware of an interrelated ecclesiology and anthropology.

It is the researcher's firm belief that if the pastoral work of the church is done according to ecosystemic principles, it should be community orientated. A community approach to pastoral work has certain implications.

a) This means pastoral care to more people than only those who belong to the church community. This

means that the church as a religious community should interact with the other communities (political communities, economic communities and so on) with which it comes into contact.

b) Community pastoral work is much more than just the work of the pastor or the church council or the organised activity of some of the church members. It is a way of thinking about care in the church community. It may result in some organised structures that are of service to the community, but should not be limited to such structures. It is not the service of some people to others. It is the care of everybody in the congregation towards everybody else in the community.

c) It is an all-encompassing approach to care which attends to both the so-called spiritual and so-called physical needs of people.

d) A community approach is per definition less individualistic and more aware of the social interaction between people and society.

In a previous section, the need for a more holistic approach to medicine was propagated. This is also necessary for the pastoral work of the church. The Africa world-view is much more integrated than the modern Western world-view. Berinyoo (1988:5) from Ghana describes the Africa world-view as follows:

In Africa, there is no division and/ or differentiation between the animate and inanimate, between spirit and matter, between living and non-living, dead and living, physical and metaphysical, secular and sacred, the body and spirit, etc. 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... The human person is not an isolated individual in this world-view. He/she is at all times interacting with other beings in the universe, whom he/she is linked to by a network of relationships. The human being is essentially a member of a community of beings as well as a unique individual person.

Berinyoo's description of the Africa world-view sounds very much like what this study describes as an ecosystemic perspective. It seems necessary to make two remarks in this regard. (a) Although the importance of an integrated spirituality is mentioned earlier and is important, an ecosystemic approach is less inclined to declare that people are "completely dependent upon invisible powers". The influence of the invisible is recognised and incorporated but not feared to the same extent as in Africa. (b) It is a question to what extent this world-view is still valid for all of Africa. There is a real danger of stereotyping African societies and ignoring the variation between different societies in Africa and forcing the content into a single value-laden paradigm (Jonas 1996:79).

The influence of the Western way of thinking is visible in many different forms. The sociologist Assimeng's (1989) remark that people in West-Africa live more independently and individualistically nowadays has already been referred to earlier. Patton (1990:85) reminds us that Africa has for centuries been negotiating

the logic of Western ethics and that almost half of all Africans profess some version of Christianity.⁴⁸ Saayman and Kriel (1992:42) make the observation that "although there is no doubt about the very sincere personal faith of the medical missionaries, they held the same dualistic view as their secular medical colleagues, and shared the idea of the superiority of 'rational', 'objective' and 'scientific' biomedicine over traditional Africa health systems'.

The implication is that after years of missionary work and the influence of colonialism and Western education, it is not possible to talk about a type of "pure" African world-view just as it is not possible to talk about a "pure" Western world-view. Having said all this does not imply that what Berinyuu describes as the Africa world-view is non-existent (cf Kotzé 1993; Van Niekerk 1989).

The holistic world-view of Africa and the reductionistic world-view of the Western world are not closed systems. It is clear that the ecological world-view, a concept from the Western world, proposed in this study, is closer to the Africa world-view than to the reductionistic-scientific world-view of the Western world. This is confirmed by Berinyuu (1988:10) when he closes his discussion about the African world-view with the following "the astute western reader may note some resemblance to the emerging world picture being pieced together in the western science of ecology".

7.3.1 Society orientated pastoral work

Christians have not been immune from the forces within society of which we have spoken. And in that the church itself constitutes a society of people who also are members of a wider society, it would be surprising if the values and beliefs of this wider society had not entered the church. Counselling, whether Christian or not, can only be understood properly if its social context is acknowledged and evaluated. The social context is thus crucial for an understanding of *all* types of counselling (Bridger & Atkinson 1994:91).

Although the researcher has not defined the community specifically in geographical terms, it is so that most congregations function within a specific geographical area. Churches can do a great deal in their geographical area in terms of pastoral work. This study wishes to emphasise on the importance of an ecosystemic world-view or perspective. The researcher believes that congregations who work within an ecosystemic mindframe will develop an interrelated ecclesiology and anthropology and will move in their pastoral actions beyond the congregation as a system and start to interact with the rest of the community. Jesus seems to go out in his ministry to those who are discarded by the religious community. Jesus seems to be willing to move toward human need.

The understanding of the church as interrelated makes it possible to understand the relationship of church and society as interactive. This study previously referred to the changes that took place in modern society

48 . "Nevertheless, it is quite bizarre to construct radical differences between Western and African worldviews as if centuries of evangelism and colonialism have not left Africans well aware of the curious workings of a Western ethics..." (Patton 1990:154).

in moving from holism to differentiation and the tendency towards dualism which resulted in a split between object and subject and the sacred and the profane.

Community pastoral work is based on a positive attitude of the church-community towards society as a whole. Pastoral care is exercised within the church, but also by the church (Campbell 1985:64). There is a tendency for pastoral care to become merely a form of care to the religiously committed (Campbell 1985:64-66). Images of shepherds, flocks and sheepfolds are used to suggest that a small community of believers is to be tended in safe refuge away from the world outside.⁴⁹ Within this context of pastoral care the ordained minister is also the person who will exercise the care effectively.

Another possibility is where pastoral care became detached from its locus in the Christian community and established itself as a separate activity. This is the problem with specialist counselling services with merely a nominal attachment to the church. This may lead to an increase of involvement of the professional counsellor in society at large. But often it is a service only available to those who can afford it. Again caring action emanating from the Christian community does not take its rightful place in society.

A community pastoral work approach takes the society as a system seriously. The implication is that society and the activity in society also influences the church community. The pastoral worker should be aware of this interaction. It is already mentioned that even something such as ethics should be seen in a societal context. The caring actions of the church should take the needs of society seriously. In a time of political oppression or turmoil the church's should be there, in a time of political uncertainty the church should be there; in situations of poverty the church should be there. In the AIDS pandemic the church should be there...

7.3.2 The church community involved

I am convinced that one of the reasons I am alive today is because of the strength and encouragement that the people from the church have given. I could have given in long ago, but they have helped me hang in there (Words from a person living with AIDS, cited by Amos 1988:64)

VIGS stel 'n toets aan die *communio sanctorum*: met ander woorde kan die vigs-pasiënt en so ook die homoseksuele mens binne die gemeenskap van die gelowiges op so 'n wyse geakkomodeer word dat hy as mens bevry word van alle vooroordele en stigmatiserende etikette? (Louw 1988b:77).⁵⁰

AIDS is a test of the church's true intention to be the body of Christ. It puts a question to the church: Can the fellowship of believers, in other words the communion of the saints, accommodate the person with AIDS and care for him with sincere and unconditional love? (Louw 1991:101).

49 . Cf Breytenbach (1992:399-405) about the shepherd-flock metaphor.

50 . Louw wrote this article at a stage when, according to official statistics, 52 of 59 ill with AIDS in South Africa were homosexual men. Today the picture has changed completely.

... the full impact of AIDS has not yet hit the churches in South Africa. The impact may be cushioned by denial. There is still too much of a tentativeness, a 'wait-and-see' attitude in the response of churches officially and Christians personally. Like elsewhere in the world, we can also, with a few exceptions, talk about 'the absence of the church in the AIDS crisis' (De Jongh van Arkel 1992d:104).

The church can play a role in developing an ecosystemic and holistic approach to care. The church is in the unique position that it is very much involved at grass-roots community level, often not because church leaders find it the right thing to do, but purely for reasons of survival. Where the church did not become involved at community level, the church just did not survive. The leaders of congregations are often also community leaders. Because of the church's involvement at this level, the church will understand the worldview of the community to a great extent. Earlier it was emphasised that an interrelated ecclesiology means that the church takes its community character seriously. An ecclesiology which pointed to the importance of the local churches is also important (Stuart 1994). It does not mean that the local congregation should function in isolation from the broader church, but only that the pastoral actions should go out from the local church community. Too often actions are planned and executed at Synodical level, without acknowledging the role of the congregant at local level.

The church community has the unique history of having gone out for the last two thousand years to proclaim the gospel. The church community often reached out to illiterate communities or communities of people who came from different backgrounds. There is a certain resource of experience in the church which could be activated to reach people and inform them about the HIV. Bradshaw (1993) tells numerous stories of missionaries who learned the hard way how to approach communities. The church has a history of involvement in educational and development projects which had next to no impact because of the radical difference in frame of reference of the missionaries and the communities they became involved in.⁵¹ An educational project which does not empower people to gain mastery over their environment because it does not recognise the basic assumptions the people make will have very little effect.

The stigmatisation surrounding AIDS causes people to prefer confidentiality, which makes it more difficult to involve different people and even lay workers. This does not mean that the full-time pastor should be the only person involved. Traditionally, the minister was expected to be a warm, supportive and open person. This changes in community pastoral work. "Unless the local congregation is a warm, supportive, open, and honest fellowship, it denies all opportunity for a true ministry of pastoral care" (Campbell 1985:91). The emphasis should move from the person of the pastor to the congregation.

51 . Bradshaw (1993) says that the idea that an illness is caused by a virus does not make any sense for people who did not grow up with the idea of germs and viruses.

52 . The role of ritual in pastoral work is a subject on its own. Cf Nieuwkoop (1986), Baai (1991) and Kirkpatrick (1988).

The pastor will not be able to deal with people living with AIDS on his/ her own. It should be the task of the pastor to enable the church community to respond jointly. Not to do so would be to invite personal isolation and pastoral burnout. "Clergy are notorious for claiming more ownership of ministry than is either healthy or biblical. The many dynamics that are a part of the ministry to AIDS patients and their families almost preclude any minister's being able to mount a Lone Ranger type of response" (Amos 1988:100). Amos (1988:35) mentions the possibility of a Pastor's Support or Advisory Group. Such a group could support the pastor and may even become involved with a careseeker if the pastor is not available.

Community pastoral work emphasises the importance of getting the community involved. Pastoral work is seen to be more than only the work of the pastor, but refers to the involvement of the whole church community towards one another and towards the community as such. Community pastoral work takes place at more than one level. At one level the church community functions as a healing community involved in mutual care. At another level specific lay people in the community with the gift of counselling should be trained to help with counselling. At a third level all group leaders should be trained to help with pastoral support in the groups they are in. At a fourth level members in the church community, who are involved in systems outside the church community, represent the church unofficially and may also be involved in caring for people.

The church community should have the openness to involve other systems with which people in need are connected. If the person is gay, and belongs to a gay group, the pastor could, with the caretaker's permission, involve the support group within the local gay community. In many places gay groups have formed support groups to assist people with AIDS. It is even possible to involve groups like the hospice movement if the person has full-blown AIDS.

If the church community has a strong ward or cell system where people meet regularly and are caring towards one another it could be possible for somebody who is HIV+ and may already be part of such a small group to receive care and give care without giving any knowledge of his HIV status to anybody in the group. It could be possible in a caring church community to involve somebody who tested HIV+ or has AIDS in a group without sharing his medical situation.

Involvement of the church community may be more than only direct caring. Skills in the church community could be activated. The church community or people with the knowledge and gifts could be involved by making society aware of true facts, by means of education programmes in the church and in the different communities which overlap with a specific church community. The church community as a caring community could play a role in the altering of sexual mores. James and Glover (1993:678) come to the conclusion that the role of education in the prevention of the spread of the AIDS virus in young adults could be limited (not useless) if certain factors are not kept in mind. When young people become sexually active it is much more difficult to alter their patterns of sexual behaviour and it may also be too late. The best age to start with education programmes for young people is between 8-12 years (Jameson & Glover 1993:678). It seems as if the church community with its structures of Sunday School and other activities directed at children could play a role in this regard.

Integrated church communities with people with different cultural backgrounds, may be the ideal place to develop a bridge between different approaches to sickness and health. The secularisation of society whereby religious symbols and beliefs lose their public dominance [cf p 72] and the corresponding intellectualisation of the mundane world whereby spirit and body are divided into different spheres lead to the distinction between the physical healer and the spiritual healer in society. In modern society the doctor has replaced the priest.

The church community could challenge this reductionistic perspective. "The holistic approach to healing and/or the ministry for the sick in Africa has much to contribute to a highly compartmentalised western culture and to pastoral care in particular" (Berinyuu 1988:56). The church community could also play a role in introducing some of the benefits propagated by the medical fraternity.

The church community could help societies, through their involvement, to come to terms with disasters. Seeley and Kajura (1995:74) say in Uganda, where they are doing their research, AIDS affects total communities. It is not only households that suffer, but the whole community suffers. They point out that there is a difference between the effect of AIDS and other disasters (war, famine, earthquakes and so on) that affect whole communities. Other disasters do not take the form of a discrete event with recognisable stages and responses. After "natural" disasters it may be possible for communities to grieve together when those who have lost their lives are remembered and their deaths honoured. There are very few acts of communal grieving in the case of AIDS because of the stigma that continues to be associated with AIDS/HIV. It seems that the church could also play a role in this regard. Some churches have a custom on certain occasions of reading the names of people who have died, for instance at a church service at the end of the year. Such an occasion could help the bereaved family and friends of a person who died of AIDS in their grieving process.⁵² The church community could help people to tell their story of suffering and relate it to the story of the One who died on the cross.

The church community could undoubtedly play an important role, but that would also ask of the church community to review their structures. In South Africa the white community became used to institutions to send their old people and handicapped people to. There were hardly any institutions available for black people to send people to. This attitude of institutionalisation of those who could be seen as a burden to society became clear when Louw (1988b:79) said a few years ago: "Die kerk behoort selfs aan *inrigtingsorg* te dink waarbinne die pasiënt in die lig van sy eiesoortige behoeftes, gespesialiseerde pastorale versorging kan ontvang". This study wishes to emphasise that the challenge to the church community is just the opposite to building institutions. The time has come to realise that the challenge of AIDS to the church is to deal with those infected and living with AIDS, within the church community. Pastoral care should take place in the community, by the church community.

7.3.2.1 The church community and confidentiality

The issue of confidentiality in the world of AIDS can take on unique and unexpected dimensions. That it demands and deserves the critical attention of the ministering community cannot be overemphasized (Amos 1988:49).

Confidentiality is central to the AIDS issue and also to the pastoral care of the church (Amos 1988; Louw 1990; Bassford 1991; Overall 1991). HIV seropositivity and AIDS are generally associated with certain behaviour patterns. Many diseases that result in death are linked to behaviour, like smoking, drinking and overeating. However, society has accepted these to a great extent. Homosexual and bisexual behaviour as well as IV drug users have been identified as being high risk behaviour and not acceptable to many people.

The attitude of society towards people who are HIV+ or are living with AIDS has caused many careseekers to be afraid of making their HIV seropositivity known. Careseekers have often experienced how family, friends, the church, their work and so on start to discriminate against them. Most medical insurance's do not pay for AIDS-related illness. Confidentiality is thus often very necessary to assure that the careseeker's job (and sometimes even those of the rest of the family) is not in jeopardy. It is true that as AIDS is starting to spread into the heterosexual community, some people's attitudes are also changing, but many people are still prejudiced. This makes the issue of confidentiality even more important.

Although the right of a person to confidentiality is accepted by most people, there are also people who question some forms of confidentiality. Overall (1991:34-35) says that "while confidentiality remains an essential ethical principle in medical practice, it is also important to notice both who is protected by confidentiality and who pays the price for it. In this sort of case, it is not some faceless and amorphous 'society' that suffers; it is real women". The question is what right does the sexual partner of somebody who is HIV+ have to know that his/ her partner is positive? Overall (1991:36) says that there is a tendency in the newsmedia and literature to emphasise the importance of revealing the HIV seropositivity where women are involved, but to accept that men have the right to keep quiet.

Confidentiality could also become a problem where a community pastoral approach is followed. Such an approach emphasises the importance of getting the church community involved in pastoral work. Society's stigmatisation of people who are HIV+ or people living with AIDS evokes secrecy. It could also result in the negative tendency that caring for those who have AIDS should be done by professionals or in hospitals, where the secret would be safe.

By involving a person in a small group, the person could receive emotional and spiritual support without necessarily having to share his illness. Such groups could thus be support systems for both the pastor and the careseeker. However, a person may readily share the fact that he/ she is HIV+ in all confidentiality with the group, especially if they share a high level of confidence, trust and acceptance in the group. But what if a member of the group tells other people?

Bassford (1991:119) argues for the importance of confidentiality, but also discusses all the possible situations where confidentiality is problematic because of the danger it could cause for others. Bassford's (1991:119) closing statement summarises the problem eloquently:

The awful dilemmas just discussed, as well as many others around AIDS, often arise because of fears of having sexual practices and preferences revealed. Such fears are usually well founded, arising from the prejudices and intolerance of our society... our goal should always be to change social attitudes and conditions that cause them to

arise.

It seems important that the HIV+/ AIDS person should expect the same level of confidence other people expect from society. But there are instances where society's and the individual's survival come into conflict. Most people would argue that society should get preference. Whenever people share personal and intimate knowledge with others there is always a risk that somebody will not keep the secret. The pastoral role of the church should be to encourage people to share, but also to teach people that confidential information should be kept confidential. It seems as though the task of the pastoral work would also be to help to change attitudes as suggested by Bassford (1991).

7.3.3 A diaconal pastorate

A community pastoral work approach boils down to the point where the distinction between the pastoral task and the diakonia task of the church become enmeshed. From an ecosystemic perspective the need to categorise care into diaconal care and pastoral care could be questioned. The diakonia and koinonia elements of the church should not be separated. The caring and serving aspects of the work of the church should be related. Other relations may also be formed, like a missionary-diaconate or a missionary-pastoral relation.⁵³ A community approach to pastoral work would support a diaconal pastoral care (cf Coetsee 1991)

This becomes even more necessary when the needs and the situation surrounding people living with AIDS are taken into account. This caring can take many forms. It may be the involvement of the church in diaconal actions or it may be more specialised forms of caring. People living with AIDS are often in need of a holistic approach, which includes physical, emotional and spiritual support.

Pastoral workers of the URCSA responded to the questionnaire sent out by the researcher as follows:

		FULLY AGREE	AGREE SOME= WHAT	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	DISAGREE SOME= WHAT	TOTALLY DISAGREE
56	The caring activities of the church include the diaconal task (diakonia) of the church.	91.7	3.7	2.8	-	1.8
76	It is important to separate the diaconal task of the church and the caring task of the church.	48.1	17.6	5.6	13.0	15.7

Diakonia without koinonia could very easily become a sort of paternalism. The history of the church in South Africa is full of stories of people willing to help the poor and the underprivileged without willingness to become involved (koinonia) with those they help and support. Koinonia without diakonia could lead to a spiritualised gospel. Again there are many examples in the South African context of people who are willing to pray together with those in need, but not willing to become involved in their physical needs.

53. Bisschoff (1993:51) emphasises the importance of the caring and the missionary dimensions in a congregation: "Dit is daarom noodsaaklik dat daar weg van 'n versorgingsmodel beweeg word na 'n model waar die missionêre en versorgingsaspek in kombinasie staan en mekaar ondersteun".

7.3.4 A narrative element

The importance of the narrative element in pastoral work has already been emphasised [cf p 315]. Storytelling will encourage a more holistic approach, because it is often easier for careseekers to integrate feelings with the rest of their life when they put them into story form. Siebert (1994) makes use of the narrative approach to deal with the death of his wife. The narrative element is well articulated by Gerkin (1984:26):

Pastoral counsellors are, more than anything else, listeners to and interpreters of stories. Persons seek out a pastoral counsellor because they need someone to listen to their story. Most often the story is tangled, it involves themes, plots, and counterplots. The story itself is, of course, an interpretation of experience. To seek counselling usually means that the interpretation has become painful, the emotions evoked by the interpretation powerful and conflicted.

The telling of stories plays an important role in Africa, particularly in dealing with hurt and pain. The Christian community should be encouraged to listen to the stories of others, and to tell their own stories of pain.⁵⁴ The community aspect of pastoral work could play an important role in reviving the storytelling in a modern society. The scientific approach, which influences the professional training of pastoral workers tremendously, is often so much orientated to fulfilling a specific aim that it fails to give attention to people's stories. A community approach which would make use of lay people could encourage the telling of stories.

The implications of a narrative dimension to community pastoral work should be worked out in practice. Wittenberg (1994:62) reminds us that Bible stories could be used by both counsellor and careseeker in times of suffering. Wittenberg (1994) specifically refers to the story of Job, and makes it clear that when Biblical stories are used, it should be done in a holistic way to prevent falling into a trap of rigidity or dogma. Job's friends use the dogma of God's justice to blame Job. The Biblical stories should also be related to real-life situations because God does not stand outside our life experiences: "They (Job's friends - FN) utter abstract theological 'truths' which have no link with real life because they have never experienced Job's pain" (Wittenberg 1994:65).

Wittenberg (1994) encourages the church to make use of Biblical stories and refers specifically to the use of the narrative element in counselling people with AIDS. Wittenberg (1994:67) also warns users of Biblical stories to be aware of the ambiguity of religious stories because "it can be liberatory or repressive. The story of Job is a good example of the ambivalent nature of religious language".

It would be the task of the theologically trained pastoral worker to train lay pastoral workers to understand the ambiguity of Biblical stories and to live with the paradoxes in the Bible. An ecosystemic paradigm, which is more open and less orientated towards final truths, would incorporate a narrative approach more easily than the scientific paradigm of the Enlightenment, which works with absolute truths.

54. "Narratiewe teoloë wys dan ook graag daarop dat verhaale in staat is om die werklikheid, die lewe, met al sy drama en emosies, opwinding en pyn, ekstase en leed, veel beter te verwoord as logiese, filosofiese, onbetrokke taal" (Smit 1990b:114).

A narrative approach could connect the pastoral worker and the careseeker with a wider metacontext and could make the listener aware of, for example, injustices and discrimination in society. Smit (1990b) describes how the stories told by the theologian, Nico Smith influenced others and also their perceptions.⁵⁵ Botman (1995:10-11) emphasises the importance of the narrative element in South Africa for the victims of apartheid. Through people's stories they could reconstruct their memories in a way that could ease the burden of trauma, although the scars would remain behind. Ackermann (1996:47-49) writes from a feminist perspective and emphasises the need for a narrative approach where people could share their stories. Ackermann (1996:48) comments perceptively:

Telling stories breaks the silence which blankets the lives of women and other marginalized and oppressed people and is thus intrinsic to the healing of our diverse communities. Encircling the master narrative, these modest stories are part of the meta-narratives of the outer circles emanating from multiple communities of speech and action.

Naudé (1996) points out the need for an *oral theology* to give the marginalized people who cannot write or read the opportunity to take part in theology and to give them a hearing. Naudé (1996:24-25) explains how even liberation theology fails the illiterate because the discourse takes place in writing. Naudé's serious call for an *oral theology* should be heard by pastoral workers; it is a call to hear the most marginalized. Loubser (1993:27 footnote 13) says that: "To my mind narrative theory underestimates the oral nature of texts by presupposing literary forms".

A community pastoral work approach should take note of the importance of an *oral theology*. If pastoral work becomes the responsibility of the church community and not only of the trained pastoral worker, the need to include those in the church community who are illiterate in pastoral actions is obvious. An *oral theology* should connect well with the narrative element in community pastoral work. More exploration of the narrative combined with the oral tradition is certainly necessary for a holistic pastoral work approach.

The narrative element not only emphasises the importance of telling stories, but also the importance of listening to the stories of others. "In listening with others, we are enabling each person to know who he or she is" (Kirkpatrick 1988:73). Listening to someone's story could be a form of empowering that other person. The next section will emphasise the role of empowering in pastoral work.

The church community should not only listen to stories and relate the stories of the Bible to people's stories. The church community is in itself part of God's story. By being involved with those in need, with the desperate, the oppressed, the stranger, the rejected of society, the church community is telling the story of God's love and mercy (cf Vosloo & Smit 1995:588).

55. "There is no perspective from which we can see our perspectives. Our stories are the vehicles of our perspectives. If they no longer express our perspectives, they fall into the sphere of boredom or into the storehouse of material for possible historical studies" (Ritschl 1987:29).

7.4 COMMUNITY PASTORAL WORK TAKES ON THE CHALLENGE

An understanding of the psychosocial needs of the person who is HIV+ or is living with AIDS is important. Perelli (1991:29-43) makes a list of what he calls emotional stressors he encountered in his work with people living with AIDS. He discusses all these stressors in more detail. It will be enough here just to mention them: (a) Experience of loss: loss of sexuality; loss of romance; loss of control over life; loss of identity; loss of a lover; loss of support; loss of meaning and hope; (b) Anger; (c) Fear; (d) Guilt; (e) Shame and stigma and (f) Secrecy. These emotional experiences should be seen in a social context where the total life cycle is disrupted and where the people have to deal with homophobia, AIDS hysteria, alienation and discrimination.

Greif and Golden (1994) with great insight discuss anxiety, depression, fear, anger, guilt and dependency as the most important emotional factors experienced by people living with AIDS. They not only discuss the emotions, but also some of the reasons for the emotions and how to deal with these emotions.

A community approach that works with an ecosystemic perspective can be helpful. It is a move away from the traditional linear causation approach where A causes B, B causes C and so on. A community approach would look at this complex and stress-provoking situation in terms of a circle of psychosocial factors, which are all in relation to one another and to many other variables. This circle is not closed. Each factor, including the end result (death), is part of the whole. The individual is not merely an autonomous person who controls his or her own destiny. Every person is intimately connected to other people and the rest of society and even to the future and the past. In this understanding, patterns become apparent. Certain issues appear and reappear.

In the pastoral encounter this interrelatedness should be explained and demonstrated. The church community as pastoral community is ideal in this regard to help a person to understand that he/ she is not on his/ her own. This can only happen if the church community itself understands its role as a therapeutic community. The pastoral worker is thus not alone in the process of pastoral counselling but involves the community.

This does not mean that pastoral workers and careseekers may not meet for individual counselling sessions, but that even if they do meet for such sessions, these sessions should not take place as isolated events, but as part of the bigger process of dealing with the emotional and social problems the careseekers experience. Responsibility for the support of the careseeker is shared by the pastoral worker, the careseeker and the other systems involved, like family, friends, church community, work community and so on. Burnout in the pastoral worker, produced by the pressure of working with people with a life threatening disease, is also reduced (cf Perelli 1991:57; Kirkpatrick 1988).

This may raise questions about confidentiality which are an issue needing a lot more discussion. Unlike the individualistic and medical models, where confidentiality is of the utmost importance and essential, confidentiality may, in terms of a systems approach, even be detrimental to the healing process. This does not imply that confidentiality is not important and that people's right to confidentiality should not be respected, but only that there should be an urge to openness, prompted by the pastoral worker, between

the careseeker and the other systems. This is actually very important in something like AIDS, where the first reaction is to keep everything as closed as possible. By closing up, people often cut themselves off from the systems that could otherwise have become their support systems. The higher the level of confidentiality, the more isolation is experienced. According to Perelli (1991:71), the more a person is isolated in his/ her systems, the less the communication between the members of the system and "the higher the level of irresponsible underground gossip about each other in the family and the confiding of secrets to those outside the family".

Bor (1989) discusses the differences between systemic AIDS counselling and non-systemic counselling. The following are features of non-systemic counselling, according to Bor (1989:291): (a) The counselling is focused on the individual and on presenting the problems. (b) The careseeker is guided or instructed in decision-making in terms of the solutions which the therapist offers. (c) In counselling with people living with AIDS, AIDS becomes the main problem.

Bor (1989:291-294) mentions no less than twenty-one features of systemic counselling with people who are HIV+ or living with AIDS. Many of these features have already been mentioned and discussed in more detail in Chapter 2 of this study where the systemic/ ecosystemic approach was discussed in more detail. Some of the features Bor (1989:291-294) mentions are: (a) To recognise that problems could be generated from any part of the system (family, friends, colleagues, and so on). (b) Not to necessarily have any goals to reach in relation to the problem. (c) To place the responsibility for so-called problem-solving on the careseeker and all the systems involved, particularly those who are part of the problem. To help careseekers to feel that they have a choice in matters. (d) To play a role in preventing the careseeker and the systems involved from getting stuck around one problem, but to use their initiative in looking for new options and exploring new avenues. One problem may open up the way to other problems. In the case of AIDS, for example, it may be that the relationship with family or friends is actually the problem and not the AIDS per se. (e) To introduce the concept of unpredictability. (f) To involve other parts of the system in the counselling process. (g) To add complexity to seemingly simple ideas and to simplify issues which seem overly complex.

Bor (1989)⁵⁶ makes very important observations in his study that could help pastoral workers to move away from a reductionistic approach. It is interesting that Bor himself still refers to careseekers as *patients*, a concept which suggests that the careseeker is a recipient of care and not responsible for his/her own health and future. Bor (1989) strongly works with an individualistic counselling model although he adapts it to incorporate systemic thinking. The empowerment dimension of an ecosystemic approach emphasised in this study receives no attention in Bor's understanding.

The next section will move pastoral work into a new field, namely that of empowerment and responsibility.

56. Bor (1989) makes use of a systemic framework in his study, which claims (1989:314) to be one of the first studies to "place AIDS counselling in a conceptual and theoretical framework".

7.4.1 Empowerment with responsibility

Pastoral care needs to be orientated toward the empowerment of careseekers so that they can change their society, not toward adjustment of persons to the existing situation (Furniss 1994:61).

Pastoral care sensitive to this (sic) issue traces the dynamics of gender power and powerlessness. Empowerment is a central pastoral goal, both in the small group contexts of marriage, family, and work group, and also in the larger society, through facilitating careseekers' participation in "mediating structures," voluntary associations and politically oriented groups working for societal change (Furniss 1994:164)

The *Christian gospel* does not only comfort, it also empowers. This has not always been understood (Nürnberg 1994:145).

AIDS raises questions about morality most of the time. These questions and discussions may be about more than just morality. Murphy (1994:4) is of the opinion that, in the field of moral debates, power plays an important role.⁵⁷ Even religion's involvement in these debates may be coloured by the desire of religious leaders to regain some power in modern society.

In the light of the ecosystemic metaparadigm proposed in this study, the researcher proposes the idea of empowerment as a necessary approach to pastoral work. By empowerment the researcher means that our aim should be to enhance the possibilities of people controlling their own lives (Rappaport 1981:15). This has serious implications for pastoral work.

Pastoral workers of the URCSA responded to the questionnaire sent out by the researcher as follows:

		FULLY AGREE	AGREE SOME= WHAT	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	DISAGREE SOME= WHAT	TOTALLY DISAGREE
50	As pastoral worker, I should always be in charge of counselling sessions	18.9	17	5.7	20.8	37.7
55	The pastoral worker is hierarchically on the same level as the person who comes for help.	50.5	17.8	3.7	13.1	15

There is a tendency under the respondents towards equalising the power relationship between pastoral workers and careseekers. Quite a number of respondents (35.9% answered fully agree or agree somewhat) believes that pastoral workers should always be in charge of counselling sessions.

Often pastoral work is done in terms of the pastoral worker as the knower and giver and the careseeker as the receiver. Often careseekers are handled like children and not like full human beings. Many careseekers are quite happy with this type of relationship and expect the pastoral worker to be like a "mother" or "father" figure. Cochrane et al (1991:23) describe empowerment as a "becoming the human being God intended in the *imago dei* - one who has full dignity among others, and a share in the dominion or stewardship of the

57. "The moral debates in the HIV epidemic ultimately involve judgements and assumptions about the power of public and moral authority. They ultimately involve the power to name villains and heroes. They are finally about nothing less than the power to define moral reality" (Murphy 1994:4).

world and its resources".⁵⁸ Empowerment presses a different set of paradigms upon the pastoral worker and the careseeker.

a) It accepts the careseeker/ careseekers as people with their own abilities and resources however meagre these might be. It implies that many competencies are already present or possibly given niches and opportunities.

b) It means taking a different look at the idea of "solutions" and the idea of "progress".

c) It works with the idea of a "participating society".

d) It replaces prevention which is derived from a "needs model of dependent people; it is a legacy of the progressive era and of the one-sided development of social service institutions" (Rappaport 1981:16). The prevention approach views professional experts as leaders who know the answers and provide them to their clients (careseekers) while empowerment suggests that professionals are collaborators with careseekers.

The counsellor or pastoral worker does not take the position of authority. He/ she is not the only person with knowledge. It implies a breakdown of the typical role relationship between professionals and the community.

e) Empowerment implies that what may seem to be only poor functioning of the individual, may be a result of the influence of metasocial or cultural structures. In the South African context, pastoral workers are often upset when careseekers are, for example, not in time for an appointment. It may be that the careseeker is not time conscious, it may also be that the careseeker is dependent on public transport (metastructure) which is not reliable.

f) Changes should primarily take place in a context of living rather than in artificial (counselling) programmes where everyone, including the person learning, knows that it is really the expert who is in charge.

g) It accepts the paradoxical nature of all so-called problems and allows pastoral workers to play with the dialectic and to pursue paradox. If a problem can have many solutions then it can have a diversity of people with a diversity of experiences who work out the solutions.

Empowerment lends itself to the possibility of a variety of locally rather than centrally controlled solutions, which, in turn, foster solutions based on different assumptions in different places, settings and neighbourhoods. It gives up the search for one monolithic way of doing things. Empowerment will accept diversity rather than homogeneity of form.

58 . Cf Louw (1995c:45).

h) Cochrane et al (1991:23, 78, 81) understand empowerment as an element of spirituality and connect it with the concept *discernment* (seeing clearly). This is a spirituality which arises out of personal and ecclesial transformation in a struggle for justice (cf also Kotze 1990).

i) Empowerment brings hope for those without hope and vision for the future. It generates "hope against all hope" (Cochrane et al 1991:82).

Rappaport (1981:19) is of the opinion that diversity should be encouraged by supporting many different local groups (family, church, voluntary organisations, community, sport clubs) rather than the large centralised institutions. These local groups are the places where people live, get opportunities to learn, experience growth and development and enhance their ability to control their lives. These settings create opportunities, resources and empowerment. Within these settings people will develop their own solutions.

This will encourage people to come up with their own solutions and foster the legitimacy of more rather than fewer, different rather than the same ways to deal with the problems of living. People may come up with different and even contradictory solutions. Experts may differ about the solutions, but they are the people's own solutions.

Empowerment should take place at the personal level. People should be taught that they are created in the image of God, they must know that they are not worthless. But this is only one side of the coin. The church community should be a servant community. Through the process of networking, this servant community should play a role in society, empowered in themselves but not a power force in society. Powerful without being a power force. Villa-Vicencio (1991:4) reminds us that:

The Christian tradition since the beginning has given rise to visions of justice and peace, but it has underestimated the role of power in creating this kind of society. Some (but notably not the poor themselves) have romanticised powerlessness and poverty, holding up a vision of the early church which suggests that it is not the business of Christians to seek power.

Empowerment walks a thin line between being victim or conqueror. Villa-Vicencio (1991:4) cites Mark Ellis, a Jewish theologian, who says "the desire to remain a victim is evidence of disease, yet to become a conqueror after a victim is a recipe for moral suicide". Villa-Vicencio (1991:4) reminds us that "the church is obliged ... (to) consciously live at the nexus of powerlessness and power". Louw (1989c:54-55) discusses God's omnipotence and vulnerability and says "vulnerability does not indicate that God is powerless. The important thing is: it indicates that God's power is God's love, love = omnipotence". Love should help the pastoral worker to act within the tension field of empowering.

To empower people means to trust them, it does not mean to leave them without support (Bruwer 1994a:59). Trust breeds trust and responsibility. A sustainable community pastoral work approach should be built on the qualities of interdependence and trust. To learn how to receive and to give. This is the only way to prevent empowerment from becoming an ego trip or self-reliance becoming aggressive arrogance (cf Bruwer 1994a:67). Smit (1994b:28) says:

As individuals, as individual Christians, we are powerless, we are without influence,

we cannot make a difference ... and then we withdraw into our private, individualistic spheres, and into our private individualistic kinds of Christianity.

Smit (1994b:28) cites the research done by Robert Bellah and colleagues, who found through interviews among people from privileged and influential backgrounds, that they are extremely individualistic and care only for themselves and seek their own security, comfort and happiness. These researchers plead for a change of mind away from the individualistic tendencies in society. They argue that people must learn to take the institutions of society (family, school, community, churches, legal systems, colleges, political system, to name only a few) seriously, to become involved in these institutions, to pay attention to them. Through involvement in these institutions society gets a more human face. These institutions determine the quality of our lives and if they fail, life becomes less human, even terrible.

Smit (1994:28) agrees with this viewpoint and calls on people to look beyond the church and the state as the only institutions in society. People must learn to live and work through the many institutions in society. To live and work truthfully and with integrity and to serve their fellow human beings. The African world-view, which sees power as something which is not independent from one's fellow beings, can help modern society to realise that powerlessness is also part of an individualistic world-view.

It seems as though the systems perspective could help prevent pastoral work from becoming even more individualistic, and thus also entrenching powerlessness. Clinebell (1981:18) makes use of what he calls "growth therapies" based on the systems way of thinking to maximise human wholeness. Clinebell (1981:18) describes such an approach to counselling as constructive counselling: "... constructive counselling and therapy seek to *empower* people to work with others to change the institutional and societal roots of individual problems". This implies a redefining of institutions towards wholeness.

Our people-serving institutions (especially churches, schools, and health agencies) should redefine their purposes and revise their programs to become better human wholeness centers devoted to helping people maximize growth throughout the life journey. Every community needs a network of such wellness-growth centers. To increase their effectiveness in nurturing wholeness, these institutions need to develop a variety of Nurture-growth groups (Clinebell 1981:18).

The AIDS crisis emphasises the need of empowerment on all levels.⁵⁹ Often people are in relationships where one of the partners is unfaithful but because of the power the one has over the other, a person may feel powerless to do something to bring about change. The defining of *risk groups* and, later on *risk continents* (like Africa), did not help much to prevent the spread of the disease, but facilitated a feeling of powerlessness.

Powerlessness also occurs at an institutional and macro-level. The economically powerless often do not have the means to say no to unsafe sexual practices. Prostitution is such a macro-level issue. The reason for prostitution is money most of the time (cf Schurink s a). To curb prostitution means that people (women

59. "The substantial reduction of high-risk sexual practices by gay sub-groups was achieved largely through effective self-empowering organization" (Bandura 1989:138-139).

and men) should have other options to sustain themselves and their families. Saayman and Kriel (1992:56) put it very aptly:

The churches are therefore not called in the first place to moralise about lust and sexual promiscuity. They are called rather to encourage and aid an economic system within which prostitutes can find alternative ways of subsistence.

Although HIV is a biological and not a social entity, its transmission from one person to another, for the most part, occurs within the social context of interpersonal relationships. Women are particularly vulnerable in a patriarchal society.⁶⁰ Overall (1991:36) remarks "gender differences are emphasized and exaggerated; but power differences are denied or overlooked". The major burden for self-protection against sexually transmitted diseases usually falls on women themselves, although some women believe it to be the men's responsibility (cf Cochran 1989:316). The use of condoms, which is widely propagated, allows women to be empowered to control their lives in a certain sense. Many men resist the use of condoms for a number of reasons. Some believe it reduces their sexual pleasure, or threatens their sense of manliness and authority, casts a shadow of doubt on their faithfulness, or carries the frightening implication that they may be the carriers of disease. Some people do not have the written or spoken ability to negotiate safer sex, nor the power to do it.

The next sections discuss empowering from a gender (7.4.1.1) and a community (7.4.1.2) perspective. This is followed by a section about the role of responsibility (7.4.1.3).

7.4.1.1 Gender empowerment

Female inequality is a major social cause of the HIV epidemic (Wilson & Lavelle 1993:671).

Many men possess coercive power over their partners. "Women who are enmeshed in relationships of imbalanced power need to be taught how to negotiate protected sex ... At the broader societal level, attitudes and social norms must be altered to increase men's sense of responsibility for the consequences of their sexuality" (Bandura 1989:137). Pearlberg (1991:40 ff) says women could be taught skills through role playing, learning and practising assertiveness skills to give them the capability to raise sexual and communication issues with partners. People should be encouraged to make their own decisions about safer sex and self-protection regardless of what their partners tell them.

It is necessary to add to Bandura's statement that these imbalanced power relationships also exist in same-sex relationships and that there are also heterosexual relationships where the women are the coercive power. Everybody should be given the responsibility for their own sexuality. "Social norms, however, that

60. Women in South Africa are, according to certain studies, more easily infected than men by the HIV. "HIV/ AIDS is three times more common in women than in men" (Stevens 1995:7). According to C Patton (1993:183 note 8), different studies do publish different results but "women are considered more consistently infectable than infectious".

dictate safer sex could spare individuals from such difficulties, something that is becoming more apparent from research on gay male sexual behavior change" (Cochran 1989:317).

Condoms as a solution for the spread of AIDS should be seen in the context of empowerment. The problem of empowerment becomes even more difficult in cultures where women are expected to be subservient. Cochran (1989:319) refers to the role of women in the Hispanic culture and describes how difficult it would be for a woman, in a culture where women are expected to be sexually inexperienced and obedient to male desires, to request her male partner to use a condom. Kriel (1993:28) refers to the situation in stingily patriarchal societies where it is accepted that males will have several sexual partners.

Patton (1993:169, 175) is critical of all these referrals to other cultures where men refuse to wear condoms. She feels that the 'ordinary' US man is also not very co-operative in this regard. Sex is often implicitly viewed in the Western culture as a man's right and a woman's obligation.⁶¹ This is also entrenched in some male-dominated religions. That may be the reason why some religions are so strictly against the use of the condom. Pearlberg (1991:41) says initiative is necessary and suggests that, in cultures where male protection of the family is cherished, safer sex could be framed as a highly desirable way for men to protect their families.

The pastoral worker's role is not only to counsel, but to work towards change by providing a framework for support and community-wide education. In this process people in the community should be used to take on the struggle against oppressive structures. People should be empowered to take on the struggle for safer sex themselves. Pastoral workers could play a role by, for example, creating programmes that improve people's sense of self-worth.

Small groups are one way to empower people. The learning process in such a group is more participatory than information-orientated. Such groups could form support systems and share information in an indirect way. Networking with other people and groups may also play a role in empowering individuals and groups. Pastoral work should activate the church to become part of these networks and to play a role in the empowerment of people.

7.4.1.2 Empowering the church community

There is a tendency in churches to exercise some form of hierarchical authority over their members and to project their own vested interests onto society. This has become an obstacle to the church's meaningful participation in pastoral work. This prevents pastoral work from becoming a *people's movement* and the church from being truly a servant church. That is why an interrelated ecclesiology as base theory is so important for practical theology and also for pastoral work. The ecclesiology should influence the leadership patterns in the church.

61 . According to a press report (*Sunday Times* 19 May 1996), citing a global sex survey, only 7% of South Africans use condoms and only 21% are worried about AIDS.

Pastoral workers of the URCSA responded to the questionnaire sent out by the researcher as follows:

		FULLY AGREE	AGREE SOME= WHAT	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	DISAGREE SOME= WHAT	TOTALLY DISAGREE
28	Every member should be seen to have equal status in the church.	82.2	6.5	4.7	4.7	1.9
34	I believe that the clergy and church council should dress similar to the congregations during church services.	42.6	19.4	12	16.7	9.3
22	The clergy should be seen as the shepherds of the congregation and the members as the flock.	11.9	10.1	7.3	24.8	45.9
42	I believe the clergy and church council should dress differently from the rest of the congregation during church services.	34	12.3	12.3	21.7	19.8

The respondents (in this case full-time pastors of the URCSA) gave a clear indication that they believe that all members should be seen to have equal status in the church. The metaphor shepherd-flock is well-known in the Bible. Pastoral workers are not requested to respond to the metaphor as such (although some could interpret it that way), they are asked to identify the clergy with the shepherd and the congregation as the flock. The attire of the officials in the church is a contentious subject (cf Beukes 1993). Some respondents may believe strongly in the symbolic value of it, others may (even subconsciously) see it as a sign of the authority of the clergy and the church council. There is no indication why 34% of the respondents believe that the clergy and church council should dress differently.

It is necessary to transform the leadership patterns into ones of partnership and participation, and to help the church to step down from its ecclesiastical pedestal and become active, vital, serving and caring communities of people which serve one another and society. This would mean the empowering of the office of the believer to become involved in the caring actions of the church community.

The church community is the place where the stories of people's hurt should be told. "Once we recount our stories in community, and analyze and reflect together on their meaning, they acquire the power to move us forward" (Ackermann 1996:48).

7.4.1.3 Empowerment and responsibility

It is much easier to think (and write) about rights than it is to think (and write) about obligations and responsibilities (Jenkins 1995:4).

Empowerment must be connected with responsibility (Cochrane et al 1991; Smit 1994b; Ackermann 1996). From an ecosystemic perspective, the paradox between self-assertion and self-denial must be kept in mind. The one presupposes the other. For those at the bottom the challenge is to be empowered, to break out of repression and to act as people with hope. Those at the top are challenged to move down, to move out of an individualistic lifestyle to become aware of others in need (cf 2 Cor 8:9).

Empowerment should promote self-care and starting to take responsibility for one's own life but also the life of others in a non-paternalistic way. To do this, a community approach, which implies community involvement, is necessary. Community pastoral work should foster empowerment as something which

does not take root in isolation. It should take place in the context of taking responsibility for one's brother and sister as well as for nature.

The AIDS crisis also demands a life of responsibility. People should learn to take responsibility for themselves and for others. This means that those who are living with the HIV should act responsibly towards others in society (cf Louw 1990:48). Society should also take responsibility for those who have AIDS and need help and those who have no other way to live economically than to be willing to sell sex in return for money or to pay for services in kind.

It should also reflect the responsibility that the church community should take for those in need. In Matthew 25 it is clear that the church community will have to answer to the question "Where were you when I was hungry, and naked, and sick, and in prison and a stranger?" God not only made us in his image and solely accountable to him, He also made us social creatures who must exist alongside the rest of the universe.

It is the task of the pastoral worker to empower people, but in an integrated way. People should be empowered not to become more individualistic but to become more aware of their own humanness and also of that of others. It seems as though the concept of "ubuntu" in the African philosophy could help the church community and pastoral workers towards communal thinking. Van Niekerk (1989:529) reminds us that in the African way of thinking the community can get so much preference above the individual that the individual tends to become non-existent. Ackermann (1996:45) says that: "Accountability is ultimately tested in the reality of the well-being of all".

It seems that if the community or the individual is absolutised, a situation develops where empowerment and responsibility may come into serious conflict. An ecosystemic and holistic perspective, which moves away from absolutism towards integration, should help a community pastoral work approach. Personal empowerment should not be separated from community interests and the community's interest should not develop distinct from common human values.

7.4.2 The way forward for the church's pastoral work

The aim of this study is not to work out a specific church programme to take on the AIDS pandemic. The aim is to give attention to the church's pastoral work approach to see to what extent our pastoral work approach could deal with the issues of society, of which AIDS is one of the main challenges facing the church and the whole world.

Having said all this, it becomes inevitable to point out a direction for the church's pastoral work approach to the AIDS challenge. More detailed and practical strategies should be developed by churches and congregations themselves. This, in itself, already indicates a direction to take, namely that strategies should be worked out by the churches with their own cultural and social situation in mind.

- Community pastoral work should take the cultural situation into consideration and give attention to the local context. It should also challenge the cultural and the local situation, particularly if it is

discriminatory and disempowering to certain groups of people.

Community pastoral work should also play a role in making local communities aware of their interconnection with the rest of society and the global world.

The church community and the pastoral work actions of the church should be willing to work together with other organisations and movements and also ecumenically with other churches and religious groups.

Pastoral workers of the URCSA responded on the questionnaire sent out by the researcher as follow:

		FULLY AGREE	AGREE= SOME= WHAT	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	DISAGREE SOME= WHAT	TOTALLY DISAGREE
26	I believe that the Christian church is called to work closely with all the other Christian churches in the community	83.5	10.1	2.8	0.9	2.8
31	If Christian churches work together too closely, it confuses the church's members.	50.5	15.9	6.5	17.8	9.3
11	Christian religious leaders should not take part in religious services together with other religious leaders, like Muslims, Hindus and Jews	28.4	22.9	8.3	13.8	26.6
35	I will accept an invitation from our mayor to take part in a religious service together with religious leaders of other religions like Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists and Jews.	54.2	15.9	6.5	3.7	19.6

- The pastoral work of the church should, as a diaconal-pastorate, also address the consequences of the AIDS-epidemic, especially in regard to people living with AIDS and orphans.
- The church should accept that, although the terms HIV and AIDS are medical definitions, AIDS is not primarily a medical condition in need of pure medical intervention. It affects all areas of life and specifically the communities and relations the person who is HIV+ or living with AIDS is connected to.
- A community pastoral work approach, where the church community and not only the pastor is involved in the caring actions, could play a preventative role. The pastoral work of the church should make AIDS visible through care, support and openness. This could then also serve as a preventative action.

Many people deny the impact of HIV and AIDS as they haven't seen it and therefore tend to believe that the descriptions are exaggerated or that it does not exist. Involving the church community through care and support could help to further openness and also involvement. Personal contact with AIDS may therefore stimulate prevention (*Norwegian Church Aid* 5 a:3).

In itself the involvement of the church community is an empowering act whereby people, through caring for others, become empowered to act as responsible human beings. It seems to be particularly appropriate to train young people in the church how to care, also physically, for others. Young people often have the energy, the time and the sensitivity to care for others. But they need some direction and empowerment to do it. The church can play a major role in this.

Prevention, only through admonishing and handing out of information, is doomed to fail.

- A community pastoral work approach should also take on the issue of sexual ethics. In many societies and communities sex is a taboo subject.

In many of these communities religion is an important interlocutor concerning sex. (This does not mean that everybody in the community is living according to the religious principles). The role of religion and the church is often confined to being a "watchdog" or to raising the guilt complex of those who do not adhere to the principles set out by the church and society. The church's or religion's role as watchdog may have an influence on behaviour, but only to a limited extent, particularly if people experience that the community or society have double standards: one standard for young people and another for adults; one for gay people and another for heterosexual people; or one for women and another for men.

Community pastoral work should bring the topic of sexual behaviour into the open in a sensitive way. It is not only necessary to talk about sex openly but also to put religious principles and society's sexual practices into perspective. In many communities certain principles are propagated and most of the time given a religious cloud, but in practice the community collectively or the society as such does not adhere to that principle at all. This is also a sign of our Western dualistic thinking, where principles and practice are often not integrated.

- A community pastoral work approach should be involved in home-based care programmes, run by church or non-church networks.

Community pastoral work is about more than just counselling, it is about total care. The costs involved will make it impossible for people in a country like South Africa to be cared for in institutions. Often treatment is not sophisticated and does not require hospitalization. In addition, home care may add quality of life to a person with AIDS and his/ her family.

It would be important to work together with other organisations and implement an integrated, but sustainable service to those in need.

- The impact of AIDS will become visible on all levels, in the community and on a macrolevel.

The church's pastoral action should prepare itself to face these consequences, namely more poverty, especially pressure on elderly people, women with babies who are HIV+, and the many orphans in society. In the years to come church families should be prepared to take in orphans.

- Community pastoral work should have a prophetic task, not only to warn society about the impact of the HIV and the need to change behaviour, but also to stand on the side of justice.

The way society often responds to disasters is to put the blame somewhere and to isolate those who are blamed. The pastoral work approach of the church should foster sensitivity and compassion for those in need and should speak up about violation of the rights of those who are HIV+. Sensitivity from the church's side may affect the way people living with AIDS are treated in the community. It may make the difference between the whole community's attitude towards people living with AIDS. Even if the church has little

influence in a specific community, it is important that the church does not invigorate the community's prejudices.

- A community pastoral work approach should empower people to take responsibility for their own lives and to start to care for others.

Many people are in a position of dependency. Sometimes because of social structures, sometimes because of their own choice, sometimes even because of the attitude of those caring for others. Empowerment does not mean that a person should only think of himself/ herself but should go hand in hand with an attitude of taking responsibility for your own life in the context of community. People empowered within the context of community/ networking should be aware that they are in relation to other beings and the universe.

7.5 OVERVIEW

"What is known about HIV/ AIDS will continue to evolve and change" (Bor 1989:321). A community approach to pastoral work done from an ecosystemic perspective should influence the church approach to the AIDS crisis. It should be a holistic approach aware that many changes could take place in the years to come.

HIV-positivity or AIDS raises a feeling of uncertainty. Information is sometimes conflicting. People's reactions are conflicting. Basic life issues like sexual activity are put in jeopardy. Death is suddenly very close and a stark reality, although it could still be several years into the future. An ecosystemic perspective to counselling, that operates according to a less dogmatic perspective and is more orientated towards an uncertain mode of thinking, may connect with the feelings of a careseeker who is HIV-positive or has AIDS. It may be easier to talk about the uncertainty and to show that the uncertainty can be addressed.

A pastoral worker, who works from an ecosystemic perspective, may feel less pressurised to come up with answers and solutions in a situation with much uncertainty. It is crucial that we should be able to hear what help the people living with AIDS require and not what we, with the bias of our own needs, think is needed (Kirkpatrick 1988:73). This can also help to reduce the burnout in pastoral workers.

A community approach done from an ecosystemic perspective provides pastoral work with a positive framework within which to work in an AIDS setting. It cannot provide all the answers but at least it allows them to be addressed. A community approach is a perspective rather than a technique. Those who work from this perspective may draw on very disparate techniques, but remain aware of the patriarchal heterosexist society they work in.

Both the ignorance about the devastating effects of AIDS and the social feeling of despair in the face of the AIDS pandemic should be addressed. The traditional individualistic approach, from an Enlightenment perspective, did not succeed. The community approach moves away from a framework where the individual or society is seen as helpless. Power is of central concern in the community approach, but so is interaction with the whole of society. This means that community pastoral work should not only deal with the power relation between pastoral worker and careseeker, but also with the wider relations in

society. In practice, this could mean that lobbying, campaigning, social action and intervention for certain issues and rights may be part of the pastoral worker's task. This means being able to exercise care outside the formal confines of the therapeutic setting. Social action can work alongside individual therapy or group therapy. It could include facilitating a reconciliation of the professional and voluntary side of care.

Although AIDS has negative social and personal implications, from an ecosystemic perspective, it has a place in the ecology of things, it has a purpose in maintaining balance in the wider ecology (Bor 1989:315). This does not make its social impact or the emotional trauma associated with (early) death less painful, but puts it in a wider context.

In the very short known history of humankind, many different so-called plagues have occurred. Plagues in medieval Europe were associated with urbanisation and changes in human behaviour. Changes in modern society, including migration, increased mobility and a diminished emphasis on Victorian sexual values, have provided a fertile environment in which HIV has been transmitted (Bor 1989:315). Although medically most people contracted AIDS through sexual contact, from an ecological point of view sexual practice is not the only factor that causes AIDS. This study reminds us that AIDS forms part of a larger social and economic system. It also means that problems that arise in the context of AIDS have different meanings and implications in different settings. It also reminds us that society (and thus also the church community) always has to face up to some degree of uncertainty and unpredictability (cf Bor 1989:316).

There is a certain untidiness or open-endedness in pastoral work as described in this study. Community pastoral work is not described in terms of a specific policy or specific techniques. Community pastoral work is more a way of thinking about pastoral work than a specific way of going about it. The assumption is that the way we think will eventually also influence our praxis. This is inherent to the Christian gospel. A community pastoral work approach should constantly remind the church that AIDS is not only a medical or an ethical issue, but also an issue of justice and compassion.

While it is important that pastoral workers should develop certain skills and be trained in different counselling methods, the emphasis in this study is not on method or "what-to-say-when". Instead, this study wants to help pastoral workers to be aware of the importance of the bigger picture and systems involved in the context of our modern society. It is important that pastoral workers should be helped to identify the systemic implications of problems; address the dilemmas and fears that arise from these implications; realise the ecological impact certain issues may have; be aware of the social and economic influences that play a role and even consider the potential effect on others their intervention might have.

AIDS should be seen as an opportunity for the church to show compassion and minister forgiveness in a holistic way. The church community must provide the kinds of services neighbours provide for one another and practically live out the commandment "to love one another" (cf Louw 1990:50).

8. NOT A CONCLUSION, BUT A BEGINNING

The needs of people often develop over time and is a culmination of different processes. In other words, needs do not just happen, in general they develop through a process which is often the result of different patterns which develop up to the point where urgent help and support is sometimes needed. The specific pastoral needs of people should not be isolated from the general needs of people in society. The pastoral care and counselling going out from the church community should be aware of the processes involved and should adapt to the specific needs of a person as well as the general needs of people. This study wishes to emphasise that pastoral work is put into practice through many relationships and systems. Some of these relationships are individualistic and others more communal in nature.

Pastoral work, done from an ecosystemic perspective, is broad, inclusive and non-particularistic. This study is an attempt towards integration and synthesis rather than isolation and exclusivism, working consciously with a specific perspective, to map out the features of the observed world. This does not mean that other perspectives or theories, mapping out different aspects of what is presumably the same universe, are totally rejected. It also does not mean that all perspectives are equally acceptable.

The understanding of the researcher is a functional "truth" to him. Ecosystemic thinking always reminds us that the same event or theory can be interpreted in many ways. We all select the interpretation which we believe will serve our purpose best. Our own personal frame of reference often validates our theories. Systems exist as we bring them into existence by observing regularities or patterns and incorporating these into our world-view.

The basic affirmation of pastoral work is God's love for every human being. Within the context of God's love, pastoral work should be comprehensive. It should permeate every congregational function. Community pastoral work could be described as a holistic process whereby a church community reaches out collectively and individualistically to members of the church and to others who are in need. According to the understanding reached in this study this should be done ecosystemically. Community pastoral work calls pastoral work to be involved in reconciliation, justice, healing and wholeness - individually and corporately.

This study stresses that pastoral work should be community orientated. The community should be understood not as a closed but an open system; thus the reference to the word *network*. This study, in terms of its ecosystemic metaparadigm, moves beyond the point of arguing whether or not pastoral work should only be directed to the church community or to the whole society. The issue for the future is not whether, but how pastoral work should interact with the society. This study merely makes some suggestions, which could be investigated in further research projects.

The caring functions of the church should never lose sight of its basic calling - the sustaining and enrichment of human life with all its value and dignity. It should embrace the brokenness into a creative force for healing and wholeness. The ministry of pastoral care is not directed to organisations, structures or programs, but to people. We live in a society where institutions and structures do not always serve and

affirm people's humanity. Part of the caring task of the church is to become prophetically involved in structures that disempower people. The church should also critically evaluate her own structures.

This study takes seriously the challenge Jürgen Moltmann posed to theology to **think new** about the role of theology. Moltmann's challenge is amplified further by Bosch's challenge directed to the church community to move away from the Enlightenment paradigm. Society, the church, the actions of the church and pastoral workers are challenged by the (looming) AIDS crisis which faces the world, but particularly Southern Africa. These challenges are interrelated in many ways.

This study proposes an ecosystemic metaparadigm for practical theology (and thus also for the pastoral work of the church) (chapter 2). The assumption is that the underlying overall paradigm (perspective) influences the theology of theologians and lay people. The ecosystemic metaparadigm takes on the challenge of Moltmann to theology to become more ecumenical, more holistic and less mechanistic.

An ecosystemic theological perspective should have an influence on the ecclesiology. An interrelated ecclesiology as base theory was suggested for practical theology (and thus also for pastoral work) (chapter 3). It was also a response to the challenge of Bosch to move away from the Enlightenment view of the church, which also challenges our view of pastoral work in a changing society (chapter 4).

The interplay between theory and praxis was enhanced with an investigation into the views of pastoral workers of the URCSA (chapter 5). A positive correlation between pastoral workers' views of the church and of pastoral work was identified as well as a tendency towards ecosystemic thinking. The possibility of a sample bias should be noted. The small sample size warrants caution in generalising the findings.

The community pastoral work approach suggested in this study (chapter 6) is a praxis-consequence of the ecosystemic perspective and the interrelated ecclesiology, but actualised in the context of the AIDS crisis (chapter 7). This study ends (chapter 8), not with a conclusion, but with the researcher's firm believe that this is just the beginning of a process.¹ This is a confirmation of the circular way of doing theology inherent to the ecosystemic pattern of thinking. It also links up with the first chapter where a so-called *solution* was suggested.²

8.1 THE NEED FOR FURTHER EXPLORATION

There are several points in this study which need further research and investigation:

1 An ecosystemic perspective or a community pastoral work approach is not the end. MacIntyre (1989:156), in another context, reminds us that "*Perhaps* Einsteinian physics will one day be overthrown just as Newtonian was".

2. "It is, perhaps, strange to find a "proposed solution" in the form of a statement at the beginning of a thesis. But this is the result of the circular way of thinking proposed in this study. It is also not a solution in the normal sense of the word, but more a proposal of an evolving, dynamic and ecological way of thinking" [cf p 38 of this study].

- The relationship in South Africa between the state and the church in caring for people.
- The professionalization of pastoral work in the South African context.
- The relation between postmodernism and ecosystemic thinking and its influence on the actions of the church.
- The relation between Habermas and postmodernism and its relevance for practical theology.
- A community approach to medicine and psychology in South Africa and its influence on pastoral work.
- A study about the pastoral views of people in traditional communities.
- The role of the narrative and oral approaches towards pastoral work.
- The implications of a diaconal pastorate in praxis.
- An empirical study of the relation between pastoral workers world-view and view of pastoral work.
- How prophetic can a pastoral approach be in a modern secularised society where the church's influence is limited?
- Pastoral work from a development perspective.
- A pastoral approach to Christian ethics.

8.2 NEW PATTERNS

Very few things are actually new and even so-called *new patterns* are not really new, because of their connection with the past. The ecosystemic perspective described in this thesis could hardly be called new. It is merely an attempt to emphasise certain aspects of practical theology and particularly plead for a more holistic and integrated perspective. It questions a value-free, objective approach to theology, something already done by the communicative actions approach, accepted by many practical theologians.

Changes in perspective and in approach described in this study are only part of a much bigger process of change going on in this universe which is influencing humanity and theology. It has already been accepted by many pastoral workers (Campbell 1981; Furniss 1994; Graham 1992; Clinebell 1984) that the excessive emphasis on the individual and his/ her intrapsychic health is a phase in the history of pastoral work. The influence of different kinds of theology such as liberation, third world and feminist theology on traditional theology should not be underestimated.

The spirit of the Enlightenment and the extremely close connection between pastoral work and psychology play an important role in the individualistic phase of pastoral work. New developments in psychology (family therapy and community psychology) as well as a broader understanding of pastoral work and its relatedness to other disciplines (sociology, philosophy) and developments in the so-called natural sciences,

led to "new" patterns in pastoral work.

The implications of all these changes and influences are not always very clear. This study accepts that these changes will sometimes be paradoxical in the sense that the implications would not always point in exactly the same direction. The acceptance of paradox is already a sign of change from the Enlightenment spirit of absoluteness. Larry K Graham, for example, describes these "new" patterns very skilfully in *Care of persons, care of worlds*, which appeared a few years ago (1992). The author argues for what he calls a *psychosystemic approach to pastoral care and counselling*. Graham (1992:13) describes his theory as follows:

A psychosystemic theory enables us to position the ministry of care more prominently among larger social and political interpretations of the pastoral situation, without losing focus of the healing, sustaining, and guiding needed by individuals, groups and families. It joins microsystemic with macrosystemic arenas of experience. It attempts to resolve, both conceptually and practically, the ongoing tension between concern for individual psyches and the increasing awareness of the ecological or systemic connection between all living things.

Graham's approach and this thesis correlate at many points. He works with a systems approach to pastoral work and refers to the reciprocal interplay between the individual and the social context. An interplay, which he acknowledges as not being neutral or static, but value-laden (1992:13). He summarised the basic thesis of his book "that to care for persons is to create new worlds; to care for the world is to build new personhood (1992:13). The destiny of persons and the character of the world are intertwined". However this study differs from Graham's book in the sense that it is less interested in developing an ecosystemic "theory". This study was more interested in describing underlying patterns and trends that form the metaparadigms that influence practical theology and thus also the pastoral work activities. Some of the implications for practical theology that follow from this study are the following:

- Practical theology should be aware of the underlying metaparadigms in all theological activity. This thesis makes use of an ecosystemic metaparadigm.
- Practical theology should work with an integrated ecclesiology, which includes an anthropology, as base theory.
- Practical theology should be process orientated, thus recognising that the theory-praxis relationship is both inseparable and dynamic.
- Practical theology should work with a holistic view of humanity.
- Practical theology is called to realise the importance of context. The context determines the perspective which often determines the actions that follow.
- The importance of communication for practical theology should be complemented with the idea of *community or networking*.

- An inter-disciplinary approach should be followed.
- From an ecosystemic perspective, practical theology should be aware of the prejudice in society and of the need for research and the so-called *objective factors* be understood within its context.

These implications will influence the actions of the church. The next section will further discuss the implications for the pastoral work of the church.

8.2.1 A pastoral vision for the future

Pastoral work is often either individualistic or communitarian in approach. The individualistic and reductionistic approach is imbedded in the Cartesian-Newtonian world-view of the Enlightenment. The African world-view on its part, is community orientated and holistic (cf Mosothoane 1973). Both these approaches have their shortcomings. The individualistic approach often denies the need of people to belong, to communicate with others and to be involved with others. The traditional approach may lead to a closed system with little space for individualism. It fosters the possibility of an unrealistic expectation that the church could be the centre of society and that society could be reorganised to function again the way traditional communities used to function.

Although the pastoral work of the church should be involved in social, prophetic and caring actions, the church often does not have massive resources in terms of financial strength, administrative organisation, technology, expertise and political clout. It is unrealistic to demand or expect of the church to change the society as a whole. Pastoral workers must humbly acknowledge what they are able or are not able to do. The church's strength lies in things such as caring and helping and in terms of concepts like love, justice and commitment.

Community pastoral work, done from an ecosystemic perspective, is well aware of the problems of modernity, and points to the community character of pastoral work without trying to create traditional communities in a modern society. The pastoral task of the church is to embark on a program of collective consciousness to try and overcome extreme attitudes of individualism and subsequently materialism (cf Nürnberger 1994:136). The church could build small committed communities (cells) and networks that could act as leaven.

This means that pastoral work should change its paradigm, its frame of reference, from value-free science to an interactive approach to scientific data; from absolute truth to provisional pronouncements. The community of believers and the universe as a whole are to be deconstructed and reconstructed.

A community pastoral approach demands of pastoral workers to empower the powerless and vulnerable society. This may also imply conflict within the vested interests of power groups. This includes a call to responsibility. Both the powerful and the powerless must know that they have a responsibility. No person or

institution is excused from responsibility - and the greater the power one has, the greater the responsibility.

Community pastoral work means to explore the assumptions, values and norms that guide society and organise communal activities, which demand going beyond conventional values and norms. Pastoral workers could play a role in questioning self-interest and individual selfishness in society. Broadened horizons, evoke responsibility and accountability.

In traditional communities the system of meaning is centred around the community and its normative structures. The individual is tied into a fixed social system with obligations and taboos. Group loyalty is fundamental to perception and behaviour. Anything that goes beyond the limits of the community, clan, tribe, ethnic group or gang is seen as hostile actions. While this close system grants belonging and security, it also undermines individual creativity, effort and responsibility.

In modern communities the system of meaning is centred around the autonomy of the individual. Private interest is fundamental to behaviour. The world is considered to be mere material for utilisation. People are trained from childhood to respond to the Enlightenment in terms of competing and outperforming others. self-fulfilment becomes the most important aim of life.

An ecosystemic approach challenges both these types of world-views. Community pastoral work, offered in this study, is done from an ecosystemic perspective. It is a way of doing pastoral work where every person is free from communal fetters, free for service to others. "Responsibility moves in concentric contexts, each of which is multi-dimensional: nature, society, community and the wholeness of the person" (Nümberger 1994:143).

The implications of a community pastoral work approach could be summarised as follows:

- Pastoral work, as a discipline, should consciously move away from studying only the pastoral actions of individuals from Christian communities and give more emphasis to the pastoral actions of the Christian communities themselves. Every community is at least potentially pastoral.³
- Like practical theology, pastoral work should work with a holistic view of humanity.

This means that it applies to all humanity and to the whole of creation and seeks liberation from all that is oppressive. The implication would be that possible ignorance on the side of practical theology and possible imbalances hitherto perpetuated in practical theology, by not giving enough attention to the oppression of people in terms of race, class, sex, sexual orientation, and even between those that are HIV+ and those that are not HIV+, should receive special attention.

3 . Cf JNJ Kritzinger (1995:368) who writes from a missiological perspective.

- The agenda of pastoral work often seems more wedded to science, professionalization and paternal patriarchal and heterosexist practice, than being open to the complex historical, social, economic and political context of the lives of the people with whom pastoral workers come into contact.

In this reductionistic framework pastoral work may be in conflict and competition with registered professional counselling by counsellors such as clinical psychologists and social workers. Community pastoral work going out from the church community, could complement the functions and skills of both paid professionals and voluntary workers. In the church community there may be people with professional counselling skills and people with few skills but commitment to care for others. Caring going out from the church community should be seen as a complementary service to services already available in society and not as being in competition with existing professions.

- Community pastoral work is an attempt to develop a more social-prophetic and ecosystemic model of pastoral caretaking.

Currently the dominant perspective in pastoral work is the interpretation of symptoms and the making of a diagnosis based upon individualistic interpretations of the personality and behaviour in a private and relatively isolated setting. These types of diagnoses are often done in isolation and not in co-operation with the family, culture, education and work of the careseeker. Many people have received healing and experienced growth in this individualistic approach.

However, in spite of these positive outcomes for many individuals, the need exists for a more holistic and contextual approach (cf De Jongh van Arkel 1994). An approach which will be more ecosystemic, thus more aware of the dynamic interactions between and within persons, families, communities, societies, cultures, nature and God. Such an approach would be more prophetic and also aware of the oppressed in society (i.e. people of colour; women and minority groups) and of the needs of the careseekers in view of a combination of structural impairment, power imbalances, personality traits, and societal influences.

It means that pastoral care and counselling are also directed to shalom, justice and transformation and not only to personal fulfilment for the individual.

- Many pastoral workers suffer from burn-out. An AIDS epidemic would aggravate this problem.

A community approach means that the individual pastoral worker should not become the centre or focal point, but part of a network of pastoral care, "realising that no one person can care co-creatively for every need without support, personal and corporate" (Kirkpatrick 1988:81).

An ecosystemic community pastoral work approach should closely connect pastoral work with the church community or church network. The church should be a healing community. Often this healing community will also need to be healed.

- A community pastoral work approach is concerned about social issues like AIDS and accepts the role of

the church in this regard.

The church community should embrace and sustain those who are sick with AIDS and AIDS-related conditions, caring without barriers, exclusion, hostility or rejection. According to all signs it is becoming more and more clear that it would be impossible to care for all the AIDS patients in hospital.⁴ The state will need the support of the religious communities in this regard. The church community should prepare itself to deal with those members of the church community and thousands of others whose care will eventually be dependent on their families, friends and the communities or networks they belong to.

- An ecosystemic community pastoral approach should be aware of the important influences of socio-economic and political systems on people.

Socio-economic and political awareness must be central to, and a critical part of, all pastoral care that wishes to be ecosystemic and holistic. By ignoring these factors, pastoral workers would be part of the disempowerment of people and part of promoting the interests of the powerful against the powerless.

- Social justice is also the task of practical theology and pastoral work.

The importance of social justice for missiology, for example, is emphasised quite often (cf Crafford 1978). In practical theology, social justice is usually seen as the task of the diaconate (cf Nieuwoudt 1982). An ecosystemic community pastoral work approach recognises pastoral care and the diaconate as interrelated. The quest for social justice should also be taken up by pastoral workers if they are prophetically inclined.

- A community pastoral work approach takes as supposition that a pattern of personal wholeness cannot be established apart from participation in the lives of others and allowing them participation in your life.
- Community pastoral work, done from an ecosystemic perspective, could form the basis for a pastoral work approach in Africa, which includes the holistic values of the African world-view and integrates these with emphasis on the role and the responsibility of the individual from the Western world-view.

A community approach to pastoral work could help to integrate the spirit of Africa and the Western world and to develop responsible human beings, not in the Western style of self-sufficient beings, but people who are empowered to take responsibility for their lives, while being part of a community or network of people who are willing to be involved with other people (*ubuntu*).

- Pastoral work should refer to the helping and caring actions of the church.

4 . Pattison (1994:150-163) makes it clear that the state, in England, failed to communicate to people the implications of caring for psychiatric people in the community, when they decided in 1961 to care for people outside institutions. The results were devastating for the sick and their families. It is necessary to educate the general public not only about AIDS, but also that people living with AIDS will eventually become the responsibility of society.

The need for a diaconal-pastorate approach should be emphasised. It means that the sharp division between pastoral work and the diaconate should be obliterated.

- The roots for a community pastoral approach is the church community, but the context is the whole society.

Community pastoral work involves caring actions centred in the church community. The body of Christ model should help the church community to become involved and to use their gifts in the congregation as well as the wider community. These actions, rooted in the church community, are directed to the whole of society.

- Careseekers should be empowered to be able to live responsible lives and to be able to tell their stories of hurt, oppression, discrimination and social conflict, experiencing empowerment and liberation.

This empowerment should not only refer to individuals, but also to groups like, for example, women and cultural groups whose culture is being degraded in terms of the dominant culture. Empowered people and groups would be in a better position to take firm decisions about important aspects of their lives. Not only the individual should be healed, but society as well. This could only take place through empowered individuals. In the AIDS context there is the need for rape victims and sex workers to be empowered to take control of their lives again. In the South African context there is the need for those that are being discriminated against, the victims of the past system of apartheid and the possible victims of the present system of democracy to tell their stories and to experience liberation in the process.

- Community pastoral work is not a mere bandage to cover the wounds. It is an all-encompassing approach to healing, including healing from within, together with transformation of people and society, empowerment and stewardship.

8.2.2 A personal perspective

This is the last chapter of this thesis and yet it is not completed or finished. This study ranges over a somewhat wide territory. It raises many issues, without fully exploring them all and does not profess to answer all the questions raised. This is not a study of the art or technique of pastoral work. It does not presume to tell ministers and lay people how to do pastoral work. It is primarily concerned with the metaparadigm from which pastoral work is performed. Therefore it seems appropriate to end this thesis on a personal note. This is also to emphasise that this research was not done by a *faceless* researcher. The researcher is a white South African male. In the South African context, neither colour nor gender can be ignored, even in the struggle for a non-racial South Africa which the researcher stands for.

The researcher has learned a great deal from this study and during the preparation of this thesis. The systems involved in the process of writing a thesis are numerous - university, teachers, own community of friends, family and the church community in which I function, all played a role in the selection, interpretation and reading of the material. This is still an ongoing process. To use the words of the Liberation theologian, Enrique Dussel (1988:2), on community ethics; it is a "road under construction". It is difficult to attempt to

draw conclusions from something which, I have felt all along has been more in the way of the exploration of my own understanding than the setting out of evidence to answer to a certain hypotheses.

This study is not a final statement of my thoughts nor an absolute declaration of the ecosystemic perspective of pastoral work. It hopefully has the potential to grow, mature and transform. I have every expectation that the pastoral work of the church will do the same. The goal of this thesis is not so much to present a full and complete conceptualisation of community pastoral work, as it is to propose a (hopefully) fresh perspective, to suggest some different ideas and to stimulate some creativity in the field of pastoral care and counselling. The closing words of Howard Clinebell (1981:283-284) for his readers in his *Contemporary growth therapies* remains in my mind:

This 'conclusion' didn't go where I expected it would when I started writing it, which is probably just as well. For the only conclusion that will be worth much to you is the one *you* decide to write in your own thought and in your own actions and relationships. When you do that, it is really not a conclusion, of course, but a beginning!

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ADDENDUM 1



PLEASE MARK THE RELEVANT BLOCK WITH A CROSS.

1. WHAT IS YOUR GENDER (SEX)?

MALE	1	FEMALE	2
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2. WHAT IS YOUR AGE (IN YEARS)?

.....years

3. WHAT LANGUAGE DO YOU REGARD AS YOUR DOMINANT HOME LANGUAGE?

ZULU	01	XHOSA	04	VENDA	07	TSONGA	10
SWATI	02	SOUTHERN SOTHO	05	TSWANA	08	NDEBELE	11
NORTHERN SOTHO	03	ENGLISH	06	AFRIKAANS	09	OTHER	12
						

4. WHAT IS YOUR HIGHEST ACADEMIC QUALIFICATION?

DIPLOMA IN THEOLOGY	1	
BACHELOR'S DEGREE OR EQUIVALENT	2	
HONOURS DEGREE OR EQUIVALENT	3	
MASTER'S DEGREE	4	
DOCTORATE	5	
OTHER (SPECIFY)	6

5. DO YOU HAVE ANY PASTORAL WORK TRAINING OTHER THAN YOUR SEMINARY TRAINING?

YES	1	NO	2
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IF YES, PLEASE SPECIFY THE TYPE OF EXTRA TRAINING

.....

6. HOW MANY YEARS HAVE YOU BEEN A MINISTER IN THE CHURCH?

.....years

7. HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE GEOGRAPHICAL AREA YOUR CONGREGATION IS SITUATED IN?

URBAN/ SEMI-URBAN	1	RURAL	2
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8. WHAT PERCENTAGE OF YOUR TIME AS MINISTER IS SPENT WEEKLY ON PASTORAL WORK ?

LESS THAN 10%	1	BETWEEN 10% AND 20%	2	BETWEEN 20% AND 30%	3	MORE THAN 30%	4
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PLEASE TURN OVER

PLEASE STATE YOUR LEVEL OF AGREEMENT WITH EACH ONE OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS BY MAKING A CROSS IN THE APPROPRIATE BOX.

THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS ARE ABOUT THE CHURCH. PLEASE GIVE YOUR PERSONAL VIEW ABOUT THE TASK OF THE CHURCH

		Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
9	I believe that the people in the church must make sure that social and contextual factors do not influence their understanding of the Bible.	22.6%	16%	4.7%	25.5%	31.1%
10	A caring church should emphasise both the priestly and prophetic dimensions of the church.	91.6%	4.7%	0.9%	0.9%	1.9%
11	Christian religious leaders should not take part in religious services together with other religious leaders, like Muslims, Hindus and Jews.	28.4%	22.9%	8.3%	13.8%	26.6%
12	A country cannot be prosperous if the political leaders are not confessing Christians.	24.3%	15.9%	7.5%	17.8%	34.6%
13	The church is not really influenced by things that happen in society, such as violence, for instance.	61.5%	13.8%	4.6%	7.3%	12.8%
14	We should demonstrate concern in the church about the depletion of the ozone layer in the atmosphere.	56.7%	22.5%	13.7%	4.9%	2.0%
15	The church is the kingdom of God.	17.6%	13.0%	2.8%	11.1%	55.6%
16	The confessions of the church are drawn up objectively by people who distance themselves from all outside influences.	43.5%	19.4%	5.6%	12%	19.4%
17	The involvement of the church in matters such as justice and poverty is just as important as a theologically sound sermon.	78.9%	6.4%	1.8%	6.4%	6.4%
18	The State should not give preferential treatment to any one religion.	55.7%	22.6%	3.8%	7.5%	10.4%
19	The church is in solidarity with the world.	24.5%	17.9%	10.4%	26.4%	20.8%

PLEASE MAKE SURE THAT YOU HAVE ANSWERED ALL THE QUESTIONS ON THIS PAGE.

		Strongly agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	Agree
20	I believe that the people in the church are influenced by social and contextual factors in their interpretation of Scripture.	65.1%	24.8%	3.7%	3.7%	2.8%
21	A theologically sound sermon is more important than involvement in justice and poverty.	37%	20.4%	12%	13%	17.6%
22	The clergy should be seen as the shepherds of the congregation and the members as the flock.	11.9%	10.1%	7.3%	24.8%	45.9%
23	The church's welfare functions overlap with those of welfare organisations.	39.8%	33.3%	5.6%	12.0%	9.3%
24	The church community is there to care primarily for its own members who are poor and in need.	16.7%	9.3%	5.6%	26.9%	41.7%
25	What church people do (their actions) is just as important as what they believe.	84.3%	9.3%	2.8%	0.9%	2.8%
26	I believe that the Christian church is called to work closely with all the other Christian churches in the community.	83.5%	10.1%	2.8%	2.8%	0.9%
27	The church has both a theological and a sociological dimension.	77.4%	19.8%	1.9%	-	0.9%
28	Every member should be seen to have equal status in the church.	82.2%	6.5%	4.7%	4.7%	1.9%
29	Church people are called to help those in society who are poor and in need, even if those people never attend church.	67%	22%	4.6%	2.8%	3.7%
30	The church is conqueror of the world.	16.2%	9.5%	7.6%	20%	46.7%
31	If Christian churches work together too closely, it confuses the church's members.	50.5%	15.9%	6.5%	17.8%	9.3%
32	Social events and happenings like an election have a significant effect on the church.	51.4%	26.2%	6.5%	11.2%	4.7%
33	The church is only a theological entity.	54.2%	12.1%	5.6%	11.2%	16.8%

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		1995	2000	2005	2010	2015
34	I believe that the clergy and church council should dress similar to the congregation during church services.	42.6%	19.4%	12%	16.7%	9.3%
35	I will accept an invitation from our mayor to take part in a religious service together with religious leaders of other religions like Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists and Jews.	54.2%	15.9%	6.5%	3.7%	19.6%
36	It is more important for the people of the church to believe correctly than to act correctly.	39.3%	10.3%	11.2%	18.7%	20.6%
37	I believe that the church must be less busy with serving society and give more attention to the (spiritual) edification of its own members.	29.5%	21%	11.4%	18.1%	20%
38	There is a very clear distinction between the welfare functions of the church and those of welfare organisations.	9.3%	22.2%	7.4%	25.9%	35.2%
39	The confessions of the church are influenced by the trends of the age in which they are formulated.	55.1%	32.7%	3.7%	1.9%	6.5%
40	South Africa's Constitution should stipulate that this is a Christian country.	15.9%	10.3%	11.2%	22.4%	40.2%
41	I believe that one of the most important roles of the church is to serve others in society.	65.1%	20.8%	2.8%	6.6%	4.7%
42	I believe the clergy and church council should dress differently from the rest of the congregation during church services.	34.0%	12.3%	12.3%	21.7%	19.8%
43	Recycling programmes (e.g. paper and glass) should not be part of the church's activities.	45.1%	17.6%	15.7%	11.8%	9.8%
44	The church must contribute to the coming of the kingdom of God in the world.	97.2%	0.9%	-	1.9%	-
45	South Africa can be a prosperous country even if it is a secular (non-religious) state.	35.5%	17.8%	5.6%	15.9%	25.2%
46	A caring church should emphasise the priestly more than the prophetic dimension of the church.	44.3%	23.6%	12.3%	9.4%	10.4%

PLEASE MAKE SURE THAT YOU HAVE ANSWERED ALL THE QUESTIONS ON THIS PAGE

THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS ARE ABOUT THE CHURCH'S PASTORAL WORK AND PASTORAL CARE. PLEASE GIVE YOUR PERSONAL VIEW ABOUT THE PASTORAL TASK OF THE CHURCH

		I fully agree	I agree somewhat	I neither agree nor disagree	I disagree somewhat	I totally disagree
47	Our congregation should be involved in pastoral work in the local hospital even though the majority of people in the hospital do not belong to our church.	80%	16.4%	3.6%	-	-
48	I will not find it possible to involve a religious leader of another religion in the counselling process, even if I were requested to do so by the people who come for counselling.	36.7%	18.3%	7.3%	19.3%	18.3%
49	It is beyond the task of pastoral workers to become involved in cases of discrimination.	47.2%	13%	7.4%	6.5%	25.9%
50	As pastoral worker, I should always be in charge of counselling sessions.	18.9%	17%	5.7%	20.8%	37.7%
51	I think that it is very important for the whole congregation and not only the clergy and the elders, to take part in the caring activities of the church.	89.9%	6.4%	-	2.8%	0.9%
52	Pastoral workers should be involved in AIDS prevention programmes in their communities.	83.3%	10.2%	3.7%	-	2.8%
53	Pastoral workers should not become involved in the Reconstruction and Development Programme.	67.3%	14.5%	2.7%	5.5%	10%
54	Pastoral workers should be politically neutral.	18.7	11.2%	10.3%	12.1%	47.7%
55	The pastoral worker is hierarchically on the same level as the person who comes for help.	50.5%	17.8%	3.7%	13.1%	15%
56	The caring activities of the church include the diaconal task (diakonia) of the church.	91.7%	3.7%	2.8%	-	1.8%
57	It is essential to have professional training before you can become involved in pastoral work.	9.1%	13.6%	4.5%	28.2%	44.5%

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58	If there is a marital problem between a member of our congregation and her partner, who is a Muslim, and they come to me for pastoral care, I am willing to involve his spiritual leader, if requested.	57.9%	26.2%	5.6%	4.7%	5.6%
59	It is the task of social workers and health workers, not pastoral workers, to care for people with AIDS.	56%	21.1%	7.3%	6.4%	9.2%
60	A pastoral worker should be sensitive to discrimination in society.	83.2%	10.3%	4.7%	-	1.9%
61	The congregation's caring activities are the sole responsibility of the clergy.	69.7%	10.1%	3.7%	4.6%	11.9%
62	Pastoral work by our congregation should not be extended to the local prison, if no member of our congregation is in the local prison.	77.3%	9.1%	2.7%	4.5%	6.4%
63	It is not part of the caring task of church people to help with the distribution of food and clothes.	78.7%	13%	1.9%	2.8%	3.7%
64	As a pastoral worker I must be willing to counsel all people even if I feel uncomfortable with their attitudes towards certain issues.	5.6%	3.7%	3.7%	15.9%	71%
65	Pastoral work is caring actions in the congregation and also in the wider community.	80.4%	17.8%	0.9%	0.9%	-
66	Organising the recycling of paper and tins may be part of a pastoral worker's task.	25%	34.3%	13%	11.1%	16.7%
67	Church people should become involved in pastoral work even without professional training.	55.6%	23.1%	3.7%	4.6%	-
68	Pastoral workers should work only within church circles and should not involve members of other professions, like social workers, psychologists, doctors, psychiatrists and community workers.	77.1%	10.1%	0.9%	8.3%	3.7%
69	When the people in the church community help unemployed people to get work, they are involved in pastoral care.	68.2%	22.7%	1.8%	3.6%	3.6%

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		I fully agree	I agree somewhat	I neither agree nor disagree	I disagree somewhat	I totally disagree
70	It is impossible for pastoral workers to be politically neutral.	31.1%	22.6%	9.4%	16%	20.8%
71	The place to discuss environmental issues is the ethics class and not the pastoral care class.	32.7%	28%	10.3%	18.7%	10.3%
72	The only way to help somebody with their problems is to have individual counselling sessions with them.	18.5%	21.3%	1.9%	18.5%	39.8%
73	Pastoral workers should work together with members of other professions, like social workers, psychologists, doctors, psychiatrists and community workers.	89%	6.4%	-	1.8%	2.8%
74	As pastoral worker I may refuse to counsel certain people if I am uncomfortable with their attitude towards certain issues (e.g. sexism, racism, violence).	12.3%	24.5%	6.6%	11.3%	45.3%
75	The wider sociopolitical context must always be kept in mind when dealing with a person's problems.	72.9%	15.9%	2.8%	2.8%	5.6%
76	It is important to separate the diaconal task of the church and the caring task of the church.	48.1%	17.6%	5.6%	13%	15.7%

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