

**CARRYING THE TORCH OF HOPE: SURVIVORS'  
NARRATIVES OF TRAUMA AND SPIRITUALITY**

**by**

**JAMES HENRY IAIN MARTIN**

**Submitted in part fulfilment of the requirements**

**for the degree**

**MASTER OF THEOLOGY**

**in the subject**

**PRACTICAL THEOLOGY – WITH SPECIALISATION IN**

**PASTORAL THERAPY**

**at the**

**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**SUPERVISOR: DR E KOTZÉ**

**CO-SUPERVISOR: DR M E HESTENES**

**NOVEMBER 2003**

## **ABSTRACT**

This research journey examines the process of co-creating, along with my co-travellers (research participants), a more holistic approach to trauma debriefing. Whilst incorporating elements of Mitchell's (1983) Critical Incidence Stress Debriefing model (C.I.S.D.), our point of difference has been to adopt a narrative pastoral approach. This was achieved by introducing *spirituality* and *narrative therapy practices*. Our research pathway has been further shaped by adopting a qualitative research approach within a postmodern, social construction discourse.

My research curiosity was invited by both the mind, body and soul divide expressed in psychology; and the healing possibilities of spirituality I have witnessed in both my own and in the lives of others. While my co-travellers predominantly preferred to express their spirituality in terms of Christianity, our narrative pastoral approach to trauma debriefing is offered to people of all religious persuasions.

**Key terms:** Trauma debriefing; spirituality; body, mind & soul; postmodern social construction discourse; narrative pastoral therapeutic practices; contextual practical theology; post traumatic growth (PTG); witnessing; hope; trauma discourses; Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (C.I.S.D.); qualitative research; alternative stories; vicarious traumatisation

**CARRYING THE TORCH OF HOPE:**

**SURVIVORS' NARRATIVES OF  
TRAUMA AND SPIRITUALITY**

Student: J H I Martin  
Student Number: 3148-919-2  
Supervisor: Dr E Kotzé  
Joint-supervisor: Dr M E Hestenes

# CONTENTS

## CHAPTER 1: NARRATIVES OF TRAUMA AND SPIRITUALITY

	1
<b>1.1 BACKGROUND</b>	2
<b>1.2 Kindling curiosity</b>	2
1.2.1 Daniel's story	2
1.2.2 America's story	4
<b>1.3 WHERE IS THE SPIRITUALITY?</b>	5
1.3.1 Stumbling into the light	7
1.3.2 Striking the first match	9
1.3.3 Patches of light	11
1.3.4 What is spirituality?	12
<b>1.4 RESEARCH CURIOSITY</b>	14
1.4.1 Research aims	14
<b>1.5 TRAUMA IN THE SPOTLIGHT</b>	17
1.5.1 Lighting the torch of hope	17
<b>1.6 RESEARCH APPROACH</b>	17
1.6.1 Qualitative research	17
1.6.2 Participatory action research	18
1.6.3 Feminist perspective	18
1.6.4 Case study	19
<b>1.7 RESEARCH PROCEDURES</b>	19
<b>1.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS</b>	20
1.8.1 Participatory consciousness	20
1.8.2 Feminist and contextual theological stances	21
<b>1.9 LEAVING A MAP OF THE JOURNEY TO OTHERS</b>	22

## CHAPTER 2: EPISTEMOLOGY:

<b>THE TORCHES OF POSTMODERN, SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION DISCOURSE, NARRATIVE PASTORAL PRACTICES AND CONTEXTUAL PRACTICAL THEOLOGY</b>	23
---	----

<b>2.1 INTRODUCTION</b>	24
-------------------------	----

<b>2.2 ILLUMINATING EPISTEMOLOGY</b>	24
2.2.1 Modern discourse	24
2.2.2 Postmodern, social construction discourse	26
<b>2.3 NARRATIVE PASTORAL PRACTICES</b>	30
2.3.1 The light of pastoral care	30
2.3.1.1 Torch bearers of spirituality	32
2.3.1.2 The gift of faith	35
2.3.2 The light of narrative therapeutic practices	37
2.3.2.1 Challenging dominant discourses on trauma	39
<b>2.4 THEOLOGY</b>	42
2.4.1 The light of postmodern discourse	43
2.4.2 Contextual practical theology	45
2.4.3 Feminist theology	48
2.4.3.1 The light of Jesus	49
<b>2.5 A CONSIDERATION OF THE JOURNEY SO FAR</b>	51
<b>CHAPTER 3: THE TORCH OF NARRATIVE PASTORAL THERAPEUTIC PRACTICES</b>	53
<b>3.1 FIRST STEPS: INTRODUCING MY CO-TRAVELLER</b>	54
3.1.1 Getting started	56
<b>3.2 WHAT IS TRAUMA DEBRIEFING?</b>	57
3.2.1 Dissenting voices in the dark	59
3.2.2 Taking trauma debriefing into the light	62
<b>3.3 THE TORCH OF NARRATIVE THERAPY</b>	62
3.3.1 Externalising the problem	62
3.3.2 Metaphors	63
3.3.3 Unique outcomes	64
3.3.4 A not-knowing stance	66
3.3.5 Letter writing	67
<b>3.4 CO-CREATING A NARRATIVE PASTORAL APPROACH TO TRAUMA DEBRIEFING</b>	69
3.4.1 Retaining elements of Mitchell's CISD Model	69
3.4.1.1 Who has the remote control?	70
3.4.1.2 Adding the light of spirituality	71

<b>3.5 BROACHING THE SUBJECT OF SPIRITUALITY</b>	72
3.5.1 Co-authoring preferred stories of spirituality	74
3.5.2 Fanning the flames of faith and hope	76
<b>3.6 RE-MEMBERING AND PERSONAL AGENCY</b>	77
3.6.1 Re-connecting	80
<b>3.7 REFLECTIONS ON OUR JOURNEY</b>	82
3.7.1 Contemplating a narrative pastoral approach to trauma debriefing	83
<b>CHAPTER 4: CONTINUING TO CARRY THE TORCH OF NARRATIVE PASTORAL THERAPEUTIC PRACTICES</b>	86
<b>4.1 FURTER STEPS</b>	87
4.1.1 Continuing to carry the torch of spirituality	87
<b>4.2 TODD</b>	88
4.2.1 Germinating spirituality	90
<b>4.3 ANDREW</b>	90
4.3.1 Spirituality in their own words	91
4.3.2 Spirituality taking root	93
<b>4.4 ROSIE</b>	95
4.4.1 being heard into speech	97
4.4.2 The healing light of forgiveness	98
4.4.3 The warming glow of hope	101
<b>CHAPTER 5: CARRYING THE TORCH OF HOPE</b>	103
<b>5.1 THE JOURNEY'S END</b>	104
5.2 What difference has this journey made?	105
<b>5.3 BENEFITS TO MY CO-TRAVELLERS</b>	107
5.3.1 Opening the door to spirituality	107
5.3.2 Structuring the therapeutic conversation	108
5.3.3 Receiving narrative letters	109
<b>5.4 BENEFITS TO THE RESEARCHER</b>	110
5.4.1 Social construction and postmodern discourses: New ways of being	111
5.4.2 Spirituality: New ways of being	112
5.4.3 Creating circles of caring: A new way of being	114

5.4.4 Community: A new way of being	115
5.4.5 Ethicising: A new way of being	116
5.4.6 Narrative pastoral practices: New ways of being	118
<b>5.5 POSSIBLE BENEFITS TO OTHER DEBRIEFERS</b>	120
5.5.1 Two-way therapeutic relationships	121
5.5.2 Taking-it-back practices	122
5.5.3 Re-membering	122
5.5.4 Writing narrative letters	123
5.5.5 Other possibilities for consideration	124
<b>5.6 WHERE TO FROM HERE?</b>	124
<b>5.7 THE FINAL SAY</b>	125
<b>5.7.1 JOAN</b>	125
<b>5.7.2 ROSIE</b>	126
<b>5.7.3 ANDREW</b>	127
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	129
<b>APPENDIXES</b>	146
<b>To Chapter 3: LETTERS TO JOAN</b>	
a. Letter 1	146
b. Letter 2	149
c. Letter 3	151
d. Letter 4	154
<b>To Chapter 4:</b>	
<b>e. E-MAIL CONVERSATION WITH TODD</b>	157
<b>f. LETTER TO ROSIE</b>	158
<b>g. LETTER TO ANDREW</b>	160

## Acknowledgements

*Your word is a lamp to my feet*

*And a light for my path*

Psalm 119: 105

This research journey has only been made possible by the contributions of significant *torch bearers* in my life. I would like to acknowledge their part in keeping my own flame of hope burning brightly throughout this journey:

Most significantly, Joan, Andrew and Rosie, whose narratives of trauma and spirituality provided both the inspiration and terrain through which we journeyed together.

Dirk Kotzé who opened my eyes to the presence of many pathways in theology; that theology does not belong on the dusty shelves of academia but in the lived experience of people; and that *ethicising* is an action as vital as breathing.

Elmarie Kotzé who has taught me to see the world in a different light; to see and question accepted ways of being or discourses that silence people because of their *differentness*; and to embrace both the responsibility and effectiveness of words.

Elize Morkel whose infectious passion for the narrative way and community work is an inspiration. Her teaching has fuelled my torch of hope, a torch I will carry diligently into the future.

Dr Hestenes, Elonya and Nerrina for their invaluable input in helping shape our research pathway.

Ruth, my co-traveller in life, whose encouragement and loving support not only made this journey possible but helped to rekindle my flame of hope whenever the going got tough and the journey's end seemed far off.

My sons Jay and Cary for their patience and understanding of the many hours this research journey took from my time with them. May the torch of hope co-created in this research journey be a legacy that they too can carry into the future.

Simon, my pastor and friend, whose spiritual walk continues to provide a guiding light for my own.

And, finally: Jesus, whose *way of being* has been a lamp to my feet – guiding me along this journey. My hope is that people in the darkness of trauma will always experience our therapeutic conversations as a path bathed in his healing light.



