

**PRISON MINISTRY: NARRATIVES OF FAITH, HEALING AND
RESTORATION**

by

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I declare that

Prison ministry: Narratives of faith, healing and restoration is my own work and that all sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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ABSTRACT

The research focused on the healing and restoration of the offender through acceptance of the Christian faith. Acceptance of the Christian faith is perceived to have a positive influence on the adjustment of prisoners and to this effect, the running of Christian programmes and Bible Studies have a positive value. Provision of pastoral and practical care to prisoners and their families provide one of the few normalising influences in their lives and offer hope and meaning in a situation of despair. The church and wider society are invited to become involved in the restoration and healing of society by demonstrating practical care for those imprisoned and a commitment to reintegration of released prisoners into communities of care.

The stories of healing, hope and restoration reflective of inmates' new-found faith serve to counteract the dominant discourses of vengeance, bitterness, despair and hopelessness and strengthen the voices of forgiveness, care, community, trust and hope in the healing and mending of society.

Key terms:

Post-modern epistemology; narrative pastoral approach; feminist post structuralism; social construction discourse; post-modern theology; power discourse; prison ministry; restorative justice; Prison Fellowship New Zealand; Alpha in Prisons; crime and punishment discourses; faith discourse; ethical responsibility; accountability.

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CHAPTER 1 – PRISON MINISTRY: A RESEARCH STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This study is informed by my participation in prison ministry in Wanganui, New Zealand, through involvement in Prison Fellowship projects and in running Alpha programmes in the local prison.

The research focused on the healing and restoration of the offender through acceptance of the Christian faith. This incorporates the role of the church and faith community in pastoral care for the prisoner and ex-prisoner. Acceptance of the Christian faith is perceived to have a positive influence on the adjustment of prisoners and to this effect, the running of Christian programmes and Bible Studies have a positive value. In the following sections attention is given to the background and the area of concern of this research study, namely the involvement of Christian programmes and pastoral care in prisons; a review of research with regard to the impact of faith on inmates' adjustment, re-offending and reintegration into society; and the need and purpose of this study are explained. This chapter also relates my personal journey into an awareness of human suffering and becoming accountable, not only as an individual, but also as part of a faith community.

1.2 THE RESEARCH QUESTION

1.2.1 Background and general description of the area of concern

The relationship between Christianity and imprisonment is as old as the New Testament, with ministries to prisoners dating back to the first century of the church. With the world-wide growth of prison ministries, Christian influence in prisons persisted and arguably prospered, in the latter part of the twentieth century (Bolkas 2000:2-6). Garland (1990:203-204) comments that 'throughout the history of penal practice religion has been a major force in shaping the ways in which offenders are

dealt with.’ Even today ‘[i]n a practical sense, religion is a central aspect of the modern prison system’ (Clear et al 1992a:1).

My research suggests that the involvement of chaplains and prison ministry volunteers has a significant influence on the lives of prisoners. Through the provision of pastoral and practical care to needy prisoners and their families, they are able to provide one of the few normalising influences in their lives. With a mission to love and serve societies’ ‘outcasts’, these Christians represent a benevolent presence to people who have often reached the lowest point of their emotional and spiritual levels. In these circumstances they are able to offer hope and meaning in a situation of despair. In the area of prison ministry, Prison Fellowship and the introduction of the Alpha programmes have been active and instrumental in bringing the Christian message of hope to prisons.

1.2.1.1 Prison Fellowship New Zealand

Prison Fellowship New Zealand (PFNZ) has been active since 1982 and organises and equips Christian volunteers to visit and minister to prisoners, their families and to the victims. It is a volunteer-based ministry and people work in the areas where they can impact most effectively on the lives of inmates. They assist the chaplaincy, organise church groups to visit, conduct worship services and take Bible studies. Many become personal mentors and role models to inmates. They assist with accommodation; employment and church support after inmates are released. Prison volunteers also give personal support, encouragement, friendship and prayer support to those who minister in prison, to staff, prison officers and management.

Recently, Prison Fellowship has developed a new strategy for prison ministry. It has developed a set of core programmes to address the needs of prisoners, their *whanau*¹/ families, and victims, both inside the prison, and after they are released. These

¹ Maori for family and extended family (relatives/blood relatives/part of family group) (Williams 1975:179)

programmes (*Inside Out...* 2002) will focus on three areas – **transformation, restoration and reintegration.**

Through **transformation** Prison Fellowship actively addresses the desire to change through spiritual transformation and the Gospel of Jesus Christ is at the cutting edge of this ministry. Many inmates make a personal commitment to a Christian lifestyle while in prison, and need assistance while in prison to develop values and behaviour which reflect that intent. To facilitate this process, volunteers take Bible Studies, and act as spiritual counsellors and role models to reinforce and guide their decisions.

To facilitate **restoration** a programme called *Sycamore Tree* has been devised based on the principles of restorative justice to facilitate reconciliation between the offender and victim. *Angel Tree* is a Prison fellowship programme that provides Christmas presents to prisoners' children who might otherwise be overlooked during the Christmas season. It provides a crucial link between children and their imprisoned parents. It provides an opportunity to restore relationships between inmates and their children, and to provide additional assistance to the family.

In order to assist the prisoner in **integration** into society an aftercare programme *Operation Jericho* (*Inside Out...* 2002:4-5) has been devised to help selected prisoners overcome personal and social barriers in order to lead productive, crime-free lives on release from prison. As part of this programme, church-sponsored mentors are being trained and used to facilitate a relationship with prisoners and ex-prisoners and other community organisations in order to reduce the societal, resource and personal barriers ex-prisoners often face in attempting to make a successful transition back into society (*Inside Out...* 2002:4-5).

In October 2003 the first faith-based prison unit was opened at Rumataka Prison near Wellington, New Zealand. In a unique partnership between the Department of Corrections and Prison Fellowship New Zealand, the department will provide the custodial staff, and retain overall management of the 60 bed unit. Prison Fellowship will take responsibility for running an 18-month Christian development programme

within the unit. This is an interdenominational strategy, involving churches in a teaching and facilitating role. There is a strong emphasis on inmate accountability for the harm done in committing crime, and work toward restoring relationships with their victims, with family members and with the wider community. Through the language of relationships, they learn that the Christian message is a message about developing relationships based on love, forgiveness and reconciliation (*Faith based prison unit [2003]*).

PFNZ states that involvement in prison ministry should be raised. Prison numbers in New Zealand have increased by 99 percent from 1985 to 1999. Current projections call for 1600 additional prison places before the end of 2010 (Prison Fellowship New Zealand 2002).

1.2.1.2 Alpha in Prisons

Another area of prison ministry involvement is by means of Alpha programmes. Alpha in Prisons was launched in December 1994 in response to a demand from inmates with the desire to live changed lives. Prisons can be a place of hopelessness and depression. In the words of an ex-offender (*Alpha in prisons* 2000:10): ‘Prisons are so final and leave you feeling hopeless. That’s what God offers, what is on offer through Alpha – is hope.’

Enthusiasm for Alpha in Prisons (*Alpha in prisons* 2000; *Caring for ex-offenders* 2001) has been growing since 1995, with 125 UK prisons running courses by November 2000, and many courses being started world-wide. In response to increasing demand from prisons, the Alpha in Prisons Office was established in 1997, with the aim of introducing Alpha into every prison in the world. In this way every prisoner will have the opportunity to complete an Alpha course while in prison and come to faith in Christ.

Alpha (*Alpha manual* 2000) is a 15-session practical introduction to the Christian faith designed primarily for non-churchgoers and new Christians. The course is a low

key and non-threatening series of sessions where men and women from any background or belief system can ask questions about the meaning of life. It is a powerful tool through which to present the claims of Christ to the thousands of prisoners who have little or no understanding of the Christian faith. Follow-up courses to Alpha are also available and people who have accepted the Christian faith or wish to explore it further can enter in follow-up courses. Examples of such courses are: *A life worth living* (1994) (a nine-week course based on the book of Philippians and written specifically for those who are just starting out in Christian life); *Searching issues* (Gumbel 2000) (tackling seven issues most often raised during Alpha sessions, e.g. suffering, homosexuality, validity of other religions, etc.); *Challenging lifestyle* (2001) (nineteen Bible studies applying Jesus' teaching on the Sermon on the Mount to the details of our daily lives, e.g. how to deal with anger, love your enemies, get your relationships right, handle money, etc.).

The Alpha Course is arousing interest among senior prison officials and prison chaplains right through the world and is being encouraged to be implemented in prisons. The impact and influence of this course is seen not only as a valuable contribution to the spiritual life of prisoners, but also as helping many to bring about change in their lives, making a change to a new life free of crime and drugs. Alpha is playing an active role in reintegration of the ex-offender into the community and the involvement of the church in the rehabilitation of prisoners and the reduction of re-offending rates (*Alpha News* 2000:13).

Having given a brief synopsis of the involvement of PFNZ and Alpha in the field of prison ministry, I would like to share my story of how I became involved in prison ministry and how my own perspectives came to change over a period of time from being 'clinically' inclined to becoming 'caringly' involved in a healing ministry. To this effect I am much indebted to my studies in pastoral therapy from a post-modern social constructionist worldview and a new country, both of which lifted me out of my confined comfort zone and 'enlarge[d] the place of my tent ...stretch[ed] my tent curtains wide; lengthen[ed] [my] cords, strengthen[ed] [my] stakes' (Is 54:2). I am

thankful for a church that offered me the space to grow spiritually, expanded my nurturing gifts and invited me into a ministry of care.

1.3 MOMENT OF ‘INSERTION’

In the mid 1990’s during a time of devotion, I experienced the desire to get involved in prison ministry. This desire kept simmering in me, but I did not investigate the possibility of this type of ministry further; shelving the idea for the time being. Somehow, I thought of this vocation as a complete impossibility, being a white South African female, although there was no foundation for this reasoning and there was a prison on our doorstep in the town where I was living.

During this period of time I was busy with an Honours Degree in Psychology. Gradually in the course of this study, I became disillusioned with the individualistic and objective approach and the lack of spiritual embodiment I experienced in this field of human social endeavour. I can associate with Heshusius and Ballard’s (1996:1-2) description of a growing awareness of change in an individual’s perception of ‘knowing’ and feeling about what is right:

For many of us, there are moments in our professional development, as in the whole of life, when we know that we no longer believe what we had long accepted as true and correct....the confrontation can become so bothersome, and the need to trust one’s inner knowing so strong, that the felt discomfort leads to an intense intellectual analysis.

I experienced an inner discomfort working within the tenets of a positivistic perspective, which leads one to objectively study mankind according to universally applicable and reductionistic methods, lacking the kaleidoscope of contextual, socio-political and cultural difference and variety. In 1998 I enrolled for the M.Th. Degree in Practical Theology with specialisation in Pastoral Therapy at the Institute for Therapeutic Development in collaboration with UNISA, Pretoria, South Africa. This field of study introduced me to a post-modern, narrative and social constructionist worldview. My observation and understanding of what I believed to be ‘reality’ and ‘truth’ came under scrutiny and I was introduced to a different way of perceiving;

adopting 'new lenses' as an aid to 'seeing' differently (Hoffman 1990:4). Dockery (1995:13-14) describes this shift from a modern way of thinking to a post-modern mindset as a 'dislocating human condition', because it tends to throw people out of the worldviews they have traditionally held.

My 'conversion' from a modernist to a post modernist worldview, was certainly not a Damascus experience, as Guba (1996:48) so aptly describes the adoption of a new worldview, but a labouring process and in many instances a 'dislocating human condition' (Dockery 1995:14). This was nevertheless a gratifying and enriching process; a process that also prepared and helped me to understand and to appreciate the political changes taking place in South Africa. As a privileged, white South African I was a silent and passive participant and co-instrumental in a socio-political system that legalised and condoned the oppression and dehumanisation of my fellow-citizens. The system of 'apartheid' was considered to be divinely sanctioned and scripturally validated and advocated from the pulpits of the Dutch Reformed Church; the Church in which I was brought up and spiritually nurtured. Like many other white South Africans after years of racist indoctrination, I was left with a feeling of 'despair and disillusionment' (Ackermann 1996:34). Apartheid not only depended on a modern world-view; it claimed science and religion as witnesses to its truth (Du Toit 1999:951). The bond between the white Dutch Reformed Church and the Nationalist Party served the cause of white rule in South Africa (Ackermann 1996:39).

Having been part of a political system that was structured through abuse of power and racial discrimination, I have become increasingly aware of the potential to abuse power that comes with being in a position of power. Accountability not only means to address the power imbalances and injustice in society, but especially to be self-reflectively deconstructing our own voices as embedded in our 'particular class, cultural, temporal, historical and geographical spaces' (Jones 1990:8). Healing praxis thus starts with an awareness; a willingness to see and to feel and to listen; to being open to examine and reflect on our historical responsibility, consciousness and ignorance in terms of power (Ackermann 1998:90-91). My utmost desire is that this

attitude of self-reflection and awareness of ‘the other’ will be reflected in the ethics of my praxis.

In 2000 my family relocated from South Africa to New Zealand and we joined the Christ Church Anglican Parish in Wanganui. Being in a new country, I was wondering how I could become part of the healing praxis. As part of the missionary vision of Christ Church, Alpha Courses were presented at regular intervals to evoke interest in the Christian faith. In order to be able to a helper or a leader in such a course, I was asked to attend an Alpha course in order to get acquainted with the content and method. During the Holy Spirit weekend of this course, I had the experience of having my hands healed of eczema.

An Alpha course was also running at the local prison in Wanganui. Having had the miraculous healing of my hands, I was invited into the prison to give a testimony to a group of inmates attending an Alpha course during a talk on healing. Amidst a multi-cultural group of male inmates, most of them of Maori² and Pacific origin, I was privileged to testify how the Lord had healed my hands. I can still remember the expressions on some of their faces Was it wonder? Disbelief? Hope? The experience of being part of this group session simply changed my life. I was reminded of God’s calling many years before to become involved in serving in the prison. I would like to refer to this moment of time as my ‘moment of insertion’ which located my pastoral response in the lived experience of individuals and communities (Cochrane, De Gruchy & Petersen 1991:17). I knew that I wanted to become part of these men’s lives, sharing their thoughts and views with regard to religion, spirituality, values and their perception of life. I consequently got involved in prison ministry as part of an inter-denominational team. What initially started out as a one year commitment to prison ministry, has become a commitment over a few years.

It is against this broad background that I would like to position the involvement of our interdenominational Alpha team in our local prison. It became a story of the ‘fusion of

² A Polynesian people native to New Zealand (Williams 1975:179; *Webster’s*...1970:516)

horizons' (Gerkin 1986): the development of a new story for all the participants, because no one remained untouched and unchanged after this participatory journey.

The following sections review research done in the area of religion with regard to inmates' adjustment and recidivism and assess the need and significance of the study.

1.4 NEED FOR AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

1.4.1 Research studies on the impact of faith on an inmate's adjustment, re-offending and reintegration into society

Kim Workman (2001), Executive Director of Prison Fellowship New Zealand, recently brought out a report, *The influence of religion on inmate's adjustment and recidivism*, in support of faith based prisons or 'APAC'³ prisons. It involves a four-phased incremental change process which aims to successfully restore the inmate to his family, the community and God. APAC prisons have been proven effective in bringing about lower recidivism rates, lower levels of prison incidents and resultant savings to taxpayers. APAC differs from conventional approaches to offender rehabilitation. It is a process of spiritual transformation, which seeks to change people's values and beliefs through changing their relationship with God (Workman 2001:6-7).

Workman (2001:2) argues that there is a lack of social science research in the area of correctional policy making and administrative practice, on the one hand, and the influence of religion on inmates' adjustment and recidivism, on the other hand. The lack of research in this area can be attributed to potentially problematic biases held by both religious workers and scientific researchers. Many chaplains, ministers, and

³ Association for Protection and Assistance for the Convicted. Faith based or 'APAC' prisons had their genesis in Humaita Prison, Brazil in 1972. It is founded on Christ centered leadership and 'tangible expressions of unconditional love.' APAC aims to empower inmates and volunteers to take responsibility for solving their personal and communal problems (Workman 2001:6). In New Zealand a unit of Linton Prison, Palmerston North, has been running on APAC principles since 1999. The first formal faith based unit in New Zealand was established in October 2003 at Rumataka Prison, Wellington and is called He Korowai Whakapono - 'The cloak of faith'.

religious volunteers have been reluctant or lack the skills to undertake publishable research. This reluctance has been increased by a broader, historical scepticism about the relevance of religion held by many in higher education, and particularly by university researchers' ambivalence in studying spirituality or religion (Jones 1994; Larson et al 1986; Larson 1995; Workman 2001:2). John Dilulio (quoted by Workman 2001:3), Professor of Politics and Public Affairs at Princeton University, comments that substantial empirical evidence exists that reports positively on the involvement of religious programmes in the prison and he reflects as follows: 'It's remarkable how much good empirical evidence there is that religious belief can make a positive difference. It is intellectually irresponsible to ignore the "faith factor" in tackling social problems.'

Religion is perceived to be a powerful agent in bringing about behavioural and social change. The question has been posed, that if religion can bring about inhibition of delinquent and criminal activity, why might it not facilitate the process as well as the outcomes of prison rehabilitation? Workman (2001:3-4) comments that scientific evidence suggests that religion does affect behavioural and social change and supports the argument: 'Religion targets antisocial values, emphasises accountability and responsibility, changes cognitive approaches to conflict, and provides social support and skills through interaction with religious people and communities. Such emphases seem to be consistent with what many rehabilitation workers call principles of effective treatment.'

The present research findings generally confirm that there is a positive relation between religion and crime. Evans et al (1995:39-40) contend in their study: 'Among our religiosity measures, participation in religious activities was a persistent and non-contingent inhibitor of adult crime.' These results correspond with other published research showing that religion has similar benefits in other areas of impulse control or deviance, such as drug and alcohol abuse (Gartner, Larson & Allen 1991). Research done in New Zealand, indicates that religious beliefs have a significant influence on motivating offenders to turn from a life of crime, and to remove themselves from anti-social influences (Dennehy 2000; Lala 1996; Leibrich 1993). Aside from a theological

discussion about the spiritual role of religion, as well as evidence demonstrating the mental and physical health benefits of religion, there are scientific reasons to predict that religion might affect behavioural and social change (Bergin 1991; Gartner, Larson & Allen 1991; Larson 1995; Levin & Vanderpool 1987). Clear et al (1992a) found that religiousness was related both to improved adjustment, fewer institutional infractions, and reduced re-offending.

With regard to the impact of faith on reintegration into society, Stark and Bainbridge (1996) found that where a solid core of Christian faith existed within the community, and local Christians were well integrated into the prison with faith-based programs, it contributed significantly to the reduction of re-offending. 'Finding' religion was of little consequence, unless this was followed by immersion in a like-minded group after release. This finding supports the faith-based prison methodology, which promotes the development of a 'moral community' within the prison, and then seeks to integrate the inmate with a church community, and provides mentoring and support following their release (Workman 2001:6).

Miller (1979:185) contends that some of the reasons for the power of a Christian emphasis in a prison setting are that: 'The Christian emphasis neither undermines the offender's integrity (by considering him to be of "diminished" responsibility) nor leaves him without hope (in the face of his own weakness and failing). Christian conversion – with its emphasis on repentance, forgiveness and a new allegiance and empowering reach to the heart of those needs of every individual.'

Clear et al (1992a) comment on how religion appears to change inmates, or how inmates perceive they are changed: 'Inmates who adopt religion seem for the most part, deeply committed to doctrinaire models of religious living. This is an indication of how attractive the certainty of religious doctrines can be for inmates. It facilitates a type of "total replacement" whereby the ways of the past are subordinated to a new, fully developed way of living, one that can be thought of as "proven".'

1.4.2 The need for and significance of the study

Substantial empirical evidence exists which reports positively on the involvement of religious programmes in the prison. The question has been posed, that if religious belief can make a positive difference in cognitions, behaviour and perceptions, why can we not use the 'faith factor' in tackling the social problem? Few issues evoke such powerful responses as crime and its consequences. The legacy of violence and crime is not only bequeathed to the immediate victims of crime, their family and friends, but permeates the whole of society. Where criminal offending is perceived to be increasing or to be largely random in its occurrence, whole communities are traumatised by it (Marshall 2002b:1). Pieterse (1998:178-179) describes the criminal violence in South Africa as an 'all-knowing', 'new tyrant' that is on the rampage, threatening 'our safest, most private and most sacred places'.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu (1999:7) comments that crime is the responsibility of the whole of society. 'It reflects an inability of people to be just and fair in their dealings with one another. It panders to the shadow side of human nature where greed, violence and injustice lurk in each of us.' Crime is a complex issue involving economic and social status and background, education and employment opportunity, as well as individual personal choice. Crime is often committed by people who have been themselves the victims of fundamental injustice, or those whose basic human rights have been violated (Considine 1999:70). In South Africa major socio-economic problems and the legacy of apartheid are considered to have given rise to a very violent society (Pieterse 1998:178). In New Zealand the prison statistics are reflective of the socially and economically disadvantaged. The overrepresentation in prison statistics of those who are marginalised or discriminated against in the larger social and economic order, is to Marshall (2002b:8) indicative that criminal justice cannot be separated from social justice.

The church cannot be neutral with regard to ‘systemic injustice’ (Bosch 1991:433) and the ‘social forces’ that shape the ‘political environment’ (Cochrane, De Gruchy & Petersen 1991:27). The church is called to be an active agent in engendering wholeness and healing. In this study, in collaboration with my co-participants, I am reflecting on prison ministry as one way in which we can engender healing for a broken society.

The need for this study, I see as fourfold and involves the following areas:

1.4.2.1 The church and faith community

Graham (1996:53) comments that the focus of care should be relocated back into the communal context of the Christian congregation. The Christ Church Anglican Parish, where I have my spiritual home, reflects a ‘shared ministry of the laity’ (Graham 1996:53) and members of the parish are encouraged to be involved in a ministry ‘arising from their faith and directed toward others and the world’ (Cochrane, De Gruchy & Petersen 1991:3). Our church has as her vision and mission: To glorify God in faith, service and love; To befriend the lost and teach them to live as disciples of Jesus. Our faith needs to be a committed ‘embodiment’ of what we profess (Ackermann 1998:88). Isherwood & McEwan (1993: 74) say that faith without a commitment to society (God’s creation) is empty.

In this study we as a church and faith community were challenged to recapture our vision and mission and to put our faith into practice, rooted in the context of our society. In order to make a difference to the society we live in, we have to be aware of social and systemic injustices and be concomitant in engendering healing and wholeness. As a church faith community we also need to be informed of societal discourses which are entrenched in our practices and worldview and need to rethink our participation in oppressive discourses and our contribution to marginalising and alienating people.

1.4.2.2 The prison as community and faith community

Research findings confirm that religion has proved to be a powerful agent in bringing about positive change in the offender and also assists in the successful reintegration of the offender into society. Acting on the biblical mandate of seeking the lost, this imperative also includes ministering to the prisoner. A strong presence of communities of faith exists in most prisons and these communities need to be built up and strengthened by fellow believers outside the fence.

1.4.2.3 The wider society⁴

Crime has an influence on the whole of society and in restoring what has been broken by crime, Workman (2003: [1]) suggests a 'full-circle vision'. The healing and restoration of prisoners through finding the Christian faith would contribute to the healing of the wider society. There is a need to minister in practical ways to all those impacted by crime, to strive for justice within the criminal justice system, and to minister Gods healing grace into our societies (Marshall 2003:11; Workman 2003).

1.4.2.4 The research community

This research study responds to the lack of qualitative research in the area of prison ministry. It also responds to the desire and need expressed by manifold chaplains, prison volunteers and leaders involved in prison ministry to have the stories told of imprisoned men and women whose lives have been remarkably changed by their Christian faith and who have been able to find hope, healing and restoration through accepting the Christian faith.

⁴ The general perception is that the criminal justice system focuses on the rehabilitation of the offender and fails to respond to the needs of the victims (Smarto 1993:77). The legal system, communities and the church need to be informed and educated to respond appropriately to the needs and plight of the victims of crime. About 80% of all prisoners were victims of severe sexual and physical abuse as children. Attending to victims of crime before they become offenders, would have a tremendous impact on the incidence of crime (Lampman & Shattuck 1999; Marshall 2003; Workman 2003: [1-2]).

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

When I started out on my journey participating in prison ministry, I experienced it as part of a ‘missionary outreach’; the realisation of the ‘call’ on my life many years before. The Scripture⁵ that spoke to me was from Isaiah 42:1-7 and is the summary of Christ’s programme (*Missio Dei*) on earth (Diochi 2001:191):

I have put my Spirit upon him; he will reveal justice to the world. He will be gentle – he will not shout nor quarrel in the streets. He will not break the bruised reed, not quench the dimly burning flame. He will encourage the fainthearted, those tempted to despair. He will see full justice done to all who have been wronged. He won’t be satisfied until truth and justice prevail throughout the earth, nor until even distant lands beyond the seas have put their trust in him. ...You shall also be a light to guide the nations unto me. You will open the eyes of the blind, and release those who sit in prison darkness and despair.

At the outset of my journey into prison, I had little knowledge of how the lives of the inmates, my fellow volunteers and the chaplains would impact on my life. Many of these fellow participants have been involved in prison ministry, or acting on a promise from God, faithfully praying for prison ministry and the ‘setting free’ of the prisoner. This telling of our collaborative experience is a humble tribute to a group of people who had a life-changing effect on me.

The research question that focused my research was as follows:

How do I participate in pastoral care of prisoners in a way that will bring hope, healing and restoration into their lives?

The questions that evolved in the process of my research journey and helped me to reflect on my commitment to pastoral care, were:

⁵ The translation of Isaiah 42:1-9 is taken from *The Living Bible* (1971). All other Scripture quotations are from *The Holy Bible: New International Version* (1984). The particular translations used by the inmates in their testimonies (chapters 4 and 5), are not known.

- How can the Christian faith discourse contribute to engendering hope, healing and restoration in an environment of incarceration?
- How can the stories of men whose lives have been changed by the Christian faith be told in a respectful and accountable manner?
- How can these stories serve to bring hope, healing and restoration to a broken society?
- How can the ideas of narrative therapy be incorporated to challenge the dominant social discourses of power?
- How can the ideas of narrative therapy be incorporated in presenting the Alpha programmes?
- What can we do as a church and faith community to become more inclusive of the offender and ex-offender?
- How can the church and the faith community become hospitable and equipped to heal the wounds of a broken society?

1.6 THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to tell the stories of those inmates that found hope, healing and restoration by accepting the Christian faith. The stories narrated and reflected on evolved through these inmates participation in Alpha Courses *Questions of Life* (Alpha manual 2000; Gumbel 1993) and *Challenging Lifestyle* (2001) over a period of time. These stories are interwoven with the reflections of other participants (volunteers, chaplain(s) and ex-inmates) and tell of the meaning-making of being pastorally involved with one another in prison ministry. Embedded in the purpose of this study, is the hope that these voices would add to the hope for the mending and healing of creation. I hope through this study to raise an awareness of the dominant discourses prevalent in society and theology, which serve to oppress, marginalise and alienate. An invitation is also extended to the church and the faith community to become hospitable to the stranger, the marginalised and the oppressed. In addressing these issues, the study cuts across different areas and disciplines, because the effects of crime are inextricably intertwined with the social, the political and the spiritual.

This study should be seen as forming part of a wider framework in a process of healing, working towards an ideal, a vision of restorative justice: restoring a state of 'shalom' to the community. This requires not only *feeling* care for the needy, but also *doing* care and includes both the victim of crime and the perpetrator of crime. As such, the faith community should offer an environment of hospitality and support that will contribute to healing and restoration (Marshall 2003:11-12).

1.7 MY RESEARCH JOURNEY

My 'moment of insertion' as described in 1.2 was a decisive moment in my life: stepping out of the confines of myself into a 'participatory consciousness' (Heshusius 1994:19) with others. This experience initiated me into a shared journey of faith with fellow-volunteers and inmates that offered us the 'prospect of creative participation in the unending and unfolding meaning of life' (Gergen 1994:252). In the following sections I reflect briefly on some aspects of this journey.

1.7.1 Widening my horizons

Through my involvement in prison ministry, I became increasingly interested in the impact of this ministry on the lives of the imprisoned. In my endeavour to become more familiar with the field of prison ministry and the aftercare of the ex-prisoner, I attended the following conferences:

- Alpha Conference, Palmerston North, 27 – 28 April 2001
- PFNZ Conference: 'Breaking down the Walls' – The Reintegration of Prisoners and their Whanau/Families into the Community, Matamata 14 – 16 June 2002
- PFNZ Seminar: 'Christians and Justice', Waikanae 17 October 2003
- PFNZ 20th Anniversary Conference: 'Post Sentence Restorative Justice', Waikanae 17 – 19 October 2003
- National Alpha Conference, Auckland 24 – 25 November 2003 (attending seminars on Alpha for Prisons and Caring for Ex-offenders)

The tireless zeal of Kim Workman, Executive Director of PFNZ, to initiate and design Christian-based community programmes for the restoration of inmates to family, friends and the community; to facilitate the inmate's reintegration into society and implement restorative justice programmes inside and outside the prison, is an inspiration to everyone who seeks the betterment of society. His input and involvement was instrumental in establishing the first faith-based unit in Rumataka Prison in Wellington.

I was privileged to attend an Alpha Conference in 2003 in Auckland, presented by the 'designers' of the Alpha programmes, namely Sandy Miller and Nicky Gumble from Holy Trinity Brompton, London (the home of Alpha). I attended two seminars by Emmy Wilson who leads the Alpha for Prisons programme in the United Kingdom. The seminars were titled 'Alpha for prisons' and 'Caring for the ex-offender', which discussed the running of an Alpha programme in prison and the aftercare and integration of ex-offenders into society. Emmy and Kim are the epitome of persons 'doing hope' (Weingarten 2000:402). The insights I gained from the above-mentioned conferences, helped to deepen my understanding of the role of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa and the healing and restorative power of sharing our stories of suffering and pain.

1.7.2 Getting acquainted with the Alpha programmes

The pastoral care programmes in which I have been involved in the prison, namely *Alpha (Alpha: Manual 2000)* and *Challenging lifestyle (2001)*, seek to bring about transformation as well as restoration; changing people's values and beliefs through changing their relationship with God; seeking to restore the inmate to peers, their family, the community and to God. They are designed to introduce a Christian perspective in a non-threatening manner, allowing space for discussion, reflection and the deconstruction of power imbalances. Graham (1996:52) contends that pastoral care is challenged to equip individuals and communities with the resources they need to respond to changing conditions of lives and relationships. Alpha endeavours to

reach out into a pluralist and fragmented society which has become distanced and separated from its spiritual and religious roots and heritage.

The Alpha Course (*Alpha manual* 2000) has been used in prisons world-wide and has been highly acclaimed by inmates, as well as senior prison officials and prison chaplains. It has been seen as a valuable contribution in the changing of inmates' lives, as well as playing an active role in the integration of the ex-offender into the community. The vision and values that Alpha has at heart, are stated as: 'The re-evangelisation of the nations and the transformation of society' (Alpha International conference 2003:64). Alpha in prisons aims to fulfill these aims by:

- Giving each person in prison the opportunity to attend an Alpha course
- Linking prisoners who have completed Alpha with a supportive church prior to their release
- Integrating ex-offenders into the life of the community, providing them with:
 - A person to meet them on release from the prison gate
 - Basic needs, clothing, food
 - Accommodation (preferably Christian)
 - Work (where appropriate)
 - A link with a supportive church

1.7.3 About the Alpha group meetings and meeting the men

The Alpha meetings I am writing about were run in two prison wings: one in a high security unit (which will be referred to as **Unit 1**) and another in a mixed wing for minimum to medium security inmates (which will be referred to as **Unit 2**). The Alpha and follow-up, Challenging Lifestyle, were run in Unit 1 over a period of 11 months during 2002. The Alpha group consisted of 7 team members plus the chaplain and 10 to 12 guests (inmates) that attended regularly. The course was lead on a rotation basis by the Parish Assistant from Christ Church and two female team members.

The second Alpha in prison, in which I participated and which is included in this research, was run in Unit 2 in the first half of 2004. The leadership was a husband and wife team, 4 team members and a chaplain. The course was regularly attended by 8 to 10 guests (inmates). In both of the units the inmates were from diverse ethnic groups, mainly Pakeha⁶, Maori and Pacific Islander. Three of the men who initially attended the Alpha and Challenging Lifestyle Course in Unit 1, had been transferred to Unit 2 and it was good to meet up with them again, and see the changes that had taken place in their lives. It takes time to get to know the inmates and to build relationships with them. They do not trust easily and you have to prove your reliability. The faithfulness of your attending these meetings creates stability and safeness. Sharing in their thoughts and daily struggles and achievements, and sharing with them where you are coming from, creates an atmosphere of community and trust and a platform to build on. The coffee breaks are always a special, informal time of catching up on personal news and the men enjoy the coffee and special treat of biscuits.

The format of the Alpha talks (*Alpha manual* 2000), as well as the follow-up courses (*A life worth living* 1994; *Challenging lifestyle* 2001) are as follows (*The Alpha team training manual* 1999:1-7; *Alpha in prisons...*2000): welcoming the group, time of prayer and worship, a short talk or video on a specific topic, coffee and refreshment break, breaking up into discussion groups. The six subsidiary aims of the small group are:

- to discuss the talk and issues arising out of the talk
- to model Bible study
- to learn to pray together
- to develop lasting friendships within the body of Christ
- to learn to minister to one another
- to train others to lead

⁶ Person of predominantly European descent. Also: Imaginary beings resembling men, with fair skins (Williams 1975:252).

1.7.4 Listening to stories

The group's conversation centered on the stories that evolved from the topic under discussion. Although the discussions often tended to wander from the main topic, the main purpose of these gatherings was to create a space for dialogue for new narratives, or the 'not-yet-said' (Anderson & Goolishian 1992:29) stories to be co-created. The 'not-knowing' (:29) position is embedded in the Alpha Course's approach to facilitating a discussion and creates the opportunity for team leaders and helpers to be informed by the participants. Anderson and Goolishian (1992:29) reflect on this attitude of the therapist: 'This being informed position is critical to the assumption...that the dialogical creation of meaning is always a continuing process. The therapist does not "know", a priori, the intent of any action, but must rather rely on the explanation made by the client.' As facilitators of these discussions it was important to create a space for the inmates to feel free to explore their spirituality and discuss their thoughts with regard to their discoveries. I can connect with Griffiths (1995:126-127) in her observation: '...if "I think I know" the basic story of someone's experience with God, I am probably beginning to close off therapeutic possibilities. I then risk joining those forces of cultural oppression that would instruct and censor what can be spoken.'

In our respectful listening to the inmates' stories and in their sharing their testimonies for this research, they experienced that we treasure their stories and lives. Anderson and Foley (1998:45) comment that listening is a ministry in itself: 'Listening carefully and responding accurately to the story of another is a true ministry. To be understood and accepted by another person an [sic] treasured dimension of human living.'

1.7.5 Reflecting during and on prison meetings

Reflection on the stories and contributions made by the participants formed an integral part of the group discussions. This ongoing process helped to deconstruct the power of the leaders and helpers as being in possession of 'expert theological knowledge'. Our method of responding to the inmates' stories could be reviewed and

deconstructed to evaluate if our responses were in context of the conversation and did not reveal negative, moralising or culturally insensitive connotations (Friedman 1995:146). This process of reflection helped to make our pastoral practice transparent and accountable; it also allowed for equity in that the participants felt free to question and challenge us on our points of view (Friedman 1995:149-150).

After each Alpha meeting in prison we had a short de-briefing outside the prison gates, during which we could reflect on our discussion and the general course of our gathering. Any detected uneasiness or anomaly during these meetings would then be addressed. This was also a time for prayer and thanksgiving for the time we were able to spend with the inmates. Any needs and requests of the chaplaincy, the inmates and prison ministry team would be made known and taken up for supplication in our intercessory prayers during the week.

1.7.6 Negotiating the research

The idea of making the Alpha prison ministry a research project emerged only after I had been involved in prison ministry for a period of time. Listening to the inmates' evolving and changing stories and seeing how they changed, birthed the idea of writing about this life-giving faith experience. It took a long time of thought, prayer and discussions with the chaplain, my mentor, Lorne (the Alpha Coordinator and Parish Assistant of Christ Church) and the participants to envisage how we would go about it. In the end the prison ministry story started to speak for itself and evolved naturally as an act of participation and collaboration. My sincere hope is that the 'knowledges' and voices of the participants have been honestly and meaningfully spoken and written into a richer description of what prison ministry means to them.

1.7.7 Writing the research

The writing of this research was done over a period of time and in collaboration with the participants. As the study came to its conclusion the participants were given the opportunity to read through the dissertation and give further input and feedback. A

change in chaplaincy during 2004, created a void and prevented the prison ministry teams from going back into prison to run Alpha and related courses. Consequently, the inmates co-authoring this document did not have insight into the final manuscript before it's submission for acceptance. I have negotiated with the new chaplain to the prison, to visit each participant individually, to show and read to them the end result of this participatory prison ministry narrative and to thank them for their valuable contribution and input.

1.7.8 Reflecting upon the research

Being part of this participatory journey in telling the re-authored stories of people exploring their faith and finding healing and restoration, was a personal journey in faith in itself. I was humbled by how much I learnt from the participants in this research and prison ministry journey. I would like to reflect on this in the last chapter.

1.8 OUTLINE OF RESEARCH REPORT

In **Chapter 2** I discuss the theoretical framework that informs the research. Out of my chosen epistemology the study is theologically positioned and the implications and possibilities for practical theology, with specific reference to the field of mission, are discussed.

In **Chapter 3** discourses of power relating to the prison environment, the church and the dominant societal discourse with regard to crime and the offender are discussed, as well as the deconstruction of power.

In **Chapter 4** the significance of faith, healing and restoration are narrated in the stories of prisoners, ex-prisoners and prison ministry volunteers.

In **Chapter 5** the significance of pastoral presence as embodied in the prison chaplain, the faith community ('priesthood of brothers') and the sacraments is discussed in order to give a richer description of prison ministry. It also discusses how pastoral

presence can be extended and expanded beyond the prison walls to ex-inmates and *whanau*.

Chapter 6 concludes with a summary of reflections and experiences on our journey in prison ministry.

CHAPTER 2 - THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The epistemology I have chosen is informed by a post-modern paradigm, incorporating a narrative approach and social constructionist worldview. According to Freedman and Combs (1996:22) the adoption of a post-modern, narrative and social constructionist worldview offers useful ideas about how power, knowledge and ‘truth’ are negotiated in families and larger cultural aggregations. The ideas of Freedman and Combs (1996) as well as other exponents of the social constructionist discourse are incorporated in this study.

In the following sections I explain the paradigm shift from modernity to a post-modern view of reality. I then explain the dominant premises of the social construction discourse. Developments in theology (and practical theology) form part of the conceptual framework of this research. The paradigm shift from a modern to post-modern view of reality had an impact on theology and requires a new theological reflection and positioning to meet the challenges of the post-modern culture. From my chosen epistemology, I position my research in the contextual approach with regard to practical theology. My insights regarding practical theology and pastoral care are mainly drawn from liberation and contextual theology (Bosch 1991; Cochrane, De Gruchy & Petersen 1991; De Gruchy & Villa-Vicencio 1994; Pieterse 1998) and feminist theology (Ackermann 1996; Ackermann & Bons-Storm 1998; Graham 1996; Isherwood & McEwan 1993; Welch 1990).

My focus in practical theology is aimed at communal and pastoral care within the prison context. In the facilitation of pastoral programmes, I also draw on the narrative therapeutic insights of White (1991, 1995, 1997, 2000) and White and Epston (1990, 1995). These insights helped me to bring a ‘thicker description’ to the pastoral programmes presented in the prison. This chapter concludes with the methodological approach that has been followed in this study.

2.2 FROM MODERNITY TO POST-MODERNITY

There are different perspectives with regard to setting a timeframe for a school of thought. Oden (1995a:23) identifies the time span of modernity as a 200-year period between the French Revolution 1789 and the collapse of Communism in 1989. Pieterse (1993:113) situates *post-modernism* within his understanding of the concepts *pre-modernism* and *modernism*. The pre-modern time refers to traditional society and humankind before the Enlightenment. The modern era is understood as the period from the Enlightenment until the dawn of the new era, namely *post-modernism*.

For many years the positivistic epistemology of the modernistic paradigm dominated the world of human research in the sciences without being questioned. At the centre of this epistemology is the belief that the world can be objectively known (Botha 1998:54). The modern knower professed to remain objective and separate from the observed, gaining a dispassionate knowledge of the world from a vantage point outside the flux of history. The goal of the human intellectual quest became that of unlocking the secrets of the universe, in order to master nature for human benefit and create a better world. This quest led to the modernistic characteristic of the twentieth century – bringing rational management to life through technology (Grenz 1995:91).

After well over three centuries, modernism came to a crisis. The devastation brought about by the First World War caused disillusionment and radical doubt in the ability of technological achievement to ensure and maintain human progress (Pieterse 1993:16-17). Oden (1995a:25) defines the final stages of a ‘terminally fragmented modernity’ as a ‘disabling social malaise, a crash of the moral immune system, a collapse of virtue, a *moral spinout*’. Oden (:25) calls the period from the ‘60s to the ‘80s the ‘acute phase of rapidly deteriorating modernity’ and ‘[W]e watched to our horror the disintegration of this 200-year worldview in relentless disarray....’ Modernity, which held the Western intellectual tradition for 200 years in its ‘ideological spell’ (:24-25) was declared bankrupt and has been liquidated (Loytard quoted by Pieterse 1993:15).

While modernism defined an epistemology that was characterised by a belief in an objective truth that is knowable and researchable, the post-modernistic epistemology is characterised by a loss of belief in an objectively knowable world, independent of an observer. Post-modernism celebrates an inherent distrust in so-called objective truths as hope for society (Müller 1996:55). The ‘objectivity’ of the modernist worldview, with its emphasis on facts, replicable procedures, and generally applicable rules easily ignores the specific, localised meanings of individual people. When people are treated with this kind of ‘objectivity’ they are regarded as objects, thus inviting them into a relationship in which they are the passive, powerless recipients of our knowledge and expertise (Freedman & Combs 1996:21).

Müller (1996:56) quotes Anderson in describing three processes which define a transition of one manner of thinking (modernism) to another manner of thinking (post-modernism):

- The collapse of a singular belief system. There is currently no universal consensus on what truth is.
- The birth of a world culture. Each faith becomes aware of other faiths. Each faith is naturally associated with a moral ethical code. Consequently, it becomes more difficult to accept one’s own faith system as the absolute truth.
- A new polarisation is developing. Conflicts about the nature of communal truths and values develop. Culture wars erupt over critical issues like education and moral development.

The rise of the post-modern life experience is considered by Müller (1996:55) to have inevitable consequences and he quotes Küng in saying that it is associated with enormous tension and polarisation in society, state labour unions, churches and even between different generations within families.

The post-modernist worldview also presents challenges for the praxis of theology, with specific reference to my research area, prison ministry (missionary outreach to prisoners). The position of theology and practical theology in a post-modern culture

and the challenges and opportunities that these present, will be discussed in Section 2.4. Kraus (1998:12) contends that the pursuit of knowledge is a shared quest: 'One cannot assume that one has absolute, objective knowledge which is then simply to be transmitted to the ignorant. The pursuit of knowledge must be dialogical.' Pieterse (1996:58) contends that the church needs to act as a catalyst in naming and addressing the domination of totalising and universalising assumptions; and challenge the existing power relations within the church and society.

The social construction theory as a post-modern discourse challenges 'the idea' of a singular truth and the possibility of objective social research. The narratives of faith that arose during the course of this study were the result of a process of co-creation and meaning-making through being in conversation with each other. Brueggemann (1993:9-10) contends that in this process, knowledge needs to be *contextually* understood; *localised* meanings and knowledge need to be taken into consideration; and the *pluralist* manner in which knowledge creates meaning has to be taken into account. In the next section I discuss social construction discourse as my chosen epistemology, in order to understand how knowledge is acquired as a social product of historical interchange among people (Dill 1999:12).

2.3 SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION DISCOURSE

Social construction theory is part of the post modern paradigm shift. Social construction theory encompasses more than a new social paradigm; it is a way of understanding the processes that are involved in the acquisition of knowledge (Botha 1998:68; Kotzé & Kotzé 1997:3).

2.3.1 Knowledge as a social phenomenon

Social construction discourse is a means of coming to an understanding of the nature of knowledge. Gergen (1985b:3) states that social construction discourse wants to elucidate 'the processes by which people come to describe, explain, or otherwise account for the world in which they live.' As such, it seeks to approach

knowledge from the social processes through which it is created. Knowledge is perceived as evolving within social interaction through the co-construction of ideas, concepts and memories and ‘mediated through language’ (Hoffman 1992:8).

Knowledge is not viewed as the objective reflection or representation of an external reality, but as a social construction (or negotiated meaning) of people in their attempt to live together in this world (Freedman & Combs 1996:29). The objective basis of conventional knowledge is challenged and knowledge is viewed as a social construction that is the product of historically situated interaction between people (Gergen 1985b:5). Knowledge is put within the framework of social interchange and meanings are co-created by individuals in conversation with each other.

2.3.2 Language and social construction discourse

It is in language that societies/cultures construct their views of reality (Kotzé & Kotzé 1997:5). The worlds that people know are the worlds shared in language; language is an interactive process, not a passive receiving of pre-existing truths (Freedman & Combs 1996:29). In agreeing on a word or a gesture, we agree on a description and interpretation of what we see. Anderson and Goolishian (quoted by Freedman and Combs 1996:29) formulate it as follows: ‘Language does not mirror nature; language creates the nature we know.’

Society’s understanding of who we are, is shaped through the discourses of psychology, theology, economy, politics and other cultural discourses (Botha 1998:57,58; Freedman & Combs 1996:25; McNamee & Gergen 1992:8). Social interaction gives rise to a process of reification of knowledge in that ideas, categories, laws, beliefs, social customs, and categories over time are accorded ‘reality status’. These clusters of taken-for-granted assumptions in a particular social context are referred to as a ‘discourse’ and might be given voice in a set of statements about what is normal or conventional (Winslade & Monk 1999:22-23). Over time certain privileged discourses become institutionalised discourses and exert power over people

(Lowe 1991:45). This becomes the 'lenses' through which societies interpret their world and shaping of our being and behaving (Freedman and Combs 1996:16).

In considering violence in society⁷, patriarchy as a privileged discourse plays a significant role. Poling (1991:105) comments how patriarchy has come to shape society: 'Patriarchy has become reified in theologies, ideologies, organisations and institutions. Patriarchy positions men in relations of power that are taken for granted to such an extent that abuse is entertained under the guise of leadership, care and protection.' Patriarchal ideologies silence the voices of women and children and as such the abuse of power is perpetuated. Many men consider it their right to use violence as a manifestation of their power and authority. This type of behaviour has become exemplary in certain contexts as a perception of being a 'real man'. In the words of one of the inmates, the belief of what a typical man should be, includes words like 'be strong', 'revenge', 'pay backs' and 'intimidation'.

2.3.3 Language, meaning and narrative

From a social construction view point the focus is not on the individual person, but on the social interaction in which the language is generated, sustained or modified in order to understand each other. Anderson and Goolishian (1992:26) move towards a more 'hermeneutic and interpretive' position regarding meanings as co-created and experienced by individuals in conversation with each other. From this point of view 'people live, and understand their living, through socially constructed narrative realities that give meaning and organization to their experience.' This statement brings attention to the narrative as another important social discourse in the organisation and maintenance of our realities shaped through language.

Within the social construction discourse the faith discourses of a believing community are mediated and presented in a narrative form and are co-created within a historical and cultural context. This influences the manner in which we perceive

⁷ In Some thoughtful considerations... (1998) the Dulwich Centre explores issues of violence and abuse in a deconstructive manner.

theology. The following section focuses on theology and practical theology and the implications for these in view of my chosen epistemology.

2.4 POST-MODERNISM, THEOLOGY AND PRACTICAL THEOLOGY

2.4.1 Introduction

Theology cannot escape the influence of the post-modern philosophy of science. ‘Theology’ as a subject specific term originated from the close connection between Christian thought and philosophy (Louw 1997b:43). Science, which also includes theology, is always practiced out of an epistemology which determines the how and what of our thoughts, observations and decisions. Theology being practiced from the position of the social construction discourse, holds important implications (Kotzé 1992:12), because theology is also a language construct. This applies also to practical theology, which as a theological discipline has a specific perspective on theology as a whole (Heyns & Pieterse 1990:6).

2.4.2 Changing perspectives in theology

Within the epistemological framework of the modern paradigm, it was believed that the subject (theologian) could study the object (God and the traditions of the church) for the purpose of discovering absolute, timeless and universal truths (dogmas) for Christians to live by and be saved. In the current paradigm shift from knowledge as an objective truth to knowledge as a social construction, post-modern scholars are challenged to re-think the object, task and ethics of theology in a changing world (Steyn 2001:18).

Theology literally means ‘thinking about God’, or ‘language or thought (*logos*) about God (*theos*)’ (Louw 1997b:46). God, however, cannot be the object of scientific study and cannot be captured in human language. Heyns and Pieterse (1990:3) argue that theology, at the most, can be described as a scientific study of people’s faith in God and people’s faith statements about God. Although God cannot be made the object of

theology, the language and actions reflected in the faith community's reality *coram Deo* (Kotzé 1992:16-17) can be made the object of scientific study (Louw 1997b:46). Theology thus encompasses the critical and reflexive discourses of a believing community about its faith in God (Heyns and Pieterse 1990:4).

Louw (1997c:2) argues that the question of God arises out of a search for meaning in our endeavour to make sense of our existential needs: our feelings of guilt, anguish, despair and meaninglessness. The existential experience of faith is a reality for many believers. Botha (1998:118) points to the fact that theology shares with science *the contextual, experiential and interpretative dimension* of all human knowledge. Faith and theology, as well as the natural sciences are narrative views of reality. The experiential and interpretative nature of theological knowledge is however more complex in that it involves not only a way of looking at the world, but a very personal trust in God.

Because our experience of God is indirect, we can only speak about God. In the expression of our religious experience the believer and theologian use metaphorical language which will be a reflection of the metaphorical language of the theological tradition (Botha 1998:118). These experiences are mediated and presented in a narrative form, in stories, myths, poetry and history (Pieterse 1993:25). These stories become an interpretive record of human actions, faithfulness and unfaithfulness, through biblical metaphors and images (Gerkin 1986:50). As such, faith experiences exist in a narrative form and form the object of theology (Botha 1998:119).

Theology cannot be understood as separate or unaffected by cultural changes and thus be a closed and timeless system of knowledge (Botha 1998:125). Rossouw (1993:894) explains theology as being culturally influenced as follows: 'Theology is an activity by which humans relate their faith in God (theos) to the patterns of meaning that prevail in any historical period or culture (logos).' Rossouw (:895) warns that theology is at risk of becoming obsolete, should it not address the challenges posed by changing cultural processes.

Gerkin (1991:190) asserts that the Christian and biblical tradition needs ‘interpretation and reinterpretation’ in order to stay relevant to contemporary life situations, or else it runs the risk of becoming a ‘dead tradition, unrelated to the problems...of ongoing life.’ Culture is an interpretive mechanism of societies to understand themselves and the world they live in. People’s understanding of God changes in relation to the metaphorical changes in their culture. This necessitates the review and reinterpretation of root metaphors and images depicting faith-related realities on which theological discourse is built (Botha 1998:119; Van Niekerk 1994:288-289).

According to the post-modern view, the object of theology can never be a canonical text. The text can only be considered as ‘a partner in social construction discourses where the (contemporary and culturally bound) reader in dialogue with the canonical text, construes his own post-canonical, socially constructed and personal text, that is never completed – while holding on to the biblical text’ (Botha 1998:124).

For many theologians the post-modern thought poses a threat to their basic premises (Henry 1995). Some people experience great discomfort with this new paradigm and are trying to hold on to the old paradigm or to embrace a new orthodoxy. The post-modern threat to theology is a genuine threat to modernistic theology and an effort to counter this threat may lead to revival of religious fundamentalism (Botha 1998:126). The emergence of a post-modern culture cannot be ignored by the theological community and requires a new theological reflection, in order to make a unique contribution to the diverse discourse of this world *coram Deo* (Botha 1998:125). Post-modernistic theology must endeavour to take up the challenge while holding on to the revelation of God in Scripture, although theology cannot hope to continue as a modernistic theology. The new situation offers a new opportunity for theology, because it creates new openness for faith (Van Aarde quoted by Botha 1998:126).

For Grenz (1995), truth is a communal concept. The Bible’s truth is only ‘The Truth’ within a culture-specific system of shared meaning, that is for Christianity. Furthermore, different Christian communities have different discourses of Christianity (Gerkin 1991:96). Post-modern social construction discourse as epistemology points

out that communities are actively involved in the process of constructing their own theologies. Truth is an agreement reached within a community of believers (De Villiers 1991). Therefore, the truth and authority of the Bible have to be assumed in faith by the Christian community (Du Toit 1999:942-943) and not defended as the absolute truth before the secular world of other religions. Rational arguments, based on modern and positivist authoritarian reading of the Bible, can no longer convince the world of the Bible's truth (Bosch 1991:483).

2.4.3 Post-modernism and missiology

Post-modernism necessitates a re-addressing of the missionary enterprise in the world. Bosch (1991) in his book, *Transforming mission. Paradigm shifts in theology of mission*, makes a valuable contribution to the dialogue on the dialogical position of mission and theology in our post-modern culture. Bosch (:483) recommends 'a theology of religions characterised by creative tension, which reach beyond the sterile alternatives between a comfortable claim to absoluteness and arbitrary pluralism or relativism.' He seeks for a theology that would embrace the abiding paradox of 'asserting both the ultimate commitment to one's own religion and genuine openness to another's, of constantly vacillating between certainty and doubt' (:483). In the exposition of his seven perspectives, Bosch (:483-489) seriously considered other indicators of the emergence of the post-modern paradigm, but his main concern was the missionary enterprise of the church. The seven perspectives of Bosch's (1991:483-489) theology must be understood against the background of a widening crisis in the missionary enterprise of the Christian church. Bosch (:3-4) ascribes this crisis to:

- The advance of science and technology;
- The de-christianisation of the west;
- The religious pluralism of a global village;
- The exploitation of other nations by the western Christian nations;

- The sharp contrast between affluent Christians in the west and a poor third world, and
- The patriarchy of western churches over third world churches.

Botha (1998:132) contends that Bosch (1991) has made a valuable contribution to an understanding of a post-modernistic theology. In Botha's (1998:132) opinion the weakness in Bosch's (1991) contribution lies within the fact that he did not explore the **social linguistic construction of knowledge** enough and thus **disregarded the local, historical and cultural** determination of truth. He affirmed the universal truth claims of the Christian community, but this stance is not in harmony with post-modern social construction discourse as epistemology. Botha (1998:132) acknowledges Bosch's (1991) respect for genuine dialogue as an important strength of his work.

J E White (1995:366–371) addresses the strategies a church would incorporate in order to be effective in a post-modern world. He endeavours to locate these responses in the context of post-modern society. Modernity laid the foundation for post-modern society. J E White (360-361) mentions the following formative processes that played a role:

- *Secularisation* – ‘sectors of society and culture are removed from the domination of religious institutions and symbols’;
- *Privatisation* or *Individualisation* – Privatised religion became a ‘choice’ and compartmentalised;
- *Pluralisation* – ‘the man in the street is confronted by a wide variety of religious and other reality-defining agencies that compete with his allegiance or at least attention.’

The characteristics that emerged from the processes of modernity, are described by J E White (1995:362-363) under the rubrics of moral *relativism*, *autonomous individualism*, *narcissistic hedonism* and *reductive naturalism*. J E White (:363)

reflects that the ‘trauma’ of the post-modern world is the inability of modernity to deliver on its promises. Instead of enhancing fulfillment and satisfaction, a barren wasteland was created: ‘Moral relativism led to a crisis in values; autonomous individualism led to lack of vision; narcissistic hedonism led to empty souls; and reductive naturalism has been proven inadequate for human experience’.

As Christians we need to respond to this existential crisis and need to re-evaluate our missionary approach to a secularised world. J E White (1995:366-371) addresses the strategies a church would incorporate in order to be effective in a post-modern world. He explores the following:

- Our approach, method and style should be culturally relevant.
- Relationships must be built with non-believers.
- Evangelism should be understood as a process and event – with a renewed emphasis on process.
- A biblical, functioning community should be maintained. Authenticity and genuine relationships will be decisive for the effective presentation of the Gospel.
- Apologetics must be used, but updated. Method and approach need to be changed. Instead of telling people to believe, people must be led to discover the truth for themselves.
- Christianity should be portrayed as practical. Practical relevance and application should be the doorway to the issue of truth in general.
- A vision of the Church should be recaptured, namely to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10), but has to respond to social streams impacting on society. Our privatised, pluralised and secularised post-modern world calls for the Church to rethink its missionary and outreach strategies.

The above-mentioned strategies as suggested by J E White (1995:366-371) were incorporated in the format of the Alpha programmes. It allowed for a way of communication, which was open to the voices of the marginalised and the spirituality of other cultures (Fukuyama & Sevig 1999:4, 6, 8). Alpha invited the participants into

a dialogue about the relevance (or irrelevance) of the Christian faith. The aim of this course was not to bombard participants with dogma and doctrine, or to give a rational or exact explanation of God, but to point to coherence between our experience of God and the way we experience the world physically and morally (Herholdt 1998:224). In this dialogue, the Story of God became a conversational partner (Botha 1998) and the participants were invited to discover meaning for themselves. Through forming a relationship with God, believers (or seekers of faith) discovered their own truths with regard to the Christian faith, based on their personal faith experiences (Herholdt 1998:224). Post-modern theology encompasses a spirituality of wholeness and as such the value of human feelings, as part of the human experience of God, can be restored (:216). In the faith discourse that developed, we were invited to be active participants, guided by a personal God as an active co-creator in the plan for our lives (:217). The faith discourse that developed from these discussions is related in chapters 4 and 5.

2.4.4 Putting pastoral care in context

From my chosen epistemology I position my research in the contextual approach and draw from the insights of feminist theology. According to Bosch (1991:423) contextual theologies claim to represent an epistemological break in comparison with traditional theologies. Traditional theologies could be seen as theologies *from above*, while contextual theologies arise *from below* with particular interest in the *poor* or the *culturally marginalised*.

The church model of liberation, within which feminist theology lies, speaks of a church which grows out of the people. These communities of faith arise from grassroots – the ‘ordinary person’ – those who feel that others are always making decisions about them, in which they have little, if any, say (Cochrane, De Gruchy & Petersen 1991:31). In this study I attempted to give central place to the community of faith that developed in the prison. The experiences of the inmates, alongside the narratives of their lives and their relationship with God are told as a means to enrich our understanding of their unique experiences of coming alive and being restored in Christ and reconciled with society.

In *doing* theology in the prison our focus was on *communal care* within the context of the prison (reaching out and caring for one another) and *pastoral care* (building communities of faith in the prison and strengthening the communities of faith that already existed - the establishing of *ekklesia* and *koinonia*) (De Jongh van Arkel 1988:4). The uniqueness of the pastoral care programmes in prison lay in the inclusion of God in the conversation. Louw (1993:205) reflects on the nature of the pastoral conversation: 'The identity of the pastoral conversation is inferred from the fact that God wants to be a conversational partner....The proprium of the pastoral encounter must be sought in its triological character.' This allowed for the Story of God to be interwoven into the lives of the participants. As their faith grew stronger they were able to experience the involvement of a personal God in their life situations.

Care is present where people listen to one another, care for one another and have an understanding of the needs and distress of one another. Our mutual care found expression in the building of strong relationships. We hoped that in supporting, caring and ministering to one another, the love and compassion of Christ could be reflected. (De Jongh van Arkel 1991:105-108). Gerkin (1991:75) claims that a prophetic ministry is a response to the recognition of human suffering and conflict. It requires an interaction of those in pain and those who see a need for change. The prison environment is an environment not only of physical incarceration, but also the spiritual incarceration of people. Many inmates found spiritual freedom by accepting Jesus into their hearts and forming a relationship with him. This guided them into a journey in which they could explore their faith in an environment where they felt supported, loved and accepted.

Within this study, pastoral care is assumed as a global ministry. Care is the work of the whole people of God in which every person is assumed to have a 'priestly' or 'diaconal' vocation (1Pt 2:9) (Cochrane, De Gruchy & Petersen 1991:3). This also includes the restoring of the person to the person God intended in the *imago dei*: the restoration to full dignity among others and to share in the stewardship of the world and its resources (:23). Through finding their new identity in God, inmates were restored and empowered to fulfil a prophetic role in their immediate environment. The

communities of faith that developed in prison became visible reminders of God's presence. The pastoral presence and care expressed by these inmates to fellow inmates, served as an embodiment and expression of God's unconditional love for human creation. Cochrane, De Gruchy and Petersen (:23) comment that the spirituality that arises out of the personal and ecclesiastical transformation in a context of struggle, serves as a powerful witness of the church as a socially transforming praxis. To Ackermann (1998:141) the transformation power envisaged in a feminist pastoral care of concern is an embodiment of the 'word made flesh':

Christian pastoral practice has the potential to reveal a God who is startlingly present in human encounter. In their relationships and actions of care, Christians believe they can effect some of the creative and redemptive work of God, but that such care will also express something of the divine reality. Thus human pastoral relationships...will also be to Christians in some sense a disclosure of God.

Ackermann (1996:43) reflects on the contribution of feminist practical theology to healing and reconstruction and describes it as a '[c]ritical, committed, constructive, collaborative and accountable reflection of the theories and praxis of struggle and hope for the mending of creation based on the stories and experiences of women/marginalised and oppressed people.' The stories that were reflected on in this research study, evolved over a period of time during the interdenominational team's involvement with Alpha programmes in the local prison and reflect a collaborative attempt and belief in a hope for the restoration of humankind. They were born from, on the one hand, people's awareness of their own hopelessness and despair, and on the other hand, an awareness of our own contribution and connection to the marginalisation and oppression of others. This called the church and community of faith to reach out to the suffering and be *with* them. The words of Harrison (quoted by Ackermann 1996:43) are a reflection of the Alpha team's consciousness of social contradictions and our calling to be involved in a process of change:

Awareness of contradictions is never the result of isolated intellectual striving. It comes from a process of concrete engagement, an entering into struggling against oppressive conditions that involves being drawn into collective effort to overcome this condition. Such consciousness

takes hold only in concrete engagement; it is through struggle that we acquire more profound awareness of the range of social oppression and its interconnectedness.

Pastoral care in prison became, above all, an expression of ‘utopian hope for a better world’ (Ackermann 1996:43) and a means to evoke and recognise hope, and to keep such hope alive even in a situation which humanly speaking, is hopeless (Cochrane, De Gruchy & Petersen 1991:82-83). Many prisoners were able to find hope in finding faith and this faith was strengthened and sustained within the community of care that developed. The faith experiences of the participants served to strengthen each other and allowed for an alternative story of hope to rise, interwoven into the greater Story of God. These stories of their faith and hope are told in Chapters 4 and 5. Our experiences are embedded in a narrative framework or structure and the following section explores how the narrative metaphor allows for new constructive narratives to develop.

2.5 A NARRATIVE APPROACH

2.5.1 Introduction

The human need and capacity to make meaningful interpretations of who we are and the world we live in, have long been explored in the hermeneutical and narrative paradigms (Louw 1997:22-23). Boisen, the father of pastoral counselling in America coined the phrase the ‘hermeneutics of self’ and ‘the study of human documents’. His concern was that the objectification of theological language would lose touch with the ‘concrete data of human experiences’ and proposed a careful study of the lives of people struggling with spiritual issues to restore that connection (Gerkin 1984:37). Gerkin (1984) developed Boisen’s metaphor of the need of human existence to be understood and interpreted in *The living human document....* Drawing on the hermeneutical insights of Gadamer and his concept of ‘fusion of horizons’, Gerkin (1984:44) explored the implications for pastoral care: a client and his/her story are never the object of pastoral care, but a dialogical process in which one strives to understand another and make room for a new story with new meaning to evolve.

Capps (1995) and Veltkamp (1988) also explored the narrative nature and dimensions of the pastoral conversation and profession in which the client is invited to explore different avenues and texts.

Gerkin (1986:26) talks about the narrative structure undergirding all human activities. All things human are in some sense rooted or find their deepest structural framework in a narrative or story of some kind. The role of the narrative in shaping the identity and creating meaning of life's experiences is acknowledged and explored in the narrative metaphor.

2.5.2 White and Epston's narrative design

From a social constructionist point of view we cannot have direct knowledge of the world. We come to understand our life and give meaning to our experiences by being in conversation with each other (McNamee & Gergen 1992). Social scientists embracing the text analogy propose that we can come to knowledge only through 'lived experience'. In order to make sense of our experiences, we arrange our experiences of events in sequences across time in such a way as to arrive at a coherent account of ourselves and the world around us. This is referred to as a story or self-narrative (White & Epston 1990:9-10). The full richness of our lives can never be captured by a single dominant narrative. Some narratives become part of a person's life and are thus shaping or constituting of it (:11). Other stories never get told or expressed and become 'subjugated knowledge' of a person's life (:12, 25).

For White and Epston (1990:15) there is a rich and untapped source of lived experience, even in the most marginalised and disempowered person, that falls outside the dominant stories of the lives and relationships of persons. Through the 'externalisation of the dominant problem-saturated story' space is being created for alternative stories (referred to as 'unique outcomes') to evolve which can then become shaping and descriptive of the person or community. By ascribing new meaning to 'unique outcomes', an alternative story can develop to help the person in the re-authoring of their lives and relationships (:16).

Our stories are not shaped in a vacuum, but they form part of a recursive process. Our 'reality' of who we are, is created through communication within a community with others and formed within the context of various discourses within a society. Lax (1992:71) reflects on the constituting effect of discourses, as follows: 'The boundaries of our narratives are constructed through political, economic, social and cultural constraints and potentials, with our choice of narratives not limitless, but existing within prescribed contexts. This narrative or sense of self arises not only through discourse with others, but *is* our discourse with others.'

Kathy Weingarten (quoted by Freedman & Combs 1996:17) writes that we are not captives of the dominating narratives, but can examine the taken-for-granted stories in the local culture, re-evaluate the relationships we have formed and thus constantly re-author and update our own stories.

2.5.3 The deconstruction of constitutive discourses

Narrative therapy acknowledges Foucault's notion of the pervasiveness of power (Gordon 1980:141). Foucault considers power and knowledge (power/knowledge) to be inseparable and as such, politics speaks of the ability of certain knowledge practices to dominate over time. Societal discourses are given voice on what is normal or conventional, privileging certain kinds of talk, while marginalising others (Winslade & Monk 1999:22-23). These privileged discourses become 'normalising' in the sense that they construct norms around which persons are incited to shape their lives and come to make meaning of their experiences (White & Epston 1990:19-20).

From a narrative point of view, participants were invited to challenge these cultural 'normative' discourses that shape our reality and to take a stand against the injustice of oppressive ideas and practices (Kotzé & Kotzé 1997:10; Law & Madigan 1994:5). In the missionary outreach to the prison, team members had to reflect critically on how we (as part of the Body of Christ) could constructively contribute to the mending of a broken society. This question is addressed in chapter 3. The participants were invited to begin a journey of co-exploration in search of alternative stories which

would include love and forgiveness and lead to the co-construction of stories of hope, faith and healing. This approach allowed for the opening of space to re-author their life stories; it provided for a ‘thicker’ description which enabled them to redefine their identity. These stories are reflected on in chapters 4 and 5.

2.6 A QUALITATIVE RESEARCH STUDY

For the purpose of this study I have chosen to use a qualitative approach to research (Denzin & Lincoln 2000b:1-25) to investigate the research question as stated in 1.5, namely how to participate in pastoral care of prisoners in a way that would bring hope, healing and restoration into their lives. I was interested to know how the church as faith community could contribute to this process of healing and also extend this healing to the wider society. In this study the voices of the inmates were valued as witnesses of the healing and restoration which they experienced through finding the Christian faith.

Qualitative research draws on a variety of methods and there is no single theory or method that is clearly its own. Denzin and Lincoln (2000b:4) describe the result of these interconnected methods as a ‘bricolage’:

Qualitative researchers use semiotics, narrative content, discourse, archival and phonemic analysis, even statistics. They also draw upon and utilise the approaches, methods and techniques of ethnomethodology, hermeneutics, feminism, rhizomatics, deconstructionism, ethnographies, interviews, psychoanalysis, cultural studies, survey research and participant observation amongst others.

For the purposes of this study I used a combination of methods and drew from different perspectives as a strategy to add ‘rigor, breadth, complexity, richness and depth’ to my research (Denzin & Lincoln 1994:5). This approach creates space for dialogue among texts. Many things are going on at the same time – different voices, different perspectives, points of views, angles of vision: ‘...they move from the personal to the political, the local to the historical and the cultural. These are dialogical texts. They presume an active audience. They create spaces for give-and-

take between reader and writer. They do more than turn the other into the object of the social science gaze' (McCall 2000:421-434; Denzin & Lincoln 2000b:5). Through creating space for the dialogical texts that evolved from this 'bricolage' of approaches I hoped to create a fuller understanding of the contribution of the faith community towards healing in the prison context and in the wider society. The practices which were included in this bricolage were the narrative approach to research, listening to stories, and the feminist perspective on research as care and participation.

Qualitative research allows one to study things in their natural setting whilst trying to interpret how social experience is created and given meaning (Denzin & Lincoln 2000b:3). My intention with this study was not to study the influence of faith on the attitudes and behaviour of inmates as a social phenomenon from an objective and distanced vantage point, but rather to create a continuous participatory co-construction of experience (Roux 1996:19) and meaning-making among a community of believers. Roux (:19) quotes Patton in this respect saying: 'There is no burden of proof. There is only the world to experience and understand. Shed the burden of proof to lighten the load for the journey of experience.'

Information for this study was mainly gathered through informal conversations, group discussions, multiple reflexive conversations, interviews, letters, documents and written testimonies. The information obtained, is reflected on in chapters 4 and 5. Ballard (1994:22) asserts that stories are 'as important, relevant, valid, reliable meaningful and generalisable as many other writing that is referred to as research.'

As research methodology I used the narrative method, because each of the participants' history is embedded and interwoven with their own cultural and social history that led to their current situation. At the heart of the narrative method is the concept of a *narrative unit* which MacIntyre (quoted by Connelly & Clandinin 1987:130) explains 'as the union in a particular person in a particular place and time of all that the person has been and undergone in the past and in the past of the tradition which helped to shape the person.' This allows for the living out of a

narrative, as well as revision of ongoing narrative unities and the creation of new ones (Connelly & Clandinin 1987:131). Sharing our stories and experiences and listening to one another, created the space to see these stories evolve and change over a period of time.

Anderson and Foley (1998:45) contend that careful listening and responding accurately to the story of another is a ministry in its own. Reflective listening also involves the challenging of the discourses that shaped us as social beings: those 'practices of power which categorise, distribute and manipulate – those through which we have come to understand ourselves scientifically, and those through which we have come to form ourselves into meaning-making selves' (Law & Madigan 1994:4). Through multiple reflexive conversations participants were encouraged to address and challenge the cultural 'normative' discourses that shape our reality and invited to take a stand against the injustice of oppressive ideas and practices (:5). The naming of abuse and of oppression are in themselves political acts. In this process the participants were invited to become activists in their own lives to question and challenge these subjugating practices that are shaping of their lives (Kotzé & Kotzé 1997:10; Law & Madigan 1994:5). The narratives of most prisoners reflect a dominant story of criminal activity, violation of human rights, failure, guilt, hatred and hopelessness. Social discourse on criminals focuses on legal retribution and 'just deserts'. When alternative discourses are allowed to evolve, reflective of repentance and forgiveness, space is created for new stories to come forward which tell of resilience, hope, faith and restoration. Feminist action research is committed to action and social transformation and its focus is to bring about social and individual change (Reinharz 1992:175). The stories of changed lives that evolved during this research are reflective of a resolve for a changed and life-engendering lifestyle.

These reflexive conversations also served to critique the team's involvement in the prison ministry outreach and to foster a practice of transparency (Kotzé & Kotzé 1997:11). It also contributed to the 'demystification' of the helping process and the prison ministry team became more 'visible, audible, accountable and contestable'

(Epston 1998a:130). In this manner our being together became a participatory event and a 'co-search'-journey (Dixon 1999:45) in meaning-making.

I consider 'pastoral care as ethical care' (Kotzé & Kotzé 2001:7) to be the backbone of this research study. Kotzé (2002:27) comments that 'We cannot know *for* people what is good for them. We also have to know what is good *with* them. To be ethical, the participation of the people *about* or *for* whom we do the research is of primary importance at all levels of our research.' My being in the prison team gradually evolved from learning *about* to learning *with* and became an expression of 'mutual care', which Heshusius (1994:19) describes as 'participatory consciousness': 'Participatory consciousness [is] not "about" something or someone; [it refers] to being with something or someone.' The inclusion of the voices of the inmates and other fellow-volunteers as co-participants, reflect my attempt to 'learn from' my fellow participants and not simply 'learn about' them (Reinharz 1992:264). I believe that my way of being in this group reflected the participatory or collaborative view of research described by Reinharz (1992:181):

In feminist participatory research, the distinction between the researcher(s) and those on whom the research is based disappears. To achieve an egalitarian relation, the researcher abandons control and adapts an approach of openness, reciprocity, mutual disclosure, and shared risk. Differences in social status and background give way as shared decision-making and self-disclosure develop.

In the process of our prison ministry meetings, through the sharing of our faith stories, experiences and the construction of alternative stories, a 'community of concern' (Epston 1998a:131) and 'community of acknowledgement' (White 1997:93) developed among the participants. We became an 'outsider-witness' (White, M 1995, 1997) group to each other re-affirming, acknowledging and strengthening the emergence of new and alternative stories. This allowed for a strong community of care to develop which served to build relationships of trust and strengthen the community of faith in the prison unit(s). The quality of care that gradually evolved among the participants, I would like to think of as that which Sevenhuijsen (1998:147) describes a 'caring solidarity'.

In research influenced by a feminist perspective it is a natural consequence that the researcher has to be changed by the participatory process. Heshusius and Ballard (1996:172) in their reflection on research, comment that '[r]esearch should become a relation rather than an activity, a relation that acts *in* the world as distinct from methodological practices that act *on* the world.' This way of knowing requires a 'blurring of the boundaries between self and other', where knowing necessitates the 'reimagining of the self, not just of the other' (:172-173). I would like to reflect on the evolution of my changing perceptions on relatedness between the 'self and other' in the process of my study, in the last chapter.

2.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS OF RESEARCH

In view of my research, I align myself with a feminist, communitarian ethical framework. This is an evolving ethical framework and serves to communicate and reflect changing perspectives of the researcher as well as the research community. Christians (quoted by Denzin & Lincoln 2000a:34) describes this research model as follows:

This community has common moral values, and research is rooted in a concept of care, shared governance, neighborliness, love, kindness and the moral good. Accounts of life should display these values and should be based on interpretative sufficiency. They should have sufficient depth to allow the reader to form a critical understanding about the world studied. These texts should present an absence of race, class and gender stereotyping. They should generate social criticism and lead to resistance, empowerment, and social action; they should stimulate positive change in the social world.

In doing this research on prison ministry in participation with fellow-team members and inmates, I hope that the writing and reflecting on this research, portray an honest and sincere ethical approach to this participatory journey.

CHAPTER 3 - INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE FENCE: CRIME AND PUNISHMENT- DISCOURSES OF POWER

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Crime destroys the freedom and wholeness of society and communities claim their right as citizens to be protected and for justice to be served. In this chapter crime as a dominant societal discourse and imprisonment as a form of criminal justice are discussed. Attention is given to different theories of punishment, with the suggestion of restorative justice as a better and alternative way of dealing with the effects of crime and healing of society. The pervasiveness and uneven distribution of power in structures, ideologies and institutions give rise to abuse of power, oppression and social injustice.

The purpose of this chapter is to give a perspective on the practices of power and to raise awareness among the participants, the church and faith community, and the wider society, of the pervasiveness of power in theology, our societal discourses and practices which serve to oppress, marginalise, alienate and exploit. This serves as a call to reflect on our own participation and contribution to human suffering and oppression and hopefully to be moved to introspection, repentance, compassion and accountability. Ackermann (1998:82) reminds us that we are held responsible and accountable for the suffering and injustices of this world and have to become involved in the healing of society. Cochrane, De Gruchy and Petersen (1991:13) contend (drawing on the 'pastoral-hermeneutical circle' of Holland and Henriot) that the social context of our ministry should be informed by a social analysis. Cochrane, De Gruchy and Petersen (:35) quote Albert Nolan as saying: 'Social analysis is the instrument or tool we use to clear away the lies, the blindness, the confusion and propaganda, so that faith can discern the movement of the Spirit and indeed the forces of evil in our world today.'

These discourses call for a deconstruction of power, for the voices of the suffering and marginalised (offenders and victims) to be heard and to prepare a way for forgiveness,

healing and restoration. In this respect the church can play a significant role in engendering healing to society through ministering to a suffering people in prison, assisting in the re-establishment of the ex-prisoner into society, as well as being involved with and sensitive to the needs of victims of crime.

3.2 CRIME AS A DOMINANT DISCOURSE

Crime is universal and evokes strong responses. Crime affects not only victims, but also those close to them and the whole of society. Like death, crime can enter one's life at any time, destroy forever one's sense of safety and security, and leave a legacy of anxiety and mistrust. Where crime is perceived to be increasing, random or out of control, it creates general trauma, even among those not directly affected by the crime. Crime creates a perception of restricted freedom and a fear of being the next victim (Marshall 2002b:1).

The traditional methods of dealing with crime focus on retribution and punishment, with imprisonment the crown in 20th-century policy. This policy's failure is reflected in the statistics from every country and jurisdiction. Crime rates continue to rise, imprisonment numbers mount endlessly and costs become astronomical (Consedine 1999:7). Western countries see massive increases in prisons. The bulging prison population will create a crisis in society, yet this development has elicited little public debate (Bowen & Consedine 1999:8).

The available statistics show that in the USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand the indigenous ethnic groups are imprisoned disproportionately when compared with their populations.⁸ Almost all the figures reflecting imprisonment of indigenous ethnic groups are increasing. This is shown most dramatically in Canada (3.9%), followed by the USA (2.3%), then New Zealand (1.6%), then Australia (1.1%), whereas the average for the whites is 0.1% or less. This average is about the same in Western

⁸ Based on figures in Bowen and Consedine (1999:8-9) and Walmsley, R [2004].

Europe. The New Zealand average overall of about 145 per 100 000 (including the whole population) is about 50% greater than Europe.

The fact that New Zealand prisons are overpopulated with the poor and disadvantaged, with Maori and Pacific Islanders, with those at the bottom of the social and economic scale, is perceived by Marshall (2002b:8) as a reflection of the fact that criminal justice cannot be neatly separated from social justice. For all the countries studied, the parts of the population which are socially disadvantaged or discriminated against constitute those who are most likely to commit crime and end up in prison.

The consequences of mass incarceration as a solution to social problems are serious and far-reaching. Vivien Stern (1999:8) points out the dangers incarceration poses to the security of society by ‘creating an enormous, alienated, antisocial class hostile to society’s values and bound together in crime.’ The consequences for society are vast when such a large percentage of its population has formed their friendships and business networks, as well as affirmed their values within a prison culture. General concern for society is expressed over the large component of young men (and women) who during their imprisonment come to perceive society as their enemy and therefore could present a greater threat once they have been processed through the prison system than they did at the beginning of their criminal careers (Bowen & Consedine 1999; Duff & Garland 1994; May & Pitts 2000; Spitale 2002).

According to Marshall (2002b: 2) the exploding prison population is *not* necessarily a symptom of increasing crime rates (in New Zealand at least), but due to the community’s general perception *about* crime, as reflected in social and political policy. Marshall (:2) refers to The Republic of Ireland, with a population which equals New Zealand, but with half its prison population. This may mean New Zealand has more crime than Ireland, or a more punitive society, or has less imaginative judges and politicians, or more pronounced ethnically- related social and economic injustices.

3.3 DEFINITIONS OF CRIME

Varying definitions of crime reflect different accents attributed to the act of crime, including its perception as moral wrongdoing, an act of sin or acting unlawfully.

The term *crime* is defined by the *Chambers English Dictionary* (Schwarz et al 1992:336) as: ‘A violation of law, especially; if serious; an act punishable by law; such act collectively or in abstract; an act gravely wrong morally; sin; an accusation, a cause or motive of wrongdoing; to charge or convict of an infraction of law.’

Following in the above steps, Emile Durkheim (quoted by Diochi 2001:68) defined crime as: ‘An act prohibited by the collective consciousness of the society. And a criminal is simply the human person in a society who has refused to obey the laws of the city or the laws guiding the society.’

According to Kaplan et al (quoted by Diochi 2001:64) the idea of crime is equated more broadly by some people as a social wrong-doing. The problem with this definition is that citizens and legislatures do not necessarily agree on what is right and what is wrong. Most acts which are regarded as immoral are also illegal, but the spheres of crime and morals do no more than intersect. An act may be immoral, but not a crime, for example abortion and adultery in certain communities (:69).

According to G. Bennett (quoted by Diochi 2001:69), ‘crimes are defined in and out of existence relative to the social, economic, and political climate of the times’ of which prohibition and abortion are examples. In times of economic depression, judges tend to impose heavier penalties than in times of prosperity. When considering the shifts in crime and the perceptions of what a crime is, one has to take into account the historical and contextual trends that influence the formulation of definitions. This point of view underscores the power of societal discourse in a certain time and period – a point of view that directly emphasises the power relations embedded in religious and criminal discourses.

Stephen Tyler (quoted by Madigan 1996:51) reflects as follows: ‘Learning takes place within communities of discourse whose members – even in dissent – are guided by and constrained by notions of right, proper, and appropriate ways of saying, doing and thinking.’ Adopting a postmodernist perspective, it is proposed that the language we use constitutes our world and beliefs. It is in language that societies construct their views of reality. These realities are kept alive and passed along in the stories we tell and the traditions we hold (Freedman & Combs 1996:29–30).

3.4 DIFFERENT THEORIES OF PUNISHMENT

Marshall (2001b:98-143) in his book *Beyond retribution: A New Testament vision for justice, crime and punishment* discusses different approaches to punishment and its evolution in the West. These are the *rehabilitation*, *deterrence* and *retributivist* theories. He also discusses the *human rights* theory, and concludes his argument by a plea for a new paradigm, a model of restorative justice.

3.4.1 The Rehabilitation Theory

The *Rehabilitation theory* appeals to its capacity for generating change in the recipient. Punishment has a corrective goal; it might even be regarded as a form of ‘treatment’ for anti-social tendencies (Marshall 2001a: 99).

The aim of reform was relatively novel when raised by the philosopher Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832). Prison was considered a more humane alternative to capital punishment or banishment or public humiliation, as well as the potential means for reforming criminals so that they could be returned to society as upright citizens. Prior to this time, the system of punishment was largely arbitrary and often brutal. The function of imprisonment changed from being a system for detaining people before trial or sentencing to becoming a mode of punishment in its own right. ‘The age of sobriety in punishment had begun’, Michael Foucault (quoted by Marshall 2002b) observes, even if the intention was ‘not to punish less but to punish better’ – better because now the mind or soul of the criminal was being targeted, not just the body,

and it was being done away from the public gaze behind prison walls (Marshall 2001a:100; 2002b:4). At first, reform strategies were unsophisticated and undifferentiated, but as human science developed, offenders were divided into categories and rehabilitation programs adjusted to meet their specific needs. In twentieth-century penal theory and practice, there was growth of concern for the reformation of criminals and their reintegration into society (Marshall 2001a:100).

The strength of the rehabilitative approach is the way it recognises that an offender does not stop being a member of the community while under correction. The offender's interests are part of society's interest, and it is in everyone's interest that the lawbreaker is rid of the behaviour that injures the community (Marshall 2001a:100).

3.4.2 The Deterrence Theory

According to the deterrence theory, which claims its lineage back as far as Plato, punishment is designed to discourage future wrongdoing, by making the offender an example to others. In contrast to the reformatory theory, the deterrence theory is more honest about what punishment is actually doing: it is delivering pain, not therapy (Marshall 2001a:104).

Punishment is not an adequate deterrent in itself, especially of serious crimes or crimes of desperation. Punishing the desperate or those without hope does little to deter offending in social contexts of economic despair, political hopelessness, or systemic violence. Most criminologists and sociologists agree that crime rates are more influenced by social and economic policies and by the prevailing political climate than by penal policies (Marshall 2001a:105).

Deterrence depersonalises the offender, seen as a 'non-complier' of the law, through fear. The courts are sending a message to future potential offenders. The greater the punishment, the stronger the message (Marshall 2001a:106-107). The punishment is largely functional and the moral or legal guilt of the offender is not addressed.

Deterrence reasoning can lead to scapegoating, in that an individual offender is made to suffer not only the consequences of his or her own misdeeds, past and potential, but also the full weight of communal anxiety about crime (:107-109).

3.4.3 The Retributivist Theory

The term 'retribution' means 'repayment' – that is giving back to someone what he or she merits or deserves. It is normally used in the negative sense of punitive recompense for wicked deeds. Four key elements in retributivism may be identified (Marshall 2001a:109-112).

The first is the notion of *guilt*. Criminals are regarded as morally responsible agents who, by voluntarily breaking the law, incur personal, legal guilt that must be dealt with. From this flows the second element of *desert*. Punishment is deserved and it would be unjust not to punish. Wrongdoers deserve to suffer for what they have done, whether or not the punitive suffering produces any desirable consequences. Proponents of retributivism frequently use metaphors for punishment such as 'repaying the debt to society'. The third key concept is *equivalence*, or proportionality. In order to be just, the punishment should be proportionate to the offense committed. The fourth concept is *reprobation* or *denunciation*. Punishment is the fundamental means by which society communicates its abhorrence for certain deeds and sets the boundaries of acceptable behaviour (Marshall 2001a:109-110).

There are significant strengths in the retributivist theory. In contrast to the deterrence theory, it focuses on the criminal as an individual, not on the betterment of society. It recognizes that wrongdoing entails personal choice and moral responsibility. Punishment is justified only if it is just, it is just only if it is deserved, and it is deserved only if the crime is the result of free will (Marshall 2001a:111).

A further strength is that it takes seriously the entitlement of the criminal to be treated as a rational human being with an inherent right to receive just repayment, positive and negative, for his or her own actions. To punish someone to intimidate (deterrence)

is to treat the person as less than human; to punish in order to correct (rehabilitation), is to treat the person as a juvenile, but to punish because it is due, is to treat the person as a reasonable and responsible agent. It offers the offender a chance to make amends for the crime committed and to rejoin society's moral consensus by choosing to live by society's rules (Marshall 2001a:112).

One of the criticisms of retributivism is that it tends to focus on the individual. Theoretically the punishment serves to restore the social or even cosmic imbalance caused by the crime, but in practice, attention focuses on the criminal as an isolated unit in society. Crime is treated primarily as an offence against the law by an autonomous individual who is totally responsible for the crime and ignores the extent to which the negative aspects in the community have contributed to his crime. It is crucial to inquire into the societal causes of crime – and collective responsibility for it – rather than being content to divide individuals into categories of guilty and innocent, and calculating commensurate punishment for the guilty. Karen Kissane (quoted by Marshall 2001a:118) makes the following comment:

The legal principle that each person is responsible for his or her actions has collided with growing knowledge about how little control some people have over their lives; about the links between physical and emotional poverty and abuse and crime. How just is it for society to cast from its midst the misshapen creatures of its own making....Is not crime part of the body proper, a systemic illness?

The law which criminals break is not a neutral description of absolute morality. Barbara Hudson (quoted by Marshall 2001a:118) argues that the law predominately expresses the desires of the powerful, property-owning, whites, and that the justice system hits the poor and disadvantaged more heavily than the rich and powerful. There is also a significant link between types of punishment and business cycles. During economic depression, punishment increases and reform gives way to retribution. Thus the rehabilitative ethos in the 'good' 60's gave way to a retributive ethos in the recessionary 70's and 80's. Retribution fails to provide 'deserts' which are 'just' in an unjust society which benefits from maintaining the status quo, i.e. the wealth gap (Marshall 2001a:119).

The exclusive focus on the individual offender also highlights another weakness in retributivism (shared by deterrence and reform theories) – neglect of the victim, particularly when the system redefines the victim as the impersonal state, not the human being actually hurt by the crime. Crime always involves the rupturing of relationships. Not only is the proper relationship between victim and offender distorted by the crime, but the emotional, material, and physical hurt experienced by the victim affects his/her relational world. Punitive retribution is an inadequate response, since it does little or nothing to bring about recovery. A more promising strategy is to begin where the problem began, in the fractured relationship (Marshall 2001a:119-120).

When biblical considerations are taken into account, it is debatable whether retribution, strictly understood, is as foundational to biblical conceptions of law and justice as is sometimes claimed. There is a theme of retribution in the Bible and it serves an important theological function (Marshall 2001a:122). In non-capital offenses, the emphasis in biblical jurisprudence falls on restitution rather than retribution (Lv 17-27; Nm 5-8). Theologically God's justice is not retributory, but the expression of his love and concern for each of us. John Hayes (quoted by Marshall 2001a:125) explains: 'The basic principle operative in Israelite law was for restitution...for restoration of the victim to the status prior to the wrong rather than *punishment* of the offender.' Restitution restores *shalom*, which flourishes only when true justice has been done, where harm has been repaired between the offender and the victim (:125). As humans we can only administer rough justice, rather than the genuine justice of God. God deals with people not merely on the basis of external deeds, but on the basis of their intentions, motivations, and enduring moral character, which God alone can know perfectly (1 Sm 16:7; Mt 5:8) (:127-128).

Thomas Talbot (quoted by Marshall 2001a:128) argues that the retributivist theory of justice is basically flawed, because justice is only fully satisfied when the harm caused by wrongdoing is undone. Punishment does not achieve this. Paul Fiddles (quoted by Marshall 2001a:128) makes the point: 'What justice demands is not payment but repentance; it is finally 'satisfied' not by any penalty in itself but by the

change of heart to which the penalty is intended to lead.’ God’s justice can ultimately be vindicated not by retribution, but only by reconciling forgiveness, for only in this manner are things made right.

On its own, retributivism is inadequate to deal with the complexities of the social institution of punishment and the depth and the breadth of the biblical witness (Marshall 2001a:128-129).

3.4.4 The Human Rights Theory

Attempts have been made to conceptualise the problem of crime and punishment in fresh terms. In the human rights theory, crime is understood as an interference with the rights and freedoms of others, as is punishment, which therefore requires special justification. The general justification for punishment is the protection of human rights through crime reduction and the promotion of the positive freedom of victims and potential victims. There are limits to punishment guaranteed by the offender’s continuing possession of human rights, limits that cannot be set aside for utilitarian purposes. For example, capital punishment, torture, physical abuse, forced public humiliation and perpetual punishment are ruled out. Rights also imply corresponding duties, especially from a biblical perspective. If the state claims the right to punish the offender, it has a corresponding duty to ensure that it inflicts no more harm than was intended by the sentence. The intention of the punishment is the deprivation of liberty from which consequent suffering inevitably ensues, such as the loss of family ties, the limited ability to make decisions for oneself, impaired prospects for future employment, and the dehumanizing impact of the prison community. The state has a duty to offset these handicaps by rehabilitative efforts, which will also enhance the offender’s positive freedom by increasing his or her capacity to refrain from crime and to live as a responsible citizen (Marshall 2001a:130).

The human rights theory offers a helpful new framework for explaining and justifying criminal punishment, but whether it achieves fundamental shifts at the institutional level of the criminal justice system, remains to be seen. The current justice system is a

hybrid of many different – and, to some degree conflicting – theories of punishment. The result is a profound crisis in the penal system itself and widespread confusion amongst the general public about what purpose punishment is intended to serve (Marshall 2001a:130). This places demands on those running the system. Prison administrators are required to deter, hurt and rehabilitate at the same time, then denied the resources to do so and widely criticized for failing to meet such an incoherent and contradictory remit (:130-131).

Howard Zehr (quoted by Marshall 2001a:131) argues that the Western penal system, although a mixture of several theoretical perspectives, remains largely committed to retribution. A fundamentally retributive model has been subjected to a number of utilitarian adjustments (such as the concept of rehabilitation and alternatives to incarceration) to make it work better or appear more humane. But none of these adjustments have remedied the basic dysfunctionality of the retributive model. What is needed, he argues, is a new paradigm, a model of restorative justice, committed not merely to administering punishment, but to making right what has gone wrong through crime, and employing appropriate institutional mechanisms for doing so.

3.5 DISCOURSES OF POWER

In order to co-create new meanings with the inmates in their lives and relationships through accepting the Christian faith, it was important to create an understanding of how certain kinds of negotiated meanings operate to subjugate, marginalise or trivialise people's experience, or prevent it from being fully represented.

Discourse is a central term in Foucault's writing and in its broadest sense is described as 'anything written or said or communicated using signs' and emphasises its dominant focus on language (Fillingham 1993:100). McHoul and Grace (1993:26) link Foucault's idea of discourse to the historically specific relations between disciplines (defined as bodies of knowledge) and disciplinary practices (forms of social control and social possibility). According to this position, in any given historical period, we can write, speak or think about a given social object or practice

only in specific ways and not others. ‘A discourse’ would then be *whatever* constrains – but also enables – writing, speaking and thinking within such specific historic limits (McHoul & Grace 1993:31). The direct social and historical context of any discourse is thus emphasised by Foucault and indicates that each era will define its own discourses and these definitions may vary radically over time (Fillingham 1993:101).

In order to sensitise and enable us to deconstruct the power structures embedded in discourses with regard to crime, punishment and religion, one needs to understand different perspectives on the concept of power. Discourses regarding knowledge and power are deconstructed within the social construction framework (Kotzé & Kotzé 1997:9). Within the post-modern paradigm the work of the French philosopher, Michel Foucault (1965, 1973, 1977) with his ideas on relational power, contributed greatly to an understanding of the concept of power. James Poling (1991) is a practical theologian and psychotherapist and addresses issues regarding the abuse of power in the Church. Joanne C. Brown and Carole Bohn (1989) look at Christianity, patriarchy and abuse from a feminist point of view. In the following discussions I explain some of the main themes as presented in the above literature, insofar they have helped me to gain a better understanding of the power relations embedded in my area of research.

3.5.1 Michel Foucault

Foucault considers language to be an instrument of power. He argues that there is an inseparable link between knowledge and power: the discourses of society determine what knowledge is held true, right or proper in that society, so those that control the discourse, control knowledge (Freedman & Combs 1996:38). Power has an influence on how knowledge is created and on the subjugation or marginalisation of ‘alternative’ knowledges and discourses (Gordon 1980:81).

Foucault (1965, 1973, 1977) was intent on exposing the operations of power at the microlevel and at the periphery of society: in clinics, prisons, families, etc. According to him, it was at these local sites that the workings of power are most evident. The

workings of power are disguised, because they work in relation to certain knowledges that construct particular truths and are designed to bring about particular and ‘correct’ outcomes (White 1991: 34 –35). Foucault (1977, 1980, 1982) states that the practices of modern power are insidious and effective. They incite persons to embrace their own subjugation, to relate to their own lives through techniques of power.

In Foucault’s (1977) *Discipline and punish*, subtitled *The birth of the prison* the object of study is not really the prison, but a way of isolating a specific technique of power, namely to ‘...make the technology of power the very principle in both the humanization of the penal system and the knowledge of man’ (Foucault 1977:23). In this strategy the body is the central target and in Foucault’s (1977:24) analysis ‘a political technology of the body in which might be read a common history of power relations and object relations’.

Foucault uses Jeremy Bentham’s plan for the Panopticon (Foucault 1977:205; Luyt 1999:76-96; Pretorius 2002:29–30, 45–48) as a paradigmatic example of a disciplinary technology. It is not the essence of power, but an example of how power operates. This architectural form was proposed as the ‘ideal’ model for the organisation or arrangement for persons in space that would effectively ‘forge’ them as ‘docile bodies’ – bodies that can be more easily transformed and used.

The architectural functioning of the Panopticon consisted of a large courtyard with a tower in the centre and a set of buildings, divided into two levels and cells, on the periphery. Each cell had two windows: one brought in light and the other faced the tower, where large observatory windows allowed for the surveillance of the cells. The cells were like ‘small theatres in which each actor is alone, perfectly individualized and constantly visible’ (Foucault 1977:200) in which each individual was cut off from contact with those in adjoining cells: ‘He is the object of information, never a subject in communication’ (:200). The persons in these spaces were subject to the ever-present ‘gaze’ and believed themselves to be under constant surveillance. This mechanism of power had the effect of ‘inciting’ persons to act as if they were always being observed and maintained the individual in subjugation (:187) .

The Panopticon mechanisms of observation also facilitated conditions for the *'evaluation and fixing of lives'* (White & Epston 1990:69). These persons could, according to the norms constructed by the organisation, be classified, qualified, measured, compared, differentiated, and judged. Subjected to the perception of the ever-present gaze, persons experienced themselves as being constantly evaluated according to the rules and norms specified by the organisation. The ever-present gaze experienced by persons occupying the individual spaces was in fact a *'normalizing gaze'* (White & Epston 1990:69). This normalizing gaze would subject people to a *'whole micro-penalty of time, of activity, of behaviour, of speech, of the body, of sexuality'* (Foucault 1977:178).⁹

Since individual spaces prevented persons from having direct contact, each person was isolated in his/her experience of scrutiny, in subjugation to *'normalizing judgment'* (White & Epston 1990:70). This prevented them from comparing experiences, generating alternative knowledges, and establishing coalitions that would enable them to protest this subjugation. This individualising hierarchical system of observation effectively neutralised counter power and the initiation of resistance (Dreyfus & Rabinow 1983:189; White & Epston 1990:70).

Through the invention of the file, people's lives could be documented which enhanced practices of normalisation and individualisation of persons. Individuals were able to be *'captured and fixed in writing'* and documentation facilitated the gathering of statistics and the fixing of norms (White & Epston 1990:70). The file was instrumental in the formalisation of the individual and in his self-subjugation (Foucault 1977:202; White & Epston 1990:70-71)

Foucault (1977:194) argues the Panopticon provides a model of power that is *positive in character and in its effects*, rather than negative. The term *'positive'* is not used in the sense of being desirable or beneficial, but with reference to the effects of this form

⁹ The architectural design of the venue in which the Alpha Course was held, was such that the group was under constant surveillance for security reasons; thus enabling the team to experience the effects of being subject to *'the normalizing gaze and judgment'* (White & Epston 1990:69-70).

of power. Through this power, knowledge is produced as ‘reality’ and ‘rituals of truth’, and creates normalising ‘truths’ and norms around which persons are urged to shape or constitute their lives and therefore becomes specifying of persons’ lives (Flaskas & Humphreys 1993:42; White & Epston 1990:72). The Panopticon is a model for a mechanism of power that is self-maintaining and highly autonomous. It provides a mechanism in which all persons are simultaneously a subject of and an instrument of power: ‘This indeed is the diabolical aspect of the idea and all the applications of it...It’s a machine in which everyone is caught, those who exercise power just as much as those over whom it is exercised’ (Foucault 1980:156). The observers (the guardians) also become the observed: they are also ‘fixed, regulated, and subject to administrative control’ (Dreyfus & Rabinow 1983:189).

In Foucault’s analysis of power he wanted to demonstrate that power practices are recursively linked; that power is never localised; never in anybody’s hands. Power is employed and exercised through ‘a netlike organization’ (Flaskas & Humphreys 1993:41; Foucault 1980:98). Technologies of power are described as ‘mobile’: they are spread out in their everyday operation, localised spatially and temporally. When these technologies do find a localisation within a specific institution (like schools, hospitals, prisons) they create the climate for bio-power to invest and develop. When links are established between these institutional settings, then disciplinary technology is truly effective. It is in this sense that Foucault refers to power as being productive (Dreyfus & Rabinow 1983:185).

Apart from the ever-present nature of power-relations, Foucault also argues for the ever-present possibility of resistance. Because power is conceived as relational, the potential for resistance is held within any power relationship (Flaskas & Humphreys 1993:41; Foucault 1988:122-123). Foucault’s (1988:122-123) view on resistance is that it is coextensive with the power it opposes and that there can be no resistance outside the system of power relations: ‘As soon as there is a power relation, there is a possibility of resistance. We can never be ensnared by power: we can always modify its grip in determinate conditions and according to a precise strategy’ (:123).

In the exploration of Foucault's work on power, the most important ideas to hold are the ideas of the productive potential of power, the notion of power as relational and the need to study power in the context of the specific social relationships in which it occurs, and the notion of the possibility of resistance (Flaskas & Humphreys 1993:42).

3.5.2 James Newton Poling

Poling is a practical theologian and addresses the issues of power and the abuse of power, especially the sexual abuse of women in the Church. Poling, as a minister of a church is disturbed that the moral witness of the church on the issue of sexual violence is almost completely missing (Poling 1991:17). He feels strongly that religious leaders must choose whether 'to collude with the dominant culture as sanctioning agents of abusive power or to be prophetic critics of the way power is distributed and defined' (:12-13).

Poling (1991:12) sees power as 'a complex term with personal, social and religious connotations.' He sees power as inherent to all human beings, but inequities in power distribution lead to the abuse of power. Relational power for the individual persons is dependant on a just and creative social environment. Society, organised into institutions and ideologies, controls the resources needed for a good life. Power in society is organised in such a way that inequity gives occasion for injustice. Individuals abuse their power in destructive behaviours such as sexual abuse (:25-26). The family is an ideological construct and institution that structures domination in certain ways. Patriarchy is a hierarchical system that portrays unjust power relationships of men and women, and creates structures for sexual and physical violence and exploitation against women, children and other marginal groups (:29). Most sexual violence and abuse are perpetrated within families and by persons who are trusted leaders in society (:11).

Social injustice also causes human suffering. Racism, classism (oppression of the poor and the working classes), heterosexism (the oppression of gays and lesbians), and

imperialism (the oppression of poor nations by the economic and military power of richer nations), are examples of institutionalised forms of abuse (1991:30). Poling (:31) considers social injustice and abuse of power as evil and destructive of mutuality and the relational web which is conducive to life.

In his work with survivors of sexual abuse, Poling (1991:32) came across many who had the courage to speak up and tell their stories and he was astounded by the 'resilience of their hope': 'Those with resilient spirits can teach us about both the evil of abusive power and the source of hope in an unjust world.' The resistance of individuals and groups becomes a source of hope for the healing and restoration of humanity: 'Their voices are testimony to the resilient God who has been revealed in Jesus Christ' (:33). Poling (:33) thinks that we should search for the resilient hope of the human spirit, which can resist abuse and create new communities for the 'restoration of communion and freedom of self, others and God.' Women survivors are finding the courage to speak about their suffering in the midst of secrecy and silence.

One of the challenges of modern theology is to clear away distortions regarding God's love, namely that He sanctions the abuse of power. In this sense Poling (1991) sees the abuse of power as a theological problem. Poling (:33) grounds the healing of victims in the love of God: 'Discovering the Jesus who can reveal God's power and love.... Through resistance to the abuse of power and the work of God's love in Jesus Christ, the human spirit is made resilient'.

3.5.3 A feminist critique of Christianity, Patriarchy and Abuse

The essays in Brown and Bohn's (1989) *Christianity, patriarchy and abuse: A feminist critique* address the issue of violence against women and children and focus on the role of Christian theology undergirding an abusive culture. They wish to address and analyse theological views on patriarchy which serve to support and perpetuate domestic violence as an acceptable norm in society (Brown & Bohn 1989: xiv).

Brown and Parker (1989) criticise the theology of the atonement and the ways in which it makes violence seem appropriate, concluding that ‘glorification of any suffering is glorification of all suffering. Christianity has been a primary – in many women’s lives *the* primary – force in shaping our acceptance of abuse. The central image of Christ on the cross as the Saviour of the world communicates the message that suffering is redemptive. ‘If the best person who ever lived gave his life for others, then, to be of value we should likewise sacrifice ourselves’ (Brown & Parker 1989:2). The internalisation of this theology traps women in an almost unbreakable cycle of abuse. Brown and Parker (:4) strongly argue for the acknowledgement and condemnation of this glorification of suffering: ‘The only legitimate reason for women to remain in the church will be if the church were to condemn as anathema the glorification of suffering. Only if the church is the place where cycles of abuse are named, condemned, and broken can it be a haven of blessing and a place of peace for women.’

Fortune (1989:145) reflects on the theology of the cross and the resurrection and remarks that it provides insight into the meaning of suffering and transformation. The crucifixion did not glorify or justify suffering: the resurrection and subsequent events were the surprising realisation that in the midst of profound suffering, God is present and new life is possible. Ruether’s (1989:146-147) way of speaking of transformation and opposition to injustice find resonance with the hope and resilience portrayed by survivors of abuse in Poling (1991):

Transformation is the alternative to endurance and passivity. It is grounded in the conviction of hope and empowered by a passion for justice in the face of injustice. It is the faith that the way things are is not the way things have to be....Transformation is the means by which, refusing to accept injustice and refusing to assist its victims to endure suffering any longer, people act.... By refusing to endure evil and by seeking to transform suffering, we are about God’s work of making justice and healing brokenness.

3.6 PRISON MINISTRY: TOWARDS A MINISTRY OF HEALING AND RESTORATION: A DECONSTRUCTION OF POWER

Foucault's notion of the pervasiveness of power, namely 'power is always there and we are never outside it' (1980:141) is perhaps nowhere else more graphically displayed and evident than in the physical and architectural structure of the prison as penal institution and the inhabitants of these structures: the offenders, who through the abuse of their power committed crimes and in doing so subjected their victims to suffering and violation of their human rights. Poling (1991:12) sees power as inherent to all human beings and that inequity in the distribution of power, leads to the abuse of power.

In listening to each other's stories and in the responsible and honest re-authoring of our life's narrative, we are called to an ethical and accountable addressing of the power discourses that we contribute to. Ackermann (1998:91) speaks about the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa which she calls 'an exercise in accountability.' In order for healing to take place in our lives and in society we need to address these power imbalances, and have the courage to become accountable for our actions at all times. White (1991:27) recommends that deconstruction should be used as a tool in therapy to reveal so-called 'truths', biases and prejudices that are hidden in practices, social structures and ideologies.

In our pastoral practices and also in the running of the Alpha Course, we had the ethical responsibility first of all to deconstruct these power imbalances in our own lives and practices, and secondly to help others (and ourselves) to challenge and discern 'oppressive and exploitative practices' (Cochrane, De Gruchy & Petersen 1991:34) which had been regulating of the dominant story of their (our) lives and subjugating of a new and preferred story. The interdenominational prison ministry team, in being part of the larger body of the church, had to acknowledge the participation of the church in contributing to oppressive measures such as racism, classism, sexism and colonialism which gave rise to the injustices prevalent in society

(Cochrane, De Gruchy & Petersen 1991:46; Isherwood & McEwan 1993:14-15).¹⁰ Foucault (1980:141-142) explained that we are never outside power, but stressed that it does not mean that one is trapped and condemned to defeat. Power is seen as relational; therefore we can resist and take a stand against forms of abuse and oppression. Isherwood and McEwan (1993:14) mention that the concepts of all-encompassing love and forgiveness in which the Christian community was founded, in time became enmeshed and absorbed into political concepts which run contrary to Christian ideals. We have to re-instate these ideals of love and forgiveness into society in order for transformation to take place.

The question that motivated our team, as part of the Body of Christ, was how we could contribute to the healing of society. In re-capturing our vision of the church, namely to seek and save the lost, we wanted to respond to the social streams impacting on society (White, JE 1995:371) and prison ministry provided an opportunity to be involved in the society. The message we brought of healing and hope had to be appropriate to address the needs of a post-modern and pluralist society and we had to come with a willingness to critique our own motives and practices in order to be culturally and contextually relevant. Social healing is not to be separated from political healing, because the practices and ‘social engineering’ of politics have shattering effects on the social fabric of society (Ackermann 1998:81).

Marshall (2002b:6) contends that the institutionalised prison system which was meant to be a humane alternative to other forms of punishment, has since become one of the most violent and inhumane institutions in modern society.¹¹ Prisons foster the very

¹⁰ One way of deconstructing power during the Alpha Courses, was the modelling of egalitarian/partnership models within the team. Respect between the genders was modeled and women were given an equal share in co-leadership and leading in worship. In this way we endeavoured to deconstruct attitudes that reinforced dominance over women, especially in an environment in which many of the inmates have a history of violence and abusive behaviour toward women. In Unit 2 the Alpha Course was led by a husband and wife team which provided an opportunity to model and egalitarian marriage relationship and also showed how a couple can be partners in ministry (Hall 2004).

¹¹ T.R Snyder (quoted by Marshall 2002b:4) reports as follows with reference to most prisons in the United States: ‘Despite the comments one hears about some prisons being country clubs, there is nothing pleasant, humane, or welcoming about most prisons in the United States. Prison life is composed of small prison cells open to public view, double and triple bunking in cells designed for one person, crowded dormitories, regimented schedules, sometimes brutal treatment, frequent sexual violations – including twice as many women raped as of women nationwide – limited opportunities for

behaviour they mean to control. They generate the hatred and hostility they claim to correct. All prisons – from the most primitive and brutal to enlightened and modern institutions – are ‘warehouses of pain’, places where hurt and hurting people are made to suffer further hurt through forced deprivation of freedom, the loss of autonomy and dignity, and prolonged isolation from people who care for them the most. Prison hurts because it contradicts our humanity. We are made as free creatures in the image of a freedom-loving God. To take that freedom away strike at the heart of human dignity and identity (:6). According to Lee Griffith (quoted by Marshall 2002b:10) there is a close association in Scripture between imprisonment and the spirit of death itself: ‘...the problem is not that prisons have failed to forestall violent criminality and murderous rampages; the problem is that prisons are *identical in spirit* to the violence and murder that they pretend to combat....When we cage people we are in reality fueling and participating in the same spirit we claim to renounce.’

God’s solution is not to refine the prison system but to set prisoners free (Lk 4:16-20): ‘And he (Jesus) stood up to read... “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me *to proclaim freedom to the prisoners* and recovery of sight to the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”’ The liberation Jesus proclaimed was not only of a spiritual or psychological nature intending to liberate those imprisoned by sin and guilt. His proclamation also referred to liberation of people from the material structures and ideological systems which robbed them of freedom and dignity. Jesus’ entire ministry of feeding the hungry, healing the sick, forgiving the guilty, embracing the outsider, loving the enemy and confronting the oppressor was a fleshing out of his proclamation to release the captives. In the Old Testament, freedom typically means freedom from external constraint (from poverty, debt, slavery, oppression and military oppression). In the New Testament, freedom more often refers to an interior moral and spiritual freedom which the Christian Gospel brings, a freedom from demons and despair, from sin and selfishness, from guilt and greed. In practice it means that those

self-expression and self-improvement, body counts, strip searches, identification by number rather than by name, impenetrable walls topped by razor wire, and guards with sticks and guns. It could hardly be more inhumane...’

behind bars can still experience genuine moral and spiritual liberation even while they remain externally unfree. The same Lord that brings interior freedom also desires to see prisoners set free from their physical incarceration (Marshall 2001b:97-100).

In liberation theology, Christian pastoral practice is guided ‘by the norms of *praxis*, as the enactment of faith towards social transformation.’ Pastoral care is understood as synonymous with emancipatory *praxis*; the ‘pastoral’ constitutes the context of human need to which *praxis* is the appropriate response: serving the ends of emancipation within a context of engagement and action (Graham 1996:133). ‘Engagement’ to Ackermann (1996:34) means to be actively involved in actions promoting freedom and justice and is a means to reclaim the original ‘emancipatory impetus’ of Christianity. Therefore fellow believers are called to engage in actions which will assist in the eventual release of prisoners (spiritually and physically); and which will support ex-offenders in post-release adjustment as part of the freedom Christ brings (Marshall 2002b:12–13). We are also encouraged to speak out against a punitive justice system that does not engender healing. We have to work towards a restorative justice system and oppose the practice of ‘real life sentences’. For healing to be truly restorative, room must be left for mercy, repentance and restoration (Marshall 2002b:13).

At the heart of a feminist practical theology lies the belief in the role of human agency in the mending of God’s creation (Ackermann 1996:46), ‘a crying need “to bind up the wounds” at every level and for all in different ways’ (Ackermann 1998:80-81). Ackermann (:83) reflects as follows:

For healing practice to be truly restorative, it has to be collaborative and sustained action for justice, reparation and liberation, based on accountability and empowered by love, hope and passion. It is not the prerogative of any group of people. It can emerge from the actions of those who are suffering, marginalised and oppressed. It can also come from those who have privilege and power, provided they too understand its genesis in the hope for a restored creation and are willing to hear the pain of the ‘others’ and to act in response.

A recent comment in the local newspaper by the daughter of a murdered woman in our community, reflects the reaction of the afflicted to crime: ‘...the killer deserved to rot in hell for what he did to our mother’, and ‘only the killer’s capture and punishment would restore [my] mother’s respect and dignity’ (*Wanganui Chronicle* 17 Jan 2005). This comment is representative of the dominant discourse for vengeance and retribution by the victims of crime. It is also reflective of their pain, grief and suffering for an irretrievable loss. In the deconstruction of a dominant discourse of retribution, we are led to the alternative, namely that of forgiveness. Shriver (quoted by Ackermann 1998:92) points out that:

Forgiveness, in politics or in any other human relation, does not require the abandonment of all versions of punishment of evildoers. But it does require the abandonment of *vengeance*....Forgiveness gets its real start under the double impetus of judgment and forbearance from revenge. Forbearance opens the door toward a future that will not repeat the old crimes. Unaccompanied by forbearance in this very beginning, moral judgment often fuels new enmity.

Ackermann (1998:92) writes that forgiveness cannot be demanded, it can only be hoped for. ‘The aim of forgiveness is to restore communion with one another and with God to reconcile our brokenness.’ Lashlie (2002:106) writes as follows: ‘If it is pain you (victim) want them to feel to assuage the grief and anger you suffer as a result of losing a loved one, know that it is in the telling of their stories that the real pain is felt. If you (victim) insist they be subjected to ill-treatment and further degradation, you give them something to fight against – and they are well used to fighting.’

The process of healing requires an awareness to listen to each other’s stories. Awareness is a willingness ‘to hear, to see, and to feel’. This mutual exchange of our stories needs to have the innate capacity for transformation in order for change to take place; for a new life to begin (Ackermann 1996:48). Healing also requires the acceptance of accountability: ‘We are bound in relationships that claim responses, that make us accountable, bonds of relationship are forged, strengthened and expanded’ (Ackermann 1998:91).

Without taking responsibility and being made accountable for our wrongs, no room is left for forgiveness. For victims of crime forgiveness is letting go of the power that the offence and the offender have over them (Consedine 1999:189). For the offenders repentance signifies accountability, a change of behaviour and an understanding of restitution. When forgiveness meets repentance, reconciliation becomes possible (Ackermann 1998:93).

Archbishop Desmond Tutu who chaired the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, listened to thousands of testimonies from victims and offenders. Archbishop Tutu (quoted by Consedine 1999:188-189) speaks about forgiveness as an essential component of healing: ‘...I have come to believe...that forgiveness is not just a spiritual and ethereal thing unrelated to the real world, the harsh world out there. I have come to be believe...that without forgiveness, there is no future.’

The following chapter presents the narratives of inmates who found healing and restoration by accepting the forgiveness that God offers. In finding the Christian faith these inmates’ perceptions, attitudes and values changed and they were brought to a position where they accepted accountability for their deeds (or were challenged to do so) and wanted to make amends. Accepting the Christian faith installed in them the hope that there can be a future for them and a possibility to be restored to family, their victims and society. The healing and restoration of the offender can contribute and prepare the way for restorative justice and forms part of the healing of society.

CHAPTER 4 - NARRATIVES OF FAITH, HOPE, HEALING AND RESTORATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter reflects the faith discourse of inmates and volunteers who came to accept the healing and restoration that is to be found in the Greater Story of God. Through accepting the salvation that is found in the sacrifice of a personal Redeemer, inmates could re-author and reshape their lives, incorporating stories that tell of a new life possible in Christ. In this story, the Cross became central as a symbol of liberation from spiritual incarceration and speaks of love, grace and hope. This chapter tells the stories of volunteers answering the call of Christ to minister to the imprisoned: 'to set the captive free' (Lk 4:18). It also tells the meaning-making faith stories of inmates centering on themes relating to the Cross, divine grace, hope, healing and reconciliation with God, family and friends. These faith stories came about through a process of interchange and dialogue and reflect the resilience of inmates to reevaluate their lives and relationships, and in doing so examine and challenge taken-for-granted stories that kept them spiritually incarcerated (Freedman & Combs 1996:17). In the re-authoring of these stories some of the approaches to narrative therapy were incorporated and woven into the stories of the inmates and volunteers.

In the telling of the stories of changed lives, our hope was that the healing, hope and restoration experienced by these inmates would expand beyond the walls and fences of the prison and spread to family, friends, the community and the victims affected by crime, and in doing so, contribute to the healing and transformation of society. Myerhoff (1982:116) comments on the effectiveness of a story: 'A story told aloud to progeny or peers is ... more than a text. It is an event. When it is done properly, presentationally, its effect on the listener is profound, and the latter is more than a mere passive receiver or validator. The listener is changed.' These stories bear witness to the transformative power of faith and, as such, create hope for a changed society and the restoration of a state of *shalom*.

4.2 THE BIBLICAL MANDATE FOR MINISTRY TO THE INCARCERATED

Prison ministry shares the same objectives as the universal church: regeneration, healing and spiritual development. Prison ministry is not only a constitutional right of inmates, but also a command of the church. Matthew records a discourse in which Jesus places prisoners in the same category as the hungry and the naked: ‘...I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me’ (Mt 25:36). Although incarcerated, they are members of society and desperately need the compassion and transforming grace that is found in Jesus Christ (Covert 1995:65-66). The Gospels insist that Jesus’ preferential option is for ‘the poor, the hurt, the vulnerable, the prisoner’; and they all provide the key text for ministry among the imprisoned: ‘You visited ME’ (Mt 25:36). Matthew (Mt 12:18-21) recounts the prophecies of the long awaited Messiah in terms that have a special relevance for inmates, as a *Servant, gentle, spirit-filled, non-judgmental, and compassionate*. This bears also specific relevance to the chaplain and volunteers and these attitudes should be reflected in our ministry to the inmates (Diochi 2001:189). In our sharing of stories there must be willingness ‘to hear, to see, and to feel’ (Ackermann 1998:48) and to show the compassion that Jesus did: ‘...not to break the crushed reed, nor to put out the smouldering wick’ (Mt 12:20).

In 2000 Lorne Campbell, Parish Assistant at Christ Church, Wanganui, felt called to act on the biblical mandate to bring a message of hope to the prisoners and to start an Alpha Course in the local prison. This was preceded by his visit to Holy Trinity Brompton Church in London to find out how the Alpha Course was impacting their prisons. He was inspired by the hope experienced by inmates through the work of Alpha in over 100 of Britain’s prisons at the time. **Lorne** relates as follows: ‘*Since that visit, doors opened at Kaitoke Prison to take the Alpha Course into the prison... Since then, a number of Christians in Wanganui and our own Parish have got involved. The vision was to run courses in each of the units (there are 7) and to birth a “church”...a community of men who follow Jesus in each. It has been extremely*

*rewarding seeing many men coming to the courses, encountering the Living Lord Jesus, and seeing life change happen.*¹²

Bosch (1991:412) denotes mission as the total task God has set the church for the salvation of the world, which always relates to a specific context of evil, despair and lostness. It ‘embraces all activities that serve to liberate man from his slavery...slavery which extends from economic necessity to Godforsakenness.’ Mission is the church sent into the world, to love, to serve, to preach, to teach, to heal, to liberate. For **Hannah***¹³ an Alpha leader, her passion is to reach the lost and the prison provides the ideal environment: *‘Prisoners are forgotten, abandoned or condemned by most, so are particularly lost and needy. Those that come to our groups know they need to change, to be different. Some are already believers, some have some background as children, and some are totally unchurched. It is a wonderful privilege to be among people who listen and want to know about the Gospel of Christ.’*

4.2.1 An invitation to spirituality, diversity and dialogue

In the Alpha Course, space is allowed for the richness of diversity, inviting the cultural and the spiritual into the conversation. The inmates come from diverse cultural backgrounds and those that have a church background represent different religious convictions. The Alpha team itself is an interdenominational team, representative of mainline, Pentecostal and charismatic churches. An interdenominational team has the advantage that they combine different strengths and insights in the ministering team (Cochrane, De Gruchy & Petersen 1991:21). A post-modern approach to religion invites the contextual and the local knowledges of a pluralistic society into a dialogue (Bosch 1991:484; Gerkin 1997:148). We enter the faith discourse as Christians, but with the openness for the otherness of the Other. Tracy (quoted by Petersen 1994:226-227) comments that three things are crucial for a dialogue: self-respect and respect for one’s own tradition; self-exposure to the Other

¹² The voices of the participants were written in italics in order to make them more visible.

¹³ Pseudonyms are used to protect the identity of the participants.

as Other; and a willingness ‘to risk all in the questioning and inquiry that constitutes the dialogue itself.’

Waldgrave (quoted by Tapping 1993:30) argues that our societies as a whole are secular and Western people, by and large, have severed the relationship between the physical world and the spiritual, with spiritual phenomena such as dreams, prayers or other-worldly experience being marginalised. In order to minister to and counsel people from traditional cultures, Western people need to understand how spirituality (expressed through a sense of connection with nature) pervades every aspect of the lives of people from traditional cultures (Tapping 1993:31). By weaving the divine into the human narrative, space is allowed for this spirituality to enter ‘... to co-create the meaning of an experience with a personal God: an evolving story with God that is uniquely his or her own, not dominated by my story, not a psychological story, not even the story of his or her particular religious doctrines’ (Griffith 1995:137).

Luke* expresses his need for spiritual fulfilment in the following words: *‘Because prison can be such an inhuman experience the presence of Christianity and a Christian ministry in prison is vital. No other group or organisation can or does provide the same sort of human contact. The majority of people in prison are facing identity issues and they have usually taken up some inappropriate way of ‘being’ in the world. Christianity can and does give hope, fulfilment, a sense of a future and continuum. Even non-Christians can find the life of Christ inspiring. Change cannot occur until there is some understanding of personal motivation and need. I believe that Jesus can fulfil that need and give the opportunity to live life to a purpose higher than the simple fulfilment of desire.’*

In this re-authoring of new and preferred stories, the Holy Spirit is invited into the co-authoring process. As this process evolves, inmates can move away from thin conclusions which have dominated the self narrative and find ways in which these alternative stories can be richly described (Morgan 2000:15). As Freedman and Combs (1996:16) describe: ‘As people begin to inhabit and live out the alternative stories, people live out new self-images, new possibilities for relationships and new

futures.’ Inmates were invited to discover meanings for themselves as they wove the religious content into their personal lives. Faith became their own personal experience in which they could redefine their lives and ‘theology’ became the story or account of their lives (Herholdt 1998:225). **Hannah*** tells of the changes which become evident when inmates come to faith: *‘When faith comes alive in the men, we can see a change in their attitude to their situation. Some say it’s the one thing keeping them sane. Many change physically – they can hold their hands up, a light comes on in their eyes, they have confidence and hope. They discover purpose and begin planning a new and different way of life. Some become very bold in witnessing and bring others along.’*

4.2.2 The Gospel message as basis of encouragement for inmates

The inmates find it encouraging that Jesus Christ not only chose people as his disciples who were regarded as ‘unsavoury characters’, but also chose to entertain the company of disreputable characters such as ‘tax-collectors, sinners and criminals’ (Diochi 2001:188). The pastoral presence of the chaplain and other prison ministry volunteers is highly appreciated by inmates and often is their only contact with the outside world. **Paul*** shares his impressions with regard to the Alpha course and the visits of prison volunteers in the following words: *‘The Alpha Courses – Questions of Life and Challenging Lifestyle have been an awesome source of encouragement. This was a good time of fellowship with the brothers and sisters and worship with Jesus Christ. The prison ministry volunteers for the Alpha groups and Church services are doing an awesome work for God. To them belongs the Scripture Matthew 25:35-40. It takes courage to come and visit us, the stereotypical rejects of society. That courage is in Christ, the Holy Spirit. I thank them with all my heart. I’ve learnt so much while I’ve been locked up in this place I call my training ground. I’ve learnt that we are powerless to avoid demise as long as we are in control. Our only option is to lose our life and find it in Christ. And then we can laugh at the strong man who thought he had control of our eternity.’*

The visits and prison ministry meetings also serve as an encouragement to prison volunteers. **Jacob***, an Alpha and Bible Study leader, reflects on his involvement in

prison ministry: *'Our visits quickly became the highlight of every week. We become very attached to the men and sorry as they are released or moved to other prisons. We are constantly aware of our privilege and that God himself values the ministry – we understand Isaiah 61. It's only through those men that I've learnt the meaning of koinonia. In terms of worship, we gain from them more than we give.'*

Mark* a prison ministry volunteer, reflects on the hope he observed amongst a group of men during his first church service at the prison: *'Here was I, a conservative, conventional Anglican joining about eight inmates singing 'Give thanks with a grateful heart.'* What had these chaps got to give thanks for, being released into a security room, from being locked in their cells? No, it must surely be more than that. An earlier Alpha course had brought some of these inmates to know Jesus Christ ...'

In the following sections excerpts from the stories of inmates and volunteers will be reflected on and related to meaning making and faith building images and experiences in their lives.

4.3 THE DIMENSION OF THE CROSS IN PRISON MINISTRY

4.3.1 The image of the cross as a symbol of redemption

The cross is highly valued by inmates. Offenders identify with a Saviour who experienced the native Jewish legal system of his day through the example of Jesus Christ at Calvary. They can identify with Christ by his arrest and his brief imprisonment, because he knows the pains of being misunderstood, being rejected by humanity and being seemingly forgotten by God. Inmates seek God's forgiveness as they identify with him through their sufferings, because in the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, they see the loving heart of a merciful God, and learn the true meaning of love, and the cost of forgiveness (Covert 1995:71; Diochi 2001:193).

James* comes from a background of physical and mental abuse. He came to accept the sacrifice that Jesus made on his behalf: *'...I understood that Jesus died for me and*

no one has ever done that for me. No one has ever stood in the gap and took a beating or took the abuse that was given me.'

4.3.2 The cross and grace: Externalising sin as a form of 'bondage and slavery',¹⁴

The cross reflects the reality of human hopelessness and our desperate need for grace. The cross graphically speaks to sin and slavery, guilt and the punishment that it brings. It also addresses oppression and injustice (Covert 1995:73). The word of God emphasises that there is no unforgivable sin, fault and crime, which takes us to Golgotha where sin, fault, crime and the cycle of revenge are conquered. Covert (1995:72) reminds us that: 'When the cross is internalised, it gives proof of a divine grace that seeks out the darkest corners of sin, including those that are imprisoned for the most heinous crimes. In atonement of the cross, we find a God who stepped into history to sacrificially heal all who would respond in faith.'

Inmates that come to accept the Christian faith, often externalise their sin and wrongdoing as a form of 'bondage and slavery'. Through the acceptance of God's grace and forgiveness they are led to a place of peace and rest, knowing that, like the prodigal son, they will be forgiven if they are truly repentant. This offers a dimension of futuristic hope to their lives, knowing that change (for the better) and an alternative lifestyle is possible (Diochi 2001:206).

Robert* accepted Jesus into his life. He experienced God's forgiveness as having had a 'blood transfusion'. His acceptance of this forgiveness freed him from the burden of sin and gave him a new perspective on life: *'I ended up in jail and that is where I found God and now I will tell you how it happened. ...I attended an Alpha Course. I heard about Jesus who died for our sins on the cross. On the second day I felt Jesus come into my heart. I felt free. I have been real bad and God forgave me. Now I am a free man and I know God wants me for something. I am not sure what yet, but he*

¹⁴ Based on a model of Christian narrative therapy proposed by Richard Cook (2000).

will let me know. I am so happy that I have found God. Now I have something to live for and that's God's love. I will always praise God for saving me...'

4.3.3 The cross and repentance: Taking a stand against 'bondage and slavery'

Jesus summoned his listeners: 'Repent and believe the Gospel.' The calling is to specific changes, to renounce evidences of the domination of sin in our lives and accept responsibility in terms of God's love for our neighbour. *Metanoia* involves the 'total transformation of our attitudes and styles of life' (Bosch 1991:413).

Timothy* testifies how he was led to repentance before God, his victim and his family, to stand up to the 'bondage of slavery' and to take responsibility for the wrong he has done: *'I saw that my life was still full of unrighteousness and the sin that was working in my life was convicting me to make changes. Galatians 5:19-21 was mentioning things such as 'adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lust, hatred, conflict, envy, strife and rebellion' to just name a few. These and more plagued me for a good part of my life. My old nature of corruption, deception and immorality was condemning me. There was comfort in John 3:17... 'For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved.'*

I have trusted God's Word and turned away from all that is wrong and sin and have completely repented of all my wrongs, actions, deeds and unrighteousness, hurts that I have done to people, family close, near or far. I've asked God to forgive me for every lie I've said, big lies and the trespasses I've committed more so against my poor victim, my family. I admitted to doing wrong and evil things. I asked God to search me, and see if there was any wicked way in me, if so, to show me and I would pray about that sin, and put it to rest by giving it all to God. I'm not sure as to how God works, that's God's prerogative, but I believe that I received the Holy Ghost which Christ spoke about in John 14:17 which says '...and shall be in you.' Verse 26 is the punch verse: 'But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send

in my Name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things in remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.'

Diochi (2001:202) in his ministry as chaplain to prisoners encouraged them to think of themselves in the Christian faith as sinners, defaulters and imperfect human beings, rather than victims of societal and genetic misfortune. In his view, by accepting the blame, this would create hope for the successful solution to their problems. He quotes Ward (1971) in this respect, stating: 'However, to live with dignity and self-respect and hope, each one of us must believe in that blessed margin of his experience in which he can say "through my fault, my own fault, my own most grievous fault"...the belief that human responsibility is a reality is part of the gospel.'

Ackermann (1998:48) writes that stories need to have the capacity to transform. We are bound up in relationships which call for accountability. Lashlie (2002:106) affirms this point of view and draws on her experience in a women's prison:

[Y]ou don't feed them less and work them harder. Instead you bring them face-to-face with themselves. In bringing them to prison, a vacuum has been created and the chaos present in their lives before they came to prison has been removed. None of the distractions that have allowed avoidance of the real issues remain.... It is in the moment that the inmate comes face-to-face with herself or himself that the real pain is felt and the real journey of acknowledgement of what they have done and whom they have hurt can begin. It is in the telling of the stories of their lives that they can begin to understand the journey they have been on and begin to know the pain they have inflicted on others.

Peter* came to a stage in his life where he could see through his self-deception and could grieve for his victims: *'I think that God has had his hand on me for a very long time, right through my life. I have been in and out of a lot of churches in search of what is true to me, but as time went by, my beliefs became distorted as I fell further and further away from God. So everything I believe to be good was put aside as I started to embrace the bad things, like: lust, power and control, sexual pleasures. I am in prison for child molestation and I know without the help I would not have the courage to speak out to you this day. All the deceit and lies, false masks I used, to get*

around my beliefs, families and other adults have caused a tremendous amount of pain and heartache for all concerned. I have shattered their lives into many pieces. I believe now that Jesus is the only One who can restore what has been done. I have recently completed a sexual offender's course in Auckland, but I still felt like something was missing in my life. The (Alpha) course I completed did fill that gap that was missing.'

Jenkins (1990:117) believes that abusive men should accept full responsibility for their abuse. This should be done in a public way so that victims of this abuse could be relieved of the burden of secrecy that was bestowed upon them. This enables the offender to deal with the abusive behaviour, instead of allowing him to hide behind a veil of secrecy.

4.3.4 The cross and liberation: 'Putting off the old and putting on the new'¹⁵

Inmates stagger under the burden of sin and guilt, and under the dictatorship of social discourses and reaction patterns. The old self is bound to laws, social powers, and systems of sin and to unseen dynamics. With the acceptance and internalising of the liberating grace provided by Jesus' sacrifice on the cross, inmates can start to break free from the burdens of sin and guilt that serve to enslave them and squeezed them into life-inhibiting moulds (Cook 2000:33-34). Poling (1991:32-33) comments that in a world where abuse of power is so dominant, we have to resist the abuse of power in order for power to serve its original purpose. Jesus serves as an inspiration of hope in his resistance to the power and principalities of his time. In him we find the example of repudiation of abuse of power, which should challenge the church and believers to resist injustice and evil. The New Testament models and narrates new and life-enhancing stories. Romans 6:6 tells of the 'old self' that is set free of sin. Ephesians 4:22-24 shows that we can help someone to put off the 'old self' and present the hope of the new self (Cook 2000:34).

¹⁵ Based on a model of Christian narrative therapy proposed by Richard Cook (2000).

Many inmates testify with regard to these life-changing processes, where they were able to resist the evil that dominated in their lives and engage in a new way of thinking and behaving. **Jock*** tells about his ‘putting off the old and putting on the new’: *‘Before, the old Jock was like “Jake the Muss” character. I’d always be in scraps... once I lifted my hands it was all over for that person. Every time I’ve been in prison I’ve been in fights, but not this time. The old Jock is smaller now, the new Jock lives in God. He’s still there, the old Jock, but I believe as I continue to work on it, and learn, that the old Jock has lost control. The Bible Study and Church were choice! Fellowship is important with the brothers and church people. I think differently now, people know me as a fighter, that’s my doing, cause that’s how I was. Now they will need to learn and accept me as I am – to accept the changes – my friends and whanau will get a different Jock. Although I haven’t lived tomorrow, I know that it will be different – it won’t be like it used to be. I have a future now, and a fellowship, mates and a life.’*

4.3.5 The cross and forgiveness: Discerning the pressures of conformity¹⁶

Many feel deeply hurt because they have been betrayed by those whom they had confidence in. The Biblical narrative of Jesus Christ’s betrayal by one of his disciples directs them to an example of ‘*non-revenge, non-vengeance, non-vindication and non-vendetta*’. This attitude also portrays a great sign of forgiveness to offenders and inmates internalise this incidence as an exemplary assurance of God’s forgiveness of their crimes (Diochi 2001:193). It also lays upon individual offenders the obligation to adopt a Christ-like attitude to those who have offended against them (:189). At the heart of Christian spirituality is listening to the Word of God to discern what is true or false. This discernment should lead us to discern our contribution to suffering and oppression caused by human greed and self-righteousness and direct us to contemplate God’s perspective for the well-being of society (Cochrane, De Gruchy & Petersen 1991:78-79).

¹⁶ Based on a model of Christian narrative therapy proposed by Richard Cook (2000).

The acceptance of God's forgiveness, led **Timothy*** to bestow grace on his fellow humans and also enabled him to discern the pressures of conformity. As he came to accept and incorporate the Christ story into his life, he could discern and unmask the deception of the social discourse of what is expected of 'a real man': *'The teaching of acceptance and forgiveness (and many others) that is taught by Jesus, would lead many to believe that by following these principles of living that they are for some reason surrendering their belief of what a typical "man" should be, i.e. "Be strong", "Revenge", "Unwavering", "Staunch", "Pay-backs", "Intimidation". These beliefs are in direct contrast to what the Lord loves as being displayed in the Beatitudes. Jesus has taught me that the only way to fulfilling yourself spiritually is by believing and following his teachings. I find the power of forgiveness the most rewarding, because regardless of how other people may treat you, He has taught us that "vengeance is mine". So we can let go of trying to get even with everybody that has wronged us in some way and we can focus on positive uses for our energies.'*

McLean (1996:15-16) discusses how the dominant culture of masculinity gives rise to 'masculine oppression'. Men should be led to an understanding of their own pain and frustration in being a man, in order to make the changes necessary to benefit both men and women. For men two things go inextricably together – the desire for power and the fear of failure. The general impression is that men's fear of failure is much greater than the desire to succeed. According to Miles (quoted by McLean 1996:16), 'to be a man it is not simply to be: A man must do, display, prove, in order to display unchallenged manhood.' Segal (quoted by McLean 1996:16), contends that men's oppressiveness comes from their fear of not being male-enough: 'Making a man out of a boy means teaching him that the human sacrifices of the power struggle are essential to the process of becoming a man.' Institutions that are set on making men out of boys often involve 'brutalization, physical and emotional abuse, emphasis on hardness and strength, contempt for sensitivity, delicacy and emotional intimacy.'

Masculinity is often most clearly defined in terms of what it is *not* – and that entails the repudiation of what the dominant culture deems to be feminine. Masculinity is described by Chodorow (quoted by Real 1995:32) as perceived by most boys as a

‘negative achievement’ – an emphatic disidentification with ‘mother’: it is about ‘not being girlish, not being like mother, not crying.’ Men are led to repudiate and denounce what they value the most, namely to reject this nurturing female world if they have to survive as men (McLean 1996:17). Foucault (1988) argues that we are not powerless in power-relations, but that we can resist them. By the power of God’s love in Jesus Christ our spirit is made resilient and we can oppose abusive practices (Poling 1991:33). Romans 12:2 reads ‘do not let this world squeeze you into its mould.’ In standing up to these oppressive discourses of what it means to be masculine, men can be led to discover who they have been truly designed to be as men.

Matthew* challenged the dominant discourse of being a man: *‘Admittedly, being in prison has had a profound effect on me as a person. I dare to think what person I may have become, if I indeed accepted the attitude of the definition of a “man” that is held by the majority of the inmates. Being in prison has been a blessing in disguise. It’s is amazing how little time you actually set aside for stopping and thinking while you are in the mainstream society. The tragedy is that coming to prison for my family and myself may in the long run be worthwhile, because with Jesus’ help and a lot of free time to think and feel, I do believe I have found myself.*

After attending the Alpha Courses for the last three years, I have become a person who accepts himself and others more freely, can give and receive affection without emotional walls to climb, does not suppress his emotional responses and is able to stand back, contemplate and analyse feelings of guilt, anger, envy and then to transcend these feelings by using Jesus’ teachings of forgiveness and acceptance.’

Lashlie (2002:107) reflects that inmates given the space and time to reflect on their wrong-doing can be brought to a place where they accept responsibility for their actions and start to believe that they can create a better future:

I have watched again and again as women who have been given the space to think about themselves and their lives, women who came into prison railing against the unfairness of the

world and denying all responsibility for the crime for which they have been convicted, have stood to own the chaos that was their life before prison. They have finally owned their crime and the hurt they have inflicted on others and expressed their resolve to make their own future and the future of their children a more positive experience. I have watched the light come on in the eyes of women as they have realised that they do have a place in the world; they do have a contribution to make; they do have a right to be alive.

4.4 STORIES OF DIVINE GRACE AND PERSONAL FAITH

Acceptance of the divine grace of God as an act of mercy in giving himself to humanity in totality, speaks to the inmate of his limitless love towards the human person and towards them (inmates) in their prison-life. The narratives of individuals such as Moses, David, and Job, who all sought and received divine grace freely, are comforting and a spiritual support to inmates. Through spiritual care the inmates are led to understand that grace makes personal growth possible because it guides them to communicate with God and be open to God's peaceful and enlightening Spirit (2 Pt 3:18). There is a direct relationship between grace and the exercise of faith. Grace has been a very powerful gift and instrument of steadfastness and courage for many inmates, who have been devastated by their past crimes, and whose present lives in prison are a daily struggle. The inmates realise that they are not removed from tribulations, but through the grace of God and their faith they can be sustained and even be transformed into the glory of God. The biblical narratives of Paul's weaknesses, in the midst of his trials, encourage offenders to experience the power of God, which strengthens their faith (Covert 1995:67-68; Diochi 2001:187-188).

Sam* narrates how he experiences the presence of God and what his faith means to him: *'One evening, late last year, peaceful and quiet it was, I was working on a Bible correspondence study course, when I looked at the window. In the window it seemed like an image of Jesus appeared. Then it was like he was in the cell with me. An awesome reminder to me from this experience is how Christ can communicate with us, through each other, creation, the scriptures, visions, dreams like he did with the prophets of old, to know, sense his presence: "I am always with you says the Lord."*

Without Christ there is no hope and by accepting Christ the Author and Perfector of our faith, there is a sense of direction and purpose in life and I have no regrets having Christ as my Lord and Saviour. Hope comes from seeing God's perspective in the midst of trial and tribulation, and also works together with faith conforming to his will. Hope is trusting God with our life, our future, in things to come, believing in the unseen, keeps us positive, keeps us progressing forward. Hope is to have faith, believing and trusting God, believing in the help that God can provide. Over time and often I've learnt the hard way. Yes, an understanding of what sin is and how it separates me from Christ, the consequences of how important it is to forgive like Jesus did. To be obedient has a lot to do with faith, as without faith, would it be impossible to accomplish this.'

Fowler (1981:16) speaks of faith as a verb, as related to the Greek verb *pistuō* and the Latin verb *credo*, which permits one to say: 'I trust, I commit myself, I pledge allegiance'; this is as active mode of being and committing, a way of moving into and giving shape to our experiences of life. In accepting the Christian faith, the inmate puts the old identity that speaks of misfortune and destruction down and a new identity in Christ is formed. In putting their faith and trust in God, inmates are moved to form a commitment and alliance to the Other and others that express the same trust and loyalty in this 'center of value and power' (:16). This faith community provides a context in which they can 'serve common goals, ...hold shared meanings, ...remember shared stories, ...celebrate and renew common hopes... and become part of that which we love and trust' (:18-19). Jesus said: 'Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.'

Many inmates tell of how they came to feel they 'belong'; to realise who they really are in Christ. **Jonah*** experienced that he found a place of fellowship where he felt accepted and a group of people with whom he could share: *'After a few weeks I could drop my mask and my true self started to shine through. Barriers were being broken down. I suddenly found my true self. Alpha let me be my own person. There was no judging or criticism, I could relax. It is like a sanctuary where you can escape from the plastic world of being incarcerated.'*

4.5 STORIES OF HOPE AMIDST INCARCERATION

Hope is an important component of a life worth living. Hope is necessary in order to stay healthy and a healthy society needs a shared sense of social hope to remain confident and purposeful. Christian hope is ultimately the *hope in God*, that expresses confidence in the saving power bestowed by a faithful God. Biblical hope expresses an eschatological expectation: the restoration of creation by the future coming of God. Christian hope is also *this-worldly*, trusting in God for the healing and renewing of this planet (Marshall 2001b:107). Cochrane, De Gruchy & Petersen (1991:83) reflect that it is hope that empowers Christians to keep on struggling for justice and social transformation, even in situations which are humanly speaking hopeless.

Hope is also spoken of as a spiritual assurance and support in present situations and becomes ‘a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner sanctuary behind the curtain’ (Heb 6:19). Hope strengthens inmates in the midst of their weaknesses and despair in prison. Most of the incarcerated live with the hope of returning and being restored to their family, community and society. Inmates accepting the Christian faith receive a latent Spirit of hope and find strength to handle their difficulties. They are sustained by the divine promises and live in the faith of God’s mercy, kindness and forgiveness. Although this might not obliterate all the difficulties and pain from an individual prisoner’s life, it serves as an instrument of hope which carries the incarcerated into God’s perfect and tranquil future (Covert 1995:72; Diochi 2001:188).

Timothy* expresses the hope and purpose he has found in the following passage:

‘I do believe that life has a purpose and there is a purpose why I had to come to prison. It is a step to another chapter in my life: a life in Christ, an abundant life, where He is Lord of my life. Viktor Frankl wrote: “Nothing in the world will so effectively help you to survive, as the knowledge that there is a purpose to your life. He who has a WHY to live for, can bear almost any HOW.”

James*: *'Christ gave me hope – I am still alive. Christ is hope: 1 Cor 13:13 "And now these three remain: Faith, hope, love, but the greatest is love." Through Jesus' sacrifice my sins were taken away. Jesus was crucified for you and me that we might have life. We don't have to do anything to earn it. By the blood of Christ it has been done.'*

Marshall (2001a:108) reflects: 'Without hope, without a controlling vision for how things ought to be, and one day will be, there is little chance of achieving significant change for the better.'

4.6 STORIES OF RECONCILIATION, HEALING AND RESTORATION

Imprisonment is a concrete example that we reap what we sow and that sinful living brings many forms of punishment, including legal retribution. When false lifestyles and attitudes are identified and deconstructed, space is created for a new and hopeful story to emerge. Inmates realise that lost opportunities and damaged relationships cannot be reversed, but forgiveness and reconciliation offer healing and a new beginning. Most inmates live with a strong sense of guilt and failure and find it difficult to believe that their crimes can be forgiven (Covert 1995:66).

Spiritual transformation and personal growth can only be obtained through divine forgiveness. Covert (1995:66) argues that the church should include forgiveness in its total ministry and communicate it as the foundation for personal change, healing and a new life. Only through the acceptance of the reconciliatory work of Christ, criminals find cleansing, healing and inner peace and are able to forgive themselves and others (Diochi 2001:273-277; Opata 2001:128-130). Faith and hope ground inmates in the redemptive work of God and free them from legalistic guilt and condemning shame and allow them to hope in a better future where mercy and justice will prevail (Allender 1999:36-37).

Acceptance of divine forgiveness allowed the following inmates to forgive themselves and others, whom they believe had wronged them. Some were also able to restore

severed relationships with friends, family and society and to incorporate ('remember') them into their lives:

Joseph*:

'The Lord has been so good to me the way he has given me new friends and dear brothers and sisters in Christ. In my first family I lost a daughter and a son, but God is so awesome because He is giving me new family members, like my grandchildren being restored to me, and their dad and his wife are like my new son and daughter. I never thought I would see my grandkids for many a year. I thought maybe when they are all grown up they may come looking for me. But I know the Lord had other plans, it's like in Joel 2:25: "I will repay you for the years the locusts have eaten." It was after my home leave and after seeing the grand kids that Jesus took me to this Scripture in Joel".'

Nathan*:

'Some years ago I realised that it is only through God that I am still here so I turned back to Him. I got baptised in water and since then I look at life and people differently. I now try to do things as God would want me to. I am more forgiving, more thankful for each day, I find I pray for others a lot and care more for others. I was married for thirteen years and now feel if I had involved God in my marriage it may have lasted. But I am now involved with a lovely lady and her, myself and our two children try to put God in charge of each day....God has done so much for us. I have also made up with my mother for who I have been very bitter towards and almost held hate for in the past and we now get on very well with each other. God has changed my life and is changing my life each day and for this I am so grateful. It brings joy and I am the happiest that I have been in a very long time.'

For **Luke*** and **Timothy*** being healed and restored, feels as if a void, an emptiness has been filled. This they believe is done by the Holy Spirit: *'I feel that I have always been called to Christ. Perhaps this is just a realisation of the reality that we all yearn for something, the hole on our insides that needs to be filled, by God. I also feel that I have always had reasonable intuition and often know to or not to do something. For*

years I have not listened to this advice in my ear. This advice, I believe to be the Holy Spirit.'

Timothy* remembers his experience of being filled by the Holy Spirit: *'On the 3rd of May 2003 at an Alpha weekend meeting, God filled me with his Holy Ghost. I will never forget this experience. I could not hold back these tears of joy that were streaming down my cheeks. I had this instant feeling of belonging, the void and emptiness was filled, I spoke in an unusual language that I have never spoken before. I know God spoke that day, my well was filled up, my hunger and thirst was quenched according to John 4:14 "...but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."*

Anderson and Foley (1998:58) write that each child is born into a web of stories, myths and legends. Being born into a new family, allows for a new web of stories to evolve. The ritual attached to birth described by Anderson and Foley (1998:58) can be used as an analogy for being born in the Spirit (Jn 3:6). The rituals attached to birth 'facilitate hospitality and locate the beginning of each individual's life within a web of communal stories' and serves to enrich the 'new-born' with the Greater Story in the new family of Christ.

4.7 TOWARDS A RICHER DESCRIPTION OF IDENTITY: 'DEFINITIONAL CEREMONY' AND 'COMMUNITIES OF CONCERN'

White (2000:62-63) writes on the practices of narrative therapy that help people to move from thin to richer descriptions of their lives. In running the Alpha course in prison, we had much to learn from these insights and it served to provide a richer description of our pastoral care:

[T]he practices of narrative therapy assist people to break from thin conclusions about their lives, about their identities, and about their relationships...these narrative practices also provide people with the opportunity to engage in thick or rich descriptions of their lives, of their

identities, and of their relationships. As people become more narratively resourced through generation of this thick or rich description, they find they have available to them options for action that would not have otherwise been imaginable.

(White 2000:63)

4.7.1 Sally's story: Naming abuse: A story of hope and resilience

Poling (1991:182) tells of the resilience of the hope he experienced among survivors of sexual abuse. He reflects: 'Those with resilient spirits can teach us about both the evil of abuse and the source of hope in an unjust world.'

Sally* a prison volunteer tells how participating in prison ministry has helped her to address certain issues in her life and how she grew stronger and was able to step out in faith. Her story is a story of resilience and 'archaeology of hope' (Monk et al 1997) towards healing and restoration. Poling (1991:182) writes that there is comfort in the knowledge that no evil intent is beyond God's understanding: With God's love you can have the courage to accept your own suffering and the suffering of others in the knowledge that God will sustain you.

As a child **Sally*** and her sister were subject to sexual abuse from a relative and she carries the scars from this experience. She was asked to participate in a prison Alpha in a unit for sex offenders. This created tremendous turmoil in her and she doubted her strength to handle this. After prayer and encouragement from the team leaders and fellow-team mates, she decided to face this and participate in this Alpha. She thought: *'Well, if I want you to handpick a team Lord, you could not have picked a better team for me to work with. And I knew it would be alright, but I still had trepidation that first day, but I coped with it OK. The Lord was there, He was with me.'*¹⁷

¹⁷ Thompson-Richards (2001:12) comments on the dilemma Christian counsellors often face when a Christian engaged in counselling makes changes for the better, but he/she attributes all the change to God. The dilemma is how to elicit a sense of agency in the Christian without downplaying the role of the Holy Spirit. Thompson-Richards (2001) recommend questions that would build up both the person and their faith in a loving God, e.g.: 'How were you able to co-operate with the Holy Spirit in this situation?' or 'What does God's Spirit empower you to do in those moments?' (Cook 2000:33).

A year later, she was led by the Holy Spirit to give a testimony of her abuse in this specific wing during a church service. **Sally*** sees this as part of a long process of healing, but she knows that it is not over yet. But she had the courage to stand up and address the issue of sexual abuse in front of a group of men convicted of sexual offending. She found this experience truly amazing. After her testimony the inmates all came over to her and gave her a Scripture. This made her feel that her story was heard and that she received compassion. Ruether (1989:147) remarks:

We celebrate small victories, we chip away at oppressive attitudes cast in concrete of injustice...we speak boldly of things deemed secret and unmentionable, we stand with those who are trapped in victimization to support their journey to safety and healing, and we break the cycle of violence we might have known in our lives.

4.7.2 Forming ‘communities of concern’ and ‘outsider witness’ groups

Group discussions form an integral part of the Alpha gatherings and have the purpose of reflecting on the talk that has been given. The guests (inmates) are encouraged to share their thoughts on the topic and to tell stories that are meaning-making to them. The ‘definitional ceremony’ (White 2000:63) metaphor can be made applicable here, because the discussions created a context for the telling and retelling of inmates’ (and team members’) stories. These stories evolved over time and allowed for the richer description of their lives. The team members formed an audience or ‘outsider witness’ group in listening carefully to the inmates’ stories and rephrasing these stories in the retelling of what they had heard. These stories in turn, would be retold by the guests (inmates) who acted as audience to the re-tellings of the ‘outsider witness’ group and would add and contribute to the richer description of the personal and relational identities of the inmates (Friedman 1995:260; White 2000:63-64).

These discussions and reflections were valuable in that they served to acknowledge each other’s stories and expressions. These stories were also expanded by linking the stories to the lives of others around ‘shared themes, values, purposes and commitments’ (White 2000:64), often incorporating a Bible figure or a Bible story

which was of significance and applicable to their life situations. This contributed to forming and rooting their pastoral identity in the 'narrative images and metaphors of the Christian story' (Gerkin 1986:71).

Myerhoff (quoted by White 2000:69) mentions how difficult it is for *inter alia* socially marginalised people to find an outsider witness group. Prisoners often find themselves isolated and without any outside support system, because of severed relationships. The 'outsider witness' groups that developed during our group discussions, were informally formed and an unintentional development and outcome of the 'structure' of our group discussions. This provided a valuable opportunity for a forum of acknowledgement to develop. Myerhoff (quoted by White 2000:69) makes the following observation with regard to the advantages of 'outsider witness' groups:

When cultures are fragmented and in serious disarray, proper audiences may be hard to find. Natural occasions may not be offered and then they must be artificially invented. I have called such performances 'Definitional Ceremonies', understanding them to be collective self-definitions specifically intended to proclaim an interpretation to an audience not otherwise available.... Socially marginal people, disdained, ignored groups, individuals with ... 'spoiled identities', regularly seek opportunities to appear before others in the light of their own internally provided interpretation.

In the tellings and retellings of the definitional ceremonies, previously dismembered memories, or experiences, or people can be re-incorporated into the new story. Meyerhoff (quoted by White 2000:69-70) refers to this act of re-incorporation of previously dismembered members, as 're-membering', a 'reaggregation of members...who belongs to one's life story, one's prior self, as well as significant others who are part of the story.'

As these retellings evolve, inmates find that their voices become stronger and they are encouraged to challenge societal beliefs and dominant constituting stories of their lives, assisting them to thicken the preferred and alternative stories of their lives. When they enter a stage in their spiritual growth where they can accept forgiveness and also find it possible to forgive others, they have the strength and freedom to re-

member these others into their lives. **Sam*** tells how he came to a stage in his faith journey where he was able to re-member his mother into his life: *‘Long after I accepted the Lord Jesus as my Saviour, bitterness and hatred was in my heart towards my mother, until just after midnight one night in a prison cell. I was for some unknown reason woken up. Soon after discovering what/who woke me up, I asked why I was woken up and what did he want to speak to my heart about, and it was to get rid of the bitterness and hate which kept me separated from Christ and seek forgiveness, forgive my mother.’*

The reflecting practice also helped the team members and leaders to break from habits of ‘normalising judgment’ (White 2000:77) and the ‘gaze’ (Foucault 1977:187-188) and to question and critique our own methods in presenting the course to ascertain that we did not fall prey to passing judgment or to exercise control and reproduce relations of domination (Monk et al 1997:35; White 2000:79-81). In giving space for the marginalised voice to be heard, the ‘traditional hierarchy was dismantled’: we as leaders let go of our position of ‘authority’ and in the words of Gergen (1994:243) ‘enter this arena not with superior truth about the world, but with various modes of being – including a range of languages and encompassing “the other”.’ **Hannah*** reflects on interaction during our meetings: *‘They (the inmates) very much appreciate to be treated as persons of value. While we treat them as brothers, loved by God, many of the staff treat them as lost causes.’*

Being part of a ‘definitional ceremony’ and witnessing the tellings and retellings of stories has the effect of what White (2000:76) describes as being ‘moved’: being transported into ‘territories of life and identity in which they could never have predicted they would find themselves.’ This evokes that which White (2000:77) equates to Victor Turner’s (1969) ‘communitas’ – a unique sense of being present to each other in entering ‘liminal circumstances, betwixt and between known worlds’ (White 2000:77). **Jacob*** an Alpha leader reflects on seeing the inmates become stronger: *‘[W]e see growth of personal faith as men join in the singing, and discussion and prayer. Some men have been regularly with us for years and their growing faith*

is evident in our meetings. They talk of their hopes for change in the prison, and of the different lives they will be able to live when they are released.'

As my research was nearing its end, I asked the chaplain, in what respects she experienced spiritual growth, healing and restoration while being a chaplain in prison. I think her answer is a summary of 'communitas' – a sense of being present for one another and being 'moved' into an area of life where you never thought you would be. It also reminded me of the 'wounded Healer' (Nouwen 1998). Only in our brokenness can we be there with one another.

Cecile*, the chaplain, shares with us the meaning of her being involved in prison: *'One of the things that became very apparent to me, and I think it is essential to being a pastor or even being a Christian, is to recognise that we are all broken and not only to recognise it intellectually, but to know it in your heart that in actual fact it is only the grace of God that keeps you in a place where you are and not in the place where they (the inmates) are. Because if we look at our own hearts... they are more deceitful than we are willing to admit. I suppose that is the one thing I learnt... that God broke me, majorly and it's only in that brokenness that He is able to pour faith. By being in the prison with these guys I had to confront things in myself that I would never have confronted as the vicar's wife and I failed in many instances. But God was able to use that brokenness... and I think my experience in prison has given me, probably filled my basket that I carry, my basket of life, probably to overflowing now in ministering with other people...I have a depth and a breadth in the love of God that I would never ever have had if I hadn't hung out with those guys in prison. And every time I think on it, I think on what a privilege it has been to be part of their lives. In actual fact I probably got more from them than what I gave... that's how it feels to me. I realise that God has used my ministry in prison to take me to a place that I would never have got. Intellectually I've been there, but it had not been a spiritual or a heart experience of knowing what God's call is on my life. So I guess that's the growing I've had from those guys. I was stepping into shoes (in becoming the chaplain) that I did not even realise what I was even doing. And it is only because of stepping into those shoes that I have spiritually come to a place where I believe God*

wants me to be. I would never have done it without those inmates...God has used them as an instrument of His grace. Because we get all confused of what God uses... we always think he is going to use the vicar or some holy person and he doesn't... He uses the foolish to confound the wise.'

In Patton's (1993:6) reflection with regard to listening, hearing and community, we are reminded of God's remembering and re-remembering of his creation and his desire for us to live in community with him and with our fellow-humans:

God created human beings for relationship with God and with one another. God continues in relationship with creation by hearing us, remembering us, and bringing us into relationship with one another. Human care and community are possible because of our being held in God's memory; therefore, as members of caring communities we express our caring analogically with the caring of God by also hearing and remembering.

In the following chapter pastoral presence as embodied in the chaplain, the faith community and the sacraments, as symbols of God's presence and grace, is discussed.

CHAPTER 5 - ABOUT PASTORAL PRESENCE AND EXPANDING THE CONVERSATION¹⁸

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The church has a major role in correctional institutions and its presence is vital to every inmate. In this chapter the significance of pastoral presence as embodied in the prison chaplain(s), volunteers, the faith community ('priesthood of brothers') and the sacraments is discussed in order to give a richer description to prison ministry as a form of engagement with people in their suffering. This presence contributes to engendering hope, healing and restoration in a broken society. This chapter also discusses how pastoral presence can be extended and expanded beyond the prison walls to ex-inmates and *whanau* and how connections can be formed with the community. The hospitality of the faith community is of prime importance in the successful integration of the ex-inmate into society.

5.2 THE MINISTRY OF PASTORAL PRESENCE

Individuals experience pastoral care when someone reaches out to them in compassion. People who are in pain need pastoral presence, because suffering brings feelings of isolation and abandonment (Covert 1995:79). To Diochi (2001:186) the essence of the ministry of pastoral presence is summed up in the word *compassion*. *Compassion* is not to be understood in the sense of sympathy, mercy, empathy or pity, but a disposition of our being in Christ: to share in broken-life situations, in the pain, anguish and burden of others, to enter in places of pain. Diochi (:186) quotes Andrew Purves in his image of compassion:

Compassion is conventionally defined as suffering with another person....In its soteriological dimension, however, compassion means not only 'suffering with one another' but also 'suffering for another.' In compassion, one may carry the sin and suffering of others in such way that they may be restored to wholeness precisely because their sin and suffering are borne.

¹⁸ See: Epston (1994, 1998b)

One's compassionate solidarity with the suffering of another becomes a redemptive solidarity.

It is an entry into another's lostness, displacement and separation.

The chaplain's presence in the prison environment is a tangible example of Christ's humility and servanthood among his people; an example of God's infinite love and transforming grace. The chaplain's presence and visibility in cell blocks, exercise yards and other prison areas, conveys the meaning that the church desires to be with them and cares about their welfare (Covert 1995:78; Schilder 1999:1-10). Walking with the chaplain(s) through the court yards on our way to the chapel or venue where the meeting is to be held, we often see him/her pause, speak an encouraging word to one of the inmates, or acknowledge an inmate with a personal greeting or comment.

Luke* an ex-inmate describes how he experienced the presence of the chaplain(s) during his period of imprisonment: *'The initial real human contact with anyone in prison was with prison chaplains who were the only ones who seemed concerned for anything more than that I was alive. My introduction to prison chaplains began at the beginning of my prison sentences and has continued outside....The personal contact with the chaplain, usually one who stood out, and surprisingly usually a Uniting Church Chaplain, was highly important to me and if for some reason I did not have a chance to talk to her or him for a fortnight or more, I would feel bereft.'*

Covert (1995:88) writes that the prison chaplain's presence 'should reflect a compassion that is made possible through their own sin and wounds.' His/her 'imperfections and need for continuing grace' makes compassion towards others possible. In the previous chapter, the chaplain related how her own brokenness enabled her to reach out to the inmates as an instrument of healing. In a letter to the chaplain, **Joseph***, an inmate, expresses his gratitude for the compassion and 'caring solidarity' (Sevenhuijsen 1998:147) he experienced from the presence of the chaplain: *'You are a friend and a gift from God. Among the great and glorious gifts our heavenly father sends is the gift of understanding that we find in a loving friend. For in this world of trouble that is filled with anxiety, everybody needs a friend in whom they're free to share the little secret heartaches that lay heavy on their mind; not just*

a mere acquaintance but someone who is so kind. In your generous heart of loving, the good God in his charity and wisdom always sends a sense of understanding and the power of perception and mixed with these fine qualities also kindness and affection.'

For others to see Christ, chaplains must mirror his essence: a presence that testifies to both the reality of God and his love for humanity. **Danny*** gave a testimony at his baptism of how he came to Christ. He remembers how he became aware of the love of God, through the relentless, unconditional love expressed in the chaplain's presence: *'On September the 11 of 2001, which was the day that the twin towers came down, this lady (the new chaplain to the prison) came in and she had a light that I knew I wanted, but I did not know how to get there and the more she came to talk to me and the more stoned I got, the more often she came to see me... and she just kept coming to see me. And even when I was wasted she came to see me and she just did not give up...'*

Prisoners search for something that will give meaning and direction in their lives. In their quest many of them investigate different religions and examine the attitudes and behaviour of those who participate in these religions. Christians also come under this scrutiny to see if they are different: whether they really have inner peace, spiritual strength and love. Therefore, the church must develop a strong priesthood in prison communities. **Lorne**, the Alpha Coordinator, mentioned in his vision for the prison, the birthing of a 'church' in each unit: a community of men who follow Jesus. Christian inmates are the primary communicators of the Gospel and the main support system for their peers (Covert 1995:88).

5.3 A PRIESTHOOD OF SERVANTS: COMMUNITIES OF FAITH

Inmates form their own communities of faith within the prison walls, supporting one another and building one another up. As Christians, they are often subject to ridicule from fellow-inmates and officers, what they experience as persecution of their beliefs. Although incarcerated, they live in hope and faith which give them the strength and

boldness to carry out the commission of Jesus to be witnesses and to reach out to fellow-inmates. Covert (1995:94) quotes the writing of Lettermann, which can be made applicable to the faith community in prison:

The community of God's people is a broken community, living in a broken world. But at the same time it is a healed and healing community. This brokenness, which yearns for healing, is both individual and corporate....Healing in this life is never complete. Yet, paradoxically, wholeness is experienced in the midst of pain and suffering. Those who suffer can lay claim to healing in spite of their infirmities through the peace which comes from God and through those who love, care and support.

Jacob* a prison ministry leader and volunteer, reflects on his experience of the men in prison: *'[O]ur visits are only a part of their day to day Christian life. Many of them know and take part in music, and join in discussion and prayers. Many are established in faith, either before or since going to prison, and know their Bibles well. They have their own ministries to one another, but no doubt are built up – as we are – by our times together. We believe there is also a significant ministry to prison officers.*

I believe that the very regularity of our commitment is important to the men. We spend about two hours a week with them as friends and equals. Some have few other visitors. They seem to trust us as they seem to trust few others in the prison system, and extend that trust to fellow-prisoners. Ours is of course not the only Christian ministry; nor do they depend on outside visitors: they used to be fearful even to carry their Bibles, but now they sing Christian songs together and have their own weekly Bible Study. As we worship with them, they go on without us. They are practically their own church – without the coffee and biscuits.'

Christian inmates have a 'priestly' and 'diaconal' vocation and responsibility to fulfil in the prison environment and they should be empowered for this role (Cochrane, De Gruchy & Petersen 1991:3). They should be encouraged to take leadership roles in Bible Study and to act as facilitators and group leaders in the presentation of Alpha Courses. Christian inmates find much encouragement and support from their 'brothers in Christ', especially in an environment where they feel isolated and alienated.

Sam* tells what this fellowship means to him: *'I call them Christian brothers (not friends)....I have a wonderful brother in Christ over at K* (prison unit) who is and always will be close to my heart, has always been there for me to talk to and study the Scriptures with, while other brothers in Christ are supportive in other areas such as attendance, participation in fellowship groups, sharing personal experiences, knowledge about themselves which create new friendships, relationships to grow and to hopefully be able to be there for and listen to each other, to be able to help in any way possible. After all wasn't that what Jesus' ministry was all about; about people, lost souls. He loved and cared for all, made the time for them.'*

Covert (1995:92) writes that to have a successful prison ministry, the believers must become part of a priesthood, touching each other's lives with compassion and support. By doing this, we heal others, and at the same time heal ourselves. Volunteers often comment that the reason they are drawn back into prison, is the compassion they experience from these inmates. One of my fondest memories is sharing one evening with the men my utter despair in writing the thesis: I felt totally stuck in the academic discourse and could not get through to the heart of the matter. I remember these men – a priesthood of brothers – forming a circle around me; praying for me and ministering to me. I will never forget how humbled and comforted I felt, experiencing the compassionate care and encouragement of these inmates.

5.4 CONFIRMING THE MINISTRY OF PRESENCE: RITES OF PASSAGE – THE SACRAMENTS

If faith is perceived as a journey: a process of discovering more of the God in which we place our faith, the following three stages to rites of passage that Michael White (2000:27) describes, drawing on the work of van Gennep and Turner, can be made applicable to this journey:

First, the *separation phase*, in which one breaks from one's life as one knows it. This marks the beginning of the journey. Second, the *liminal phase*: the 'betwixt and between' phase, in which one feels defamiliarised with the world as known to one

before. Thirdly, there is the *reincorporation phase*, which is achieved when one finds that one has arrived in another place in life, where one experiences a ‘fit’ that provides a sense of being at home with oneself.

This ‘migration of identity’ (White 2000:28) is also present in the faith journey and marks the arrival of the believers in the place where they feel they have been adopted into God’s family. For the believers the ‘rites of passage’ to the Eucharist and baptism, and especially baptism, become an entry to the place where they feel it provides a ‘fit’ and they belong. Through partaking in communion, they feel united with the community of believers and baptism, amidst a ‘community of acknowledgement’ (White 2000:25) is a public statement of their new alliance: turning their backs on the old and resolving to live a new life in Christ. This is also a time of **remembrance** and **re-membrance**: remembering the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross for our sins; and re-membrance into the household of God (Cook 2000:32). The writer of Hebrews calls us to ‘Remember those earlier days after you had received the light, when you stood your ground in a great contest in the face of suffering’ (Heb 10:32).

5.4.1 Baptism as sacrament and rite of passage

In the narration of their spiritual growth, inmates invariably testify of coming to a stage in their Christian walk, where they had the compelling desire to be baptised. **Keith*** is an ex-inmate who did an Alpha course to re-ignite his interest in the Christian faith. While in prison, he came to a stage in his faith journey, where he had a strong desire to be baptised. After his release, he continued in his walk of faith and started running Alpha Courses from his hometown as part of the local Apostolic Church’s outreach.

Keith* writes as follows: *‘I attended an Alpha Course last year and that reopened my interest in Christ. If it was not for the dedicated members of Alpha I am sure that my interest in Christ would not have been rekindled. I enjoy reading the Bible and asking questions about it, but I have come to a brick wall halting my progress. I have prayed*

about this many times and repeatedly get the same word back in answer to my prayers. What is this word? The word is "Baptism".

I am absolutely positive this will remove the block wall. Why? Because baptism is realising Christ will be with you forever more once you acknowledge your desire to follow him with strength and courage. Baptism is confession and identification with Christ of his death, burial and resurrection for those who choose to follow him. Baptism to me means a voluntary and free, full, undivided transfer of body, soul and spirit to Christ for his use. Since being baptised on 4th March I have felt as though I am semi floating. This is a good feeling I must say...'

Timothy*:

'I am in a crucial point in my walk with God where I am in need of baptism in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, for without the shedding of blood there is no remission, without the cross experience I would not be saved. I see that Christ's death, burial and resurrection is the symbol of my repentance, baptism and receiving of the gift of the Holy Ghost. Repentance is the dying of the self, like what Paul wrote in Gal. 2:20: 'I am crucified with Christ, never the less I live, yet not I, but Christ in me, and the life which I now live, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.'

Anderson and Foley (1998:71) write that (infant) baptism should not be seen as the end to a journey, but as the beginning of a journey ahead. The same can be said of adult baptism:

Baptism reveals God's invitation to become immersed into a community of faith and to set out on a life-long journey of ongoing renewal in which the meaning of the baptismal action will continuously unfold. The Christian life, as Martin Luther insisted, is 'nothing else than a daily baptism, once begun and ever continued' (Luther [1538] 1959:445).

Cecile* the chaplain, speaks of baptism as a symbol and outward manifestation of an inward work by the Holy Spirit: *'The baptism is a huge part of ministry in prison. I*

do not think baptism with sprinkling of water is adequate, because in a sense what we've got in baptism, is when a person has decided to walk in the right relationship with Jesus, with God: the baptism is the outward and public manifestation of an inward work. So it is a sacrament that we do, to portray the inward work that God has done. It is like the sealing of the righteousness that you have.

*For my friend **Danny*** [a former inmate of the Wanganui Prison who got baptised in another New Zealand prison] it was a huge step to make this public declaration before all the guys in prison who have come voluntarily, not all of them are Christian, to stand up and say I have decided to follow Jesus. Now this is a guy that is covered in tattoos, full facial moko¹⁹, dreads... He has been in prison for 7 years... in that time he has been out of prison 3 months... he has spent most of his adult life in prison and he is still going to struggle... but I just cried when I saw him come out from under the [baptismal] water, because **Ted*** [the chaplain] said to me, his addictions have been broken. I asked **Danny*** later, what happened under the water ... and he said to me I was floating in light and the scum came off... Today I've been thinking and praying, what a amazing award for faith... it was his faith, but it was also my faith, you know, that God has given me this amazing situation that I got to be part of and here it was: the works of your faith before your very eyes and you know that nothing, that no therapy can ever do what the Holy Spirit did for that young man.'*

Anderson and Foley (1998:72-75) write of baptism as 'a pastoral resource of unusual riches'. Baptism is a symbol of God's providential care: a promise that the baptised will be held in the care of God and sustained by the witness and prayers of the faith community. In baptism God is ritually acknowledged as an active co-author. In remembering our baptism, we can be strengthened, because we do not write our narrative alone. God is in partnership with us from our baptism and nothing can sever that bond.

¹⁹ Tattooing on the face or body

5.4.2 Eucharist as sacrament and rite of passage: ‘Remember me’

Anderson and Foley (1998:155-161) talk about Jesus’ ‘table ministry’ (:159) and describe him as a Storyteller that spoke in ‘table metaphors’ (:155) The Eucharist is a symbolisation of his care and engagement in people’s real life struggles that culminated in ‘table intimacy’ (:159). This table ministry, although divinely initiated was an exchange and merging of human and divine stories and emerged from Jesus’ association and involvement with the ordinary, the grieving and disreputable (:159). The human story becomes the context for divine revelation, especially in the forgiveness announced in the breaking of the bread: a symbol that the human story has been heard.

One of the highlights of the Alpha Course is the ‘Holy Spirit-weekend’. At the conclusion of this weekend, communion is served. **Lorne**, an Alpha leader, comments with regard to this event as follows: *‘In sharing communion with inmates, I have found it the most moving and anointed times. On one occasion an inmate said to me that this was for him an extremely special moment. He had not had communion for over two years. One problem we find is that sometimes Catholics find it difficult to receive communion because of different traditions. We have learnt to offer it to all and for those who don’t receive, we offer prayer.’*

To Anderson and Foley (1998:157) the Lord’s supper is the ultimate embodiment of the Christian’s ‘mighty story’ and so it becomes our most ‘dangerous ritual’. Lest it might become an empty ritual or formality, instead of life-sustaining to the faith community, the Eucharist must also be an enactment of pastoral care and must converge with worship and liturgy. Sunday Eucharist must reflect the dynamic between God, as embodied in Jesus’ story, and the human, real-life stories of ordinary people. For **Cecile***, the chaplain, the Eucharist is a pastoral act, ministering to people in need and then bringing them to the next step, the sacraments, where they are able to say: ‘I will follow Jesus.’ In this sense, she sees the Eucharist and baptism as going together: *‘...being through the waters of baptism, the Eucharist is the next step. Both are a public demonstration of our unity in Christ.’*

To Ackermann (1998:100) the Eucharist is a recollection and communal lament for the injustices and suffering and oppression of this world, but it should also be a cause for praise and a symbol of hope in the future. Ackermann (:100) reflects on the Eucharist as portrayal of hope: ‘...as we recollect Christ’s suffering and death....In the cup, suffering and memory fuse into the transforming power of God’s love. We move from despair and brokenness into hope and healing. The Eucharist as eschatological feast offers imaginative hope, the visionary experience of the goal toward which we work in our daily struggle.’

Marshall (2001a:109) writes about the transforming power of Christian hope:

It is this hope that makes Christian hope so politically potent. By envisioning an alternative reality to the one that currently prevails, Christian hope is inherently subversive. It represents a protest against the injustice of the present order of things; it denies the ultimacy or finality of existing social structures and centers of power; it encourages belief in an open future and motivates work for change; and it sustains people through times of suffering and oppression with the reassurance of God’s presence in their pain and God’s ultimate triumph over all pain (Rv 21:4).

5.5 EXPANDING THE CONVERSATION²⁰: TOWARDS A ‘RICHER DESCRIPTION’²¹ OF PRISON MINISTRY

The discussion groups during Alpha and related courses, shared Bible Study and informal gatherings during the coffee breaks, provide opportunity for inmates and prison ministry volunteers to get to know each other well, break down barriers and to share on a personal level. As a visitor, their dire need for human contact and someone to share their hopes, their fears and dreams with, is impressed on one. Many of these inmates have no contact with family and friends on the outside and the chaplain and volunteers are their only link to the outside world. Many of these men desire individual mentoring and discipling as an extension of their coming to Christ, or simply to provide their need for pastoral care and support. Although the services of the chaplain and prison ministry volunteers are highly valued by the inmates, our

²⁰ See: Epston (1994, 1998b)

²¹ See: Morgan (2000:15)

presence there can only provide a minimal measure of their pastoral needs. Ways and means in which contact and pastoral care can be expanded and more richly described, are through letter writing, regular individual visits ('chapel visits') and mentoring, practical help to the inmate's *whanau*, Sunday church services, prayer support, celebration rituals and forming support groups. Care for the inmate does not stop at the prison door, but extends into the community. This also includes aftercare of the ex-inmate and putting structures in place that will assist him in his adjustment and reintegration into the society.

5.5.1 Writing letters to the inmate

White and Epston (Epston 1998b; White & Epston 1990) recommend letter writing as a significant way to enhance and expand the therapeutic conversation. Letter writing is also a powerful tool to extend the conversation with the inmate and to build a relationship with him. **Lorne**, an Alpha leader has strengthened a relationship with **Robert***, one of the inmates that came to faith in Christ during an Alpha, with personal visits and letter writing: *'I visit Robert* every two weeks to encourage and disciple him. I also write to him intermittently to encourage him and to remind him of the faith steps he is making. For example, on the anniversary of his conversion I send him a card. I also send him a birthday card. Sometimes I'm not able to visit him for a variety of reasons, and I will drop him a line to explain and to encourage him. He often comments how these correspondences uplift him. Robert* never writes to me. I assume that he waits for my visits instead.'*

5.5.2 Individual visits to the inmate

A further extension of our Alpha Courses, are individual visits ('chapel visits') to inmates. Many inmates do make a commitment to Christ and experience a need for spiritual support and counselling. These visits happen on request from the inmate, or are initiated by the prison ministry volunteer, or chaplain, if it is believed that an inmate can benefit from a personal visit. The requests for these individual visits outnumber the number of prison volunteers available and equipped for such visits and

many inmates have to wait for months and sometimes years to be granted individual visits from prison volunteers. Great care is taken that volunteers committing themselves to these visits are suited to the inmate's personality and needs and are spiritually and emotionally mature enough to accompany him on his journey (Diochi 2001:225). All visitors have to undergo a security screening and are subject to the approval of the chaplain and the prison authorities.

As volunteers we invariably have a great deal to learn from inmates. **Mark*** (a volunteer) tells how he got involved in **Tom***'s life: *'[I met] Tom* at a prison church service. A huge big chap, like a wrestler or a night club strongman and I started a fortnightly visit, to read with him as he had limited reading skills and was slightly handicapped. After the second visit he said to me: "Do you know the passage in the Bible I like best? John chapter 3 verse 16." I could not think what that was and had to look it up. "God loved the world so much, that he gave his only Son so that everyone, everyone who believes in him may not die but have eternal life." Then of course I had to read "For God did not send his Son into the world to be its judge, but to be its Saviour." This was especially for me. Now here was this big rough chap who even in prison got into trouble once or twice for flattening someone who provoked him, teaching me some very important lessons. So above all else, I must not judge anyone, I must not be critical and but for God's grace, I may have been there in prison too.'*

5.5.3 Lending a hand to whanau

A further extension of our prison ministry programmes is to give practical help to *whanau* where possible. In this manner not only the inmate feels supported, but also the family of the incarcerated. The visits of family, friends and relatives are very important for the inmate to keep in touch with his family and the outside world. Most inmates are, because of the geographical location of the prison, distanced from their significant others and seldom receive a family visit. Lack of finance, transport and opportunity present a major impediment. Where family is nearby and have difficulty to get to prison for regular visits to the inmate, volunteers can offer help in transporting these members on these occasions. A few prison volunteers from the

Anglican Parish have been taking a wife of one of the inmates to the prison on a rotation bases. This has helped to build trust and a relationship and provided the opportunity to minister into her life. It also empowered the inmate, in that he felt that he assisted through his own support system to be of help to his spouse.

5.5.4 Sunday church services

To fulfil a need for church services in the various prison units, the chaplain approached the different churches in Wanganui to take turns to hold Sunday services. This has proved to be meaningful to the men as well as the church volunteers. The highlight of the year is the Christmas service and special care is taken to draw up and to present an attractive service programme (see **Appendix 7**) to the inmates. The service includes a special time of worship and at the end they are invited to receive communion with the assurance that Jesus took their sins upon him when he died on the cross. Christmas, being traditionally a time of family reunion, is an especially lonely time for inmates who experience the separation from family more acutely during this time. Although one cannot fill that void in the inmate's life, one can only hope that our expression of compassion and care, being there for them, would be of some solace to them.

Mark* a volunteer, remembers an incident at a Christmas church service that was of special meaning to him and an inmate. He helped **S*** who had great difficulty to concentrate, to read and persuaded him to read a few verses at the Christmas service, to which **S*** agreed: *'What really tugged at my heart was at a church service just before Christmas. S* and I had previously been reading Matthew 2:1-2 "When Jesus was born in Bethlehem." I persuaded S* to read this at the beginning of the service. I would stand beside him and help him with a word such as "Herod". We had been over "Bethlehem" time and time again. So we got up and he, with a little bit of help, read these two verses, finishing with "and we have come to worship Him (Jesus)". Even those who had sniggered before S* started to read, clapped and cheered him at the finish.'*

5.5.5 Intercessory prayer for the prison

About twelve years before a prison ministry team was initiated for the Wanganui Prison, three ladies gathered on a regular basis to pray. They started to get words from the Lord while in prayer on ‘setting the captives free’ and ‘helping the oppressed’. They did not know what it was for, but kept careful note of these. Lorne, the Parish Assistant at Christ Church contacted one of the ladies in 1999, because he wanted to prepare a team to move into the prison. Initially they did not want to participate in the team, but after some nudging from one of the team leaders: *‘Are you sure? The men would love to meet the ladies that pray for them. We told them all about you...’* they eventually got involved and have never stopped going.

In 2002 Lorne, the Prison Alpha facilitator, approached me to organise a weekly prayer time for the prison at a fixed venue. We decided on Christ Church and the prayer meeting was put on the weekly church roster and open for anyone that felt they would like to pray. This was born out of the realisation for the need of prayer and protection for this special ministry. After all, we are warned: ‘Put on the full armour of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil’s schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spirituals forces of evil in the heavenly realms’ (Eph 6:11-12).

5.5.6 Time for celebration at the end of Alpha

Morgan (2000:111) writes that rituals and celebrations ‘celebrate significant steps in the journey away from a problem story to a new and preferred version of life.’ At the end of an Alpha Course certificates (see **Appendix 8**) are handed out to inmates for participating in the course. To qualify for the certificate they are expected to have a good attendance record. This might sound easy, but in a prison environment where the inmate’s time and activities are regulated by a prison system, attendance can become a rather taxing and challenging experience. For most of the men, the receiving of a certificate is an achievement on its own. For some of them this certificate might be the

first they have ever received. For others, completing the course is a form of getting a 'tick' when it comes to parole hearings. But the 'day of graduation' is also the day of hearing the men's testimonies when they can publicly tell of what the course meant to them. Many inmates make a commitment to turn from their old destructive lifestyle and for them and us; this is truly a celebratory experience. Many of the men do not make a commitment, but they all participate and make a valuable contribution to the course and in **Hannah's*** words: '*...they all seem provoked to think and the unbelievers challenge us with questions, which is great.*'

Morgan (2000:114) comments that '[t]he telling and performance of alternative stories ... can be transformative.' Care should be taken to select an appropriate setting and have a selected audience as witnesses at these rituals where re-authoring stories are told. Although we are restricted in our choice of venue, a special effort is always made with the refreshments served. The presence of the prison chaplains is always encouraging to the inmates. The first prison Alpha I participated in was in a high security unit. This was the first Alpha that had been run in this unit. To mark this celebratory event, John Jamieson, the then Regional Manager of Midlands Prisons, was invited to hand over the certificates and to address the men. Jamieson (*Alpha New Zealand Update* 2003: [2]) comments on Alpha in prisons as follows: 'A cell in prison, populated by the people our courts have deemed too bad to live in society, is about the last place you would expect to find a God. But increasingly prisons are becoming a place of reflection, and major life changes, as a result of the Alpha in Prisons programme. Quietly but surely it is changing hardened offenders into Christians here in New Zealand.'

5.5.7 Forming support groups inside and outside the prison

Narrative therapists contend that those at the receiving end of therapy have a wealth of knowledge which can be tapped into in order to reduce the influence of the problem, as well as contribute to better understanding to counteract it. Documentation of 'insider knowledge' on the skills and 'knowledges' of problems and how to address them, forms a valuable resource for other inmates struggling with similar

attitudes and problems (Epston 1998a:130; Morgan 2000:117). The recording of these 'knowledges' are sometimes termed 'consulting your consultants', or 'co-research'. In this way the power of the 'expert' leader and team members are dismantled and space is created for the voice and 'knowledges' of participants to be honoured (Morgan 2000:116).

Having a 'team' to assist inmates to stand against the effects of a problem, opens up many possibilities for forming a support system, inside and outside the prison. The writing of their testimonies and sharing these with inmates is a valuable resource in its own. This is also an opportunity to listen to each other, affirm one another and learn from each other's experience. McTaggart (1997:27) comments on participatory action research in the following way: '...Action research is the way in which groups of people can organise the conditions under which they learn from their experience and make this experience accessible to others.' **Phillip*** a prison ministry volunteer and an ex-inmate and former gang member and drug user, has a mighty testimony of healing and restoration in Christ. His ministering and encouragement is a source of hope to inmates who are struggling with related issues in their lives. **Peter*** mentions how the testimonies of other inmates serve to strengthen him: *'[A]ttending Alpha last year has helped me strengthen my relationship with God by questioning myself about various issues. It helped me tackle my problems by gathering in heaps of testimonies that were different to my own.'*

Bolkas (2000:144) argues that prisoners are a largely untapped human resource. Consideration should be given to better utilising their diverse gifts, skills and qualifications in the official preparation and delivery of religious services, and with peer counselling and/or discipling. This would potentially help to occupy prisoners, promote their confidence and personal development and assist a depleted chaplaincy. Christian ex-prisoners also present a potentially useful resource with regard to prison and post-prison ministry.

Chaplains (and volunteers) form a strong support group to inmates and *whanau*. Myerhoff's (1982) description of 'definitional ceremonies' mentioned by Epston

(1998:131) as ‘communities of concern’ is applicable to these support groups in that they can reflect on and celebrate ‘unique outcomes’ and be a supportive audience at ceremonies where significant milestones have been reached, for example baptism and graduation ceremonies of rehabilitative programmes. The voices of the inmates and their families are privileged in these communities of concern (Epston 1998a:131) and help significantly in the re-storying of a new, preferred way of being.

5.6 THE ROAD FORWARD: A VISION FOR AFTER-CARE

Caring for the ex-offender is a complicated issue and many factors need to be taken into consideration (*Caring for ex-offenders...* [2001]; NACRO 1993; Prison Fellowship New Zealand 2002). Once released, Christian ex-prisoners find themselves in a totally different environment and devoid of their Christian support system in prison. Without a pro-active plan in place before their release, few prisoners will connect with a church after release and inevitably return to old friends, habits and eventually failure (Prison Fellowship New Zealand 2002:6). Chances of re-offending are high and many prefer returning to prison life as it is more structured. The church can play a significant role in the re-integration of ex-offenders by providing the care and support that is needed. **Lorne**, the Parish Assistant of Christ Church, Wanganui has a vision for a structure to be put in place in order for men who have been through Alpha to be reintegrated into the church and society:

‘What would be good would be for the Church to meet inmates (who have been through Alpha and have shown a desire to go on with their faith) at the prison gate to help them with integrating back into society and into a local church. Churches can be very “insular” and hard to “break into” and so a total mindset change needs to be made in the hearts of church goers. What I have had a vision for in Wanganui is a ‘Half-way House’ Community – whereby single men would apply to reside in. It would be run as a ‘tight ship’ with expectations of behaviour, etc. In return, those involved in the ministry would assist the men to re-integrate into the community. I would see this as an interdenominational ministry...with funding from local churches and trust/Council funding. It would have a resident “warden” and team to assist in

the running and staffing of it. The main thrust would be to integrate ex-offenders into the life of a local church community and into society (i.e. jobs etc). I would envisage men applying a year or so in advance of release, and over that time such men would have a visiting sponsor who would be a key person in their rehabilitation upon release. These volunteers would be from local churches and carefully picked. This is a BIG VISION and would need a great deal of prayer and support from many quarters. I am reminded that “Nothing is impossible in God” (Lk 1: 37).

Involvement in helping prisoners to find hope, healing and restoration through a relationship with Jesus Christ has been an extremely rewarding work. I believe that Jesus Christ is the only answer to human brokenness....and what has been begun at Kaitoke needs to continue to be built upon by committed Christians.’

During 2004 there was a time of change-over of the chaplaincy services at the local prison and much of the prison ministry was brought to a standstill. At the end of 2004, however, we recaptured our vision and by the grace of God we will be able to continue in re-authoring and enriching the prison ministry narrative.

The aim of this chapter was to give a richer description of care as presence, participation and engagement with those that are suffering and marginalised. The stories of the inmates and volunteers were a testimony of caring *with* one another. Interwoven in these testimonies are the Greater Story of the unconditional love and compassion of a God, who does not give up on us and who is the Source of our hope.

Chapter 6 reflects on our journey in prison ministry.

CHAPTER 6 – PRISON MINISTRY: REFLECTIONS AT THE END OF THE JOURNEY

The research question that focussed my research was: *How do I participate in the pastoral care of prisoners in a way that will bring hope, healing and restoration into their lives?* The purpose of this study was to tell the stories of those inmates who found hope, healing and restoration by accepting the Christian faith. These stories were interwoven with the reflections of other participants (volunteers, chaplains and ex-inmates) and told of the meaning making of being pastorally involved with each other in prison ministry. I also envisaged raising awareness of the power imbalances that exist in society and theology that serve to oppress, marginalise and alienate, and hoped that these stories would serve to counteract these voices and add to the mending and healing of creation.

Pastoral care in prison created an atmosphere of unconditional love, compassion and community. Rising out of this sense of fellowship and community, was an overwhelming sense of hope; a conviction that our lives are not set in concrete; that change is possible and we can incorporate new life-giving stories into our lives that speak of hope, healing and restoration. Social construction discourse and the narrative therapeutic approach allowed for enrichment of this pastoral care programme in that we became sensitive to each other's stories and created space for new stories to rise up; created a discernment of societal discourses that wish to marginalise and silence alternative voices; cultivated an awareness and sensitivity to power relations; re-established the worth of being in community with each other and strengthened and "re-membered" connection and relationships. Central to these conversations was the presence of the Holy Spirit that allowed a narrative to evolve that spoke of a new found relationship with Christ. Forgiveness was invited into the conversation which challenged the voices of vengeance, bitterness, despair, hopelessness and isolation, and strengthened the voices of care, community, trust and connection. Having experienced and witnessed the influence of all aspects of prison ministry through my involvement over a period of four years strengthens my conviction that the church and the faith communities should increase their care for the prison community.

In the following paragraphs I reflect on some of the key aspects at the centre of this study and the means by which these served to change me as a researcher: narrative as a means of doing research and being alongside another; pastoral care as ethical care; awareness raising of the work being done in prison; forgiveness and restorative justice; learnings from the research and dreaming a future; and appeals to Christian faith communities.

6.1 NARRATIVE AS RESEARCH AND BEING ALONGSIDE ANOTHER

The narratives of most prisoners reflect a life full of disappointment, failure, fear, resentment and guilt, without hope for anything better. Many, however, find hope in believing that it is possible to find complete union with the Divine narrative (Anderson & Foley 1998:40), allowing for a ‘thicker description’ (Morgan 2000:15) and an alternative story to rise up. In virtually seeing these new stories come to life over a period of time, a desire was born in me to give ‘voice to the voiceless’ (Isherwood & McEwan 1993:87); to tell their stories of resilience and hope, of new found community and connection in an environment where they have more than enough reason to give up.

As this research study progressed, I became increasingly aware of narratives as being a powerful and creative way to do research. As such, I can associate with Kotzé & Kotzé (2001:9-10) when they speak of research as *participation* and *enchantment*. Participation in the Alpha Course provided the loom on which the stories of the inmates, volunteers and the Greater Story of God were woven and interwoven. In the process of the study I experienced how through the sharing of our stories, a ‘community of acknowledgement’ and ‘concern’ (Epston 1998a:131; White 1997) developed that found expression in caring for one another. Listening to these stories, could not other than change the team members. Chapters 4 and 5 told the narratives that evolved by being pastorally involved with each other. The narrative leading to a new found relationship with Christ was experienced by the group as a process in which the listener too was changed. Alpha allowed for dialogue, and space was

created for inmates to interpret Scripture and discover meaning and truth for themselves. Meaning making reflections from them included:

'The cross takes on a special meaning of redemption for me. I now understand how, like me, Jesus suffered under an oppressive system.'

'The Christian faith for me is like a blood transfusion. I felt free. I felt real bad and God forgave me.'

'The cross sets me free and engages me in a new way of thinking. I was betrayed by friends, just like Jesus.'

Enchantment was reflected in the research, because the stories of the participants were not 'an...intellectual affair', but had 'private value and value beyond their own existence' (Heshusius & Ballard 1996:15). The narratives of the inmates and volunteers created a meaningful way to bring about an ethical way of being in a participatory manner. The remark of Kotzé (2002:20) can be made applicable to the stories that arose: 'Stories can serve as vehicles to carry people's dilemmas and ethical choices, including the effects of those dilemmas and choices on other people.' The stories became enchantment because each story gives entrance into the participants' private worlds, their struggles and battles to find truth and clarity, their hopes and dreams for the future and their small victories. But these stories also enriched and influenced the lives and stories of the Alpha team.

I witnessed inmates' stories shifting from human despair to hope and in accompanying them, this also became my faith journey. My relationship with Christ was replenished and strengthened as I experienced the Lord through the eyes of the inmates finding their faith in Jesus Christ. Griffith (quoted by Marshall 2002b:14) reflects that the nearest we come to God, is when we are face to face with those who have been declared 'unrighteous, unclean and unacceptable': 'It is not that we find God there; it is that God finds us there. That is where our faith is nurtured and bears fruit. There where we expect to meet monsters, we meet God instead. The opportunity to serve God lies there among the prisoners who have been reckoned to be least deserving of any service at all.'

In our sharing with the inmates, an awareness of our own sinfulness, vulnerability, brokenness, fallibility, accountability and an overall realisation of Divine Grace, were born. We needed God's Grace as much as any inmate. I was reminded of Luke 18:9-14: that God honoured the prayer of the sinner, offered in a spirit of contriteness and brokenness. Introspection brought me to a place of humility and gratitude: that it is only by Grace that I am where I am, because in all of us lies the propensity for deceit and evil. A new story, a mutual story that spoke of faith, love, hope, community and connectedness, was able to rise up to replace the old story of isolation, hopelessness and despair.

Initially I was interested primarily in recounting the narratives of the changed lives of inmates, but my experiences with these men inspired me to increase my involvement in prison ministry and to share these stories to encourage others and to foster hope.

6.2 PASTORAL CARE AS ETHICAL CARE

I consider 'pastoral care as ethical care' (Kotzé & Kotzé 2001:7) to be the backbone of this research study and therefore I am ethically committed to strive for change and to position myself with these inmates in their pain and suffering and to resist oppressive or exploitative discourses and practices (Kotzé & Kotzé 2001:8).

At the outset, I found it particularly difficult in the prison context to care *with* people, knowing the harm and pain they had caused. In getting to know these inmates I gradually came to realise their humanity, their suffering and oppression, firstly, because of their deprivation, alienation and isolation from society; secondly, because in many respects they themselves are the product and victims of an unjust society; and thirdly, because of the immense suffering and torment of those perpetrators who realise the impact of the pain they have caused others. A compassion for these men was born in me and this started a process of realigning myself, not merely *thinking* commitments, but *doing* commitments and remembering that contextual theology requires continual dialogue between text and context (Bosch 1991:426-427). Crime

statistics indicate an abnormally and disproportionately high representation of indigenous people in prison in formerly colonised countries, and are reflective of the social injustices that have been committed in the subjugation of indigenous cultures to white, Westernised rule. In New Zealand the effects of colonisation on Maori and Pacific people, have resulted in perceptions of devaluation and being damaged.²² I could not separate myself from the social issues that were contributive to the lives of these inmates, but had to learn from and become informed by the context of their experiences. The insight of Tapping (1990:25), among others, helped me to gain a better understanding and to incorporate this into my pastoral practice:

In order to address the themes of liberation and self-determination, the therapist cannot continue to categorise clinical knowledge separately from cultural, socio-economic, or gender knowledge. The therapist must be informed in all these areas and ensure that they are included in the therapeutic conversation. They need to be informed about these as they are about clinical problems and symptoms.... [T]hey take a broader, ecological approach to the therapeutic task.

As a person *doing* theology, I became a 'being- in-community' (Cochrane, De Gruchy & Petersen 1991:2) and accepted accountability for my personal complicity in structures of control and social injustice. Stepping out into prison, meant involvement in the real life issues of these men, seeking common ground where we could mutually search for solutions to their needs within their new-found faith. As such I had to expose the 'I': no longer could my being, feelings and experience be obscured and disembodied from the world out there, but the 'I' had to become visible and engage in shared communication about the world (Jones 1990:4). The atrocities of the world could no longer be an intellectual activity of 'being informed' for me, but meant that I had to move out of my comfort zone and involve myself in the concrete life experiences of these inmates (Isherwood and McEwan 1993:76).

²² The 'Just Therapy' of The Family Therapy Centre, Lower Hutt, New Zealand (Waldgrave 1990) needs to be acknowledged for their work in addressing the injustices due to colonisation and the consequent detrimental cultural, social and economic implications to the indigenous Maori of New Zealand and the Pacific people. A 'Just Therapy' takes into account the gender, cultural, social and economic context of the person seeking help.

I was also reminded of my accountability as a Christian to go out and share my story of Divine Grace. Romans 10:14 reads ‘...how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?’ In Hosea 4:4-6 lack of faithfulness, kindness and moral values, crime and violence are attributed to those who had been given the responsibility to rule and to guide and they are called to accountability. This brought to mind my being in South Africa as a silent and passive witness of the *apartheids* regime. Welch (1990:139) reflects: ‘Particular stories call us to accountability...they call those of us who are ...complicit in structures of control to join in resistance and transformation.’

I was drawn to the feminist theology of praxis which is characterised by risk and stamina – not giving up hope despite the enormity of the task. It dares to imagine utopian dreams of a better world ‘when hopes are translated to actions for healing and wholeness’ (Ackermann 1998:88-89). Pastoral involvement with the imprisoned is an act of hope that requires strength and stamina. We were encouraged to see changes taking place in inmates’ lives, but it was our resolve to persevere, even when there seemed to be no change or response at all. In the words of the chaplain: ‘...*you just keep speaking life into them... people get put off too much when they (the inmates) respond in the way you don’t want them to respond, but you have to keep speaking those words of life into them....*’

We also experienced that sharing was not easy; that it required ‘risk and stamina’ (Welch 1990:22), because in a prison setting (in the words of a prison chaplain) revealing ‘*personal knowledge is dangerous*’, because it can be used as a form of manipulation or extortion. The honesty and boldness of these men in admitting, confessing and being accountable for wrongful behaviour, and the willingness expressed by some of these men to make amends with their victims, was truly amazing. A strong community of faith developed and the trust and friendships among the inmates and volunteers formed a strong support to sustain this connectedness.

6.3 REFLECTIONS ON POWER RELATIONS AND AWARENESS RAISING

In this study I hoped to raise an awareness of the power imbalances and societal discourses that exist in society and theology that serve to oppress, marginalise and alienate. The hope was expressed that the stories of inmates that told of their change would serve to counteract these voices and add to the hope for the mending and healing of creation.

In reflecting on this issue, I was reminded of my first impressions as a visitor to the prison: the meshed wire fences topped with barbed wire, security gates and security checks, the starkness and bare necessities of the venue where we gathered, the waiting on the men until they were brought in by the guards, their uniform clothing, the surveillance while we were in our meetings. The physical structure and organisation of the corrections services served as an austere reminder of what power, control and restriction of freedom was all about. Sometimes, influenced by the dominant societal discourse with regard to criminals, thoughts reflective of my own resentment of violence and abuse seeped through: *‘What am I doing here?’ ‘What good can come of being here?’*

While doing this research project I often experienced frustration and obstruction due to the nature and structure of the prison environment. Often that which we had agreed upon did not materialise due to changing rules, necessitated by internal correction organisation. Often a long-standing group member was suddenly and without any notification, transferred to another unit, or put in a work (labour) group, without an opportunity to bring closure. We had to make the best of what was offered and adapt the research project accordingly. Sometimes the process was hindered and at one stage the Alpha visits to the prison were stalled for an extended period of time. This caused a great deal of hurt. The inmates were not informed why these programmes had been put on hold, or terminated, and they considered this a lack of care by the Alpha team and betrayal by the church. As a pastoral care group we felt their pain and exasperation, but were powerless to do anything, except to pray. As a researcher, and

as a team, we were aware that our struggle was not against flesh and blood, but ‘against rulers, authorities...against spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms’ (Eph 6:12) that were resistant to letting go of their stronghold. Ephesians 6:10-18 helped us in the ‘deconstruction of power’ on a spiritual level in order to stand firm and ‘be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power’ (Eph 6:10).

I have asked myself in which way we succeeded in raising awareness. Reinharz (1992:178) remarks that research can empower oppressed people through embodying conscious-raising. We volunteers have been using every opportunity given to us inside and outside the church community to testify about our work in prison. I believe that this sharing has led to conscious-raising, and also served as a powerful witness to the revolutionary work that can be done in people by the Holy Spirit.²³

Inmates are encouraged to write their testimonies and these stories are used to encourage and raise awareness. They influence the way people think about prisoners and their families. Recently, **Ron***, an Alpha leader, told the congregation of the remarkable change of heart of one of the inmates who had come to Christ. An appeal was made for a poster as he would like to remove the existing, and to him, no longer acceptable, posters from his walls. The congregation offered overwhelming numbers of suggestions and practical ideas which included the help of the Sunday school and the youth group.

The Prison Fellowship project, *Angel Tree*²⁴, involving many local churches, serves as a tremendous tool to raise awareness of the plight of prisoners and their families and counteracts predominant societal discourses regarding prisoners. It also provides an

²³ According to the current chaplain, **John Major**, conscious-raising is happening in the prison itself: ‘When change in the behaviour of inmates is clearly demonstrated and acknowledged, staff, in our experience, become more and more receptive to supporting and facilitating expanding programmes within Chaplaincy. Further, in our experience, such staff also begin to explore their own instinctive spirituality.’

²⁴ *Angel Tree* is a programme that provides Christmas toys to prisoners’ children, who might otherwise be overlooked over the Christmas season. The gifts are given on behalf of the absent parent. The outreach enables the inmate to feel connected and involved with his children during the festive season (*Inside out...* 2000:2-3).

opportunity for the church to tangibly express the love of Jesus and build bridges to prisoners' families.

Volunteers bring prisoners who are allowed day visits on the outside, to church services. Recently two ex-inmates were invited to join an Alpha group in a home. They were well received and supported by the group. These contacts with the community, serve to break down presuppositions and build support networks for prisoners.

The interdenominational nature of the Alpha team was a powerful illustration of church unity to the participating inmates and helped to break down denominational exclusiveness. Many inmates equate 'church' with religion, represented by a specific denomination. Interdenominational team participation helped to deconstruct the concept 'church' and 'religion' and allowed for fellowship, community and faith to become alternative voices (discourses). Alpha has the 'host/guest' principle at heart and not 'teach and tell'. We did not enter the conversation as experts on theological issues, but with an openness to listen and to learn from our guests; to work alongside them and to accept them into our hearts unconditionally. We felt supported and empowered by our respective churches to use the diversity of our gifts to the benefit of the prison community.²⁵ Through mutual respect and having an equal share in co-leadership, egalitarian relationships between women and men were modeled (see footnote 10, p. 67).

Many people, who have read this research, have responded that it served to widen their horizons and change their perspectives with regard to our lives being embedded in stories, the power of societal discourses and the abuse of power. A trusted friend, **Derek Lessware**, reflected:

²⁵ The churches represented in this ministry reflected the understanding of feminist liberation theology, which sees the church as a liberated community, made up of a diversity of members bound by faith in Jesus, who seek freedom from oppressive practices, i.e. dominant male hierarchy and/ or custom and tradition. A pastoral practice that can be described as a liberating praxis seeks justice, peace, healing and wholeness for all members of the community of faith. This calls for the dismantling of clericalism and the liberation of the church from patriarchy (Cochrane, De Gruchy & Petersen 1991:95-96).

I saw how the unequal distribution of power lies at the root of society's handling of 'Crime' and 'Criminals' and that we need to reverse the masculine, macho nature of much of it. The thesis explained why the conventional theories about imprisonment don't work.

I saw that through Christ, we outside prison, have the one main duty to those in prison of sharing with them our love. They become aware of our empathy with them particularly when they see that we care WITH them as equals. We don't evangelise to them from any figurative pulpit, but share with them our contrition, our confession, our dialogue. This gives them the hope they so desperately hunger for.

6.4 TOWARDS RESTORATIVE JUSTICE: AWARENESS, ACCOUNTABILITY AND FORGIVENESS

My own awareness of power inequality and dehumanisation finds its way back to the South African political system based on racial discrimination. The stories told to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission by fellow-citizens who suffered under this regime could be heard in every household via the TV. Those who were prepared to listen were filled with shock and horror. In New Zealand my involvement in prison ministry through Alpha in Prisons and Prison Fellowship heightened my pastoral response to social injustice, the oppressed and the marginalised. Through prison ministry I developed a compassion for those imprisoned and also became even more sensitised to the plight of the victims of crime and abuse.

The discourses that dominate society and entrap the victims of crime are those of vengeance and retribution with no mercy for the criminal. As this research study evolved and forgiveness entered our faith discourse, the concept of restorative justice became imperative. It seemed unethical only to concentrate on the narratives of inmates who had found faith, healing and restoration and to blatantly ignore the suffering of the victim of crime. In chapter 3 I discussed forgiveness and restitution as a way to 'deconstruct' the power of vengeance over humans. What society seeks are signs of remorse or guilt from the offender. When these signs of accountability are lacking, victims find it even more difficult to come to terms with the violations and devastation brought about by the criminal act. Evidence shows (see chapter 3) that the retributivist system does not help to reform prisoners, but serves to nurture the criminal culture (Marshall 2002b). Cayley (1998:10) recommends that alternatives to

imprisonment should be sought and suggests restorative justice which is ‘rooted in the renewal of an old view of justice as peacemaking rather than retribution.’

Forgiveness lies at the centre of the Christian faith. As this research study evolved I became progressively aware of the struggle involved in the act of forgiveness. One prisoner remarked: ‘How can I accept the forgiveness of a God, if I cannot even forgive myself for what I have done?’ What inmates who have accepted the grace of God, most desire, is to be able to make amends to society. The narrative of healing and restoration can become an individual, isolated experience, unless the story of the victim is also heard. In accepting the Christian faith and the forgiveness of God, I believe that the inmates’ hearts are prepared to enter into a programme of restorative justice where the offender is brought to account. Only when the full circle is completed can true restoration take place.

Prison Fellowship International has developed a programme called *Sycamore Tree*,²⁶ in which prisoners and victims are brought together in search of healing and restoration based on restorative justice principles. This programme²⁷ has been successfully implemented over the last few years at the Arohata, Rimutaka and Hawkes Bay prisons in New Zealand and is to be expanded to eight prisons around the country this year. A *Sycamore Tree* programme was run with great success in Wanganui Prison in 2005 and my hope is that I can be involved in such a restorative justice programme in future. Jackie Katounas (*Inside Out...* 2005:6), a Restorative Justice Facilitator, reflects on the response of the offenders to the stories of the victims: ‘When victims are sharing their stories, you can see it affecting the hearts of these guys (the offenders). They are feeling with these people, empathizing with them.’ Ackermann (1998:92-93) writes that healing can only begin by acknowledging

²⁶ The name *Sycamore Tree* is derived from the biblical account of the corrupt tax collector, Zaccheaus, who climbed a sycamore tree to get a better view of Jesus as he walked through Jericho. After his meeting with Jesus he had a change of heart. The evidence of his change is obvious to his community as he paid back four times the amount he had stolen from the local tax payers. He also gave away half his wealth to the poor.

²⁷ Kim Workman (quoted in *Inside Out...* 2005:6), Executive Director of PFNZ, remarks: ‘Mediation, reparation and reconciliation are essential features of the traditional Maori and Pacific Island justice systems.’ It is found that prisoners from these ethnic groups respond particularly positively to an opportunity to restore relationships.

the trauma of the victims in its entirety, including their feelings of moral outrage and cries for retribution. Forgiveness is linked to the need for justice, repentance and restitution. Repentance signifies accountability and an understanding of restitution. Reconciliation becomes possible, when forgiveness meets repentance.²⁸

6.5 LEARNINGS FROM THIS RESEARCH AND DREAMING THE FUTURE

In running the Alpha and follow-up course, I recognised that many of the strategies used in the Alpha Course correspond to the principles and strategies embedded in narrative therapy. Narrative therapy offers a richness that enhances the effectiveness of these programmes and compliments the approach we followed in the Alpha Course. The narrative therapeutic approach helped us to gain deeper insight into the human need for meaning and narrative; the political nature of therapy and life, creating an awareness of the power of discourses; the demystification of the helping process, promoting transparency through reflection on the process itself; and, through the ‘not-knowing’ approach it re-instated mystery and wonder as legitimate responses to humanity (Thompson-Richards 2001; Weingarten 2000). Thus our conversations became a mutual exploration of the participants’ understanding and experiences and new meanings were co-created as our faith discourse developed. The Alpha team’s view also shifted from exclusively focusing in our discussions on the inmate’s well-being and salvation to the importance of fellowship and connection with the church as the Body of Christ, among the men themselves, their relationship with the prison officers and the inclusion of their family and significant others. A realisation developed of the importance for the inmates to be empowered and built up in order to expand this connection and fellowship.

An important aspect I failed to acknowledge in this research, was the praise and worship that formed an integral part of the pastoral conversation and which expanded and strengthened the faith discourse. I also failed to give the rightful

²⁸ Lampman & Shattuck (1999) give an in-depth discussion of the impact of crime on the victim and the personal and congregational responsibilities toward neighbours who are crime victims.

acknowledgement to the Holy Spirit coming alongside the inmates as *Parakletos* and *Therapon* (Louw1997c:64, 72). The stories of faith, healing and restoration told in this research focused on the spiritual and emotional healing of the inmates and volunteers. During the Holy Spirit Day (which centered on teachings on the Holy Spirit and the receiving of the Holy Spirit) we witnessed the faithfulness of the Holy Spirit in coming alongside the inmates. During the teaching on healing the inmates were introduced to Jesus not only being a spiritual Healer and Liberator, but also a Healer of the physical body. Many a miraculous healing which occurred served to strengthen and build the inmates new-found faith.

Alpha as an evangelising tool works well for the postmodern person who is hurt, has become estranged, or is an unbeliever. It meets people where they are and allows them to work at their own pace and integrate the Greater Story into their lives. As we progressed through the meetings, discussing different topics, we could see a growing awareness, understanding and awakening arising in the participants. A chaplain remarked a few weeks into the Course: *‘Where there was darkness, I can now see a Light shining from these men and out of this room.’* As an individual and as a member of a faith community and prison ministry team, my desire is to continue with this ministry to see hope materialise and to dare to dream utopian dreams of *‘Thy Kingdom come’*.

6.6 APPEALS TO THE CHRISTIAN FAITH COMMUNITIES

In doing research on prison ministry I read through various biographies of prison chaplains, research and other writings on prison ministry.²⁹ The one uniting thought that all these writings had was in the words of The Brothers Karamazov (quoted by Atherton 1987:68): *‘Lord, whatever would become of the prisoner, if Christian society, that is the Church, were to reject him as civil society rejects him? ...There could not be a greater despair than that for the prisoner.’*

²⁹ See Atherton 1987; Bolkas 2000; Cayley 1998; Colson 1981; Covert 1995; Diochi 2001; Gray 1991; Grinder 1982; Hall 2004; Hoyles 1965; Lashlie 2002; Marshall 1998, 2001a, 2001b, 2002b; McNee et al 1979; Opata 2001; Pederson 1981; Raphael 1990; Schilder 1999; Smarto 1993; Spitale 2002; Stott & Miller 1980; Workman 2001, 2002.

I have become more deeply convinced of the contribution that faith communities can make to healing in society. Prisoners do not arouse our instinctive compassion and seem to be the most undeserving of our concern. It is, however, for these very reasons that they qualify to be the 'least of the brothers' (Mt 25:40), or in the expression of Mother Teresa (quoted by Atherton 1987:113) 'Jesus in one of his most distressing disguises.' People in anguish need the concern and care of believers to get alongside them with the unconditional love of God, so that they may be re-created in the image of God and restored to their full dignity and value (Atherton 1987:112-115).

The stories that were told in this research were also intended to tell people of what is possible when you are alongside others and 'doing hope'. Weingarten (2000:402) contends that doing hope has to be an act of sharing and collaboration. It was our experience that for this hope to be sustained and nurtured, it had to be supported by a strong web of relationships that need to be extended and strengthened by the wider community. The stories in this research are a plea and an invitation to the Church and the wider society to become involved in restoration and healing; to accept an invitation to 'do hope' in a situation that might seem hopeless to others.

How should Christians contribute in a restorative way to the healing of society? In the light of my study, I believe that we need to demonstrate practical care for those in prison and need to be committed to the reintegration of released prisoners into 'communities of care'. Concern for the imprisoned must be accompanied by a generous hospitality towards them when they have finished their sentences and face the struggle of re-entering a suspicious and often hostile community, where the dominant discourse of retribution prevails (Marshall 2002b:15). We need to realise that injustice is not an act of fate: it is caused by actions and necessitates people's action to redress the balance (Isherwood & McEwan 1993:77). We need to follow the example of Jesus who sought to defend the rights of all, but especially the poor, the lowly, the sick and alienated. Therefore, we will be filled with outrage when we see injustice and marginalisation of people (Isherwood & McEwan 1993:75). Pope John

XXIII (quoted by Atherton 1987:112) concurred: 'As long as one man is behind bars, I myself am not free.'

The church has to re-evaluate the role it needs to play in a postmodern, fragmented society to become an agent that brings about healing, wholeness and transformation. Pieterse (1996:61) comments: 'The church and Christians have to learn the importance of humility and modesty, being ensconced in a highly complex, heterogeneous, damaged, broken, alienated, fearful, violent and fluid society. We have to learn to appreciate the power of difference...and to re-discover our religious legacy to listen, learn and love unconditionally.' Only when we as faith communities have recaptured the spirit of compassion and the brokenness of the wounded Healer (Nouwen 1998), can we truly begin to restore a broken society. Only when we can 'hear, see and feel' (Ackermann 1996:48) can we be receptive to the narratives of Faith, Healing and Restoration and weave these into the narrative of our societies as part of hope in the healing and mending of Creation.

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APPENDICES³⁰

Appendix 1. Information sheet #1 for the Chaplaincy, Wanganui Prison

PRISON MINISTRY: NARRATIVES OF FAITH, HEALING AND RESTORATION

INFORMATION SHEET FOR THE CHAPLAINCY AT WANGANUI PRISON

Thank you for your interest in this project. Please read this information sheet carefully before deciding whether or not to participate. If you decide to participate, we thank you. If you decide not to take part, there will be no disadvantage to you of any kind. We thank you for considering our request.

What is the aim of this project?

This project is undertaken as part of the requirements for the Masters in Practical Theology (Pastoral Therapy) degree at UNISA, Pretoria, Republic of South Africa. The aims of this research project are:

- (i) to have the stories told of men whose lives have been changed by the Christian faith and who were able to find hope, healing and restoration through accepting the Christian faith;
- (ii) to explore the impact of the Christian faith on a prisoner's adjustment and post-release success;
- (iii) to explore the role of the Church and faith community in the caring for the prisoner and in the integration of the ex-offender into society.

What type of participants are required?

A working group of 8 participants would be included in the research project. To meet the aims of this project, the participants should have attended an Alpha Course, or have been part of a Bible Study group in the prison.

What will participants be asked to do?

Should they agree to take part in this project, they will be asked to give consent for the (anonymised) information obtained from them to be used in the research project. If they take part in the project they will be asked to write a testimony (a narrative) of their experience regarding their Christian faith. I will arrange for a meeting with the participants and Chaplaincy to discuss the aims of the project and the main issues to be addressed in this narrative.

After the receipt of the participant's narrative, I would like a follow-up visit in order to inquire as to whether his participation has had satisfactory consequences for the participant, and also to give the

³⁰ The information sheets and consent forms (Appendix 1 – 6) are similar to those proposed by B A McLean (1997).

participant the opportunity to make amendments or additions to his written narrative. This will also serve as an opportunity for me to answer any questions that they may have regarding the project.

Can participants change their mind and withdraw from the project?

The participant will be informed that they are free to withdraw their participation from this research project during the workshop contact sessions. There will be no prejudicial consequences at all for them. If they choose to withdraw their participation, this will in no way impact on the research study.

What data or information will be collected?

The written information obtained from the participant will be discussed with my supervisor and the Chaplaincy and will be used in the project to narrate the faith journey of participants. With your prior consent, the faith narratives of participants may be done in written form. These written presentations will be subjected for approval to the Chaplaincy.

Results of this project may be published, but any data included will be anonymised and will therefore in no way be linked to any specific participant.

You are most welcome to request a copy of the results of the project should you wish that.

The information collected will be securely stored in a locked filing cabinet at the researcher's office and only myself, my supervisor or the chaplain will have access to it. At the end of the project, any personal information will be destroyed immediately, except that any raw data on which the results of the project depend, will be retained in secure storage in a sealed container for five years. The sealed container will hold clear and explicit instructions for the disposal of its contents. The data will be destroyed five years after the completion of the final report.

What if the Chaplaincy/Participants have any questions?

Should you have any questions or concerns regarding this project, please do not hesitate to contact either:

Mrs. Ronélie Müller
52 Glasgow Street
Wanganui
New Zealand

or

Dr Johann Roux
Institute for Therapeutic Development
418 Marais Street
Brooklyn
Republic of South Africa

Phone: (06) 343 6917

Phone: +27 – (0)12 - 4606704 or
+27 – (0)16 - 9323358

Appendix 2. Information sheet #2 for Participants, Wanganui Prison

PRISON MINISTRY: NARRATIVES OF FAITH, HEALING AND RESTORATION

INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS (WANGANUI PRISON)

Thank you for your interest in this project. Please read this information sheet carefully before deciding whether or not to participate. If you decide to participate, we thank you. If you decide not to take part, there will be no disadvantage to you of any kind. We thank you for considering our request.

What is the aim of this project?

This project is undertaken as part of the requirements for the Masters in Practical Theology (Pastoral Therapy) degree at UNISA, Pretoria, Republic of South Africa. The aims of this research project are:

- (i) to have the stories told of men whose lives have been changed by the Christian faith and who were able to find hope, healing and restoration through accepting the Christian faith;
- (ii) to explore the impact of the Christian faith on an inmate's adjustment and post-release success;
- (iii) to explore the role of the Church and faith community in the caring for the prisoner and in the integration of the ex-offender into society.

What type of participants are required?

Eight participants will be given the opportunity to be included in the research project. To meet the aims of this project, the participants should have attended an Alpha Course, or have been part of a Bible Study group in the prison.

What will participants be asked to do?

Should you agree to take part in this project, you will be asked to give consent for the (anonymised) information obtained from you to be used in the research project. If you take part in the project you will be asked to write an essay (a narrative) of your experience regarding your Christian faith. I will arrange for a visit to the participant, discussing the aims of the project and the main issues to be addressed in your story.

After the receipt of your story, I will do a follow-up visit in order to give the participant the opportunity to make changes to the written narrative. This will also serve as an opportunity for me to answer any questions that you may have regarding the project.

Can participants change their mind and withdraw from the project?

You are free to withdraw your participation from the research project. There will be no prejudicial consequences at all for you. If you choose to withdraw your participation, this will in no way impact on the research study.

What data or information will be collected?

The written information obtained from you will be discussed with my supervisor and the Chaplaincy and will be used in the project to narrate the faith journey of participants. With your prior consent, the narrative of your faith journey may be done in written form. With your prior consent these written presentations will be subjected for approval to the Chaplaincy, Wanganui Prison.

Results of this project may be published, but any data included will be anonymised and will therefore in no way be linked to any specific participant.

You are most welcome to request a copy of the results of the project should you wish that.

The information collected will be securely stored in a locked filing cabinet at the researcher's office and only myself, my supervisor or the chaplain will have access to it. At the end of the project, any personal information will be destroyed immediately, except that any raw data on which the results of the project depend, will be retained in secure storage in a sealed container for five years. The sealed container will hold clear and explicit instructions for the disposal of its contents. The data will be destroyed five years after the completion of the final report.

What if participants have any questions?

Should you have any questions or concerns regarding this project, please do not hesitate to contact either:

Mrs. Ronéle Müller
52 Glasgow Street
Wanganui
New Zealand

or

Dr Johann Roux
Institute for Therapeutic Development
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Appendix 3. Information sheet #3 for Participants (Prison Ministry Volunteers and Ex-Offenders)

PRISON MINISTRY: NARRATIVES OF FAITH, HEALING AND RESTORATION

INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS (PRISON MINISTRY VOLUNTEERS AND EX-OFFENDERS)

Thank you for your interest in this project. Please read this information sheet carefully before deciding whether or not to participate. If you decide to participate, we thank you. If you decide not to take part, there will be no disadvantage to you of any kind. We thank you for considering our request.

What is the aim of this project?

This project is undertaken as part of the requirements for the Masters in Practical Theology (Pastoral Therapy) degree at UNISA, Pretoria, Republic of South Africa. The aims of this research project are:

- (i) to have the stories told of men whose lives have been changed by the Christian faith and who were able to find hope, healing and restoration through accepting the Christian faith
- (ii) to explore the impact of the Christian faith on a prisoner's adjustment and post-release success
- (iii) to explore the role of the Church and faith community in the caring for the prisoner and in the integration of the ex-offender into society

What type of participants are required?

A working group of 8 participants would be included in the research project. To meet the aims of this project, the participants should have attended an Alpha Course, or have been part of a Bible Study group in the prison.

What will participants be asked to do?

Should they agree to take part in this project, they will be asked to give consent for the (anonymised) information obtained from them to be used in the research project. If they take part in the project they will be asked to write an essay (a narrative) of their experience regarding their Christian faith. I will arrange for a meeting with the participants and Chaplaincy to discuss the aims of the project and the main issues to be addressed in this narrative.

After the receipt of the participant's narrative, I would like a follow-up visit in order to inquire as to whether his participation has satisfactory consequences for the participant, and also to give the participant the opportunity to make amendments or additions to his written narrative. This will also serve as an opportunity for me to answer any questions that they may have regarding the project.

Can participants change their mind and withdraw from the project?

The participant will be informed that they are free to withdraw their participation from this research project during the workshop contact sessions. There will be no prejudicial consequences at all for them. If they choose to withdraw their participation, this will in no way impact on the research study.

What data or information will be collected?

The written information obtained from the participant will be discussed with my supervisor and the Chaplaincy and will be used in the project to narrate the faith journey of participants. With your prior consent, the faith narratives of participants may be done in written form. These written presentations will be subjected for approval to the Chaplaincy.

Results of this project may be published, but any data included will be anonymised and will therefore in no way be linked to any specific participant.

You are most welcome to request a copy of the results of the project should you wish that.

The information collected will be securely stored in a locked filing cabinet at the researcher's office and only myself, my supervisor or the chaplain will have access to it. At the end of the project, any personal information will be destroyed immediately, except that any raw data on which the results of the project depend, will be retained in secure storage in a sealed container for five years. The sealed container will hold clear and explicit instructions for the disposal of its contents. The data will be destroyed five years after the completion of the final report.

What if participants have any questions?

Should you have any questions or concerns regarding this project, please do not hesitate to contact either:

Mrs. Ronélie Müller
52 Glasgow Street
Wanganui
New Zealand

or

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Appendix 4. Consent form #1 for Participants (The Chaplaincy, Wanganui Prison)

PRISON MINISTRY: NARRATIVES OF FAITH, HEALING AND RESTORATION

CONSENT FORM 1 FOR PARTICIPANTS (THE CHAPLAINCY, WANGANUI PRISON)

I have read the Information Sheet concerning the project and understand what it is all about. All my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I am free to request further information at any stage.

I know that:

1. my participation in the project is entirely voluntary;
2. I am free to withdraw from the project at any time without any disadvantage;
3. I am aware of what will happen to all the information at the conclusion of the project, that the data will be destroyed at the conclusion of the project, but raw data on which the results of the project depend will be retained in secure storage for five years, after which it will be destroyed;
4. I will receive no payment or compensation for participation in the study;
5. I am aware that all personal information supplied by the inmates will remain confidential throughout the project.
6. I am satisfied that the information received would not be used to the disadvantage of the Management, the Chaplaincy or the inmates of the Wanganui Prison.

I am willing to give my permission for inmates who are involved in Chaplaincy-approved Christian programmes, to participate in this research project.

.....
(Signature of participant)

.....
(Date)

Appendix 5. Consent form #2 for Participants, Wanganui Prison

PRISON MINISTRY: NARRATIVES OF FAITH, HEALING AND RESTORATION

CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS (WANGANUI PRISON)

I have read the Information Sheet concerning the project and understand what it is all about. All my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I am free to request further information at any stage.

I know that:

1. my participation in the project is entirely voluntary;
2. I am free to withdraw from the project at any time without any disadvantage;
3. I am aware of what will happen to all the information at the conclusion of the project, that the data will be destroyed at the conclusion of the project, but raw data on which the results of the project depend will be retained in secure storage for five years, after which it will be destroyed;
4. I will receive no payment or compensation for participation in the study;
5. I am aware that my written narrative will have to be approved by the Chaplaincy of the Wanganui Prison.
6. I am aware that all personal information supplied by me will remain confidential throughout the project.

I am willing to participate in this research project.

.....
(Signature of participant)

.....
(Date)

Appendix 6. Consent form #3 for Participants (Prison Ministry Volunteers and Ex-Offenders)

PRISON MINISTRY: NARRATIVES OF FAITH, HEALING AND RESTORATION

CONSENT FORM 1 FOR PARTICIPANTS (PRISON MINISTRY VOLUNTEERS AND EX-OFFENDERS)

I have read the Information Sheet concerning the project and understand what it is all about. All my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I am free to request further information at any stage.

I know that:

1. my participation in the project is entirely voluntary;
2. I am free to withdraw from the project at any time without any disadvantage;
3. I am aware of what will happen to all my personal information (including video or audio but raw data on which the results of the project depend will be retained in secure storage for five years, after which it will be destroyed;
4. I will receive no payment or compensation for participation in the study;
5. I am aware that all personal information supplied by me will remain confidential throughout the project.

I am willing to participate in this research project.

.....
(Signature of participant)

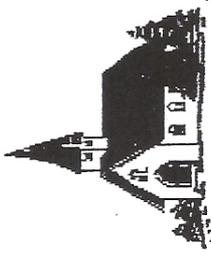
.....
(Date)

Appendix 7. Christmas Celebration Service Programme

Merry Christmas



Christmas Celebration



Unit 1 & Unit 2

Sunday 19th December 2004



Peace I leave with you, my
peace I give unto you: not as
the world giveth, give I unto
you. Let not your heart be
troubled, neither let it be afraid.

John 14:27

1. THE FIRST NOEL

The first Noel the Angels did say
Was to certain poor shepherds in fields
as they lay
In fields where they lay keeping their
sheep
On a cold winters night that was so
deep.

*Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel
Born is the King of Israel*

They looked up and saw a star
Shining in the east beyond them far
And to the earth it gave great light
And so it continued both day & night.
Refrain ...

Then let us all with one accord
Sing praises to our Heavenly Lord
Who hath made heaven and earth of
naught
And with His Blood mankind has
bought.
Refrain ...

2. O COME ALL YE FAITHFUL

O Come all ye faithful, Joyful and
Triumphant
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem
Come and behold him, Born the King
of Angels.

*O come let us adore him
O come let us adore him
O come let us adore him
Christ the Lord*

Sing, choirs of Angels, sing in exulta-
tion
Sing, all ye citizens of heaven above
Glory to God, in the highest.

Chorus...
Yea, Lord we greet thee, Born this
happy morning
Jesus, to thee be glory given
Word of the Father, Now in flesh ap-
pearing.

Chorus...

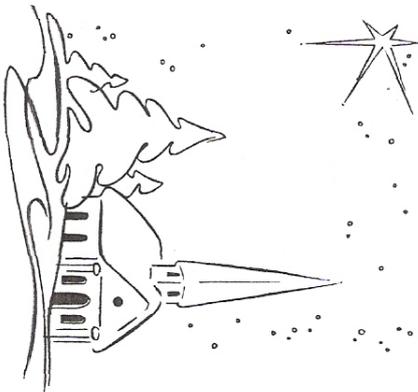
3. HARK THE HERALD ANGELS SING

Hark the Herald-Angels sing,
Glory to the new-born King!
Peace on earth, and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled,
Joyful, all ye nations rise,
Join the triumph of the skies;
With angelic host proclaim
Christ is born in Bethlehem!

*Hark the Herald-Angels sing
Glory to the new-born King!*

Hail, the heaven-born Prince of peace!
Hail, the Sun of righteousness!
Light and life to all He brings,
Risen with healing in His wings,
Mild He lays His glory by,
Born that man no more may die;
Born to raise the sons of earth,
Born to give them second birth

*Hark the Herald-Angels sing
Glory to the new-born King!*



4. JOY TO THE WORLD

Joy to the World - The Lord is come
Let earth receive her king!
Let ev'ry heart prepare Him room,
And heav'n and nature sing,
And heav'n and nature sing,
And heav'n and nature sing,
And heav'n and nature sing!

Joy to the World! the Saviour reigns;
Let men their songs employ!
While fields & floods, rocks, hills and
plains,
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat, repeat the sounding joy!

He rules the world with truth and grace,
And makes the nations prove
The glories of His righteousness,
And wonders of His love,
And wonders of His love
And wonders, wonders of His love.

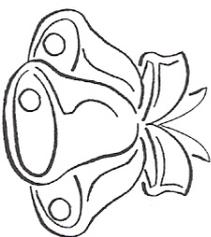
THE MILLENNIUM PRAYER

Our Father, who art in Heaven,
Hallowed be Thy Name,
Thy Kingdom come,
Thy Will be done,
On earth as in Heaven
Give us today our daily bread
And forgive our sin,
As we forgive each one of those
Who sins against us.
And lead us not to the time of trial
But deliver us from evil,
For Thine is the kingdom,
The power and the glory.

Repeat...

Let all the people say Amen,
In every tribe and tongue,
Let every heart's desire be joined
To see the kingdom come.
Let every hope and every dream
Be born in love again,
Let all the world
Sing with one voice,
Let the people say Amen!

Merry Christmas



Alpha

A Basic Introduction
to the Christian Faith

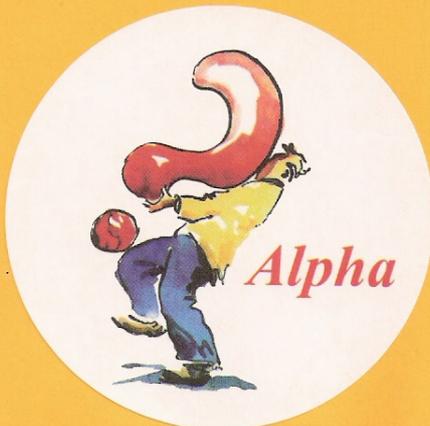


Ronald C Harris

has completed the Alpha Course
run by a combined Churches team
in Wanganui.

Course Content:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Who is Jesus? | <input type="checkbox"/> How can I be filled with the Holy Spirit? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Why did Jesus die? | <input type="checkbox"/> How can I resist evil? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> How can I be sure of my faith? | <input type="checkbox"/> How does God guide us? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> How and why should I read the Bible? | <input type="checkbox"/> How and why should I tell others? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> How and why should I pray? | <input type="checkbox"/> How does God heal today? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Who is the Holy Spirit? | <input type="checkbox"/> What about the Church? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> What does the Holy Spirit do? | <input type="checkbox"/> How can I make the most of the rest of my life? |



Date 15.07.2002

Course Leaders *Ray*

Antonie