

Spirituality and identity formation of Registered Counsellors specializing in Gestalt Play therapy

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“SOLI DEO GLORIA

ABSTRACT

Spirituality and identity formation of Registered Counsellors specializing in Gestalt Play therapy

SUBJECT: This study explores the educational and career experiences of a group of registered counsellors specializing in gestalt play therapy, in terms of professional identity development and calling as a vehicle for meaning and/or spirituality.

Registered counsellors are mid-level professionals, second to psychologists, within the profession of psychology within South Africa. The category of registered counsellors was developed with the view to meet the needs of the previously disadvantaged communities through providing basic psychological services. Registered counsellors are to complete a four year B.Psych or equivalent degree and an internship. Their counselling tasks are statutorily defined within a scope of practice.

The deployment of registered counsellors within the public health system have not yet met desired expectations due to factors such as a lack of job creation and early training models which included one-on-one intervention models. Training curriculums as well as the scope of practice are currently under revision. To date the majority of registered counsellors who are working in the profession have found employment within the educational systems or private practice.

Some registered counsellors have completed the Masters degree in Gestalt Play therapy – an educational route, now closed to registered counsellors. This form of training from within the social work field does not expand the registered counsellor’s scope of practice. After exploring experiences and challenges through a colloquium, a convenience sample was drawn from current and past students and twenty-two participants completed semi-structured questionnaires. Data was analysed using ATLAS.ti.

The storied accounts of participants within this study reveal that the majority experience their professional identities as negative, for instance “at the bottom of the food chain” or “non-existent.” Many hoped that the training in Gestalt play therapy would not only equip them to work with children, but would assist them to find a more esteemed place within

the profession. The majority of participants experienced either a “calling orientation” towards their work, followed by a group of career orientated individuals. Within both groups there are members who experience a calling of a transcendental nature.

Counsellors who feel called to making a difference or helping others within the profession were found to be challenged in their spirituality and identity, when their envisioned career paths within the profession of Psychology, were blocked. Christian believers within this sample questioned their relationship with God as well as His will for their lives. One participant wished that she had a form of faith that could bring meaning to the difficulties she has experienced.

It appears that a significant number within this subpopulation intended to (and some still do) become psychologists but have been prevented from doing so due to the small number of applicants that are selected yearly in comparison to the demand for training.

Career counselling suggestions from literature that foster the making of meaning, work adjustment and contribute to the development of callings, were used together with Gestalt theory to develop experiential reflections as an intervention. Preliminary findings suggest that they may be helpful to registered counsellors in terms of the challenges described.

These findings (and suggestions) were used within the development of a pastoral counselling intervention model. This model is based upon the reformist theological tradition and strands of Gestalt theory have been woven into it. The addressing of professional identity development difficulties and challenged callings within a field of faith, may stir up hope, create new meaning and foster spiritual growth, leading to more fulfilled lives in the presence of God.

Key Terms:

Registered counsellor¹; Gestalt Play Therapy; Professional identity development; “Self”-formation; Spirituality; Calling

¹ This is the spelling used within the Psychology Register of South Africa.

OPSOMMING

Spiritualiteit en identiteitsvorming van Geregistreerde Beraders wat spesialiseer in Gestalt speltherapie

ONDERWERP: Hierdie studie ondersoek die opleidings- en beroepservaringe van 'n groep Geregistreerde Beraders wat in Gestalt speltherapie spesialiseer, in terme van professionele identiteitsontwikkeling en roeping wat verband hou met die betekenis wat aan werk en spiritualiteit geheg kan word.

Geregistreerde beraders in Suid-Afrika werk in die sielkunde veld as middelvlak professionele beraders, met ander woorde op 'n vlak onder sielkundiges. Geregistreerde beraders voltooi sowel 'n vier-jaar graad, B.Psig (of 'n gelykwaardige graad) as 'n internskap om te kan praktiseer. Die omvang en inhoud van hulle beradings take is statutêr vasgelê.

Die kategorie van geregistreerde berading is geskep met die oog op die verskaffing van basiese sielkundige dienste aan die voorheen benadeelde gemeenskappe. Hierdie doelwitte is nog nie bereik nie as gevolg van 'n verskeidenheid faktore soos 'n gebrek aan werksverskaffing aan geregistreerde beraders en opleiding wat voorheen ook intervensie modelle, geskik vir privaat praktyk, ingesluit het. Die opleidingskurrikulum vir geregistreerde beraders sowel as die sogenaamde "scope of practice" word tans hersien..

'n Groep geregistreerde beraders het die Meestersgraad in Gestalt speltherapie (vanuit die sosiale werksveld) voltooi. Die graad lei nie tot 'n vergroting van hulle "scope of practice" nie en geen verdere geregistreerde beraders sal tot die graad toegelaat word nie.

Geregistreerde beraders, wat in Gestalt speltherapie gespesialiseer het, se ervaringe word in hierdie studie deur 'n colloquium en 'n semi-gestruktureerde vraelys ondersoek. 'n Gerieflikheidssteekproef is getrek uit die groep geregistreerde beraders wat reeds die graad voltooi het of wat daarmee besig was. Die data is met die hulp van ATLAS.ti geanaliseer.

Dit blyk dat heelwat deelnemers hulle professionele identiteit as negatief beleef. Hulle beskryf dit onder andere as "being at the bottom of the food chain" of "non-existent." Van die deelnemers het gehoop dat die meestersgraad in Gestalt speltherapie vir hulle 'n beter

plek beroepsgewys sou uitkap terwyl hulle ook spesifiek opgelei word om met kinders te werk. Die meerderheid van die deelnemers was roepings-georiënteerd in die breë, gevolg deur 'n groep wat meer beroeps-georiënteerd was. In beide van hierdie groepe was daar deelnemers wat roepings met 'n transendentale karakter beleef.

Van die beraders wat geroepe voel om 'n verskil te maak of om ander te help vanuit die sielkunde professie, rapporteer dat hulle uitdagings beleef in die uitlewing van hulle spiritualiteit, wanneer hulle byvoorbeeld weerhou word om die beroepspad wat hulle aanvanklik ingedagte gehad het, te volg. Christen gelowiges praat van 'n twyfel in hulle verhouding met God en/of die wil van God vir hulle lewens. 'n Ander deelnemer vertel dat sy wens dat sy 'n geloofsraamwerk gehad het, wat sin sou gee aan haar belewinge.

'n Beduidende hoeveelheid deelnemers het gemik (of mik nog) om sielkundiges te word, maar word weerhou deur die feit dat die aantal studente wat jaarliks aansoek doen vir keuring baie meer is as die aantal plekke wat beskikbaar is.

Beroepsberadings voorstelle vanuit die literatuur wat die ontwikkeling van betekenis, werksaanpassing en ontwikkeling van roepings bevorder, is gebruik tesame met Gestalt teorie om 'n reeks begeleidende refleksies saam te stel. Voorlopige bevindinge dui daarop dat dit effektief mag wees om geregistreerde beraders te help om die uitdagings wat hulle in die oë staar, te ontmoet.

Hierdie bevindinge (en voorstelle) is gebruik in die ontwikkeling van 'n pastorale beradings intervensie model. Die model is gebou op die gereformeerde teologiese tradisie, met drade van Gestalt teorie wat ingewef is. Deur die uitdagings vanuit die veld van geloof aan te spreek, mag dalk hoop en nuwe betekenis / sin bring tesame met geestelike groei teweeg bring, om meer vervulde lewens in die teenwoordigheid van God te lewe.

Sleuteltermes:

Geregistreerde berader; Gestalt spel terapie; Professionele identiteitsontwikkeling; "Self" formasie; Spiritualiteit; Roeping

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CHAPTER ONE

1. MOVING TOWARDS THE “MOMENT OF PRAXIS”

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The following excerpts are taken from an email, titled “Is ek dalk op die verkeerde pad?” (Am I on the wrong path?), sent to the researcher on the 8th of May, 2012 (used with permission and translated from Afrikaans).

I urgently need your honest opinion and felt that God told me to speak to you. I am enjoying the Masters in Gestalt Play Therapy immensely and am learning so much of myself. But recently I’ve started doubting whether I should continue with it. The internship is a huge concern for me, as it doesn’t appear that it will be sorted out. My honours in Psychology honestly doesn’t mean anything...

I’ve been studying for a long time, and really battled to find work last year, even with the honours in Psychology. My previous degree didn’t help me at all within my career!! If the internship does not get sorted (continue), I will once again be sitting without a career path. No-one can tell me what to expect... I’m busy gambling with my future... and as much as I enjoy this degree, I also want to settle and go into the community.

What do you think?

Somebody is suggesting to me that I’m giving up hope and that I will regret it if I discontinue my studies now... Saying that God would not have placed me on this path if He is not going to make a way to go forward. But what if I really feel disquieted within myself, knowing that God had a purpose with this degree... so that I could start working through some dark issues and understand things I didn’t understand before, but that He’s now speaking to me, saying that this is just a yield sign toward another route? ...

It is not uncommon to interpret open or closed doors in one’s career in terms of spirituality, as is evident from the difficult choices that the writer of the above email faced. While the researcher as a Christian believer has personally experienced God using a variety of both positive and negative work-related and study-related experiences for her good (Rm 8:28), she still had to wrestle with the question of where God was (and is)

calling her on both the short- and the long-term. Behind the discernment of being led by God, or ²Ultimate Transcendence (to use the term of Hodge 2003:48) also lies the question of whether God does call people into specific careers. It's also not uncommon for many people within the helping professions to feel called to, or a need to help others in different ways. Thus it is not only one's talents or skills that can shape a career, but also the transcendent summons together with the sense of self or identity that a person may have.

The researcher's career was shaped by various influences. She has a childhood history of trauma as well as a healing journey of recovery from it, which stimulated a desire to also help others that have and are facing similar challenges. Helping others is not a healing of herself by proxy though, as one's personal therapy and healing allows one to come alongside others in their own unique realities. The researcher also believes that this is not separate from a calling from God on her life to both teach and minister healing to others. She has specific skills and abilities regarding both teaching and counselling that were confirmed in various situations involving training, feedback from colleagues and clients, evaluations and supervision.

The researcher completed her B.Psych through the Institute of Christian Psychology (ICP) in 2008, and registered as a counsellor in independent practice (specialization trauma) with the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) in 2009. Prior to that she completed an Honours degree in Psychology in 1991. Registered counselling falls within the profession of psychology, and as such the counselling activities are "statutorily defined" within the profession of psychology, according to the Health Professions Act of 1974 (Cooper & Nicholas, 2012:96; Pretorius, 2012b:512). The researcher has furthermore completed a Masters degree in Pastoral studies through the North West University (NWU), and registered with The Southern African Association for Pastoral Work (SAAP) as a Pastoral Therapist in the 5th category: Specialist level (SAQA NQF level 7-8).

² The intrinsic spirituality scale (Hodge, 2003) used in this study defines spirituality as a person's relationship to God or Ultimate Transcendence. Ultimate Transcendence refers to "whatever" a person may perceive that to be (Hodge, 2003:48), and describes a Higher Power and / or all other theistic and non-theistic conceptions within or outside of organized religions (Gough, Wilks & Pratinni, 2010:278). This term also reflects the use of the term "transcendent summons" by Dik and Duffy (2009:427) in terms of calling, as a summons which is experienced as emanating from a source outside of oneself.

While the researcher's focus within the postgraduate Gestalt play therapy coursework, NQF levels 9 (master's degree) or 10 (PhD) (NWU, 2011:1), was on the use of Gestalt techniques, she is aware that the training has not led to a more delineated professional identity or work opportunities. The researcher received an email forwarded by the Centre for Child, Youth and Family Studies at North West University, on the 19th of June, 2014, on behalf of a registered counsellor, who wishes to remain anonymous, gathering support to rally for a board or association for Play therapy within the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA). This effort did not meet with success.

Should a category for Play therapy be created within the profession of Psychology, it would entail a professional masters degree (leading to registration as a psychologist) or build on it. The standards of Play Therapy International (PTI, 2008) for certification in Child psychotherapy and Play therapy within the United States and Canada, refer to Masters degrees which would include more intensive training in child and human development; marital and family issues; ethics which includes legal issues of child protection and family law as well as child psychotherapy and play therapy. A minimum of 2500 hours of direct clinical practice and a minimum of 200 hours of direct clinical supervision is also required (PTI, 2008).

The researcher completed coursework in: Basic principles of Gestalt Play therapy; Therapeutic relationship and process in Gestalt Play therapy; Advanced integration: Play therapy; and Gestalt Play therapy for the practice. The practical work consisted of two groups each receiving 6 sessions aside from the supervision and the interaction with schools and parents.

In August 2014, participant one (in this research study) made inquiries regarding possible registration with the HPCSA in South Africa as an "arts therapist" as an alternative. She was informed that it required a two year Masters in Arts Therapy from a registered university, and this is currently only internationally available. This should also be followed by 1000 hours of practical work (Davis, 2014).

The title "therapist" within the profession of Psychology is reserved for those who have completed professional training on a masters degree level, and who have registered as psychologists. While the Masters in Gestalt Play therapy (or any Masters in Play therapy within the social work departments) does not meet the requirements for a professional

masters degree in Psychology, it is a pity that registered counsellors are now prohibited from the training instead of finding a way to describe the value that it could add within their scope of practice as specialization.

The researcher has struggled, like many other registered counsellors to find a “professional identity and fit” within the organized mental health profession. While the Institute of Christian Psychology ³(ICP) has registered the B. Psych degree that led to the researcher’s registration with the HPCSA, Christian Psychology is not a recognized practice domain within the profession of Psychology in South Africa. Thus one cannot pursue a master’s degree towards registration as a Christian psychologist (South Africa, 2011:1-12). On the other hand, pastoral counselling within the field of theology is still in the process of forming a professional body (Erasmus, 2014).

Alongside the researcher’s career journey, lies a process of seeking God’s will over the course of time for her life within various areas, which includes studies and career choices. Within this journey there was various phases of reflection, doubt, joy as well as disappointment which reflect her “life lived before God” to use the term of Greggs (2012:315, 317).

In this study the researcher will explore the experiences of registered counsellors regarding their sense of calling in context of their spirituality and professional identity development. The population within the group of registered counsellors is delineated to a group who embarked on postgraduate studies in Gestalt play therapy, through the Centre for Child, Youth and Family Studies located within the faculty of Health Sciences of the North West University (NWU), Potchefstroom campus (NWU, 2011; NWU, 2014). The researcher has a personal connection to this group as a registered counsellor who completed the coursework herself.

³ In context of the current revisions of the B.Psych training (that takes effect in 2016), the ICP will no longer function as an accredited institution with the HPCSA.

1.2 BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE FOR THIS STUDY

1.2.1 Registered counselling within the profession of psychology

While Psychology remains one of the most popular courses on both an undergraduate and postgraduate level (Cooper & Nicholas, 2012:91-92), very few get into the master's degree level of professional training towards registration as psychologists (Abel & Louw, 2009:106).

The category of "registered counsellor" in South Africa was implemented as a second tier to professional practice (second to psychologists), in order to meet the needs of the wider South African population on a community level (Abel & Louw, 2009:99, 106). The creation of public sector jobs for registered counsellors towards this purpose has not realized. Instead of moving into communities, students appear to be using the B.Psych training to get an edge into the professional master level training (Abel & Louw, 2009:104; Elkonin & Sandison, 2006:608). The career itself does not appear to attract the majority of graduates (Abel & Louw, 2009:99, 106).

At the root of the problem lies the misconception of the training needs of registered counsellors, which led to one-on-one intervention counselling models being taught (creating "mini-psychologists") rather than preventative community-level intervention (Pretorius, 2012b:515), whilst there is also a calling for more community-intervention within all categories of the psychology profession. Pretorius (2012b:515-517) argues for a deconstruction of the hierarchical structure within the profession, wherein registered counsellors and psychometrists currently appear to be at the lowest level within a vertical line of power related to registration categories. They play an important role within the preventative psychological health framework or act as "emotional paramedics" in a context of trauma, by referring clients to psychologists if appropriate (Pretorius, 2012a; 2012b:515). This debate underlies the current revision and restriction of the training and internships at the major universities (Viljoen, 2012; Temane, 2012). Mirah Wilks, chairperson for the registered counselling and psychometrics division of the Psychological Society of South Africa (PSYSSA), indicated on 6 September 2014, that the revised scope of practice and training programs will commence by 2016. In spite of this announcement no formal documentation has been released yet (Wilks, 2014).

Acknowledging the relevance and the need for the basic psychological interventions on a community level, does not however help the registered counsellors who have already been trained in more one-on-one intervention models, and/or who have not found employment (Johnson, 2012b:7) or may not wish to find employment within those sectors of society. Johnson (2012a) calls for psychologists to embrace the role of registered counsellors and Pretorius (2012:515) expresses the vital role registered counsellors play on a primary health care level, but the deconstruction of power and marketing of the profession is not a reality as yet (Abel & Louw, 2009:106-107; Johnson, 2012a; Johnson, 2012b).

As a registered counsellor, the researcher is personally sceptical of a change from a vertical power structure to a horizontal structure across the various professionals within psychology. Registered counsellors are limited to the market's awareness of what they can offer. Furthermore, there are medical aids which, in the researcher's experience within practice (confirmed by Johnson, 2012a), do not cover registered counselling. As long as the situation exists wherein there are annually 10 – 20 times more applicants for training in clinical psychology alone, with only around 150 being selected nationally, the "highly competitive application process" in the words of Pillay, *et al.* (2013:47) will remain. This perpetuates the hierarchical power structures while students are using programs like the B.Psych as a stepping stone into professional training.

It also is no surprise to the researcher then, that a four year B.Psych degree is viewed as having a lower status than a Masters in Psychology (Pretorius, 2012b:515-516). Being academically minded the researcher may have had a different perception if the profession of registered counselling could be pursued on a master's and doctorate level as well, but the only way forward or "upward" is a professional psychology degree that would lead to registration as psychologist.

This leads to the question whether the personality profile and interests or motivations of someone aspiring to the career of registered counsellor would match that of what has been envisioned for psychologists. Farber, Manevich and Saypol (2005:1015-1027) reported that psychotherapists enter their profession because they have developed a high degree of psychological mindedness, serving as a confidant and mentor to others experiencing painful childhood experiences and engaging in personal therapy. Psychotherapists also commonly express a need to help and understand others, for autonomy, for (safe)

intimacy, intellectual stimulation, self-growth and healing (Farber, *et al.*, 2005:1026-102). Abel and Louw (2009:104-105) reported that approximately half of registered counsellors in their (and other) research studies, “intended to qualify as a psychologist at a later stage.”

The advice from the psychology department at the University of Pretoria (2014:20) to those who fail to get into a professional training programme (e.g. MA Clinical Psychology, or MA Counselling Psychology), is to not get discouraged. Instead they should explore the “numerous other options that are available after the completion of a bachelor’s and/or honours degree as they have already learned many skills that are relevant to different work environments” (UP, 2014:20).

The researcher points out that this requires that registered counsellors should make a shift in their career goals after 5-7 years of studying within a certain path, which affects one’s identity. While there is no fixed “self” within a Gestalt perspective for instance, such a long period of contact within an educational and professional training cycle, would have a significant impact on the personality function (Ginger, 2007:41, 44). This personality function is seen by Ginger (2007:44) as the “foundation from which desire emerges” and includes one’s personality history and self-image. Ginger (2007:44) argued that the interpretation of the learning and professional experiences will update one’s self-image. The researcher expects that this updating of identity would actually not be that easy for everyone.

From a Practical theology viewpoint the task of facilitating change is however a response to the challenges people faces in society (De Klerk, De Wet & Pieterse, 2012:5). Registered counsellors are faced with difficult career choices. They need to find ways to adapt and accept their realities which includes dealing with the spiritual implications of what they believe God’s (or their Ultimate Transcendence’s) role in closing doors may be. Career choices involve various challenges to registered counsellors’ global meaning systems which also impact perceptions of the self and their goals. Registered counsellors can also be influenced by a sense of calling in both a general sense as well as in a more specific, vocational context.

The following researchers from various universities have studied the profession of registered counselling in the last decade:

- a) Psychologists: Dr. Diane Elkonin; Ms. Alida Sandison; Prof. Johann Louw; Prof. Gertie Pretorius; Prof. Inge Petersen; Prof. Vera Roos; and Dr. Elizabeth du Preez;
- b) Students completing a Master level dissertation (not found in the HPCSA register as practicing psychologists or other categories (HPCSA, 2014b): Lynn Meagan Kotze and Bianca Joseph;
- c) A student completing research at Honours/B.Psych level (not found on the HPCSA register in any category within psychology (HPCSA, 2014b): Esther Abel.

The research topics were:

- a) From an academic perspective around the training;
- b) development of professional identity;
- c) perception of counsellors regarding the profession;
- d) perception of counsellors' competencies; and
- e) counsellors' employment patterns.

It appears that the research on the profession of registered counselling was mostly conducted by psychologists and students. There seems to be a gap in the literature when it comes to research conducted by registered counsellors, who have practiced within the profession. Furthermore, the research has been focussed on the development and success or lack of success, of the registration category. The one study regarding identity development was focussed on a group of B.Psych students who were preparing for a career as registered counsellors. No research was found that sought to help registered counsellors to cope with the reality of their professional identities within the field, possible struggles, or their sense of calling from God (the Ultimate Transcendent).

1.2.2 The profession of Psychology and Play Therapy

There are various professionals that work with children. Educational psychologists' (trained within the educational department) work with children is focussed within the

educational context, while clinical psychologists (trained within the psychology department) may work on developmental levels of all people within a wide variety of difficulties, maladjustments and pathologies (UP, 2014: 23). Play therapy is linked to a master's degree within the Department of Social Work (UP, 2014: 23). Consequently registered counsellors, who have completed the Masters level training in Gestalt play therapy, remain registered counsellors who have to work more on a preventative mental health level and cannot call themselves "play therapists" in the same way that a social worker could (Bloem, 2012). (cf. section 2.3.1)

At the end of the training, it is the Scope of practice within the profession of Psychology that directs registered counsellors' activities, which is not expanded by the Masters level training in Gestalt play therapy (Bloem, 2012; Temane, 2012). The Centre for Child, Youth and Family studies (NWU, 2011:1) offered this Masters/PhD training since 2001, and from 2011 at NWU itself. At this point in time (from 2014), the course materials have been changed towards including various theoretical approaches and are only open to Social Workers (NWU, 2014:1). This is consequently another avenue of further studies that have been closed to registered counsellors.

1.2.3 Professional identity

The notion of a unified self with qualities of sameness and consistency over time, that emerged from both William James' (Hakola, 2009:8) and Erikson's (Hakola, 2009:6; Schachter, 2004:168; Schachter, 2005:141) theories, have been called into question by the "diverse social realities" of the day (Schachter, 2005:141). The postmodern context of the day is characterized by rapid social change and the postmodern individual is accordingly "embedded in multiple contexts with multiple affiliations to different, sometimes contradicting, social groups" (Schachter, 2005:141).

Using Erikson's term "configuration" of multiple identifications, Schachter (2005:193) describes different ways in which individuals can construct identity. In the context of strong conflicting demands from the self *versus* the environment, Schachter (2005:193) finds that the variation "may be guided by a person's particular objective regarding his or her preferred structure of identity", even while "guided by both a need for wholeness and a

need for consistency”. This echoes the “self-verification theory” which postulates that an individual has “a prior preference” regarding his/her identity, for which verification is sought (Rubineau, 2007:5).

1.2.4 Professional identity development of counsellors

The professional identities that counsellors develop are self-conceptualizations that “serve as frames of reference” for their counselling roles; decisions; attitudes concerning responsibilities and ethics; modes of thinking; and patterns of problem solving (Auxier, Hughes & Kline, 2003:25; Brott & Myers, 1999:145-146; Luke & Goodrich, 2010:57; Gibson, Dollarhide & Moss, 2010:21). These professional identities develop through integration of a counsellor’s personal self (including values and personal attributes) and the professional self that emerges from their training (Moss, Gibson & Dollarhide, 2014:3). Before counsellors can validate their own identities, they are reliant on the external validation from “peers, professors, supervisors [and other] counsellors” (Gibson *et al.*, 2010:28).

In this context it becomes difficult to develop such a professional identity, in light of the newness of the field, the mixed feelings about the category of registered counsellors among themselves as well as psychologists, and the public’s lack of awareness about the profession (cf. Elkonin & Sandison, 2006:607; Joseph, 2007:83-84).

The development of registered counsellors’ professional identities, in the eyes of the wider public, remains up to themselves (Viljoen, 2012). In light of the specialization field (play therapy) serving as “enhancing value to their profession,” rather than referring to an additional professional registration (Bloem, 2012; Viljoen, 2012), students may benefit from specific exploration and activities to help them develop and/or enhance their professional identities. While this study is focused on registered counsellors specializing in Gestalt Play therapy, it may also be pertinent to registered counsellors in general, as well as those in other specialization fields, such as pastoral counselling.

1.2.5 Gestalt theory and identity formation

As a product of natural Gestalt figure formation, the configured self as a “possible” or “ideal” self (Polster, 2005:24-25; 50), may relate to the formation of professional identity among counsellors. Polster (2005:32-37) describes the integration of self-formation as taking place via the process of introjections, in an “introjections triad of contact, configuration, and tailoring”. No specific research from a Gestalt framework was found that relates to professional identity development in any profession.

1.2.6 Pastoral and spiritual counselling

Pastoral therapy is described by Louw (1998:12, 19) as the development of a “constructive understanding of God in order to encourage growth in faith and to impart meaning and hope”, by means of functions such as healing, sustaining, guiding, and reconciling. Osmer (2008:28-29) speaks of pastoral guidance as mediation between God and his people (who are imitating Christ), through the functions of priestly listening, kingly judgment in interpretation and guiding believers to live under God’s rule, prophetic discernment (related to hearing God within a current reality), in a pragmatic form of transforming, and servant leadership.

Spirituality within the Gestalt therapeutic circles frequently puts Christianity next to other belief systems (especially Eastern), that negate theism (Brownell, 2010b:115; Ingersoll, 2005:136).

In contrast Brownell (2010b:115) embraces the transcendent and immanent God, separate from the life of human beings but involved with them in ongoing relationship. People can only know themselves in “harmony with the (pneumal) field of which God is involved” (Brownell, 2010b:117). Brownell (2010b:117-118) concurs with Benner (2004:20) that “Christian spirituality involves a transformation of the self that occurs only when God and self are both deeply known.”

Brownell (2010b:118) describes crucial moments in the course of therapy that may arise, in which an addressing of the spiritual, may lead to a client connecting with God. According to Benner (2004:20) “Dialogue in gestalt therapy (becomes) an ethical

practice” as each person is “received” as a unique human being, and Brownell (2010b:109, 116-117) adds that a contact interruption consist of “hardening” (resistance of belief and determination to not hear God) within the contact cycle. In Norberg’s (2006:12) words, one is to “get out of the way of what God is already doing in a person.” This has also been the experience of the researcher in private practice. As people are able to resolve the interruptions or modifications to their contact within the awareness or experience cycle, they may become more open to a relationship with God.

Pastoral counselling is anchored within its normative Scriptural basis as the source of truth (Breed, 2013:1). Lotter (2001:328; 2004:3) emphasizes the need to work from a Scriptural and not solely from a psychological point of departure (cf. Breed, 2013:1). The question is what God’s will for the client is and joining the conversation that God has with this person (Breed, 2013:1-2). Honouring God is always part of the pastoral counselling goal which happens for instance as a client (registered counsellor) grows in his or her relationship with God, bears more of the fruit of the spirit, lives more in love, and partakes in kingdom work (cf. Breed, 2013:5).

1.2.7 Spirituality and identity formation of registered counsellors

In both the Biblically based systemic model of Joubert (2006) and the bio-psycho-social-spiritual model proposed in working towards the well-being of South Africans by Van Niekerk and Prins (2001:77), there is room for the practitioner’s as well as client’s spiritual belief system within the profession of psychology. Integrating the Christian faith into psychological counselling practice is a significant contemporary development (Tan, 2011: Loc 8596, 8603; Tan 2003:14). Within this process the integration that takes place intrapersonally, when psychological and Christian spiritual experience are appropriated, is foundational (Tan, 2011:loc 8654, 8658).

Christians in the registered counselling profession may relate their professional work to a “calling” as “a lifelong pursuit”, which Scott (2007:262; 276) found linked to an essential connection with others as well as a re-creating of the “self” in the repositioning of one’s relationship to an occupation.

The Gestalt approach is based on a field perspective that encompasses “the entire situation of the therapist, the client, and all that goes on between them” (more fluent than systems), which is dialogical and relational at its core (Brownell, 2010b:103, 108-110). Brownell (2010b:110) goes on to cite Paul Tillich as describing God as “the ground of all being”. Embracing a theistic spirituality, Brownell (2010b:115) accepts the existence of God as a Being who is both transcendent and immanent. The “Cure” within Gestalt therapy is found not in “consciousness of self but (in) the spontaneity of contacting the other...” (Lobb, 2005:35). When embedded in a theistic theology, a dialogic relationship in which one can hear God, emerges (Brownell, 2010b:110).

From a Gestalt perspective spirituality relates to the experience of the “self” (identity) and an intentional attitude that “opens up increasing vistas in the horizon of a person’s life” (Brownell, 2010a:24, 38). In this way one’s self identity and activities as professional counsellors (or any other career), cannot be separated from one’s total field of experience. Brownell’s (2012) approach accordingly integrates a theistic Biblical belief system with Gestalt therapy.

From a scientific pastoral perspective, Breed (2013:5) describes a guiding motivation in research to be the question of how to guide a person towards fulfilling their created purpose as image bearers of Jesus Christ. Spirituality from a pastoral perspective, involves the practice of the Christian faith and obedience within the presence of God, as an ongoing process of becoming who one already is in Christ (Louw, 1998:19). There is an eschatological focus within pastoral counselling rather than an integration of psychological practice and biblical belief.

1.2.8 Spirituality and a sense of being called or having a vocation

Spirituality can be closely knit into a person’s career and professional identity through the vehicle of calling. The working definition of calling by Dik and Duffy (2009:427) has formed the basis of much research, and states that:

A calling is a transcendent summons, experienced as originating beyond the self, to approach a particular life role in a manner oriented toward

demonstrating or deriving a sense of purpose or meaningfulness and that holds other-oriented values and goals as primary sources of motivation.

The source of the calling according to the research of Dik and Duffy (2009:427) can be one's experience of God, the needs of society and "serendipitous fate" whilst some report multiple sources. Calling is related to the meaningfulness and purpose of life itself and mediates the experience of stability and coherence in life (cf. Duffy & Dik, 2013:428-429). Word (2012:150) points out that it's not spirituality *per sé* but the awareness of the "connection between job tasks, spirituality and organizational outcomes," that can be linked to a likelihood of higher job satisfaction.

Not everybody is religious or spiritual, and many identify more with "vocation". According to Dik and Duffy (2009:428) vocation can be defined as:

...an approach to a particular life role that is oriented towards demonstrating or deriving a sense of purpose or meaningfulness and that holds other-oriented values and goals as a primary source of motivation.

In contrast Scott (2007:263) points out that "vocation" comes from the Latin "vocare" which originally meant "a call", though most Protestants have come to use "calling" since the Reformation.

- "Vocation" has become restricted to paid work or work within the church, while "calling" encompasses a whole range of sacred and secular occupations as well as relationships (Scott, 2007:264).
- Calling emerges from "an ongoing dialogue between self and God and self and other" around the questions, "Who am I" and "With whom am I" (Scott, 2007:269). Furthermore "calling" not only helps one to distinguish between intrinsic and extrinsic motives (i.e. the "bottom line"), but "we recreate ourselves when we reposition our relationship to work" (Scott, 2007:270, 276).

1.2.9 Exploring the professional identity of registered counsellors and spirituality

While there is a subset of registered counsellors who specialize in Pastoral counselling (1.7% of the sample in Abel & Louw's study, 2009:103), there were none amongst the

researcher's fellow-students. Registered Counselling is a profession which is not linked to any specific belief system, but to Psychology as profession, as was mentioned in the introduction.

From a professional stance, not all registered counsellors will consider clients' spiritual needs and functioning together with their psychological, interpersonal and physiological realities (Joubert, 2006:51-57). A small percentage may fill both a psychological and a pastoral role, as defined by their scope of practice within the profession of psychology (Cooper & Nicholas, 2012:96; Pretorius, 2012b:512). Yet believers who enter the profession may have a sense of being called to it by God, whether they incorporate spirituality in their work or not. Lastly not all clients will seek a spiritual or pastoral component to their counselling.

Christian registered counsellors within the research population face the challenges of fitting in the Gestalt play therapy techniques learnt into their scope of practice while developing a professional identity within their profession, at the same time aligning them also to the call of God they may sense.

1.2.10 Exploring the current situation and a way forward in terms of identity formation

The researcher expects that these difficulties (as discussed in section 1.2) would interfere with the process of professional counsellor identity development as described by Gibson, *et al.* (2010:28-29) in terms of:

- a) transformational tasks;
- b) professional identity developmental tasks; and
- c) the "transformational process across time and experience".

When registered counsellors are not at ease with their self identity, the researcher also expects it to interfere with the ability to make contact with God on a vertical level and with others (including other professionals and clients) on a horizontal level. This opinion is based on the experience of the researcher in practice as well as the description of Scholl

and Smith-Adcock (2006/2007:15) related to counsellors' needing to be able to meet others in intimacy and interdependency.

McLaughlin and Boettcher (2009:134-138, 140) advise the use of counsellors' understanding of group cohesion and group dynamics, towards building a distinctive, cohesive identity, with an unwavering commitment, unity of purpose and politics. Registered counsellors face the choice of leaving the profession, or actively taking part in the formation of their own professional counsellor identities. Specializing in an as-yet unrecognized field of speciality (Play therapy) may further complicate their professional identity formation.

1.2.11 Emerging question

The question emerges as to how the registered counsellors specializing in Gestalt play therapy experience the development of their professional identities, as well as to how they can be helped in this process of identity development. Further questions as to how Christian registered counsellors' faith or belief influences their experiences differently, flow from the first. The researcher proposes to explore these questions and to develop a pastoral counselling program utilizing spiritual principles as well as Gestalt principles of self-formation, towards this purpose. It may lead to not "losing them" to "the profession", in the words of Abel and Louw (2009:106).

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTION

The question to be answered by this research is:

How can registered counsellors specializing in Gestalt Play therapy be helped through pastoral and Gestalt principles around self-formation, in the development of their professional identities?

1.4 FURTHER RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Further questions emerging from the research question, are:

- How do registered counsellors specializing in Gestalt Play therapy experience the development of their professional identities?
- Which over-arching principles could guide registered counsellors specializing in Gestalt Play therapy, in the development of their professional identities?
- Which Biblical and pastoral principles could guide the subset of Christian registered counsellors within this population specializing in Gestalt Play therapy, in the development of their professional identities?
- How do registered counsellors specializing in Gestalt Play therapy experience the development of their professional identities after implementation of the experiential reflections?
- How can registered counsellors specializing in Gestalt Play therapy (or other specializations) in future be aided in the development of their professional identities, through the use of pastoral counselling and Gestalt self-formation principles as well as spiritual principles (based on the findings of this study)?

1.5 AIM AND OBJECTIVES

1.5.1 Aim

The main aim of this study is to develop a pastoral counselling program around professional identity development which utilizes Gestalt principles of self-formation as well as spiritual principles, for registered counsellors specializing in Gestalt Play therapy.

1.5.2 Objectives

The specific objectives of the study are:

- To find out and understand how registered counsellors specializing in Gestalt Play Therapy, experience their professional identity development.
- To identify through an interdisciplinary literature search, how registered counsellors specializing in Gestalt Play therapy could develop their professional identities.
- To identify and implement Biblical and pastoral principles into a program, to aid the subset of Christian registered counsellors specializing in Gestalt Play therapy.
- To find out and understand how registered counsellors specializing in Gestalt Play therapy, experience their professional identity development after the implementation of the Gestalt experimental mediations.
- To develop a pastoral counselling program that utilizes Gestalt principles of self-formation, around professional identity development as well as spiritual principles within the findings of this study, for the professional identity development of registered counsellors specializing in Gestalt Play therapy (or other specializations).

1.6 CENTRAL THEORETICAL ARGUMENT

The central theoretical argument of this study is that a pastoral counselling process utilizing Gestalt principles around self-formation as well as spiritual principles, will aid registered counsellors specializing in Gestalt Play Therapy, to develop their professional identities.

1.7 METHODOLOGY

1.7.1 Meta-theoretical assumptions

The meta-theoretical assumptions that researchers' have will direct their understanding of research problems, their choice of research paradigms, the way they make use of other

disciplines, as well as their interpretive actions (Breed, 2013:7; De Klerk, *et al.*, 2012:2-3). It is therefore important to reflect on, as well as give an account of these meta-theoretical assumptions.

From a Reformational perspective, theology has to do with the study of God while we can only know Him as He reveals himself and as we interpret his actions (De Klerk *et al.*, 2012:3). *Practical theology* deals with “the concrete praxis of faith” (Immink, 2005:97, 158, 179) and is concerned with believers within their churches and within society, who arrange their lives around the Christian tradition (De Klerk, *et al.*, 2012:3).

According to Osmer (2006:327), “practical theology constructs action-guiding theories of Christian praxis in particular social contexts based on four interwoven forms of research and scholarship – the descriptive-empirical, the interpretive, the normative and the pragmatic.” Practical theology can be distinguished from other disciplines in the way that it holds these four tasks or dimensions, in mutually influential positions within a hermeneutical circle (Osmer, 2006:330).

Modern practical theology has a foundation in Schleiermacher’s conceptualization of “the praxis of a person’s life” being the object of study (Müller, 2013:2). Included in this exploration is the question about how Christians “make sense of life” and “successfully cope with life” (Müller, 2013:2).

Pastoral care aims to guide believers, through the powerful work of the Holy Spirit, towards a deeper knowing of God and themselves, and to grow in their faith (Breed, 2013:4). Living within the security of the unconditional love of God the Father (versus self-acceptance), believers are helped to renew their minds (Rm 12:2) in a way that their behaviours can change, towards spiritual growth and dealing with the crises’ of life (Breed, 2013:2, 4). Within this tradition, the overall purpose of pastoral research projects includes helping people to grow and fulfil the call on their lives (Breed, 2013:5). Pastoral theology is therefore more specifically focussed on God’s interaction with believers in their daily lives.

The researcher accepts the truth of Scripture as the foundation and measuring line for other truths within her personal worldview.

- She interacts with Jesus Christ as the Son of God and her personal Saviour, and believes that He was sent to earth by the Father to enter into covenantal relationships with those who choose to accept Him.
- The researcher furthermore believes that the Holy Spirit guides her in her general life, her counselling practices, her counselees as well as her interpretive actions within research explorations.

These assumptions relate to the normative and ethical nature of a Biblical worldview or Reformation theology (De Klerk, *et al.*, 2012:2-4; Pieterse, 2011:722-724). Such assumptions are interwoven in believers' interpretation of Scripture within the praxis as well as interpretation of reality (Osmer, 2008:10; Pieterse, 2011:724).

At the same time the researcher finds herself living and counselling clients within a postmodern world, with one foot in the practical theological discipline and the other in psychology. It is thus important to explore the different ontological and epistemological roots and views further.

1.7.2 Philosophical paradigm and interpretive framework

The starting point of research for Grix (2002:177) is *ontology*, which describes one's view on "the nature of reality and being" or "the nature of reality" (Ponterotto, 2005:130-131). Grix (2002:177) describes ontology (paradigms) as "the image of social reality" or what we believe about that social reality. *Epistemology* that flows from ontology is concerned with "the possible ways of gaining knowledge of social reality" (Grix, 2002:177).

The *constructivist (interpretivist) paradigm* assumes a position which assumes the existence of multiple realities which are equally valid (Ponterotto, 2005:129). *Gestalt ontology* perceives reality as a process in which things and people exist in relation to others within ongoing change, and in which cause and effect do not necessarily explain perceived or experiential truth (Brownell, Meara & Polák., 2008:14-15). Wheeler (2008:32-39) describes the *Gestalt ontology* as a constructivist field perspective, thus relativistic and also interpretational or phenomenological (De Vos, Strydom, Schulze & Patel, 2011:8).

Constructivism refers to the way individuals perceive and construct their worlds, while social constructionism focuses on how these meanings and realities are formed within and by communities within specific cultural settings (Galvin, s.a.:56). This may foster *relativism* or the view that there is no real truth, which by implication could question the existence of God and the foundations or given state of the Christian faith (Park, S.K, 2010:1). Galivn (s.a.:56) argues that while theology holds constructed claims of reality, they are relevant within the communities of faith that they originate from, while there remains essential truth such as the laws of science.

The *research space* from an epistemological view is co-created by the researcher and participants who are all changed through the dialogical interaction (Ponterotto, 2005:131). In order to engage in interdisciplinary research between psychology and theology, Van Huyssteen (2000:429) makes use of the construct of *transversal reasoning* according to which there are different but yet equally legitimate perceptions and approaches within different disciplines (Park, S.K, 2010:2). The point of intersection within the overlap and diversion of disciplines is called the “ecotone” by Müller (2011a:4). Post-foundational theology emerges in the space (“ecotone”) between the extremes of “absolutism and the relativism of extreme forms of pluralism” (Van Huyssteen, 2000:430). Van Huyssteen (2000:427-430) counters foundationalism and non-foundationalism with post-foundationalism. In this way post-foundational theology acknowledges both the role of the context, of interpreted experience as well as the role of tradition which shape religious values (Park, S.K., 2010:2).

It is within this transversal space of interdisciplinary research (cf. Van Huyssteen cited by Osmer, 2006:341) that the researcher is positioning herself. The specific space (“ecotone”) that encompasses this study involves dialogue between the disciplines of Reformation theology, the field constructivism underlying Gestalt, together with the social constructivism underlying the formation of the “self” or “identity” within a professional community.

1.7.3 Axiology

Axiology refers to the role and impact of the researcher's values on the process of research (Ponterotto, 2005:131). The researcher concurs with the constructivist-interpretivist point of view that her values and lived experience cannot be "divorced from the research process" (Ponterotto, 2005:131). Values and lived experience are to be acknowledged, described and bracketed without denial (cf. Ponterotto, 2005:131).

The components of reformation theology and psychology are deeply interwoven within the researcher's life. Apart from her academic interest in both fields, she has also pursued her own growth and healing within both as well as making use of paradigms from both in her ministry and counselling to others. This research project was birthed in her own personal journey as well as her empathy with other registered counsellors she has been in relationship with.

The researcher's interests and goals within the field of psychology were to become a psychologist from her second year within her teaching degree (age 19). Along the way in this journey she pursued her own growth and explored various options, such as industrial psychology and educational psychology. The researcher didn't find it a good fit, as she didn't have enough passion or interest to complete a B.Com and stay working in related office management and bookkeeping work.

The B.Psych through the Institute of Christian Psychology opened the door to study in her field of passion on a part-time basis. Not having the financial support or means that a full-time professional masters' degree entails, she didn't try to apply until she was registered as a counsellor with the option of more flexible working hours. The researcher enjoys being a registered counsellor trained to utilize and integrate theology and psychological counselling. The perfect professional master's degree training would have been in Christian psychology which is not possible in South Africa. She decided in 2012 not to reapply for a professional master's degree in either clinical or counselling psychology. At that time she then entered another cycle of re-evaluating God's will and purposes ("calling") for her life in conjunction with her own career and personal goals. This included a surrendering to God in a process of allowing Him to shape her identity and future.

1.7.4 Qualitative research

The constructivist, interpretational or hermeneutical and postfoundational worldviews and ontological perspectives are the birthplace of qualitative research (Barber & Brownell, 2008:28). According to the postmodern paradigms “reality can only be known by those who experience it personally” (Delpont, Fouché & Schurink, 2011:311).

Qualitative research can be characterised as follows (Barber & Brownell, 2008:38-40; Fouché & Delpont 2011:64-66):

- Reality is [viewed as] socially constructed and known through lived experience in which the researcher and subject influence one another;
- The focus of inquiry is a “detailed description of social reality” through a “rich and complex exploration of the experience of a small number of individuals;
- Research is conducted within participants’ natural worlds and actual lives;
- The researcher embraces the role of *researcher as instrument*, incorporating his or her experience as participant to the process, as all observation and interpretation is influenced to some degree by the perceptual and judgmental processes of the observer;
- Data or constructs that emerge is “emic”, unique to a social and cultural context that is not universally generalisable.
- Participants’ natural language is used to come to a genuine understanding of their world;
- The research design is flexible and unique and evolves throughout the research process. There are no fixed steps that should be followed and design cannot be exactly replicated.

Qualitative researchers prefer “to capture the lived experience of participants in order to understand their meaning perspectives, case by case” (Janesick, 2000:395). Working qualitatively within the “ecotone” or transversal space with contextual stories examined from different perspectives, crystallization will be used as methodological path.

1.7.5 Crystallization as methodology

Crystallization allows the construction and articulation of “multiple lived truths” while bringing “different forms of data and analysis”, together with “different genres and forms of sense making within interpretive methodology” (Ellingson, 2009:xi, xii). These multiple lived truths include different experiences of spirituality within this study.

Crystallization originated in the work of sociologist Laurel Richardson (Ellingson, 2009:3) as a “postmodernist deconstruction of triangulation.” The method goes beyond the traditional triangulation of method as “there are far more than three sides by which to approach the world” (Richardson, 2000:13). The image of the crystal is reflective of the “symmetry and substances with an infinite variety of shapes, substances, transmutations, multidimensionality, and angles of approach” (Richardson, 2000:13). Aside from growing and changing, crystals are the following according to Richardson (2000:13):

...prisms that reflect externalities and refract within themselves... crystallization provides us with a deepened, complex, thoroughly partial understanding of the topic. Paradoxically, we know more and doubt what we know. Ingeniously, we know there is always more to know.

Richardson (2000:9) bases her work on post-structuralism that “points to the continual co-creation of Self and social science; they are known through each other” and which invites one to explore “new ways of knowing.” Crystallization reflects postmodern thinking and social constructivism as well as critical paradigms (Ellingson, 2009:4, 22). Knowledge is produced and represented across “multiple points of the qualitative continuum” and reflect multiple and “contrasting ways of knowing,” including the “middle-ground” constructivism (Ellingson, 2009:10).

- In utilizing crystallization in this study the researcher will firstly use different methods: 1) a colloquium; 2) an individual interview with one participant, followed by 3) semi-structured questionnaires (using psychometric instruments from research literature). The use of established scales enhances the validity of the data. The next step in this study will involve the implementation of experiential reflections (originally referred to as meditations). Participant one’s voice is heard throughout the research process phases, and the study is concluded by a “post-intervention” narrative (chapter 5).

- Descriptions in this study are “thickened,” to use the words of Müller (2004:300, 303), through interdisciplinary voices. Storied moments from the life of a pastoral counsellor are also included within this study, and an expert opinion is given after participating in the experiential reflections (meditations), by a psychologist (chapters 2 & 5).

Crystallization accommodates a “wide range of methods, practices and perspectives,” while involving “multi-genre representations” (Ellingson, 2009:4-5). According to Richardson (2000:11) “Creative Analytical Practice Ethnography” includes “evocative representations” such as auto-ethnography and poetry, and deploys “literary devices to recreate lived experience and evoke emotional responses.”

Auto-ethnography is described by Richardson (2000:11) as “highly personalized, revealing texts in which authors tell stories of their own lived experiences, relating the personal to the cultural.” “Writing stories” on the other hand, refer to narratives about the writing process that situate an author’s writing in his or her contexts such as academic background and personal history.

- Aside from the researcher being a research instrument and incorporating her participative experience in Gestalt terms (Barber & Brownell, 2008:39), crystallization “include(s) a significant degree of reflexive consideration of the researcher’s self and roles throughout the research process” (Ellingson, 2009:10). As the project was birthed in the researcher’s personal experiences as registered counsellor within the wider context of her walk with God and career development, the researcher will account for these experiences using both “writing stories” within text and “interludes” in the style of auto-ethnography.

1.7.6 Snapshots and storied theology

Alongside a shift in focus towards individuals, there is also a shifting focus towards “the person of the practical theologian” before zooming out beyond towards the collective (Pienaar & Müller, 2012:3-4). In this way the practical theologian’s “life becomes an artwork in the ecotone” (Pienaar & Müller, 2012:3-4). It is thus the life stories of individuals and groups of people, together with the life story of the practical theologian

within the transitional space, that are to be told through the qualitative method (Pienaar & Müller, 2012:6-7).

Stories form a vehicle through which we both share or tell of our “experiences and realities” and construct them, and in so-doing form and re-form our “selves” or identities (Pienaar & Müller, 2012:6). In the words of psychologist Shelley Day Sclater (2003:317) “we become who we are through telling stories about our lives and living these stories well.” Whether one would consider selves to be constructed, revealed or more concealed by stories, narrated stories form a dynamic practice that is “uniquely individual, yet social, cultural and interpersonal, within a transitional creative space similar to the transitional phenomenon of Winnicott” (Sclater, 2003:318, 321, 327). Transitional phenomenon refers to a third area or mode of experience beyond the external and internal reality, in which a teddy bear for instance, becomes the repository for loving and angry feelings to a young child – a practice ground for relationships (Caldwell & Joyce, 2011:100-102; Coppolillo, 1976:36). According to Gergan the telling of a personal story “is to take up a moral position – it is to make a claim for a particular moral dimension of the self” (Sclater, 2003:320).

McClendon (2002:158) finds narratives or stories to be “uniquely suited... to Christian theology” and coins the term “story theology.” Through attending to “lived lives” of others one’s own theology can become reformed (McClendon, 2002:22). There is a demand on the “character of the theologian” as well as the readers to “find ourselves, our own true selves, in the meeting with God which Christian faith celebrates,” and moving beyond the examination of the lives of others, to examining our own lives (McClendon, 2002:171). Theologian James McClendon (2002:22) takes an interest in these values as the Christian beliefs, which he describes as “living convictions which give shape to actual lives and actual communities.”

In this study snapshots of the researcher’s and participants’ life stories will emerge as it relates to the research aims. Their stories were not elicited within the methodology of narrative psychology or narrative theology. From a Gestalt perspective there is no “true self” just as there is no “fixed self” (Polster, 2005:4, 25-27; Wheeler, 2008:27-28), and the researcher embraces the examination of moments in her own life as well as in the lives of

her research population. These life experiences reflect a part of her life before God, and similar themes are expected to emerge from the research participants.

1.7.7 Research design in its context

The study and its application within a Christian context will be placed within the practical theological frame of Richard Osmer (2008:4). Osmer (2006:328) describes the construction of the “action-guiding theories of Christian praxis in particular social contexts, [as] based on four interrelated forms of research and scholarship” or tasks. They are the descriptive-empirical task, the interpretive task, the normative task and the pragmatic task (Osmer, 2006:328; Osmer, 2008:11, 20). These tasks function in a constant spiral circling from the one to the other, within its different focal points with the central task of pastoral guidance being interpretation (Osmer, 2008:11, 20).

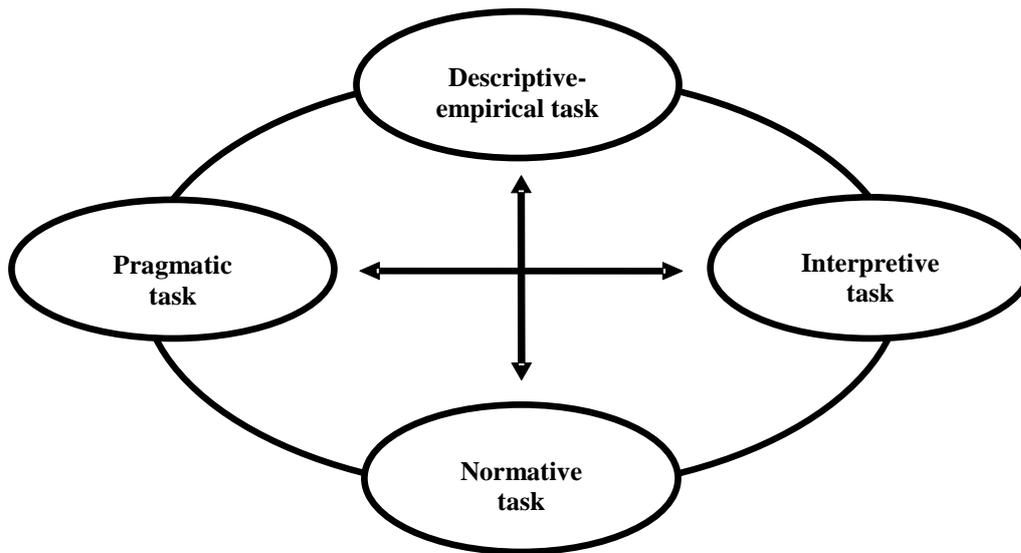


Figure 1.1: Osmer’s (2008:4) four tasks of practical theological interpretation

Within the cycle of practical theological as well as methodological tasks (Osmer, 2008:11, 20), initial information gathered through the literature study, initial interviews and Scripture, will inform the process of the unfolding research process. The elements of thought and process of the post-foundational practical theological paradigm of Julian Müller (2004:300) will also be interwoven within the practical theological tasks of Osmer

(2008:4). Müller (2004:300-304) describes the **seven movements** for practical theological research process within post-foundational practical theology:

- i. A specific context is described;
- ii. In-context experiences are listened to and described;
- iii. Interpretations of experiences are made, described and developed in collaboration with “co-researchers”;
- iv. A description of experiences as it is continually informed by traditions of interpretation (referring to specific discourses/traditions in certain communities that inform perceptions and behaviour);
- v. A reflection on God’s presence as it is understood and experienced in a specific situation;
- vi. A description of experience, thickened through interdisciplinary investigation;
- vii. The development of alternative interpretations that point beyond the local community (relating to deconstruction and emancipation).

1.7.7.1 The descriptive-empirical task

The gathering of information regarding “patterns and dynamics” related to professional identity development of registered counsellors, relates to the **descriptive-empirical research task** (Osmer, 2008:4). Within this task is a “form of priestly listening grounded in a spirituality of presence” (Osmer, 2008:28).

The descriptive-empirical research task can also be approached from the first two of the **seven movements** described by Müller (2004:300-304) for a practical theological research process within post-foundational practical theology. A specific context is described, after which in-context experiences are listened to and described.

Expanding on this process, Müller (2004:300) calls for the further development of interpretation and description of experiences in collaboration with participants as “co-researchers” (movement three).

1.7.7.2 The interpretive task

The **interpretive research task** is described by Osmer (2008:4) as an interdisciplinary study, which in this case will be of professional identity development as it relates to registered counselling (specializing in Gestalt Play therapy) as profession, as well as the constructs of calling and vocation, so as to better understand it.

Expanding on this process, Müller (2004:300) finds that description of experiences are to be continually informed by traditions of interpretation, referring to specific discourses/traditions in certain communities that inform perceptions and behaviour (movement four). The descriptions of experience are then thickened through interdisciplinary investigation (movement five) (Müller, 2004:300).

1.7.7.3 The normative task

The **normative research task** describes the use of theological concepts for an interpretive frame and the construction of ethical norms to guide “good practice” (Osmer, 2008:4). In this study an exegetical study about God’s calling, as it may relate to work and/or calling, will be undertaken. Osmer (2008:29) furthermore describes this task as a form of prophetic discernment in which people are guided “to hear God in their particular circumstances.” This is congruent with the dialogic and relational spirituality described by Brownell (2010b:108-110) according to which people are guided within the Gestalt praxis to hear God and relate to Him.

The fifth movement of Müller’s (2004:300) research process involves a reflection on God’s presence as it is understood and experienced in a specific situation. From this perspective the research participants’ understanding may be similar or totally different towards the theistic interpretation that the researcher holds.

1.7.7.4 The pragmatic task

The **pragmatic task** is described by Osmer (2008:29) as “a form of transforming leadership grounded in spirituality of servant leadership.” The pragmatic task of the

research (Osmer, 2008:4) will be concluded in the writing up of the research findings as a program of intervention, and the formulation and implementation of a strategy or action plan that may benefit other groups of registered counsellors in the future, in terms of their professional role identity.

“Strategies of action” with a desirable influence into the situation, will emerge from the research, leading to a “reflective conversation” within the field (Osmer, 2008:4). This entails the **pragmatic task** and can be linked to Müller’s (2004:300) seventh movement. According to Müller’s (2004:300) depiction of the research process, the movements culminate in the development of alternative interpretations that point beyond the local community. These tasks relate to deconstruction and emancipation.

1.7.8 Population and sample relating to the “moment of praxis”

The population for this study consist of registered counsellors who have enrolled for the Gestalt Play Therapy training on a Masters or PhD level. This training has been presented by The Centre for Child, Youth and Family studies since 2001, and from 2011 at NWU itself (NWU, 2011:1). The sampling strategy is a combination of purposive sampling (participants are deemed to represent the chosen population) and volunteer sampling within the population approached (Strydom & Delport, 2011:392, 394). The researcher assumes that participants within this chosen population represent registered counsellors who are not satisfied to stay with their B.Psych, B.Ed (Psychology) or BA Honours (Psychology) training and who want to pursue further studies. Most of these counsellors have a strong focus on working with children specifically. Three students, who enrolled with the researcher in 2012, have been accepted into directed master’s degrees towards becoming psychologists (while others have indicated that they will still re-apply for entrance into these training programs).

At the end of 2012 a colloquium was arranged amongst the students who were in their first year of their Gestalt Play Therapy training, with twelve participants. Six of them registered with the HPCSA during the course of 2012, while four counsellors registered between 2006 and 2011. One counsellor registered in 2013, and two participants have not been able

to complete their internships with UNISA who place the B.Psych training program on hold till 2016.

A list of current and previous students was obtained through the Centre for Child, Youth and Family studies, and one hundred and five registered counsellors were approached via Electronic Mail and/or text messages (SMS) in 2013, to participate in the study.

- Twenty two completed questionnaires were received. One questionnaire was also completed by a BTh (theology) graduate (completing the Masters degree in Gestalt Therapy) who didn't follow the Psychology route, for qualitative comparison purposes. Seventeen of the twenty two participants within the psychology stream have been registered with the HPCSA while five have not yet been registered (mostly through lack of internship completion).
- Four of the participants went on to complete the experiential reflections (meditations); one registered counsellor (registered with the HPCSA) in a face to face setting; two registered counsellors (registered with the HPCSA) via Electronic Mail; and one registered counsellor (who is not yet registered with the HPCSA) via a Skype call.
- Seven of the twelve colloquium participants completed questionnaires, and two of these seven went on to complete the experiential reflections (originally referred to as mediations in the process of this research).

1.7.9 Validity or trustworthiness of research

Validity within qualitative research has to do with the credibility of the description as there are more than one way to interpret events and no claim to one "truth" (Janesick, 2000:393). The degree to which the researcher and the participants are in agreement of the meaning of a description or interpretation can be an indicator of validity (DiFabio & Maree, 2012:139). In order to gauge validity, member checks were conducted before the study was completed (Janesick, 2000:393).

The researcher aimed to add to *descriptive validity* and *interpretive validity* (DiFabio & Maree, 2012:139) through the use of multiple lenses of perspective and method, using different forms of data gathering techniques and description. Using different perspectives and interpretations within the crystallization process, was another vehicle towards “quality assurance” (DiFabio & Maree, 2012:141-142). According to Ellingson (2009:15) crystallized texts furthermore, gains reflexive validity.

Theoretical validity (DiFabio & Maree, 2012:139) is enhanced through literature study which will confirm or challenge the perspectives of participants, while their descriptions may challenge current theory.

Natural validity (DiFabio & Maree, 2012:140) is gained through the researcher being an “insider” within the research population (while that carries a specific bias) and the very real situation that participants find themselves in, which is explored. From a post-foundational model of practical theology, Müller (2004:293) references states that: “The only space in which any determinations can be made... is in the moment of praxis (always local, embodied, and situated).”

Practicing practical theology becomes for Müller (2013:3-4) a qualitative study of “concrete persons – people with smell, taste, desire, and thoughts” (looking at their lives as “works of art”) and “at the same time with the practical theologian’s own world of experience.”

1.7.10 Ethics related to this study

Ethics relate to morality in terms of decisions that may “influence the welfare of humans” (cf. Allan 2011:17). Research should thus be conducted in a manner which is respectful and protective of human rights among the participants (Elias & Theron, 2012:150).

Within this study the researcher endeavoured to do no harm (Allan, 2011:288; Elias & Theron, 2012:150; Strydom, 2011:115). The principles of “beneficence” and “non-maleficence” (Elias & Theron, 2011:150; Strydom, 2011:116) have been evaluated in terms of the researcher sharing a process through which she has benefited as well as the pragmatic consideration of difficulties expressed by her fellow registered counsellors

within the studied population. This study seeks to identify or confirm struggles, to describe them as well as to start moving towards resolution.

At the same time the principles used carry risks similar to psychological interventions as participants are affected through the process (Allan, 2011:293). Risks were minimized by open and honest disclosure from the researcher (Elias & Theron, 2011:151) and informed consent (Strydom, 2011:117) which included exploring options and plans of seeking psychological intervention should it deem necessary. Options were explored beforehand to also avoid stepping into a dual relationship of researcher and counsellor (Allan, 2011:294).

The experiential reflections (meditations) used are founded in part upon already established and tested processes advocated by Dik, Duffy and Eldridge (2009) and Savickas, Nota, Rossier, Dauwalder, Duarte, Guichard, Soresi, Van Estbroeck and Van Vianen (2009) in research literature, to enhance beneficence as the “obligation” to maximise potential benefits and to minimise possible harm (Grinnell & Unrau cited by Strydom, 2011:116). An expert evaluation was sought from a counselling psychologist (see chapter 5).

A few participants who were approached indicated that the topic was currently a painful one or too close to current studies, to participate. Their rights to not participate (their rights to autonomy) were validated and respected (Allan, 2011:288; Strydom, 2011:116-117). Furthermore, the researcher was not in a (and did not take a) position of power to offer any monetary or academic incentives (Allan, 2011:290; Strydom, 2011:116-117). Participants were not coerced into participation (Elias & Theron, 2011:155; Strydom, 2011:117) and the benefits of some quantitative statistical analysis were yielded towards this goal when there were not enough participants (to be statistically significant) willing to fill out questionnaires. One participant withdrew her permission to use her contributions within the colloquium for research purposes, and her responses were omitted from the data analysis.

Research always involves a cost, even if only in terms of the time contributed and can therefore only be “justified if participants or society as a whole” would benefit from it (Allan, 2011:289). The researcher’s pragmatic goal (Creswell, 2007:44) towards this aim was encapsulated in the option offered to all the participants to partake in the Gestalt awareness reflections. While moving towards an instrument for a developmental

intervention (Ellingson, 2009:37), this study stops short of further emancipation possible through political lobbying for the profession towards change. The researcher will endeavour to introduce the findings into the professional domain through publication (Elias & Theron, 2011:152; Strydom, 2011:126) in order to stimulate further research and action.

The identities of the participants will be kept confidential (Elias & Theron, 2012:152; Strydom, 2011:119).

The researcher is furthermore tasked by Elias and Theron (2012:151) to promote “accuracy, honesty and truthfulness in the conduct of this project. The researcher made every effort to do that.

Practical theology should also be transformational in practice (Van der Westhuizen, 2010:5). The researcher will be listening “for the transformative nature of God’s work” (Van der Westhuizen, 2010:5) within the stories and experiences of the participants. Consideration of God’s will and purposes has been part and parcel of the researchers’ life. This is thus a personal value that directs this research in part, and underlies the choice of study in practical theology.

Values (axiology) and ethical principles are closely linked. Within the space (“ecotone”) of this research project the researcher will also be bracketing her personal beliefs, acknowledging that not all participants may share her values. This ethical position linked to the transversal space and interdisciplinary research is that of the “pluralists” who believe in the existence of “many different ethical perspectives on an issue” (Allan, 2011:19). There are thus various perspectives of which none contain the full answer or truth (Keykes, Kerridge, Lowe & McPhee cited by Allan, 2011:19). Unlike the relativists (believing all moral positions to be relative to the personal circumstances or beliefs of the person(s) or culture), pluralists believe there are objective standards (Allan, 2011:19). From pluralism flows: the principle of tolerance of difference; the principle of fallibility (requiring an openness to examination of one’s own morality and to learning from others); the principle of understanding behind the development of ethical standard within a particular culture; and the principle of standing up against evil (tolerance thus has a limit) (Allan, 2011:19).

1.8 CONCLUSION

Registered counsellors who are or have completed the Gestalt Play therapy training (M.Diac or Masters of Psychology), practise within the profession of psychology. Their work is defined by their scope of practice as registered counsellors who are orientated toward preventive and developmental work. Currently the B.Psych training and its accompanying internship is under revision due to the fact that many registered counsellors were trained in intervention models and one-on-one counselling which was not the original intent.

Participants in this study represent registered counsellors who have sought to specialize in Gestalt Play therapy, but still find themselves in the awkward space between lay counsellors and psychologists, where their specialization is subject to their original scope of practice. Many had the goal of becoming psychologists and some still intend to pursue that path.

The professional identity development of mental health professionals such as registered counsellors is impacted by factors such as their training, acceptance within the professional community and supervision. The professional identity development of registered counsellors usually involves the internalization of their definitions of counselling and taking responsibility increasingly for their own professional development. It is closely tied into the frameworks registered counsellors use to counsel, as well as the way that they will ascribe meaning to, derive meaning from, and perform their work tasks.

The research assumption is that identity development, coupled with the changes in the profession of registered counselling, and factors such as a lack of public awareness and professional support, impacts negatively on registered counsellors' professional identity development. At the same time registered counsellors' spirituality in terms of a sense of vocation or calling and their relationship with God (the Ultimate Transcendent) is affected. This study aims to explore the professional identity development of registered counsellors as well as their spirituality through the vehicle of calling in order to develop a pastoral counselling intervention based on Biblical and utilizing Gestalt principles which may assist them (or other registered counsellors) within this process.

CHAPTER TWO

2. DESCRIPTIVE AND EMPIRICAL TASK: FINDINGS

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Gathering information and seeking for “patterns and dynamics” about the described research problems, relates to the **descriptive-empirical research task** (Osmer, 2008:4). The descriptive-empirical task examines the current situation, “What is going on?” (Osmer, 2008:4). According to Osmer (2008:4) the descriptive and empirical research task involves: “Gathering information that helps us discern patterns and dynamics in particular episodes, situations, or contexts.”

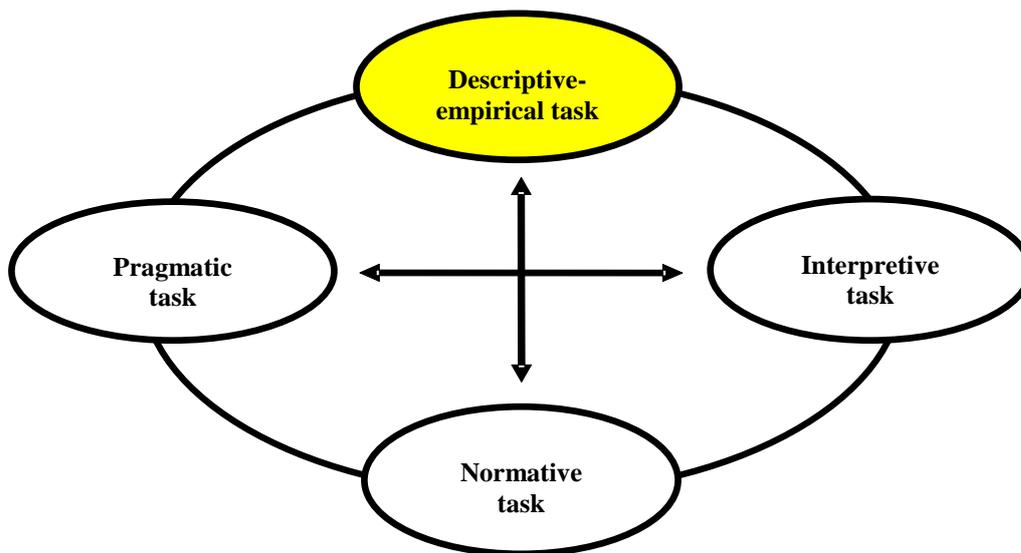


Figure 2.1: Descriptive-empirical task (Osmer, 2008:11)

The objective of this chapter is:

- To find out and understand how registered counsellors specializing in Gestalt Play Therapy, experience their professional identity development.

The descriptive-empirical research task will gather the relevant information, in order to identify the current patterns or state of Registered Counsellors specializing in Gestalt Play therapy, and how such findings relate to developing professional identities of the praxis under investigation (cf. Osmer, 2008:5). During this stage the coded data obtained during the empirical research will be placed in a framework to determine which tendencies or themes can be identified or isolated. The themes will be critically discussed, with special emphasis placed on professional identity development.

The first task of the seven movements (cf. paragraph 1.7.7) described by Müller (2004:300-301) is to describe the specific **context** within which registered counsellors find themselves, which has been done through the introduction and background in chapter one, and which will be continued in this chapter. This description spills over into the second movement that Müller (2004:300-302) lists as the **tasks of listening to and describing in-context experiences** of registered counsellors (both students and practitioners) within this research population. Participants' voices are heard through the vehicles of the colloquium, semi-structured questionnaires as well as the experiential reflective process, which was evaluated while developed.

Interpretations made (movement three) are made in collaboration with participants through discussion and member checks (cf. Müller, 2004:300-303).

Within the fourth movement (Müller, 2004:300, 302-303) the descriptions of participants' experiences will be informed by the **various interpretive frames** identified through chapters two and three. Experiences are understood in context of Biblical spirituality, psychology as well as work-related studies.

The fifth movement of **reflecting on God's presence** as understood within this specific situation or context, also takes place within the data analysis of this chapter, which is informed by the interdisciplinary study, and followed by a Scriptural analysis and Christian exploration.

These research actions are intricately linked to Müller's (2004:300, 303) sixth movement of **thickening the experiential descriptions** through interdisciplinary investigation. A pastoral counsellor who completed the questionnaire's story is heard as an interdisciplinary "shared story." An additional evaluation of the experiential reflection was

sought from Wendy Kaufman, a counselling psychologist, who participated in the process within a one-on-one setting.

2.2 METHODOLOGICAL DESCRIPTION OF QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH WITHIN THIS STUDY

This study was designed as a qualitative research study (cf. paragraph 1.7.5-1.7.6). On the 15th of November 2012, twelve registered counsellors within the master's degree training program in Gestalt play Therapy took part in a colloquium led by the researcher and Prof. Bloem, head of the Centre for Child, Youth and Family Studies. Verbal consent was obtained to use the information for research purposes, followed by written consent (Appendix A).

During the course of 2013 questionnaires were developed based upon information gathered from the colloquium, one interview with responded one (recorded and transcribed) as well as the initial literature study. The information and consent form is included in Appendix B, and the Questionnaire is in Appendix C (cf. paragraph 1.7.8).

Registered counsellors who have either completed or are in the process of completing the master's degree in Gestalt Play Therapy were contacted and asked to participate in the research process. Twenty two questionnaires were completed and returned. Seven of the thirteen participants who participated in the colloquium also completed questionnaires and two of these went on to complete the experiential reflections (meditations), leading to the tracking of their stories over a longer period. The themed qualitative data originates from the responses of twenty eight participants present at the colloquium and/or who completed questionnaires. After hearing the storied moments from the participants through the questionnaires, moments from the story of one pastoral counsellor who have completed the Masters in Gestalt Play Therapy, as a first step towards inter-disciplinary "shared stories."

Participant one's story is told in greater depth through the course of this analysis, as she was interviewed in the course of the questionnaire development. She was one of the co-researchers that did a member-check on the data as presented in this chapter, and shared more of her journey during the completion of this research project.

The response rate for the questionnaires was low (20,95%) yielding 22 data sets. The *quantitative data* was analysed by Dr. Suria Ellis, head of the statistical consultation services at the Potchefstroom campus, NWU.

The *qualitative data* was studied and analysed by the researcher using ATLAS.ti, a Computer-aided Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) package. It serves as a tool in the data analysis while increasing the “validity of research results, especially at the conceptual stage of analysis” (Friese, 2014:1). The data analysis method of Dr. Friese that was used, is called “computer assisted NCT analysis” (Friese, 2014:1). NCT refers to “Noticing, Collecting and Thinking” (Friese, 2014:3, 12).

- In the first phase of analysis, the researcher notices interesting aspects within the data and coding (derived either inductively or deductively) that may be descriptive or already at a conceptual level (Friese, 2014:13). Fereday and Muir-Cochrane (2006:4) describes this as a “form of pattern of pattern recognition within the data, where emerging themes become the categories for analysis.”
- Phase two involves organizing, renaming and actively working with the codes to best fit the collected data (Friese, 2014:13). Data is organized through the coding process with the aim of “capturing the qualitative richness of the phenomenon” (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006:45). The aim was to discover patterns as well as relations (Friese, 2014:15). Within the ATLAS.ti program analysis tools such as the query tool and co-occurrence explorer were used to analyse data in the third phase (Friese, 2014:14).

The researcher coded the data through reading and rereading the data in search of descriptions and emerging themes. In this way the researcher attempted to bracket her own conceptions in descriptive coding to first be open to the described experiences and acknowledging the sharing of the population characteristics. The researcher then coded some literature referred to in chapter three, and proceeded to re-code the data set using what emerged from the data as well as looking for themes from the literature.

The storied reality of the participants’ lives are accordingly sketched and analysed across “multiple points of the qualitative continuum” and reflect multiple “ways of knowing” in

the tradition of crystallization (Ellingson, 2009:10) as well as post-foundational theology (Müller, 2004:299).

2.3 COLLOQUIUM

2.3.1 The colloquium in its context

The researcher was part of a group of students who gained entrance to the master's degree in Play Therapy⁴ (focussed on the Gestalt approach) through a selection process at the end of 2011. The Centre for Child, Youth and Family studies (NWU, 2011:1) had been offering the master's degree and PhD training since 2001, and from 2011 at NWU itself. Prior to 2011 the degree was offered through UNISA as "MDiac" indicating Play therapy as specialization. As discussed in the introduction (see 1.2.2) a masters in Play therapy (reflected in the "MDiac") is part of the Social work departments within various universities.

During the orientation meetings in November 2011, it was explained that one's prior training determined the field in which the masters degree would be obtained in. Thus social workers would obtain the degree in the field of social work while the registered counsellors would obtain the degree in conjunction with the psychology department. The wording and practicalities were still under discussion due to the newness of the new partnership between the Centre for Child, Youth and Family Studies and the North West University. The researcher had a choice of pursuing this course as an academic masters in psychology or to build on her Masters in Pastoral Studies and obtain the qualification in the department of theology.

The selection process did not involve the department of psychology and no promise of the degree being equal to a professional masters in psychology, was ever made.

⁴ The marketing document of the Centre for Child, Youth And Family Studies in 2011 referred to "Post Graduate Studies in Play Therapy." Gestalt was the only therapeutic model students were trained in. The degree was referred to in conversation as well as within context of the short courses in Play Therapy that served as a precursor to the degree, as "Masters degree in Gestalt Play Therapy". Registered counsellors who graduated at the end of 2014, received a "Masters of Psychology" together with certificates of completion of the short courses that reflect the course content. This degree has an academic nature and is not counted as professional training in Psychology.

After the training workshops started in 2012 it became known that the degree obtained by registered counsellors through NWU will state “Masters of Psychology” for the registered counsellors, rather than “MDiac” or “Masters in Play Therapy” accompanied by certificates for the modules in Play therapy that would have been completed on the NQF 9 level. This revealed some preconceived hopes and expectations that some of the students had had, in that a “Masters in Play Therapy” would open more specific, and for some, more professional doors.

Students were invited to an open discussion between the Dean, Prof. Marlene Viljoen and Proff Retha Bloem, Michael Temane, Annemarie Kruger, as well as Mrs. Corrie Postma. They represented the faculty of Health Sciences, the Centre for Child, Youth and Family studies as well as the department of Psychology. The goal of the meeting held on the 19th of May in Pretoria was to give students clarification on their questions and to provide information. They were specifically informed that the training obtained would enrich the work of registered counsellors as a specialization within their current scope of practice within the profession of psychology, and not lead to registrations or an enlarged scope of practice as “Play therapist”.

The option to enter the master’s degree in research psychology without going through the selection process was offered. References to professional master’s degree training in psychology, refer to master’s degrees such as in clinical, counselling, educational or research psychology, which lead to registrations with the HPCSA as psychologists upon completion.

- These “events” took place within the larger “situation” comprising of a broader pattern of events and circumstances over the course of time, to use Osmer’s (2008:12) terms.
- In Müller’s (2004:301) framework this sketches the context.

The question relating to this descriptive and empirical research phase, is “what is going on?” (Osmer, 2008:31). This situation or context has been described through the words of (anonymous) registered counsellors in chapter one and the related literature (chapter 1 & 3; cf. Osmer, 2008:33).

Concern about the “events” relating to the Masters in Gestalt Play Therapy training as it pertains to registered counsellors, together with the proposed change in the scope of practice which was announced in 2011 (JVR Group, 2012), were on the agenda for the colloquium held on the 15th of November 2012. A further aim was to discuss these matters as it relates to the professional identity of registered counsellors and goals for this research study. Through this discussion the voices and stories of registered counsellors are “heard” while “in-context experiences” are described (Osmer, 2008:31; Müller, 2004:301).

The group was led by the researcher and Prof Retha Bloem, and there were thirteen participants. One participant withdrew her consent for data gathered during the colloquium to be used within this research project, and her data has been omitted.

Eleven of these colloquium participants have completed their internships as registered counsellors: four registered with the HPCSA during 2006 to 2011, six registered in 2012, and one registered in 2013. Two participants had not been able to complete their internships due to universities putting the B.Psych program on hold while revising it.

2.3.2 Storied reality

The following themes and experiential realities emerged from the colloquium held on the 15th of November 2012.

2.3.2.1 Scope of practice

Of the 21 quotations that were coded as “scope of practice” through the colloquium and questionnaires, 15 related to the colloquium discussion. Participants discussed the article of Pretorius (2012a) that appeared in a HPCSA newsletter, as well as the proposed changes in scope of practice of registered counsellors.

In response to the HPCSA newsletter (Pretorius, 2012a), participant twelve said:

[...] but that letter was saying this is what registered counsellors were supposed to be, this is the role they wanted registered counsellors to take on. But obviously something changed, something is going on and registered counsellors are not doing what they thought they were going to be doing. You know, they are becoming like mini psychologists, they're opening their own

practices and they are seeing the same clients that psychologists would see, but now they're charging half, so I think ... they were just saying... registered counsellors aren't becoming what they thought they should have become, they were supposed to be ... workers, working groups and that, so ... it was their perception of what a registered counsellor was supposed to do.

Participant eight embarked on this educational path later in life, following her grieving experiences after losing her son. She narrates her storied experience within the context of shared concerns from the group about the role and scope of practice of registered counsellors:

[...] after this happened, there was groups like, compassionate friends, but there wasn't really... I went from counsellor to counsellor and psychologist, so I felt that there wasn't something, there was a gap there and now they are saying there isn't a gap {laughter} that was just my experience, so, it doesn't make sense to me.

Concerns regarding changes in the scope of practice, can be heard in participant seven's words:

[...] I just want to say, for me, when I signed up to do the psychology degree, it was on this scope of practice ... so my question is, if that's what you think you're going to get at the end of it, you are going to be able to practice ...and it's changed, ... where do your constitutional rights come in? Cause you've actually studied for a degree, thinking you're going to have this scope of practice and it's changed, so where does that leave us?

I just feel, if I can put it in normal terms, it's like... contract breaking because when we signed up we registered and everything. That was what was told to us and we signed for that and if they ... excuse me?

There was general consensus that participants had indeed paid to reach these goals, and that an amended scope of practice should only apply to those students who knowingly and willingly sign up for that.

Participant five feels that...

[...] we were trained according to this scope of practiceIf the whole framework has changed ...how do you adjust to something that you're not trained into? So it makes you feel incompetent because - what do you do now?

Participants also reported frustration and being blocked from further studies (such as a master's degree in clinical or counselling psychology) and ending up with a scope of

practice that does not allow one to continue working with a child, “[...] so it’s sort of cutting us off at both ends” in the words of participant nine. Participant twelve pointed out that social workers who don’t necessarily have psychology every year as a subject, can complete this master’s degree in Play therapy and work in private practice with far less constraints. It was also reported by participant ten that children in her area had to wait for six to eight months to see psychologists, who couldn’t accommodate them earlier. This begs the question of where it leaves the clients who don’t live in areas where there are many psychologists.

Working within communities or governmental positions, there will still be the economic reality of having to refer clients who can’t afford psychologists. Participant seven said:

[...] there is such a big need and if we can only do this (pointing to the scope of practice changes), we can actually do nothing for the people ... So now we have to send them to psychologists, they can’t afford it... so no problem is being solved.

Participant nine added:

Also what I got from (the scope of practice and anticipated increase in limits to private practice) is that you are supposed to work, preferably for an NGO where you get paid a salary. Let’s say you get paid a salary of R6 000 a month, but you still see 88 clients as they don’t want you to bill separately for the consultations, we need to curb the costs.

Later during the discussion, participant nine explained how she feels:

[...] I think it affects your productivity and ...everything you put into it. When you are sitting with this child now, you sort of thinking scope of practice the whole time. Oops is this an intervention? You know, so what does that do ... to your work with the child ... to the client ... that’s been my hurdle and then what I get from that is that I feel depressed because then I think: I have to do the work, but I’m not allowed to do the work, so I’m being the...?(questioning gesture)

2.3.2.2 Public awareness and lay counsellors

Participants reported a general lack of awareness of the profession of registered counselling among the general public. Participant twelve finds this troubling in light of the huge needs within schools and hospitals, and feels that with awareness registered

counsellors' skills would be utilized more. There was general agreement around this point. Participant ten pointed out that public awareness could combat the misperception around work in the psychological field, which leads to students who have only completed psychology to third year level, entering schools and doing counselling, believing that it is enough.

This ties in with the scope of practice as well. Participant twelve continues:

[...] lay counsellors are dealing with ... sensitive issues, ... now they're saying registered counsellors can't, so who are these children going to go to? There's no one that is qualified and the psychologists aren't going to go to a school where they cannot earn R700 – R800 per session - they're not going to go to school and go and earn a salary as a counsellor...

Participant twelve reports that lay counsellors were counselling sexual abuse victims in an NGO setting after completing a twelve week course, whilst having no experience in working with children. Due to their lack in skills cases are being thrown out of court. While forensic assessments falls outside the scope of registered counsellors (Elkonin & Sandison, 2006:609), the category was created to meet the needs of communities on a primary health care level (Elkonin & Sandison, 2010:95). And, "by the nature of this description, most of these facilities are under-resourced institutions or NGOs existing on grants and fundraising" (Elkonin & Sandison, 2010:95). The irony then remains that a lot of work within these settings falls to lay counsellors.

Being unaware of the category of registered counsellor, the public (parents as well as educators) do not distinguish between lay counsellors and registered counsellors, participants four, five and seven reported.

Participant four works within a school context, where she has witnessed harmful effects of counselling by a lay counsellor, who is earning a salary. Enquiries were made, but no action can be taken seeing that he is not registered with the HPCSA. There was wide scale agreement that registered counsellors with more training, skills and who annually attend professional development courses, are in a far more vulnerable situation than lay counsellors, should they dare step out of line (for instance in doing more than what their scope prescribes). This begs the question for some whether formal registration is worth it.

The experiences of participants echo difficulties around public and professional ignorance of the competencies, of registered counsellors, as well as the difficulty in finding employment with adequate remuneration, in other research (Abel & Louw, 2009:100; Elkonin & Sandison, 2010:93-95; Elkonin & Sandison, 2006:606-607; Joseph, 2007:83-84) (cf. paragraph 3.2.2).

2.3.2.3 Title of “registered counsellor” versus “play therapist” or other

The title of “registered counsellor” versus “play therapist” or other, ties in closely with the public’s lack of awareness of registered counselling as a profession. Participant four brought up the fact that parents do not distinguish between “lay counsellors” and “registered counsellors.” She went on to say: “[...] actually putting us on the same level because we’re called the same thing... counsellors.”

In contrast, participant seven commented on the fact that

[...] we get called psychologists or people assume we’re psychologists. I mean even at the school (after giving) all my stuff to them ... all my certificates ... they had all the documentation (yet), the principal kept calling me a psychologist. I always have to tell her, no, no, I’m not a psychologist, I’m a registered counsellor. So you feel like you have to explain yourself the whole time.

The general agreement was that having to do that, one is “[...] undermining one’s own credibility” in the words of participant one. Continuing on this topic, participant seven says:

Sometimes I even feel that just by saying I’m a registered counsellor, I’m trying to motivate my position. I mean we don’t speak about a registered psychologist {general laughter}... I get the impression that they think: “oh, you’re not, you’re just trying to be registered somewhere.

These difficulties tie in with some participants’ desire to be able to call themselves “play therapists” and are tied to their concern around the wording on the master’s degree certificates.

The realities of participants reflect what Henderson (2004:35-38) described when saying that the title “registered counsellor” sounds similar to “lay public” and “lay counsellor,” reinforcing their lower, less professional status (cf. paragraph 3.2).

2.3.2.4 Professional market place

Participant twelve reported that at some schools there is a lack of work opportunities due to lay counsellors offering free services. Other lay counsellors do charge fees that are not commensurate with their training compared to professionals (Participants four, twelve, thirteen & eight). There was some general joking that it may be a better option not to register with the HPCSA (or to deregister) and to rather just work as lay counsellors. On a more serious note, participant seven said:

I actually feel that they're making the possibilities for illegal counsellors bigger now, because if I were not registered already and I saw this ... (proposed amended scope of practice) ... like ... said, I would just feel, oh well, then I'm not going to register, they're not going to catch me, they don't have my information unless someone goes and gives it out, but now that I'm registered they can monitor and make my source abilities less.

Participant eleven reported that a general BA degree turned out to be too “broad” to get work with. There was a general feeling of discontent within the group related to having obtained so much education up to post-graduate level (Honours or B.Psych) but it not being enough in the job market. Participant eleven continued:

[...] at my honours level, I didn't have enough practical experience in any case. So I sit with an Honours degree in nothing. I can't even get a secretarial job, 'cause I don't have that skill {general laughter from participants} ...

Regarding market control, participants nine and twelve were of the opinion that preventing applicants from entering the professional master's degree training of their choice, was robbing them:

[...] taking our choice away from us and disempowering us. I mean let us get our masters and it's up to us as individuals to find a place in the market place. ... what happens is that psychologists who are in the market place who aren't very good, can carry on because they are the only psychologists available and they've got the captive market. So allow people to get qualified ... and it will

be more competitive and you'll actually strive to be better. And isn't that better for the community at the end of the day? (Participant twelve).

Aside from valuing the opportunity for self-employment, Joseph (2007:70) suggested that registered counsellors' income potential appear to be higher within the educational and private sector. Henderson (2004:14, 33) predicted that the creation of the mid-level profession of registered counselling would serve to protect psychologists from competition (cf. paragraph 3.2.5; 3.2.10).

2.3.2.5 Educational pathways and ethical questions

The ethical responsibility of Higher Education was questioned and participants had strong opinions about the false advertising that they experience as happening at the beginning of a journey towards becoming a professional in the field of psychology (such as participant eleven). The general consensus was that groups of first year psychology students averaged a few hundred to a thousand in numbers each year. Large numbers of them want to become psychologists but don't realize that it's not as simple as deciding to be a psychologist and then completing the relevant degrees. While they generate a lot of income for the universities (that operate as businesses as participant eleven points out) on an undergraduate levels, no-one is held accountable for the large number of honours level students who cannot continue with a professional master's degree and who do not necessarily find work that suits them (general consensus). In contrast to the hundreds of first year applicants, less than fifteen gain entrance for a master's degree in either counselling or clinical psychology (per university) each year (respondents reported).

The researcher sought to verify this information, and found Unisa (2014) advising that "only a small number of students ... are selected each year", while UP (2014:22) refers to "a few" or "a limited" number. Abdinor (2013), a clinical psychologist who has been lecturing psychology students on Honours levels for seven years, advises that "usually only eight students are selected annually for each university programme" (e.g. in the categories of clinical or counselling psychology respectively) (cf. paragraph 1.2.1).

Interlude from the researcher's life:

I remember being warned in my pre-graduate studies that very few people in the class would make it into the masters training. I thought I'd just work hard enough and try repeatedly until I made it. I also assumed that many would lose interest and had no idea of the statistical reality of the number of students who would still be actively pursuing the route after their Honours. Had I known that I might have made other choices along the way. Still, I did explore and seek to widen my options such as through completing Industrial Psychology on a pre-graduate level and embarking on an Honours degree in Educational Psychology, which I discontinued within the first three months. It just "wasn't me."

While some participants feel it would then be more helpful to have the cut-off point before one's honours degree (i.e. participant twelve), others (participants seven, eleven, nine with group consensus) felt that selection processes and limits have to be put in from the first year together with more practical work. The suggestion was made to select them through psychological screening similar to social workers from their first year, and then take them all the way through to master's degree level. Participants commented on the length of their studies. Respondent twelve said:

[...] 7, 8 years and we still can't, you know... so if we knew this, we would have all become social workers and been able to open private practices and counsel and do exactly what the social workers are doing. So for me that is my biggest concern - if we knew this back then, we would have become social workers.

Participant two pointed to the difficulty in changing a career path:

I started studying when I was older, I mean I think I could have been a doctor or something by now {general laughter} and after all these years it seems that you've got nothing. When you're an older student, you can't now go back and then say, oh well, let's just now go and change our career path ... another three or four years. It's not like you're 20.

One would generally need to be able to "articulate a career path from a BA to a PhD" (Prof. Bloem). At the same time it appears that the HPCSA does not want registered counsellors to have further training on a master's degree level (general discussion).

Respondent eleven says:

I personally would like everybody to have a master's degree, who is doing counselling {over-talking}... exactly and I would like to, so that we know that we're educating people... that educated counsellors and qualified counsellors are going out into the world. It doesn't help we, we just say only three years will get you into counselling. No, don't make it easier. That's why

we're walking this road, we don't want an easy route. But when I've done my masters, I would really like to feel, hey man ...

The general opinion that followed was that counselling could rather be split off from psychology, and pursued as such from a first year level all the way to a doctoral level. Participant seven questioned one's constitutional right to pursue education to the level that one is able to afford together with one's freedom of choice.

Elkonin and Sandison (2010:93) speculated that the reason many students at NNMU use their skills to carve out other career paths later on (i.e. in human resources or labour relations) may be because they were selected at the end of their second year and not later. Perhaps the truth is rather that there are not enough options within the field of psychology (cf. paragraph 1.2.1).

Interlude from the researcher's life:

I find it quite ironic that I only investigated the possibility of pursuing social work as a possible career, within the last three years. I used to say, "If I wanted to do three people's work for one person's salary, or work in the community field, I would have studied social work." Had I known about social workers in private practice, I may have made some different choices. There are very interesting options for further studies for social workers, such as the masters degree related to forensic work at NWU (this caught my eye a few years ago).

2.3.2.6 Master's degree in clinical or counselling psychology

To a question as to why the groups accepted into master's degree level (professional psychology) are kept so small, participant eleven offered the opinion that it has to do with "[...] funding ... that's their excuse." She later pointed out within this discussion, that other professions such as doctors and dentists also have to adhere to ethics and perform at a high level of standards. How they end up working is not dependent on their training necessarily. Therefore a "stamp" on being registered as a psychologist versus a registered counsellor, doesn't really guarantee their effective and/or ethical work and skill. How does one guarantee a person's inherent skill and character through a professional master's degree selection program?

Regarding the application process, participant thirteen said:

Honestly, in terms of applying and, you know, for masters and that sort of thing, you can apply and apply and apply and not get in and it just delays and you get older or you get further along and you know that if you do get in, it's still going to be 2-3 years or whatever of studying before you actually start, but even in your application process, which is incredibly exhausting, applying to however many varsities...

Someone interjected about the huge expense of these applications to which there was general agreement. Furthermore:

[...] the whole process of it in the hopes that you might get an interview. One year you can get two interviews for varsities or whatever, or however many interviews and then the next year you'll get none... what are they? I mean how can you qualify the one year and meet the criteria for what they want for an interview and the next year you don't meet it at all? That you don't get one interview... it's just weird... (Participant thirteen).

As discussed in paragraph 3.2.5, Pillay *et al.* (2013:47) report that recruitment of candidates for clinical psychology is not difficult in light of the demand for professional training that “far outweighs available places.” If only 5-10% of applicants for clinical psychology are successful annually, it may be that many would be good candidates but that selection becomes arbitrary at some point due to the sheer number of candidates.

In Western Australia this problem was overcome through the use of Board approved supervision for qualified psychologists who would receive “full recognition” upon completion, as seen in paragraph 3.2.7.

Pillay *et al.* (2013:48) maintain that “the advantages of closely supervised, thorough, and intensive training far outweigh the disadvantages” of training a few students “in relation to the overall mental health societal needs” as well as “being ethically correct” to practitioners and communities.

2.3.2.7 Calling and identity

The participants of the colloquium voiced dissatisfaction about the identity of registered counselling, heard in:

- descriptions of the effort that it takes to legitimize one's work compared to say lay counsellors;

- challenges in identifying oneself as a registered counsellor in light of the ambiguous title as well as within an unknown profession;
- feeling forced or stuck in a profession because of the difficulties in getting into a professional master's degree in psychology (or having to leave the profession);
- the resistance within the wider profession to registered counsellors having been accepted into the play therapy master's degree; as well as,
- their feelings about a limited scope of practice.

It would appear that participants within this colloquium discussion are trying to carve out their professional identities, but while some do work in community or NGO settings, none are employed in such settings on a full-time basis.

Participant eight specifically linked her career process to calling, and voices discouragement around the closed doors to both registered counselling internships (currently) and further master's degree studies:

[...] like in my case, I had a son that died ... so that was the thing that pushed me into counselling more. If later in your life something happens and you really feel that calling to go into a field where you can help somebody else ...? (Yet) now you can't do it because there is actually somebody sitting there trying to tell you ...?

Participant eleven agreed and asked what gives others the right to determine whether you can or cannot enter a professional field, if you might be good at it. She continued:

And it's so funny because you know ... (in other fields such as finances...) like my husband, if he wants to do his master's degree he can just get it and do it and get a stamp and that's it, klaar. But we - people decide on our future. Other people decide on what we can accomplish and what we can't. I mean, I just, it feels like it's not your choice, the success you want ...not success really... but if you want to do something and pursue something and it is what you really want to do... and then people block you, saying you're not allowed to... - that's a bit frustrating and I don't like not being in control of that..

Personal agency is described in paragraphs 3.5.3 and 3.5.4 as part of self-differentiation and interwoven into spirituality and meaning (cf. Lips-Wiersma, 2002:505, 514-515; Rosso, Dekas & Wrzesniewski, 2010:114-115). Having a sense of agency as an active personal participation in one's career, is connected to work and career hope, and it is a

career counselling goal to strengthen it (Dik, *et al.*, 2009:627; Dik, Duffy, Allan, O'Donnell, Shim & Steger, 2014:12-13) (cf. paragraph 3.6).

2.3.2.8 A way forward?

In the midst of a general discouragement and/or frustration, as well as reported anger and despair, there was encouragement from some participants within the colloquium towards activism.

But I think that's the thing, we as registered counsellors, we need to, not just us, we need to get together and we need to really fight this. That's what the other, these counselling and educational psychologists do. They don't sit back and wait for {inaudible} so... (Participant thirteen).

Participant twelve reported:

I actually went to, well my husband actually wrote a letter to the DA and they weren't aware that there are these lay counsellors in schools and they are actually opposing that, which is a positive thing. They want to find out why these lay counsellors are in the schools and whether they are qualified. Or if it's a teacher who just becomes the school counsellor, who actually has, maybe has a 12 week course and does counselling in the school and is now dealing with really sensitive issues, like sexual abuse and things that they're not really trained to do.

Participant twelve summarized the discussion (including general comments that there is enough work for everyone) as follows:

[...] and it kind of comes back to the sectorial deliberation, if we can all work together, you know, the psychologists could work with the registered counsellors, could work with the police, could work with nurses, you know what I mean so that actually we're working together instead of always feeling like everyone is against each other and that everyone actually started thinking of, OK, let's work together to help everybody instead of like let's vie for, you know, it becomes competition. Things could change, so it's also kind of, I don't know, you know, not going against the clinical psychologists and counselling psychologists, but getting together and saying, listen here, where can we help, we can, you know, we can be of assistance, as ... was saying, you know, they can refer back to registered counsellors who have training in play therapy to deal with those cases that they don't feel they can work with.

It would therefore appear as if there is not a sense of belonging within a wider "team" or profession amongst the registered counsellors within this sample.

2.3.3 Emerging picture

Three participants, who took part in the colloquium, were asked to read through the description of the discussion as well as the emerging themes and stories, as a member-check. Participants one, eight and nine concurred that it is an accurate reflection of what was discussed and experienced. Participant eight reiterated that while she is better qualified than lay counsellors, they are able to do more. She was recently approached for work with a sports team at a school in her area but was informed that it would be as a charity, although the sports-manager earns a hefty salary. Participant eight asks:

Voluntary (lay) counselling has a negative impact. Who will pay a registered counsellor if the doctor's wife practices lay counselling as a hobby in between her exercise classes?" (translated from Afrikaans)

Lastly, participant eight has been in contact with numerous first year psychology students who have no idea of the path ahead.

The description and interpretation of experiences accordingly emerges "in collaboration with co-researchers" (cf. Müller, 2004:302), attending to the "particular otherness" of this population (Osmer, 2008:33).

The participants in this sample, who have all embarked on post-graduate training in Gestalt Play therapy as registered counsellors, have concerns about their scope of practice, their careers and their future careers. They reported feeling restricted and frustrated in their endeavours to specialize and broaden their work tasks. It does not appear that they pictured themselves as employees within governmental or NGO settings, as was intended by the universities and HPCSA. While there is evidence of being focused on the needs within communities that are not being met, they seem to perceive a niche that exists between lay counsellors and psychologists.

The difficulty in getting into a professional master's degree training program such as counselling or clinical psychology, has led a few participants to adapt their original career goals.

2.4 QUESTIONNAIRE: QUANTITATIVE DATA

During the course of 2013 questionnaires were developed based upon information gathered from the colloquium. The information and consent form is included in Appendix B, and the Questionnaire is in Appendix C (cf. paragraph 1.7.8). The response rate for the questionnaires was low (20,95%) yielding 22 data sets. The *quantitative data* was analysed by Dr. Suria Ellis, head of the statistical consultation services at the Potchefstroom campus, NWU.

2.4.1 Population statistics

The sample population, $n = 22$ are all white. 10 (45.5%) are English speaking, 11 Afrikaans speaking and one is bilingual (Afrikaans/ English). The majority of participants live in Gauteng (12 participants, 54.5%), followed by six in the Western Cape (27.3%), and one (4.5%) in each of the following provinces: North-West, Eastern Cape, KwaZulu Natal, and Mpumalanga.

Of the participants, seventeen (77%) have completed a BA Hons (Psych), four (18.2%) completed a B.Ed (Hons) Educ Psych and one (4.5%) completed a B.Psych. Sixteen (72.%) of the participants in this sample have registered with the HPCSA, and six (27.3%) have not. They registered in the following years:

Table 2.1: Registration patterns of participants

Year of registration			
	Year	Frequency	Percent
Valid	2006	2	9,1
	2009	1	4,5
	2010	3	13,6
	2011	3	13,6
	2012	4	18,2
	2012	3	13,6
	Total		16
Missing (Not registered)	System	6	27,3
Total		22	100,0

Two of the participants are also registered with the HPCSA as Psychometrists. They registered in 2008 and 2011 respectively.

Participants' were not linked by number to the various geographical areas and other biographical statistics, to protect anonymity within a relatively small population.

2.4.2 Statistical analysis

Table 2.2: Descriptive statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Age	22	24	51	32,68	6,722
Year of registration	16	2006,0	2013,0	2010,688	2,1823
Job orientation	22	2,0	4,0	3,500	,5976
Career orientation	22	1,0	4,0	2,500	1,1443
Calling orientation	22	1,0	4,0	2,000	1,0235
Presence-Transcendent summons	22	4	16	13,45	2,988
Search-Transcendent Summons	22	4	15	8,27	3,706
Presence-Purposeful Work	22	6	16	13,45	2,824
Search - Purposeful work	22	7	16	12,23	2,810
Presence-Prosocial Orientation	22	5	16	13,14	2,678
Search-Prosocial Orientation	22	6	16	12,18	2,822
CVQ Presence total	22	15	48	40,05	8,044
CVQ Search total	22	17	46	32,68	7,370
BCS-PRESENCE	22	2	10	7,55	2,444
BCS-SEARCH	20	2	10	4,55	2,438
Spiritual-total	22	10	50	36,59	13,458
Valid N (listwise)	15				
Age	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation

Table 2.3: Non-Parametric Correlations

CORRELATIONS																	
		Age	Year of registration	Job orientation	Career orientation	Calling orientation	Presence-Transcendent summons	Search-Transcendent Summons	Presence-Purposeful Work	Search - Purposeful work	Presence-Prosocial Orientation	Search-Prosocial Orientation	CVQ Presence total	CVQ Search total	BCS-PRESENCE	BCS-SEARCH	Spiritual total
	N	22	16	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	22	20	22
Job orientation	Correlation Coefficient	-,158	,028	1,000	,518*	-,407	-,035	-,212	,050	-,361	,012	-,440*	,026	-,406	,211	-,214	,079
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,484	,919		,013	,060	,878	,344	,825	,099	,958	,040	,909	,061	,346	,364	,726
Career orientation	Correlation Coefficient	-,087	,271	,518*	1,000	-,566**	-,220	-,467*	,037	-,250	-,107	-,134	-,108	-,391	,096	-,324	-,071
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,701	,310	,013		,006	,326	,028	,870	,262	,637	,551	,633	,072	,670	,164	,754

Calling orientation	Correlation Coefficient	,007	-,150	-,407	-,566**	1,000	-,429*	,520*	-,664**	-,161	-,373	-,350	-,519*	0,000	-,669**	,199	-,426*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,977	,578	,060	,006		,046	,013	,001	,474	,087	,110	,013	1,000	,001	,401	,048
Presence-Transcendent summons	Correlation Coefficient	,110	-,040	-,035	-,220	-,429*	1,000	-,152	,803**	,259	,784**	,476*	,933**	,213	,791**	,043	,761**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,627	,884	,878	,326	,046		,501	,000	,244	,000	,025	,000	,342	,000	,856	,000
Search-Transcendent Summons	Correlation Coefficient	-,174	-,004	-,212	-,467*	,520*	-,152	1,000	-,414	,272	-,273	,151	-,305	,581**	-,407	,604**	-,249
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,438	,989	,344	,028	,013	,501		,055	,221	,218	,502	,168	,005	,060	,005	,265

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Discussion:

Statistical analysis on the test data obtained from 22 participants reveal the following significant correlations:

- *Job orientation* is positively related to career orientation and inversely related to a search for a prosocial orientation, with a significance at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). Job orientation is furthermore inversely related to calling orientation, search for a transcendent summons, search for purposeful work, and the cumulative search for vocation and / or calling on the CVQ. It is also negatively related to the presence of – and search for a calling on the BCS. It would thus appear that a job orientation is positively related to career orientation but negatively to many of the dimensions of calling and vocation.
- *Career orientation* inversely related to a calling orientation, with a significance at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). It is also inversely related to a search for transcendent summons, with a significance at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). Other negative correlations are between career orientation and the presence of a transcendent summons, a search for purposeful work, the totalled presence of a calling or vocation on the CVQ and the search for a calling on the BCS.
- Calling orientation is inversely related to the *presence of transcendent summons* with a significance at the 0.05 level (2-tailed), and positively related to the search for transcendent summons and positively related to the search for a transcendent summons with a significance at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). A significant inverse correlation on the level of 0.01 exists between calling orientation and the presence of purposeful work. There is also some indication of an inverse correlation between calling orientation and the presence of and search for prosocial orientation and search and presence of calling on the BCS. Furthermore there is a positive correlation to searching for a calling on the BCS and it is negatively related to intrinsic spirituality with a significance at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
- The *presence of a transcendent summons/call* and the presence of purposeful work are positively related to intrinsic spirituality with a significance at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). The presence of a prosocial orientation is positively linked to intrinsic

spirituality with a significance at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). Experiencing a transcendent summons is positively related to search for purposeful work.

- Experiencing the *presence of a vocation/calling* (CVQ total and BCS total) is positively linked to intrinsic spirituality with a significance at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

It appears that the *calling orientation to work*, which reflects the meaningfulness internal to the work itself (Benefiel, Fry & Geigle, 2014), is inversely correlated with measures relating to calling on the *Calling and Vocation Scale* and *Brief Calling Scale* which contains the elements of an external transcendent call. Spiritual or religious beliefs which are more central and dominant to a person's identity, are positively related to the presence of a search for a transcendent call.

The *Work-Life orientation questionnaire*, the *Calling and Vocation Scale*, and the *Brief Calling Scale* measure values and meaning related to work and the experience and / or search for a vocation or calling, tapping into different constructs. The sample is small (N=22) which reduces generalizability to the population.

2.5 QUESTIONNAIRE: STORIED (QUALITATIVE) DATA

2.5.1 In context

After the colloquium in November 2012, the researcher interviewed participant one further as a representative of the population in order to confirm the description and interpretation of experiences as they relate to the research questions (Müller, 2004:302). A questionnaire (Appendix B and C) was developed early in 2013, based upon information gathered from the colloquium, the interview with responded one (recorded and transcribed) as well as the initial literature study.

As discussed in paragraph 1.7.8, one hundred and five registered counsellors who have either completed or are in the process of completing the Masters degree in Gestalt Play Therapy were contacted and asked to participate in the research process.

- Two registered counsellors who were approached indicated that the topic was too painful at the moment to participate.

- Twenty two questionnaires were completed and returned. Seventeen of these participants are registered with the HPCSA while five have not yet completed their internships and have not registered.
- Seven of the thirteen participants who participated in the colloquium also completed questionnaires and two of them went on to complete the experiential reflections (meditations).

Descriptions and interpretations from within this research context were gathered through open-ended questions and existing measures of work-life orientation, calling and spirituality as a motivating factor in one's life (see sections 2.4.1.3; 2.4.2; & 2.4.3) (cf. Müller, 2004:301-302).

Interview and questionnaire: Open-ended questions were asked in the questionnaire and the following themes (from the individual interview and questionnaires) confirm and expand upon information and storied events within the lives of participants:

- Drawn to a profession;
- Experiencing a calling or vocation;
- Receiving a call or vocation and spirituality;
- Educational journey;
- Finding a professional identity and place within the profession;
- Practicalities within the profession;
- Career journey – what lies ahead?

2.5.1.1 Drawn to a profession

The participants were asked the question: “Can you describe any childhood or life experiences, events or influences that played a role in your career path goals?” The participants report their storied events within their lives:

A father, who is in the helping profession, was a role model for participant twenty-two. Participant twenty eight grew up in a family where her parents have always been involved in

the community and helping others. She says: “This career path came as no surprise, as I was brought up wanting to help others.”

Some registered counsellors report that they enjoy working for themselves in spite of challenges and that they enjoy or need autonomy (i.e. participants twenty, twenty-three, and twenty-seven). The value of self-employment was reported by Abel and Louw (2009:105) (cf. paragraph 3.2.5).

A need to understand people and/or psychological mindedness can be heard in the words of a few participants (cf. paragraph 3.2.6). Participant one says: “[...] it’s about finding what makes them tick” and she says she became “intrigued” at the differences in people in different areas, as they moved around with her father’s job. Participant nineteen says:

I am quite an intuitive and curious person, so since I was about probably 14-15 years of age I always wondered why people do the things they do. Understanding human behaviour has been quite a curiosity for me.

Participant twenty was confident: “[...] I think in school people often easily trusted me and shared sensitive details regarding their personal lives with me that might have influenced my career path.”

There were also various personal experiences that may relate to a few of the participants’ choices:

Respondent one’s interest in psychology grew when her father was diagnosed with psychotic depression in her teenage years. She also reports a “[...] need for (her) own healing partly achieved indirectly through studying psychology, as well as wanting to help others who are hurting.” Within her individual interview, she reflected on her love for people and needing to help and counsel. Although she had done really well and enjoyed the analytical side of the accounting career that she pursued for a time, she “[...] didn’t love it,” and turned back towards her passion. She says: “[...] I derive such fulfilment from making a difference in people’s lives.” Her own experiences in seeking career guidance in her twenties furthermore, led to an interest in this specialization.

Having a family member, who wasn’t mentally stable, may have influenced participant three. At the same time she had “[...] always wanted to make a difference and help people” from as far back as she can remember.

Participant eight became determined to “[...] help people realize that tragedies do not have to be the end but can be a new beginning” after losing her son. Participant twelve’s brother was killed when she was fifteen and she felt a need to help her mother through her depression. She “[...] copes well with problems” and has “[...] always enjoyed looking after children”, concluding: “I knew that it was the right field for me.” Another participant (fourteen) shared that her father committed suicide when she was sixteen, and that she “[...] felt that (she) could help others, especially adolescents, in such difficult situations” Aside from her love for children, participant twenty-four says that she has “[...] lost many people to cancer and saw the pain” resulting in a desire to help.

Participant ten “[...] became aware of the circumstances of most children in South-Africa” during her first year practical teaching. She also remembers not getting a lot of support (even academically) in school when her parents got divorced, and realized that teachers “[...] may not have the skills to see a child’s pain and may not know how to support him/her.” She believes teachers should have that basic understanding as “[...] not all children’s parents/carers can afford counselling.” Participant eleven shares that she always struggled with academics at school and that this may have influenced her need to help children to become “[...] all they are meant to be – confident.”

A low self-esteem and eating disorder as a teenager followed by an early abusive marriage, led participant fifteen to seek help. This led her to “[...] want to help teenagers and children deal with issues as to not carry them into adulthood.” Participant seventeen’s sister had an eating disorder and her (participant seventeen) need to understand led her to research psychopathology on her own. Participant twenty one has “[...] a passion for people, especially children.” She has a sister with special needs and enjoyed working with the children at New Hope School, “[...] seeing the difference you can make in someone else’s life.” Participant twenty six has an alcoholic father and “[...] from small (she) always wanted to help him or/and people in similar situations.”

A need to help children who are experiencing stress and “trauma” developed through her experiences with her own parents’ arguing a lot as she grew up, says participant nineteen. Participant sixteen thinks being high-jacked may have contributed to her motivations.

Participant eighteen shared that her childhood was unstable with emotionally unsafe people. “[...] I guess deep down I was looking for answers and psychology provided me with some,”

she says. Having a mother with Bipolar 2 disorder, and other traumatic childhood experiences contributed to participant twenty-five's career direction, together with her love for children. Participant twenty-seven wanted to help others as she had been helped after receiving therapy for depression: “[...] I have a nurturing spirit...” says participant twenty three. She continues, “[...] I have always been an old soul wanting to help and look after others.”

A passion or love for children or desire to help children specifically also emerges from the above accounts.

It appears that the registered counsellors within this sample, have motivations birthed in their identities and histories which are typical of those who are drawn to the profession of psychology (cf. Farber *et al.*, 2005:1029) (cf. paragraph 1.2.1, 3.2.6).

The “draw” to the profession of psychology will now be explored in context of vocation, calling and spiritually.

2.5.1.2 Experiencing a calling or vocation

Vocation can be defined as an approach to “a particular life role that is orientated towards demonstrating or deriving a sense of purpose or meaningfulness that holds other-orientated values and goals as primary sources of motivation” (Dik & Duffy, 2009:428).

Calling involves the same dimensions together with a third aspect, described as “a transcendent summons, experienced as originating beyond the self” which drives the life orientation (Dik & Duffy, 2009:428).

The overlapping dimensions of calling or vocation contribute to the meaning that people seek in and derive from work (cf. Dik, *et al.*, 2009:625). Based on the definitions of calling or vocation the researcher searched the data for expressions of “*prosocial- orientation*”, a “*sense of purpose and meaningfulness*” and “*transcendent summons.*” Among the twenty eight participants there were 42 references to data expressing prosocial- values (such as within concerns for children in various situations or motivations as have been referred to), 57 references indicating a sense of or need for purpose and meaningfulness, while 17 references were made relating to “transcendent summons.”

There were 13 references to God (as understood within Christianity) being involved in or a source of calling. Two references were made to a Higher Power, and eight to “other,” referring to spirituality, choices or leaned behaviour based on life experiences, inner self and indirect references to spirituality or God.

Exploring the data, the following storied experiences around calling and spirituality emerges: The researcher found “a **reflection on God’s presence** as it is understood and experienced” within the context of registered counsellors specializing in Gestalt play therapy (fifth movement of Müller, 2004:300, 303).

2.5.1.3 Receiving a call or vocation and spirituality

Participants were asked to complete the Intrinsic Spirituality Scale (ISS) (Hodge, 2003) after the measures relating to *work-life orientation*, and the *experience and search for a calling* (CVQ & BCS) (appendix C) (see sections 2.4.2 & 2.4.3). Spirituality was defined as “one’s relationship to God, or whatever you perceive to be Ultimate Transcendence” to be (ISS) (Hodge, 2003:48). Following that (ISS), participants were asked to identify the source of their calling, if they felt they had one.

The last question was open ended, and asked: “Can you please tell me more about the (past and/or current) impact of your relationship with God (or within another form of spirituality), on your career path?”

Participant one received prophetic words on more than one occasion during her high school years, around a “[...] counselling kind of ministry, in emotional healing.” “[...] I definitely believe it’s a calling, it’s not just a job. That’s what keeps me going, otherwise I would have dropped out ages ago,” says participant one. While she wanted to have “[...] a window into children’s lives” she reports that “[...] her sense of being called to ministry and to provide emotional healing” was her biggest driving factor. During her Honours year she chose to do some research on Gestalt therapy even though sources were hard to come by.

After doing Dr. Hannie Schoeman’s short courses in play therapy she (participant one) wanted to go deeper into the field of Gestalt Play therapy through the master's degree level training. She felt excited as she experienced the Gestalt connection as a confirmation or

God's intervention. During her studies she kept her options open for teaching as well, and "[...] then (she) just prayed about it a lot." Later she says:

I enjoy a close relationship with God and make all decisions prayerfully. God's presence in my life is very real to me, at times tangibly so... I am second, God is first.

Participant eight reporting on feeling called to counsel after her son died. She received a lot of feedback from various people that she "should be a counsellor" indicating that people may feel they can turn to her and trust her. She views the source of her calling as God and believes that "[...] God wants the best for me and that everything will turn out for the best if God is trusted." She continues that she has the choice to fight whatever adversity happens, or use it to her benefit.

Participant nine says that (she is) professing (her) faith in Jesus Christ through helping those who are in need (physically or psychologically). She shares that:

I need God to guide me in the course of my work. When words or knowledge fail, God never fails. I rely on God to guide me on a daily basis with my work and my personal life. I have grown through the course of my studies and work to rely more on God.

God is the one guiding her career path, and "[...] deciding what she's able to do", says participant ten. She shares that she "[...] does not pursue any occupational path without consulting God through prayer and a depended spiritual journey." She also talks to God in times of making quick decisions. She goes on to say:

Currently I believe that He put me where I needed to be. I believe that He is always in charge and if I truly trust Him, He will help me on the path He chose for me. That path is the only path which is the best for me. I do not always have the answers and I may not always be happy with what He chose for me. Still I know through His word that whatever He brings on my path, He will support me through it, if I choose to trust in Him. His love never fails. He impacts my whole career path, it is His choice.

Within this context participant ten loves both her work and the children she works with. The school system makes her work more challenging and difficult to work effectively. She says:

[...] it is a very enlightening job and serves God...I try and give my all to these children and use what I know to best support them. I am in a line of work which takes a lot out of me.

Participant twelve experiences God's guidance and calling as follows:

Too many God-incidences... On looking back I can see how God has placed certain people in my path that have led to furthering my career.

A counselling course at church led to training and work in a crisis centre, which led to the B.Psych degree for which she could apply though it was a late application. Through her supervisor and other contacts doors opened at the two schools that she works at. She also heard of the Play therapy masters degree “[...] something I have always wanted to do and had forgotten about.” She goes on to say:

I feel that God has led me in this direction and has helped me to find a way to do what I love. I am not searching for anything as I know God will continue to guide me if I am meant to go further. Money is not a big thing for me – it’s the recognition of ability.

Participant fourteen shares that she believes that God has called her to counsel children, referencing Rm 12:8. She believes that:

God called me to this profession by surrounding me with important role-players who guided and supported me through my academic career.

Similar to what participant twelve shared, Participant fourteen “[...] also received confirmation in Scripture as well as prophetic words from other believers.”

“I believe that my calling of God is to serve others. My career aids me to do so, [...]” says participant twenty two. Similarly, participant twenty five shares that God is the source of her calling “[...] fulfilling my purpose and being who I am.” She shares that her faith and resilience has been tested by her career path while facilitating personal growth through “[...] many opportunities to reflect on my growth and to find out who I am.” She adds:

If I hadn’t believed in God or a greater purpose I would not have grown as much, I would not be a good therapist and I would have found it a lot more difficult, I believe.

Participant twenty-six and twenty-eight also share their belief that God has guided and directed their career paths. Participant twenty-six shares that there is a reason behind her being in her current as well as in every past places of employment, which “[...] makes me the person I am today.” She continues to say that:

I don’t always feel like I know what I am doing but I am sure that I am continuously being guided by God in all that I do career wise and as well in life in general.

“I firmly believe this is the path He has chosen for me [...], though not always feeling an impact from God,” shares participant twenty-eight. She continues to say that:

Being closer to God now has made me feel more at ease about my future as a counsellor and more aware of the impact He has on my career path.

Participant fifteen says:

[...] the “political” state experienced when (the Centre for Child, Youth & Family Studies) moved from the one university to the other... was most demotivating and if I didn’t have my Christian path to follow I would be lost ...God has led me to where I am right now in my career just as He continues to lead me. I know that just as I am disappointed in the system and the political aspects within the university change over which caused my Gestalt Play therapy master's degree to fall away, I am exactly where He wants me to be, and that is just perfect for me.

Participant twenty shares:

Before I make decisions I pray about it and I believe that God makes all things work together for the good of me because I love Him. I do pray about big decisions like work, but because I am a child of God I believe that He is in control of all aspects of my life.

A sense of dissonance is heard in the following words, giving a deeper glimpse into the struggles experienced when life doesn’t turn out as expected:

I do sometimes still doubt, to be honest. I do believe in God, it is a choice that I make. But I am not one of those Christians who believe ‘blindly’. That also does not mean that I doubt God or His existence, but I do sometimes get depressed when things go wrong and wonder why God let it happen or feel that God has abandoned me, even though I also know that if you REALLY believe and know who God is, those thoughts would not cross your mind. But I know God loves me either way. And that is freedom (that I did not have when I was younger).

This struggle can also be heard in the words of participant twenty-one:

I know that God has a plan for my life, but I do not see it. It is quite frustrating, and places a lot of pressure on my relationship with God. I love working in the field of psychology, but at this stage it seems like God has other plans for me. I am a realist, and cannot just leave my current job for something that I love doing, but it does not pay the bills.

Participant twenty three speaks of her and God’s goals that do not always align:

I was brought up a Catholic and have always had a strong belief in the Catholic Church and still admire the mystery of God and the Holy Trinity, although my

life has taken a change, I no longer consider myself a practicing Catholic and have lost contact with the Church. I pray regularly and I am grateful for everything that has been bestowed on me. I do believe that there is a path that God has created for me and in His infinite wisdom I am on it and here instead of doing something else. I am a little sad at times that God's goals and mine do not always align, but that is life.

While valuing the Jewish traditions she grew up with, participant twenty-seven says that spirituality is not connected to religion for her. While she believes that traditions “provide a sense of identity and comfort” and would like that for any children she and her (Christian) husband may have, she is “unsure of what (she) believes in.” Experiences of traumatic loss in the past two years and reading about science and quantum physics, has left her “[...] doubting that there is a god.” She goes on to say:

At the same time I would so much like to believe in god – this would be comforting and then I could believe in things like “everything happens for a reason” and I have a higher calling in life. I just don't know what I believe in at the moment and I think about this all the time... I feel like I happened upon psychology and it has been a very tough road. I envisaged that I would be a clinical psychologist by now and have my own private practice. I have had to watch two of my colleagues who did their internships with me get into clinical psychology. While I was happy for the one (she really deserved it) the other one schemed her way in and it makes me doubt that whole process. So perhaps if the road to psychology had been easier (... nine long years), I maybe would have felt like ‘yes this is what I am supposed to do’ but I probably would not have grown as much as I have (although I can't be sure of this). I do realise that challenges provide us with the opportunity to grow and change. I think I rely more on this that a higher calling with regards to my path to psychology. That I have grown tremendously.

The theme of trusting that God is in control of where one is in life and career circumstances comes through strongly. On the one hand it brings comfort to some in various degrees, and on the other it also appears to create some distance for others, also in various degrees. It impacts not only one's relationship with God but also one's assurance of faith.

Participants three and seventeen, experience their callings as originating from a Higher Power. Participant seventeen adds: “[...] something I don't understand yet but I don't need to understand it, it's okay to just have faith.” About calling, she says:

I feel the concept of a calling is the best way to explain it. I knew I belonged in this field from my 1st day. My spirituality is not very traditional so sometimes it doesn't appear to have much to do with my career but thinking about it in depth has made me realise what a guiding force it is.

On the question around the source of a calling or vocation, participant eleven says she does have a higher calling, which is spiritual in nature. She explains:

It's an ever present source that is part of me as human being. I feel it's also part of a divine force that guides us as human beings to fulfil our calling here on earth. Not fulfilling my calling will definitely cause me to be unhappy and unsatisfied in my life... I feel I have a path set out, however, "not cast in stone" on how or when it should take place/happen. But rather a relined place where I fit in, in life and my role I need to fulfil while on earth. I can choose to follow it or deny the signs put on my path to help me get to my goals.

Participant eighteen says that she "[...] used to be a spiritual person", coming from a Christian background and family. For herself, she has "[...] found a better life and meaning outside (her) religion" over the course of years. The path was from believing what she was taught to now believing "in people, in good, in choices, in love, in change". She continues saying,

I do not believe that I have a calling to do something in life. I believe that we choose as a result of the experiences we had and have in life (our field – landscape).

Participants twenty-three sees vocation or calling in terms of "[...] learned behaviour coupled with life experiences." While participant twenty-four links it to one's "inner self."

Participant nineteen says:

I do believe that things happen for a reason and that God is behind it all..... However, I do not always bring this to consciousness and I don't always spend time thinking about this. Although I am spiritual, I am somewhat spiritual.. I believe that prior experiences, the direction of God and my identity (genetically and due to my circumstances and surroundings) has led me to my career path.

The majority of the participants indicate an *awareness of a calling* that is spiritual in nature. It appears that some of the participants have a sense of a transcendent and spiritual call and some actively search out God's will for their careers through prayer and confirmation through other believers. In Brownell's (2010a:37) description these believers have an intentional God-consciousness or view the unified field in a *spiritual attitude* (Brownell, 2010b:117) leading to the experience of a pneumenal field (cf. paragraph 3.3.2.4).

From a pastoral theological perspective, these participants live within an eschatological awareness of God's involvement in their lives, seeking His will and direction, within a field of faith (Louw, 2015:28) (cf. paragraph 5.3.5.2, 5.3.5.3).

The sense of being pre-ordained or pre-destined for a specific path in life that may not always be comfortable or align with one's human will, emerges from the participants' stories. It links with the call-text of Isaiah 49:1b, 5a, the call of Jeremiah and scriptures such as Psalm 139 that speak of the days of our lives being known before they came to be.

While not being called as kings, to the office of a prophet, building a temple, military leadership or such (see paragraphs 4.2.2; 4.3.1.4; 4.8 & 4.9) Christians often feel that God has a specific pathway, purpose or destiny for them. Disciples were also called to follow Jesus and take the message of the gospel to the world, while living according to his teachings (cf. paragraph 4.4.2; 4.4.3; & 4.4.6) According to Brands (2007:23) disciples are described in Matthew's gospel as also being "instruments of renewal, healing and compassion" (cf. paragraph 4.4.3).

Isaiah 49:1b and 5a is written in such a way that Adams (2004:194) expects a "self-involved reader" to step up to the task of taking up the call as servant of God in an uncompromising allegiance to God (Adams, 2004:194) (cf. paragraph 4.3.1.4).

It is true that our post-industrial occupational and economic systems did not exist at the time the Scriptures were written, but they do speak of God's involvement with his people and with people around them and in the world, through them. Schuurman (2004:126, 142) views calling as part of the realm of God's freedom in which a prayerful consideration of one's context and abilities or aptitude is required (cf. paragraph 4.4).

2.5.1.4 Educational journey

Another question relating to "how did we get here?" relates to the educational path participants have followed. The following details emerged through the questionnaires that confirm the colloquium discussion while expanding on it.

Participant eight says she blames both, herself for "[...] not being fully aware of everything that a career in psychology entails" as well as the training "[...] institutes for continuously changing requirements." Participant eleven wishes the universities were more forthcoming about options from the start. Participant twelve says:

I would have gone to a reputable university and completed all my studies (BA-MA). It is very difficult studying through UNISA as they do not inform you properly from the outset.

She feels frustrated that she cannot complete what she had set out to do, “[...] even though (she has) the money and the marks” and is now going towards her goals in an “[...] around about way.” Participant twenty-five also reports that she “[...] had no idea where to find all the information she knows now” when she started her educational journey.

Similarly, participant nineteen says that although she started seeking information at the end of grade 11/beginning of grade 12 and sought guidance from Stellenbosch University, she had no idea regarding the different pathways towards various career paths in either psychology or counselling. Not only does she feel that her BA Humanities means nothing (the only option she was offered) as it is too general, but had she known about the School of Applied Psychology, she would have started a B.Psych there and would have been finished with her studies by now. Instead she’s very frustrated as she’s not been able to find a university where she can finish the required internship as all the programs are currently under revision.

UNISA made some changes while participant fifteen was studying there with the goal of becoming a counselling psychologist, to offer only clinical and research psychology, which led to her having to reconsider her career options and path. Participant twenty says that they were only informed after starting their B.Ed Psychology (through UCT), that they would not be able to open a private practice.

Participant twenty-one has to still complete her internship, and says:

I enjoyed my studies and thought that I would be able to open my own practice, but this was not possible. I had to get back to the University of Pretoria to do an extra subject to be able to register as a counsellor.

One can hear the discouragement in the words of participant nine:

Due to the fact that I had to work and contribute to my family life while studying it impacted negatively on my studies from time to time. As a result, no matter how hard I worked to obtain my degrees, I will never be admitted to any further studies in psychology since my age, academic performance and race is not suited to being admitted to further programmes, in South Africa anyway.

Had she known what she knows now, she would have immigrated to the USA or UK to further her studies in psychology. She feels it is too late now and she’s “[...] stuck being a

registered counsellor with a master's degree in psychology which means less than the paper it's printed on.”

Participant one says:

I caution those wishing to embark on studies in psychology to understand the long journey ahead and the need to be selected into Honours and thereafter masters in order to work within the field... There are times when I assist my clients in finding their passion, that I wish I'd received career counselling and known the options available to me as I am able to share with my clients. After completing my BA degree I tried to find a job and I was told my subjects were too theoretical and hence I was not skilled enough on the practical side of things. At that stage I registered with UNISA to study a B.Compt in order to study chartered accounting...

Participants were not only influenced by a *lack of adequate information* about options and difficulties ahead but also by *changing curriculums* which tie in with the concerns around the scope of practice, public awareness of the profession and registered counsellors' place in the profession.

2.5.1.5 Finding a professional identity and place within the profession

The participants report on their finding of a professional identity and place within the profession. Participant twenty-three says:

Working as a registered counsellor is fantastic, except for the lack of acceptance from the professional community and sometimes the ignorance of the public, but I go out of my way to inform them as to what registered counsellors do.

At the same time participant twenty-three does not rely heavily on the registration as the category “[...] is quite misunderstood.” She continues to say that:

The training and specialising in play therapy allows me more scope to talk to clients about something they understand better, which is play therapy and thus I view myself more as a counsellor practicing play therapy, than a registered counsellor.

When asked about her professional identity in terms of “self,” participant twenty-three replied:

I see myself as not yet complete. Often my friends and family build up my selves more than I do and I do not often correct them. I am a social person, but

also an ambitious person, who has not to this day achieved what she wanted to achieve and thus my professional self often impedes on my personal context as it does not represent the best of what I am or what I think I should be.

Specializing in career counselling, participant one finds that the needs in schools within her community are mostly filled by psychologists. She has found “[...] that the public is largely unaware of (her) category of registration with the HPCSA, (registered counsellors).”

Participant ten views herself as ...

[...] a registered counsellor who works with children in school contexts and being able to help very young children through my studies in play therapy.

Participant eighteen admits that ...

To be honest, I don't know where I can fit in. Structurally and theoretically I know where I belong and what I can and cannot do.... I perceive my identity as a counsellor as something I have to develop myself as opportunities out there are few.

Participant twenty-six says she feels restricted as a registered counsellor as she feels that “[...] this qualification is not taken seriously within the profession of psychology.”

Participant eleven shares that:

I feel my work-self and my "self" is related in what guides me to function, how I live my life and work to fulfil my dreams. But I don't feel my work identity as such defines where I am in my life. I am not too bothered about my title, I want to work with kids and help them to achieve their potential.

Participant nine describes her professional identity as “[...] shallow, almost non-existent.” She continues:

There is no identity to describe. I work hard in the communities where I work and I do help a lot of children and families on a daily basis, however it is not recognised and never will be, at least in South Africa. Registered counsellors do the work for little money and play therapists don't exist in the eyes of the field of psychology, but we do the same work for no recognition or money.

While participant twenty-seven's current goal is to practice as registered counsellor practising play therapy, she feels quite disappointed by her professional identity as registered counsellor. She “[...] feels like a second class citizen.” She continues to say:

It has made me terribly mad at the HPCSA and even more so at the elitist psychologists running the show there. It is almost as if they are threatened by us and they want to hold onto all the power and money. It's actually a travesty and

I wish something would be done about it... And registered counsellor registration – feels like a joke. A made up ‘oh we don’t know what to do with all these people with Honours in Psychology’. There are so many politics involved it sickens me – it should be about helping people not stopping people from helping others. It should NOT be that psychologist earn R700 an hour and we earn less than half. Disgusting!

Participant twenty-six feels that:

I have studied long and hard and yet still feels inferior in my profession. My professional self feels like it is lacking and it makes me feel doubt and affects my confidence.

She adds that she feels restricted as registered counsellor and “[...] that this qualification is not taken seriously within the profession of psychology,”

I am currently working in my field but would like to be promoted to becoming a psychologist as this would mean growth and open more doors. My identity would also be more positive and I would feel more confident as people will take me more seriously. I would also then be able to make a better living with less restrictions.

The feeling of being “restricted” is shared by participant three, in light of the fact that “[...] we cannot call ourselves play therapists and there is an impression that counsellors are looked down on by psychologists.” Participant eight feels that there is “[...] a snobbery that does not have the best interest of people suffering at heart,” while she has been left feeling “[...] not good enough to do counselling” through the problems she’s experienced with the HPCSA.

Participant twelve shares that she feels ...

[...] inferior to the other psychologists who have a two year course but a bigger scope, higher pay and recognition in the field. I feel like a student. As though I still need another two year master's degree to be recognised. People don’t even know what a registered counsellor is. I start to doubt myself as my scope is not really clear.

Not having registered yet, participant fifteen feels like a “fraud” and that it’s unfair in light of having done the master's degree of psychology (referring to the play therapy). Participant twenty-eight feels as if she has no “[...] proper place within the profession, as this masters ended up being something else in the end (i.e. a research masters)”. Similarly, participant fourteen stated that she feels “[...] like a registered counsellor with a research masters”. “[...] I have the skill but not the recognition,” she says.

Participant fourteen reports that she definitely has a professional self that is present during discussions with other professionals. At the same time, the lack of recognition within a “registered trade” (i.e. play therapy), “[...] does limit (her) professional confidence.” It is furthermore “lessened” by the fact that although academically she holds various psychology degrees, she cannot refer to herself as a psychologist. Her preferred professional self-definition is as “play therapist” over “counsellor using play therapy techniques.”

“I became aware of jealousy from psychologists towards ‘play therapists’, [...]” says participant twenty-two. In her experience parents “often prefer making use of play therapists as opposed to psychologists.”

In the words of participant one:

I feel like I’m bottom of the food chain within the field of psychology. I feel I have attained great knowledge which I am limited to impart. Explaining my services is difficult as the lay person often equates a specialisation in play therapy as meaning I am a psychologist. When I correct them they feel confused and I often feel as if it undermines me in their eyes. I also feel I’m on the same level as a psychologist when it comes to play therapy ... after dealing intensely with Gestalt play therapy - yet I’m also worried I will overstep the mark ... Registered counsellors are also not meant to see clients long-term, we have been called emotional paramedics. This although I find it somewhat degrading, is okay for me as I love doing short-term intervention work which the Gestalt play therapy techniques accommodate. I have made peace with my identity at this stage although it took me a long emotional journey to reach the understanding and peace I have now.

Participants’ sense of professional identity and place within the profession appear to be more negative than positive. Practicalities around working in the field of registered counselling, will be explored next. It appears to be that registered counsellors are experiencing some difficulties in viewing themselves as “career professionals” (Nyström, 2009:14-17) (cf. paragraph 3.4).

2.5.1.6 Practicalities within the profession

It is challenging to work as a registered counsellor in light of limited work opportunities that are salaried, while working in private practice is not easy either. As participant ten shares:

It may have been easier have there been more opportunities for registered counsellors and registered counsellors who wish to specialize. Because of the few career opportunities for registered counsellors, I have been forced to set aside my counselling profession until I have gained financial stability to fully embrace it.

Participant twenty-one is not working in her study field and not very challenged by her work, “[...] but it pays (her) bills.” Being unmarried, she had to opt for a more stable and higher income, with benefits.

Participants twelve and twenty-three work both in schools as in private practice, while participant twenty-three works as a psychometrist as well. While she enjoys working for herself, she shared that it “[...] can become very stressful from a financial point of view as well as a collaborative point of view.”

Through word of mouth, participant one had been working as a registered counsellor doing career counselling, but was hoping that work opportunities (employment) within the field would increase upon the completion of the Masters in Gestalt Play Therapy.

Participant ten hopes to get to a place where she could practice both education and counselling. She “[...] would like to have a part-time practice at (her) home.”

It appears that the title of “registered counsellor” and/or “play therapist” relate to perceived work opportunities. Participant one says the following regarding play therapy:

For me that gives it a lot more oomph, validity to the public. They know, well not all of them know about play therapy, but it’s definitely a more known title than registered counselling... I actually get some people asking me if I work for the town council. So there’s no marketing that comes through that title. It’s actually easier to just say I’m a counsellor.

2.5.1.7 Career journey – what lies ahead?

When drawn to a profession, it’s not always so easy to turn away from it. Participant one pushed past family objections to pursue a BA Psychology after Grade 12, but when it turned out to be too broad to get work with, she started a B.Compt while working at chartered accountants. Although she loved the analytical side of the work (while getting distinctions in the studies), it didn’t bring the fulfilment that she experiences when making a difference in people’s lives. She asked herself what her purpose in life was and dropped out of the

bookkeeping, starting a BA Honours in psychology. At the same time she started working as a personal assistant to a psychologist, although her salary was halved by that career move. Having had three psychologists (her employer and friends) in her life that affirmed and encouraged her, was very important, especially in the early years, she says. It gave her a bit of a yardstick aside from her driving goal, which has been to make “an eternal difference” in people’s lives. She has plans to complete a Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) which will enable her to have a window into the lives of young people she can mentor and guide, while meeting her need for a salary at the same time.

Participant twenty-six is currently completing the PGCE as a back-up plan.

Participant three’s journey has involved a search for work that she both liked and found stimulating. She is focused on getting her career counselling practice at the moment.

Participant ten would like to do more counselling aside from her role as educator, while participant eleven is “[...] happy where she is” as registered counsellor using the play therapy skills, at this time.

Participant twenty seven is similarly aiming at working as registered counsellor utilising the play therapy skills at this time, though she may consider a master's degree in educational psychology in the future.

Participant twenty-eight indicated that she’d like to get a counselling position again in the future, as well as stating that she’s drawn to something else, but unsure as to what that is.

Participant eight has not found the fulfilment she sought and will be pursuing her drama and acting, integrating her studies with it.

A lack of job satisfaction led participant nine to leave the industry that she was in, and move towards psychology, which she now regrets. The move cost her dearly in terms of finances as well as family time, and she did not reach her goal of becoming a psychologist. She may re-apply for a professional master’s degree or enter the educational field.

Participant-twenty one does some psychometric work while working as a clerk. She’s also discontinued her studies, saying:

I built my future on being a play therapist, and it is not a reality for me anymore.
I have to start over and dream a new dream.

Participant eighteen has started her own web development company, due to the challenges around financial remuneration and trust in competency within the registered counselling field.

After being very unfulfilled in teaching and moving into the psychology field, participant twenty's goals have been to help people and make a difference in their lives, and she has made a shift to part-time lecturing. She can reach her goals within this field while also “[...] becoming alive.”

Participant twenty-two has been working as counsellor in a school while lecturing part-time, and is “[...] interested in applying (her) skills and training in a more corporate work environment.”

Participant twelve is considering educational psychology or starting a training centre, while participant fourteen wants to focus on working with children dealing with trauma through the use of play therapy.

Participant fifteen has been carving a place out within church counselling, focussing on those who can't afford it, while also working with the psychologist she did her internship with.

Participant sixteen works in private practice, with schools and in free clinics, and did not indicate future goals.

Participant seventeen intends to do a master's degree in counselling psychology.

Participant nineteen started out with the goal of becoming a psychologist but the play therapy was more attractive. She aims to finish her current studies and work as a registered counsellor utilizing the play therapy skills.

Participant twenty three is enjoying her work, but her goals in working with children in the psychology profession (i.e. educational psychology) have not really changed.

Participant twenty four will be applying for an internship in psychometrics in order to make a career out of it.

Participants one, three, eight and sixteen originally set out on their journeys towards Christian counselling, career counselling, registered counselling and trauma counselling respectively.

Participant twenty-four wanted to do play therapy originally and is moving towards psychometrics. The balance of the participants set out to become psychologists.

Aside from participant ten and twenty-four, all the others had “becoming a psychologist” (mostly educational, as well as clinical and counselling psychologists) as goal at some point or another along the journey. While some are settling into registered counselling using the play therapy skills, others are still aiming at becoming psychologists.

While this research is focused on a subpopulation within the registered counselling profession, the general trend of using registered counselling as a stepping stone into a professional masters degree appears to be confirmed (cf. paragraph 3.2.5). It also appears that some registered counsellors “settle” for a career as registered counsellor when other doors do not open.

2.5.1.8 Coding and theme analysis using ATLAS.ti

There were no surprising connections or causal factors that emerged from analysing the data, which could be due to the homogeneous nature of the population and the research question and goals. Using the Co-Occurrence ATLAS.ti tool to analyse the coded data, there appeared to be a significant correlation between the experience of being “*blocked in personal power or agency*” and the following:

- a) career uncertainty (around the scope of practice as well as future of career);
- b) various experiences of passion and fulfilment linked to counterfactual options or reasons for staying within the field; as well as
- c) leaving the profession.

The C-coefficient in the coded data is low (0.02) with 1 being the normal value, which is significant when linked to a big sample of more than 300 cases. ATLAS.ti however, notes “significant” relations indicating considerable “overlap” which are worthwhile to explore (cf. Friese, 2014:189). Dissatisfaction with the career of registered counselling, the educational blocks and difficulties, professional identity and scope of practice was strongly related to (1.00), the sense of blocked agency (0.19), and to the place that registered counsellors hold in the marketplace in terms of the profession of psychology, the public and work opportunities

(0.11). Other small but significant correlations emerged between registered counsellors' "place in the market" and career uncertainty and leaving the profession.

The definitions of Dik, *et al.* (2009:625) of calling and vocation were used within the coding of the data, bearing in mind that there is a lot of overlap between the descriptions of "an orientation towards a life role demonstrating or deriving a sense of purpose and meaningfulness" which hold "other-orientated values and goals as primary sources of meaning." Pro-social values are significantly linked to, or related to:

- a) a commitment to life which is a term emerging from career construction theory, describing a commitment to a wider range of life projects rather than a particular job (0.02);
- b) a need for career growth and stimulation (0.02);
- c) promoting activism around the profession of registered counselling (0.02);
- d) work satisfaction (0.9);
- e) a concern for life involving a view of life within a time perspective, reflecting hope and optimism (relating to career construction theory) (0.06);
- f) confidence which describes one's "capacity to stand by one's own aspirations and objectives, even in the face of obstacles and barriers" (from career construction theory);
- g) curiosity about possible selves as well as social opportunities leading to explorative actions (a term from career construction theory which at the same time reflects a Gestalt awareness of "possible selves") (0.06); and
- h) career transitions describing career changes towards pursuing one's goals (0.06).

The dimension of "purpose and meaningfulness" in the registered counsellors' life orientation, was found (through ATLAS.ti) to significantly relate to:

- a) a concern for life involving a view of life within a time perspective, reflecting hope and optimism (from career construction theory) (0.08);
- b) career transitions describing career changes towards pursuing one's goals (0.06);
- c) a need for career growth and/or stimulation (0.03);

- d) a need for recognition of one's work (0.05);
- e) evidence of job crafting (0.03);
- f) personal satisfaction (0.02), and
- g) indications of active self-definition or self-formation (0.02).

Other relationships to “purpose and meaningfulness” in life orientation, are:

- a) commitment to life (0.05);
- b) confidence to stand by one's own aspirations and objectives in the face of barriers (0.09);
- c) a sense of having control or agency (0.07);
- d) curiosity about possible selves as well as social opportunities leading to explorative actions (a term from career construction theory which at the same time reflects a Gestalt awareness of “possible selves”) (0.08);
- e) career commitment (0.09); and
- f) work satisfaction (0.09).

There was furthermore a significant identified overlap or relationship between the calling dimension of a “transcendent summons” and personal satisfaction in life (0.06).

2.5.2 Work orientation measurement

The work orientation measure of Wrzesniewski, McCauly, Rozin and Schwartz (1997:21-33) explores a person's orientation to *work as a calling, a career or a job* (cf. paragraph 3.5.2). This construct is broader than job involvement or work centrality, “considering people's beliefs about the activity of work in general, as opposed to beliefs about current work” (Rosso *et al.*, 2010:98). It searches the “primary types of meanings people see in the activity of work” (why they work) with the assumption that value and meaning is driven by one's orientation as well as that one can derive value and meaning “from almost any job or occupation” (Rosso *et al.*, 2010:98). Wrzesniewski (2003:297) is of opinion that what matters most is not the “kind of work” but one's relationship to it (cf. paragraph 3.5.2).

People with a *job orientation* are focused on the material benefits of the job, “to the relative exclusion of other kinds of meaning and fulfilment” (Rosso *et al.*, 2010:98). The financial benefits provides for enjoyable time away from work (Wrzesniewski, 2003:301). Their interests and ambitions are mostly expressed through hobbies or other interests (Rosso *et al.*, 2010:98). People with *career orientations* are focused on promotion and advancement (through pay, status and prestige) through corporate structures. Advancement increases one’s self-esteem, power and social standing (Bellah and colleagues in Rosso *et al.*, 2006:98; Wrzesniewski, 2003:301). According to Rosso *et al.* (2010:98):

A calling orientation is thought to develop in concert with one’s work, and is therefore distinct from the more specific notion of a calling to a particular type of work that is rooted internally.

People with a calling orientation view work “as an end in itself” which is usually associated with the idea of “making the world a better place” or contributing to the "greater good” (Wrzesniewski, 2003:301).

The following general values towards life and work orientation emerged from the 22 questionnaires:

Table 2.4: General values towards life and work orientation

Job orientation		Career orientation		Calling orientation	
Very much	0	Very much	5	Very much	8
Somewhat	1	Somewhat	7	Somewhat	9
A little	9	A little	4	A little	2
Not like me at all	12	Not like me at all	6	Not like me at all	3
Participants	22	Participants	22	Participants	22

It would thus appear that a slight majority of participants related more strongly to a *calling orientation* followed by a group *oriented to career*, while *job orientation* stirred little interest. Wrzesniewski (2003:302-303) links a calling orientation to better psychological health and traits such as optimism, mastery and conscientiousness, putting more time into work and gaining more satisfaction from it. The research found that work only took on a “wholly enriching and meaningful” character for those with a calling orientation. Wrzesniewski (2003:302) asks how people come to have callings or could be helped to have callings. Job-

crafting may be one avenue through which people may create or undermine meaning in work (Wrzesniewski, 2003:303) (cf. paragraph 3.6).

2.5.2.1 Participants with the highest calling orientations

The qualitative data from the participants with the *highest calling orientations*, reveal the following themes and descriptors of value, purpose and meaning:

Participant one says:

I value my current work and am fulfilled and enjoying my work. I identify mostly with Mrs C in that I'm fulfilled knowing each minute spent with a young person could be making an eternal difference in their life path in that they discover their sense of calling. I value the ability to make a difference over and above the value I give to money.

She has “a little” identification with *job identification* although she “[...] craves financial security”, and identifies “somewhat” with a *career orientation* in being hopeful that “opportunities within the field” may increase after completing this degree.

Participant ten says:

I love my work and I love the children I get to work with each day. The whole school system makes my work more difficult and all the extramural activities prevent me from sometimes doing my work effectively...

Aside from fully identifying with having a *calling orientation*, she describes the *career orientation* and *job orientation* as “[...] not like me at all.” Her goals and motivations within her studies held fast through her whole educational career, and involved addressing the social needs within schools through a combination of registered counselling and her educational role. Considering a counterfactual career path (“[...] what I would change in hindsight”), she states that she “[...] would have chosen the same career path...”

It may have been easier have there been more opportunities for registered counsellors and registered counsellors who wish to specialize. Because of the few career opportunities for registered counsellors, I have been forced to set aside my counselling profession until I have gained financial stability to fully embrace it.

Participant eleven also fully identifies with a *calling orientation* and says that the description of *career* and *job orientation*, “[...] is not like me at all.” While she originally wanted to be a clinical psychologist, she moved towards registered counselling in order to be able to work both in private practice and school settings. Currently she is satisfied in those roles utilizing the play therapy, and says:

I am happy now, I wish the path was just a little more "clear". But I love my work at the moment.

Participant fourteen fully identifies with a *calling orientation* and “not at all” with the *job* or *career orientation*:

I enjoy my work with children. The controversies surrounding "psychological" careers, is sometimes off putting to the extent that I went back to teaching a while ...

The fifth of the eight participants who fully identify with the *calling orientation*, is participant fifteen. She describes the *career* and *job orientations* to not be like her at all. She decided to complete the Honours to become a registered counsellor after UNISA’s training programs changed. About her *calling orientation*, she says:

I do what I do to help people become "unstuck" from emotional pain and get on the path to become al they were created to be. It's something I'll do until I'm 85yrs hopefully. Is who I am.

Participant seventeen describes herself as “very much” *calling orientated*, “a little” *career orientated* and “not (like me) at all” *job orientated*. She has always had the goal of becoming a psychologist, views the Gestalt Play Therapy masters as giving her an “edge” towards the same direction, and still intends to complete a master's degree in counselling psychology. Looking at her career in hindsight from a counterfactual point of view, she says:

I would still pursue the same path. I would have done the intern for registered counsellor though as it would've made my life a bit easier at times.

She says the following about her *calling orientation*:

I love my work and identify with Ms. C. My organisation has been highly troubled with financial mismanagement and poor management. I don't do this for my "organization" though. When I'm in a support group and look at the people around me, I know exactly who I'm here for, my clients and all addicts who are suffering.

Participant twenty says that she loves working with people, and is focused on a career that involves helping people. She continues saying:

[...] that is when I become alive. I think I am quite happy with my career path and although there are other jobs/career paths I probably would have enjoyed as well, I believe that I have done what I was 'supposed' to do and is where I need to be.

Around her current work as part-time lecturer she says that she does not enjoy the logistical issues such as not having an office, non-functional equipment and having merely a contract (thus lacking job security).

But apart from this, I become alive when I am at work and really feels that I am where I need to be, where I belong, where I can make a difference and that it is my calling. I would also love to have a husband and family one day and therefore my job is not the highest priority in my life. I like the fact that it is structured, but also flexible enough to make space for a family.

Participant twenty-four's goals included counselling and psychometrics before she wanted to become a play therapist, though she regrets continuing with the master's degree when it (The Centre for Child, Youth and Family Studies) was moved from UNISA to NWU. She aims to complete her internship to register as a counsellor, though it becomes challenging due to some health issues.

Two of the three participants who described a *calling orientation* to be "not at all like me", identified very (most) strongly with a *career orientation*.

2.5.2.2 The strongly career orientated participants

Participant twenty-one identified with a *career identification*, a little with *job orientation* and not at all with a *calling orientation*. She wanted to become an educational psychologist originally, completed an extra subject towards registering as registered counsellor and have discontinued her studies in light of the master's degree being general and not "in Play Therapy." Currently she is working as a clerk in an engineering company while doing psychometrics as a second job with a consultation firm when they need assistance. About her *work orientation* she says:

I am not working in my line of studies. My work is not very challenging, but it pays my bills. I cannot make as much money being a counsellor as I am making now. As I am single, I need a stable income with benefits.

Participant twenty-two identifies herself as “very much” *career orientated*, while both *job* and *calling orientation* being “not like (her) at all.” Her goals originally were to work in a private practice and currently she’s doing counselling in a school while also lecturing within an Educational Psychology department within a university setting. She registered as registered counsellor in 2006, completed the M.Diac (Play therapy) and submitted her PhD thesis in Psychology in 2013. Of her work life she says, “[...] my current working environment is very comfortable, but not challenging anymore.” From a counterfactual standpoint, she would have rather done a master's degree in educational psychology, seeing that the MDiac is not recognized by the HPCSA.

Participants twenty-one and twenty-two views *career orientation* to be “very much like (them)” while the *calling orientation* is “not at all like (them)”, participants eight, nine and twenty-six also strongly identify with a *career orientation* (“very much”).

Participant eight planned to be a registered counsellor and also looked at becoming a psychologist before aiming for “play therapist.” Her response to the work life orientations, are:

I think the word that caught my eye in the Ms B's paragraph (career orientation) was recognition of her good work. It feels as if the HPCSA won't even give me a chance to prove my capabilities.

At the same time she has a strong focus on helping children achieve a “sense of mastery.” Considering a counterfactual career journey, she says that she would have combined drama and public speaking in combination with her other studies. This participant completed a lot of hours in an internship which are now not recognized, while the internships are “on hold.” She continues:

I would have followed my dream and studied acting. I thought that psychology would be a career with more fulfilment than acting but I was wrong. I also now feel that it's more possible to make a difference in peoples' lives with acting that with psychology.

Participant nine identifies strongly (“very much”) with *career orientation*, “a little” with the *job orientation* and “somewhat” with the *calling orientation*. She deeply regrets her family circumstances that led to her not being able to get higher marks during her Honours studies

and that she didn't move overseas where she could have pursued further studies in Psychology. She says:

I made a career change into psychology, which I regret dearly, having spent thousands of Rands and precious family time on a degree that means less than nothing.

Aside from doing community work, she works in a practice alongside a clinical psychologist and another registered counsellor who has the M.Diac in play therapy. In response to the work life orientation, she says:

I have worked hard to get to where I am, in fact I made a complete career change after my first qualification in the food and hospitality industry (which brought no job satisfaction) only to realise that there may be no real future for me in the psychology field. However I still do the work because no one else (clinical, educational and counselling psychologists) or very few therapists want to work long hours with sick and poor children who they basically cannot understand due to language and contextual barriers. In my four years in the field as registered counsellor I have met only 1 psychologist who works in the impoverished communities for R150 an hour and not R700 an hour in private practice. Most of my clients (in private practice) are referred to me by psychologists who cannot work with children.

Participant twenty-six had planned to become a psychologist from the start. Along her educational journey she has completed both the registered counselling training (and internship) and the master's degree in psychology (Gestalt Play Therapy), while still holding on to her goal of becoming a psychologist. Currently she is "completing a PGCE (Post Graduate Certificate in Education) as a back-up plan." Regarding a counterfactual study path, she says:

I would have rather studied social work as after four years I would have been able to work and open a private practice. There is also more work opportunities. Studying psychology has been a long and stressful process and I still have not achieved my ultimate goal which was to be a psychologist.

In response to the work life orientation, she says:

I am currently working in my field but would like to be promoted to becoming a psychologist as this would mean growth and open more doors. My identity would also be more positive and I would feel more confident as people will take me more seriously. I would also then be able to make a better living with less restriction.

2.5.2.3 Mixed orientations of the remaining participants

The remaining participants (of the twenty-two) who completed the questionnaires identified their *work life orientations* as follows:

Table 2.5: Work life orientations

	Job orientation	Career orientation	Calling orientation
Participant 3	A little	Somewhat	Somewhat
Participant 12	A little	Somewhat	A little
Participant 16	Not like me at all	Not like me at all	Somewhat
Participant 18	Not like me at all	A little	Somewhat
Participant 19	Not like me at all	Not like me at all	Somewhat
Participant 23	A little	Not at all like me	Somewhat
Participant 25	Not like me at all	Somewhat	Somewhat
Participant 27	A little	Somewhat	Not like me at all
Participant 28	Not like me at all	Somewhat	Somewhat

Participant three have reached her original goal of becoming a registered counsellor when she started studying psychology. She wants to continue working as an Integrated Learning Therapy practitioner, in conjunction with career counselling. She considered adding play therapy to her practice. While career counselling is her interest she wishes it didn't take so long to get there, and not knowing about her options sooner, saying that she might have preferred to pursue Educational psychology. She initially worked within the airline industry, perceiving it to be a "job" while hating the work, and thus she continued studying. She continues:

I was very much like Mrs A but I always continued to pursue something else so I kept studying like Mrs B (career orientated). I did eventually find something I liked which was working with children with learning problems and I have done that for nine years but it is no longer stimulating so I keep pursuing more.

Participant twelve set out to become a psychologist, but decided to "[...] specialise as registered counsellor, as psychology is difficult to pursue, even with the right marks and the available funds. It is easier to qualify overseas than in your own country." She works at a school while also working in private practice sharing rooms with another counsellor as well as free-lancing at another private school. The Masters degree in Gestalt Play therapy added much to her career skills and was a perk, but her PGCE also contributed strongly to getting the private school work. To the *work life orientation* questions she says:

I enjoy what I do and put in a lot of extra hours. I enjoy trying to find mediums that will work for my individual clients. I am frustrated that I cannot complete

what I started even though I have the money and the marks. I feel like I had to go an around about way to get close to what I have always wanted to do.

Participant sixteen works in private practice and clinics, but would have pursued clinical psychology looking back. About the *work life orientation* she says: “[...] do work for financial reasons however do also enjoy my work.”

Participant eighteen set out to become a psychologist, and became a registered counsellor (registered with the HPCSA) before leaving the profession. She says:

I have started my own company relating to web development. Counselling and Play therapy turned out to be a challenging field of work regarding financial remuneration and trust in competency.

In her response to the *work life orientation*, she says that she can identify with the many goals she wants to achieve within a *career orientation*. Although she loves her work she does not always enjoy the counselling but it is “[...] what (she) chose to do.”

Participant nineteen feels that she lacked guidance about the various routes within the field of psychology when she started studying even though she started to gather information in the beginning of grade twelve. She expected a master's degree in play therapy and the general master's degree seems to carry less weight, and this has been a “[...] frustrating and upsetting process.” Around her *work life orientation* she says:

I am not like Ms. A (job orientation), because I don't want to retire - I haven't even started my career yet. However, I always look forward to weekends and often want to go on vacation. I am not like Ms. B (career orientation), because I am not seeking a promotion. However I do appreciate recognition for good work. I am not a competitive person though, so I am different in that regard. Once I kick off with my career as a registered counsellor, I do not aim to be in a different job within five years. I am somewhat like Ms.C (calling orientation) in that I do consider my job as part of who I am. Why would I get into this line of work then? So off course, I agree. However, I do not make my work, my life. I believe in a healthy balance. I am also different from Ms.C in that I won't necessarily take work with me on holiday. The majority of my friends are not from work either.

Participant twenty- three wanted to be a psychologist working with children since grade seven. She has completed the coursework for registered counselling as well as the Masters in Gestalt Play Therapy as a stepping stone towards becoming an educational psychologist. Her other goal for the master's degree has been to gain more competency in working with children. She says:

[...] my goals have stayed the same in one degree or another, however I believe that my goals are more focused now, although it feels as if I am taking the long way around.

Counterfactually she might have become a child advocate. Regarding her *work life orientation*, she says:

I love what I do and I enjoy every moment of it. I enjoy the praise for good work done, although it is not often seen, however I do not look for praise anywhere. I would however not encourage people that I know to continue in this work or enter this field as it is a bureaucratic nightmare. What I do is who I am ...

Participant twenty-five set out to become a child psychologist. The Masters in Gestalt Play therapy seemed to be a piece of the puzzle, though looking back to the start of her educational journey, she “[...] would have applied for the B. Psych sooner and clinical master's degree shortly thereafter... only completing the short courses in Play therapy...” About her *work life orientation*, she says:

I relate mostly to Ms C (calling orientation) because I do see my career as a great part of my identity. I can also relate to Ms B (career orientation) because I feel as if I am constantly working towards something – to be registered and to be viewed as a psychologist or professional because I have worked hard. I only slightly agree with Ms A (job orientation) in that I would encourage my children to rather pursue a career path that is certain.

Participant twenty-seven says that the *calling orientation* is “not like me at all”, whilst the *job orientation* is “a little’ like me and the “*career orientation*” is “somewhat” like her. While she originally aimed at clinical psychology, she realized that one’s chances of getting into a program were “slim to none.” Currently she is content to start a practice as registered counsellor and do play therapy although as a counterfactual path; she would have pursued educational psychology early on or medicine, though her marks weren’t high enough for medicine. About her work life orientation she says:

I currently work as a facilitator at a school so this was never my end goal. I would love to open my own practice and do play therapy and counselling with children (perhaps get into educational psychology). I would enjoy my work much more should this come to pass. I would have my own hours and be able to work for the enjoyment of it and not for a necessity. At the moment I work for necessity although I am trying to be more positive about facilitating. So in that sense I am a little like Ms A (job orientation) but more so like Ms B (career orientation). I can't imagine being like Ms C (calling orientation) although that would be incredibly wonderful.

While she's thus not currently strongly identifying with having a *calling orientation*, it appears that she is expressing a "wish" for one.

Participant twenty eight wasn't able to find work as a registered counsellor and had been *au-pairing* while completing the master's degree, hoping to get work in 2014. Looking back at her educational journey she would have done counselling first, gained some work experience and then set out to complete either the Masters degree in Gestalt Play therapy "[...] or probably a different master's degree."

About her *work life orientation* she says:

[...] currently I am mostly enjoying my work as *au pair*, but if I were to get a counselling position I would probably want to do that more and would feel more like Mrs. C.

2.5.2.4 Summary: work-life orientation and career path

In conclusion it appears that there are various orientations to life and work within the population while the majority are *calling orientated* and the second biggest group is *career orientated*.

- Participants one, ten and eleven (with *calling orientations*) describe being satisfied with their present career path and speak of loving their work and being fulfilled. Participant twenty's *calling orientation* is towards "making a difference" in people's lives, and she has found that goal fulfilled in a career transition towards part-time lecturing. That is where she "becomes alive". Participant seventeen loves her work and describes the help she can give addicts as far more important than organizational mismanagement. Participant twenty four's descriptions of her work as play therapist and desire to help people, also speaks of career satisfaction. Aside from participant twenty who is finding fulfilment as a part-time lecturer, they all have in some way or the other adjusted their career goals towards registered counselling in a way that fits their wider goals and interests. Participant ten's goals in terms of her private practice may be on hold, but she is fulfilled in the work she does within the school system (which was part of her original goals).

- Within the *career orientated* group, it appears that participant twenty-two no longer feels challenged by work. From the perspective of the literature around *career orientation* that has been described, the lack of status of the M.Diac in comparison to a master's degree in educational psychology, may play a role in her life and work satisfaction. At a PhD level she still remains a registered counsellor aside from her work as lecturer. Participant twenty-one does part time psychometric work but is working as a clerk for financial reasons as a single person. She did not reach her goal of becoming a psychologist and while battle-weary, states around her identity that she has to start dreaming “*a new dream*”. Participant eight expressed a need for recognition of skill and capabilities in her work. Participant nine is very dissatisfied in not being able to continue her path towards a master's degree in psychology. The limitations on her career growth and sense of unfairness around most psychologists not being willing to do community work while she can't move forward, leaves her discouraged. Considering her involvement in communities and her scores on the other calling measurements, she may be more career focused right now because of the closed doors. The sense of a lesser identity as registered counsellor together with restrictions on work as well as income, is reported as a hindrance to participant twenty six.

It therefore appear that this group may have a stronger focus on the career path and the fact that it is hindered from moving forwards within the profession of psychology, than the calling group.

- Participant twelve shares traits from both the career and calling group in the way that she's adapting with “back-up” plans. Similar patterns among the balance of the participants as have been discussed, have emerged. Seven participants in the last group (of nine) was orientated “somewhat” to *calling* which is second to “very much” on the scale. The remaining two were orientated “somewhat” to *career*.

While there appears to be a general trend in just looking at the scores on all the tests, towards a higher experienced sense of calling among those with a *calling orientation*, it is not a predictable pattern looking at the balance of the data. The data represents where the participants were in specific points in their career journeys and cannot be seen as fixed absolutes. In the face of an increased awareness of career blocks it may be more on the foreground in Gestalt terms.

2.5.3 The Calling and Vocation Questionnaire (CVQ) and Brief Calling Scale (BCS)

The following measures of calling, vocation and intrinsic spirituality were included within the questionnaire. Using established research instruments with proven reliability and validity, increases the reliability and validity of conclusions drawn within this study.

The Calling and Vocation Questionnaire (CVQ) and Brief Calling Scale (BCS) have high convergent and discriminant validity “representing the presence of, and search for, a calling” (Dik, Eldridge, Steger & Duffy, 2012:258). The CVQ looks at the three dimensions of calling in a “more specific manner and multidimensional manner” while it appears that participants may differentiate more between thinking and experiencing a calling when considering calling more specifically, such as in the BCS (Dik, Eldridge, *et al.*, 2012:257).

The Intrinsic Spirituality Scale (Hodge, 2003:41) “assesses the degree to which spirituality functions as an individuals’ master motive.” The instrument is valid both within and without theistic and/or religious frameworks. Persons with high scores on this scale represent those to whom spirituality is the most important part of their lives and for whom it functions as: “... the “master motive that directs all other dimensions of their lives and answers their questions about life.” (Hodge, 2003:55).

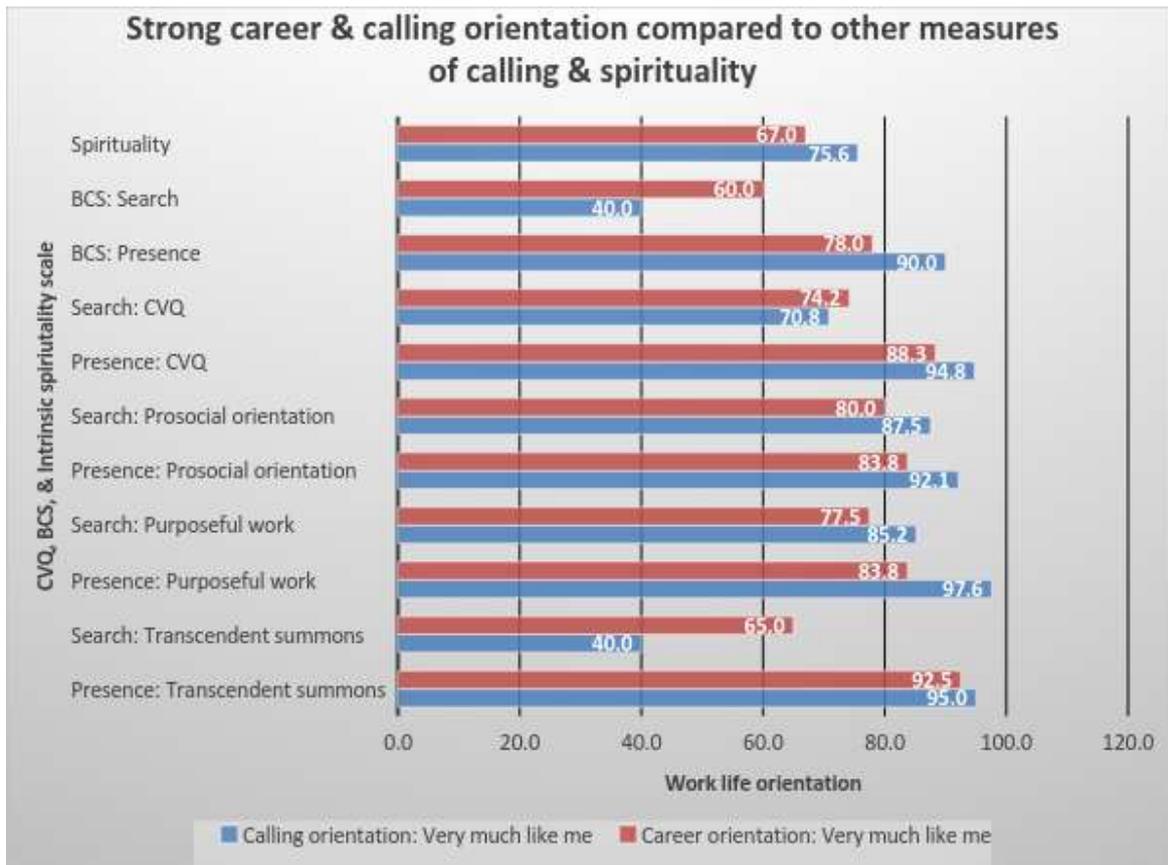


Figure 2.2: Strong career and calling orientation compared to other measures of calling and spirituality

The above scores were converted to percentages for the purpose of a general comparison only. Tentative interpretation of this comparative graph that may warrant further investigation, are:

- It appears that a life-orientation of calling is somewhat more related to intrinsic spirituality as primary motivator than from a career orientation. At the same time intrinsic spirituality operates as a strong motivator within both groups.
- A search for a calling is found to be generally higher on the CVQ than on the BCS, possibility indicative of the BCS measuring more conscious awareness as well as the few items, while the CVQ is a more multi-dimensional measure.
- A lower search for a calling may more specifically be related to the “transcendent summons” which appears furthermore, to be lower when there is a high “presence” of “transcendent summons.”

- A higher sense of calling within the life-orientation context appears to relate to a higher sense of calling as measured by the CVQ and BCS than indicated within the career-orientated group.

See appendix D for the scores of the tests per participant, expressed as a number out of ten for comparison purposes, together with the measured work-life orientation.

Tentative interpretations drawn from the measures are:

- Participants who appear to be the more strongly motivated by their spirituality which undergirds other decision making, are participants one, eleven, fourteen, fifteen, twenty-five, and twenty six (their scores on the ISS being 8.2-8.3 out of 10). Within this group, participants one, eleven, fourteen, and fifteen are strongly (“very much”) orientated towards calling in their work-life orientation, while participant twenty-five is “somewhat orientated” to both calling and career, and participant twenty six is strongly (“very much”) orientated towards career and “somewhat orientated” towards calling.
- What participants one, eleven, fourteen, fifteen, twenty-five, and twenty six all have in common aside from the highest scores on the ISS, are high scores on the perceived presence of a transcendent calling (CVQ & BCS). These scores were all 9-10 if measured out of 10, except for participant twenty-five whose presence of calling was 7.1 and 8 on the CVQ and BCS respectively.
- Comparing the scores on a perceived “presence” of a calling and a “search” for a calling, it appears that a higher sense of presence lead to a lower search for a calling.
- The participants with the strongest career orientation (work-life orientation) appear to be participants eight, nine, twenty-one, twenty-two and twenty-six. Their scores on the ISS range from 5 to 8.3, but they all have a strong sense of transcendent calling presence (8.1-9.4 on the CVQ; and 7-9.2 on the BCS).
- Participants sixteen, eighteen, twenty-three and twenty-seven are the least motivated by their spirituality (ISS scores 1.7, 1.7, 2.8 and 1.7 respectively). Aside from participant twenty-three who has a higher sense of transcendent calling (7.1 on the CVQ; and 8 on the BCS) the others scored between 2 and 6.5 for presence of a

transcendent calling. Participant twenty-three still has the goal of pursuing a professional master's degree but is working within her profession as registered counsellor as well as psychometrist. Participant sixteen didn't share much of her story. Participant eighteen started a web-design company and participant twenty-seven was experiencing a strong search for a calling and higher levels of conflict or distress within her qualitative responses.

- Participants eight and nine indicated a strong (“very much”) orientation towards career coupled with a strong sense of transcendent calling (9.4 & 9.4 on the CVQ; and 9.2 & 8 on the BCS). Both show some distress or conflict within their storied responses.

In general it appears that registered counsellors whose spirituality is a strong motivator in their lives, and who have both a strong *calling orientation* and a sense of *transcendent calling*, adapt relatively well to the blocks in their career path, and that they are able to come to a relative sense of peace. A lower sense of transcendent calling and/or motivating spirituality coupled with a career orientation or less strong calling orientation (work-life), may be indicative of less work-life satisfaction, considering participants' storied responses.

2.6 INTERDISCIPLINARY VOICE

Descriptions of experience are thickened through **interdisciplinary investigation**, within practical theology (movement six, Müller, 2004:303). A pastoral counsellor, who had pursued the Gestalt master's degree in play therapy training after studying theology (BTh), completed one of the questionnaires.

This pastoral counsellor's career goals were to have a pastoral counselling practice. She had completed various other courses coupled with her theologically based counselling training, together with the Masters in Gestalt Play Therapy, in order to have a diverse practice.

Around her work with children at church she says, “[...] I'm just equipped now to work with them.” Looking back at her educational and career path, she may have rather followed the psychology route in order to register with the HPCSA. She can't think of childhood experiences that motivated her career path.

The pastoral counsellor's *work life orientation* is “somewhat” orientated towards career and calling and “a little” towards a job. On the *intrinsic spirituality scale* her score was 6.8 out of 10 indicating that spirituality operates as a strong motivator in her life, while not as strong as some of the registered counsellors within this study. Her scores on the CVQ and BCS are 7.5 and 7 for the presence of a *transcendent calling*, and 7.7 and 8 indicating the search for a transcendent calling. Within the sub-dimensions of the CVQ, it appears that her presence (and search for) a transcendent summons/calling is the highest, followed by the presence and search for purposeful work, and lastly the presence and search related to a pro-social orientation.

There does not appear to be a significant difference within the pastoral counsellor's profile compared to the registered counsellors specializing in Gestalt play therapy.

2.7 EMERGING STORY

The colloquium, individual interview and questionnaires generated data which has been informed by the ongoing literature review. This resulted in the design of experiential reflections yielded from this descriptive-empirical phase in chapter four. The qualitative and quantitative data generated in this chapter can be summarised as follows:

- **Drawn to the profession**

Registered counsellors, who specialize in Gestalt Play therapy, find themselves in a seemingly awkward space between lay counsellors and psychologists and often get mistaken for either, while not experiencing themselves embraced within the wider field of psychology. It appears that the registered counsellors in this study were **drawn to the profession** of psychology through the same motivating pathways and interests through which psychologists approached their careers. This appears to confirm the original question of whether this would be the case, in section 1.2.1. These motivations include a *need for autonomy* found within working for oneself, *childhood experiences* that shaped a desire to help others and make a difference in others' lives, and *psychological mindedness* (cf. sections 3.2.6 & 3.4).

- **Motivated**

Most of the participants are more **motivated** by *recognition of skill and work* than by money. They show concern for struggling communities although not many actively work within them. A lack of employment opportunities coupled with a need for autonomy (and possibly recognition) that comes from private practice, may lead to less community involvement than anticipated for them.

- **Awareness among the general public**

Participants often find themselves “out of work opportunities” due to either not having the professional master's degree training, or due to lay counsellors who may or may not charge. Participants report a lack of **awareness among the general public** around the profession and title of registered counselling and although “play therapy” is a more understood career and term, it does not neatly “fit” into or expand the profession of registered counselling. Participants report that the title “registered counsellor” is often equated with “lay counselling” and that using the word “registered” sometimes give the impression of trying to legitimize one’s position. This undermines credibility. Another result of this ambiguity, pointed out by participant eight at the time of completing a “member check,” is that it becomes harder to establish a reputation in terms of having more skill than lay counsellors.

- **Sense of vocation and calling**

A strong “pro-social orientation” coupled with a need for or sense “of purpose and meaningfulness” emerged from the stories as well as the theme-analysis using ATLAS.ti. This indicates a strong sense of **vocation**. From the references as well as experiential stories relating to “transcendental summons” it appears that most of the participants experience a sense of **calling**, which originates from outside of themselves.

Participants share that their **callings** have helped them to stand fast in the face of difficulties experienced in their career journeys. The source of participants’ (who took part through the questionnaires) callings were identified as: learned behaviour and experiences (1); a combination of experiences and field experiences although God was behind it all (1); non-religious and non-spiritual (2); spiritual (1); a Higher Power (2); inner self (1) and God in the Christian tradition (12).

Some participants speak of what one participant called “God-incidences” referring to opportunities (including employment) and people He placed within their lives that indicated a specific direction and who supported them along the way. These opportunities and people confirmed the direction and calling. Some participants shared that they made both career decisions and “smaller decisions” prayerfully, and two mentioned prophetic word and confirmation about their callings. The participants indicated a belief that God would guide them, help them fulfil who they are, help and guide them through daily counselling activities, and let “all things work together” for their good.

- **Relationship with God**

A dissonance in **relationship with God** can be heard in descriptions such as: not believing blindly; wondering why God allowed things to happen or whether He’s abandoned one; “[...] it puts a lot of pressure on my relationship with God”, “God’s path and mine do not always align; “I wish I could believe,” and “I may not be happy (when my will and His collides)”.

The fact that the researcher identified herself as a registered counsellor within this population (in the training program in Gestalt play therapy), while at the same time working from within the field of practical theology, may have had an influence on whether those approached decided to participate in the study or not. There may have been more Christian respondents than they may have been otherwise (although spirituality was not defined as Christian specifically). At the same time, 17 out of 24 participants can relate to a calling of spiritual nature (of which 13 indicated Christian beliefs), within a sample of 21,95% drawn from the specific sub-population of registered counsellors (completing or having completed the master's degree training in Gestalt play therapy).

- **Meaning within the profession**

Accordingly some participants have found peace within the profession through the **meaning** they have ascribed to it, which can also be described as religious coping. The more successful participants are in adjusting their systems of circumstantial meaning (when it doesn’t fit one’s global meaning system), through which the situation becomes part of God’s bigger plan and will for their lives, the more at peace they become, leading to easier adjustment (Park, C.L, 2010:257-258; Park, 2012:28). The same is true for a

spiritual path of meaning that does not necessarily involve traditional Christian experiences.

Positive reinterpretations that are focused on the good outcomes of difficulties are adaptive while negative appraisals of Gods' (the Ultimate Transcendent) intent or of Him being neglectful, can lead to mistrust, hurt and disappointment (Aldwin, 2007:114; Park, 2012:30). This was found to be true within the different participants' stories.

- **Occupational trauma of blocked career paths**

It appears furthermore, that it may be easier to adjust to the occupational trauma of blocked career paths, when counsellors have a strong *calling orientation* in terms of the *work-life* description. This relates to the *meaning of work* in general. Those with stronger *career orientations* are at risk for higher levels of experienced distress, which according to the theory discussed (in chapter three), could relate to the lower status of registered counsellors.

- **Trained in skills within the scope of practice**

The majority of registered counsellors have been **trained in skills** more suitable for private practice than what was intended for the profession. Colloquium participants stated that this is what they “signed up for” and “paid for” and that it thus would be a form of “contract breaking” to change their scope. As it is, they perceive their **scope of practice** as limiting and blocking them for helping children in the way that they would like to, through the play therapy specialization.

Only 5-10% of students, who apply for professional master's degree training every year, are successful. The stories of the hundreds of applicants who not only fail to be selected within any given year, but who have been working towards this goal (some for up to nine years) are often not told, but are reflected within these storied accounts.

One could argue that it is statistically impossible that all the participants who fail to get into a professional master's degree training, are unsuitable for the career. Yet they are told to “not be discouraged” as they “have already learned many skills that are relevant to different work environments” (UP, 2014:20). While there may be truth in that, it has also been experienced within this population that even the Honours level training was too academic and did not lead to employment opportunities.

- **Not informed in the career path**

The overwhelming reports from within this research sample, is that they were **not informed** when they embarked on their studies, how slim their chances of success would actually be. Had they known they could have become social workers or looked at other options, or at the very least, have made more informed choices. This has led to the group partaking in the colloquium discussion questioning the ethics within the higher educational system. Some participants would like to see the profession of registered counselling to stand separate from psychology, with a career path that can also end with doctoral level training.

It is ironic that opinions within the profession of psychology is that it is more ethical to train a smaller number of students well, on a professional masters level (Pillay *et al.*, 2013:48). Without disputing the necessity of closely supervised masters training on this level, the researcher would like to question how much difference these few could make in context of the experienced need for mental health services within South Africa. The real need for basic mental health care is not disputed or dismissed. The question is how the creation of a mid-level profession such as registered counselling will meet the need at ground level, without adequate job opportunities, or when the applicants represent a large percentage of students who actually want to be psychologists.

- **Referring to professional identity**

The additional problem remains of “psychologising” the communities in question – familiarizing them with the profession so that they will experience a need for basic psychological services (see paragraph 3.2.4 & 3.2.10). The importance of the task originally assigned to registered counsellors is significant, but that does not take away the experience of “hierarchy.” Referring to their **professional identities**, participants speak of wanting to be “promoted” to psychologists, of feeling like they are at the “bottom of the food chain” and generally, of being seen as having a lower status. They also describe having reached “a ceiling” or being less stimulated than what they would like.

The registered counsellors within this sample do not show evidence of a strong sense of professional identity. They speak of being unsure of where they fit in, feeling “lesser than” psychologists, of not being welcomed by psychologists into the profession of

psychology, and of finding themselves in an “unknown profession” within society in which they are responsible to carve out their professional identities themselves.

- **Self-crafting**

Most of the participants have embraced this task of **self-crafting**. They have done this not only through seeking further master's degree level training in Gestalt play therapy, but through carving out specific niches within school, career counselling and church environments. Job crafting can be observed in how their work practices create specific identities around their strengths and interests (cf. paragraph 3.6). Considering career construction theory (Dik, *et al.*, 2009:628-629, Savickas *et al.*, 2009:245) there is some evidence that: a concern for life evidencing hope and optimism regarding the future; curiosity around “possible selves” coupled with exploring different options actively; confidence as the capacity to stand by personal objectives (even in the face of adversity); and a commitment to life’s projects or possibilities over a specific “job,” do lead to better adjustment (cf. paragraph 3.3.6).

From the qualitative theme analysis it was found that the sense of being blocked in personal agency was linked to career uncertainty, dissatisfaction with their careers and educational paths and leaving the profession. It was often referred to in context of feeling blocked in their quest for meaning and purpose.

A picture of what each participant’s “preferred identity” or “ideal self” is emerges from their storied accounts, influenced by their varied contact experiences within their personal histories, educational journeys, systems of meaning, values and beliefs, which all form part of their field. The participants also described this field to include the pneumenal - their relationship with God (cf. paragraph 1.2.3, 3.3.2.4). From a pastoral perspective this refers to the “field of faith” (cf. paragraph 2.5.1.2; 5.3.5.2; 5.3.5.3).

Professional identity development as “self-crafting” is evidenced in job crafting activities through which participants have sought to change their responsibilities or occupational tasks, such as through adding skills through further training (Berg, Grant & Johnson, 2010:973; Dik, *et al.*, 2014:6). Job crafting can also be seen in strategies of cognitive crafting referring to the changing one’s perspective. This may involve viewing registered counselling as a great career (coupled with a focus on activities that one finds meaningful) or adjusting one’s focus

to a different population. Such strategies have been reported to benefit those with “unanswered callings” (Berg, *et al.*, 2010:873).

The result of the interpretative research task, the literature study, is presented in chapter three.

CHAPTER THREE

3. INTERPRETATIVE TASK: PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT AS LINKED TO IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT AND CALLING OR VOCATION AND WORK OF REGISTERED COUNSELLORS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The interpretive task attempts to understand from a literature study what causes gave rise to the current situation, “Why is this going on?” (Osmer, 2008:4). The interpretative task, in accordance with Osmer (2008:83), will investigate the praxis according to a literature research of calling, spirituality and work within the professional identity development from the field of psychology and a Gestalt perspective. From Müller’s (2004:300-304) perspective this process involves the gathering of interdisciplinary traditions of interpretation. Osmer (2008:4) describes the interpretative task as: “Drawing on theories of the arts and sciences to better understand and explain why these patterns and dynamics are occurring.”

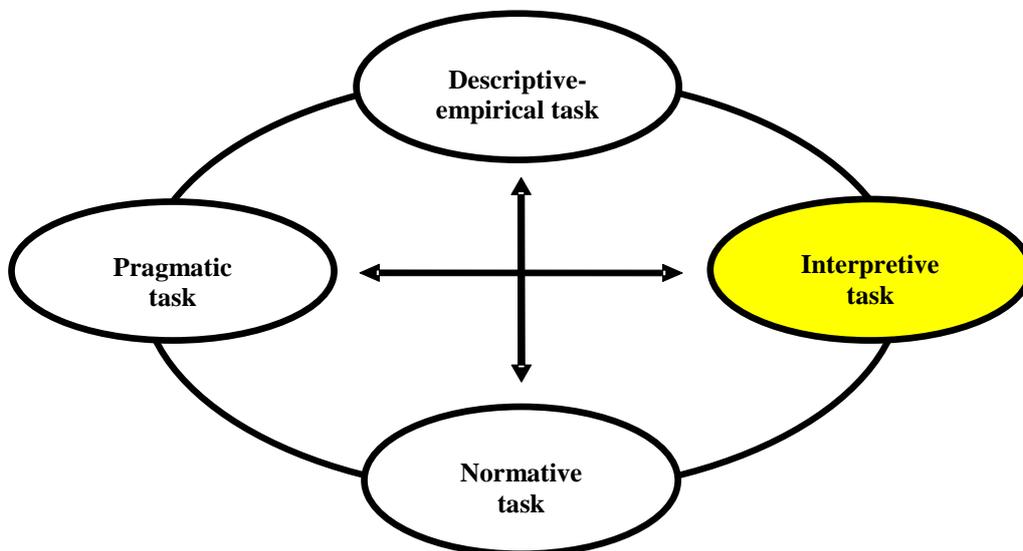


Figure 3.1: Interpretative task (Osmer, 2008:11)

The objective of this chapter is:

- To identify through an interdisciplinary literature search, how registered counsellors specializing in Gestalt Play therapy could develop their professional identities.

Registered counsellors stand within a particular, young profession in South Africa. Within this context, every registered counsellor is a “host” to a “population of selves”, to use the words of Erving Polster (2005:41). Within this population, an “essential self” is extremely enduring while a “member self” is more in “flux” and more experientially bound (Polster, 2005:41). Within the context of professional identity development, the researcher expects that the identity will be more of a “member self” during the training and early phase of one’s career, and that it will become an “essential self” as a registered counsellor settles and grows in his/her career. As a product of natural Gestalt figure formation within the cycle of experience (Ginger, 2007:41-44), the configured self as a “possible” or “ideal” self (Polster, 2005:24-25; 50) may also relate to the formation of professional identity among counsellors.

No specific research from a Gestalt framework was found that relates to professional identity development. The professional selves or identities are of critical importance as described in chapter one, as they “serve as frames of reference” for counsellors’ counselling roles, decisions, attitudes concerning responsibilities and ethics, modes of thinking and patterns of problem solving (Auxier, *et al.*, 2003:25; Brott & Meyers, 1999:145-146, 2010:57; Gibson *et al.*, 2010:21).

Within the pragmatic research task as described by Osmer (2008:4), the researcher will explore the interdisciplinary voices in what Osmer calls the “reflective conversation” within the field. The end goal or hope of this task, is leading registered counsellors towards transformation within the servant leadership model (Osmer, 2008:29). The fourth task of Müller (2004:300-304) research guidelines entails studying a phenomenon from various interpretative frameworks. Such interdisciplinary investigation thickens a description of experiences of registered counsellors within their context (cf. Müller: 2004:300-304).

After examining the career of registered counselling, the researcher will proceed to explore the *self-formation* in terms of the Gestalt framework as well as *professional identity development*. Other theories that relate will also be discussed, before looking at the *meaning of work* and *calling*, which forms the link to the *spirituality* of registered counsellors.

3.2 REGISTERED COUNSELLING

3.2.1 Birth of a profession

The counselling profession as the youngest of the helping professions, compares internationally to psychology or social work (Mellin, Hunt & Nichols, 2011:140). It has an identity which emerged from specialization and is not yet fully unified (Mellin *et al.*, 2011:140). Efforts towards establishing a collective identity focus on identifying a philosophical orientation unique to counselling, such as it being developmental, prevention orientated as well as orientated to wellness and helping (Mellin *et al.*, 2011:140; McLaughlin & Boettcher, 2009:134).

Licensed or certified professional counsellors in the USA refer to individuals with a masters or doctoral degree in counselling (or closely related degree), who have also completed “a minimum of 3000 hours of post-master’s supervised clinical experience” (over two years) (CALPCC, California Association for Licensed Professional Clinical Counsellors, 2014; Oregon Board of Licensed counsellors & therapists, 2010). The certified professional counsellors stand alongside the licensed marriage and family therapists (CALPCC, 2014) and other mental health professionals.

In sharp contrast the category of “registered counsellor” in South Africa is based on a four-year B.Psych degree and was implemented as “another tier of professional practitioner, second to that of psychologist” (Abel & Louw, 2009:99; Elkonin & Sandison, 2006:600). It was created in the face of the real needs of the previously disadvantaged communities, thus aimed at the provision of primary health care through more structured and short-term interventions at the primary or preventative level (Abel & Louw, 2009:100; Du Preez & Roos, 2008:699; Elkonin & Sandison, 2006:598-599; Elkonin & Sandison, 2010:90). Registered counsellors were to be trained in a more Afro-centric model, or a more community-based approach, expanding the counselling model in order to be more relevant to the majority of South Africans and more likely to meet their needs (du Preez & Roos, 2008:700; Kotze, 2005:26; Pretorius, 2012:516; Pretorius, 2012b:511; Rock & Hamblen, 1994). Neither the creation of public sector jobs for registered counsellors, nor the influx of black students towards cultural relevance, have realized as hoped for (Abel & Louw, 2009:106; Johnson, 2012b:7; Joseph, 2007:82).

The birthing and growth of registered counselling as a profession, has been controversial and the expectations of universities, those who created the category and those who studied towards the profession, seem not to have matched. Universities were reported by Abel and Louw (2009:106) to be disillusioned with the B.Psych training and only four of twelve departments were planning on continuing their training in 2008. Elkonin and Sandison (2010:90) confirm that many universities discontinued the training and state that there is “little evidence that the category is fulfilling the purpose for which it was developed”. In 2012, Johnson (2012a:1) reported rumours that “several academic institutes are grappling with the B.Psych degree and counsellor training”, partly because of difficulties in “registering courses and getting recognition from the HPCSA”. This has culminated into a major revision of the B.Psych program and internships which have halted training effectively until 2016, by which time the newly promulgated scope of practice for registered counsellors will be in place (Viljoen, 2012; Temane, 2012; Wilks, 2014).

In an earlier article, Elkonin and Sandison (2006:605) explained that the Professional Board of Psychology “muddled expectations” by a statement in 2001 that “registered counsellors may practice for their own account”, and it was only clarified in the formalization in 2003, that that was prohibited. This led to a class action suit against the Minister of Health around students’ perceptions of being “trained under false pretences”, which allowed them to register in the category of “independent practice/private practice” in 2005 (HPCSA in Elkonin & Sandison, 2006:605). Elkonin and Sandison (2006:606-607) found that this caused confusion and disillusionment which contributed to a number of students changing career paths and not writing the professional board examination towards registering with the HPCSA, while the number of applicants also declined at that time. Though Joseph (2007:72) reported that the number of registrations have risen this rise has been linked to the right to private or independent practice. This has defeated the objective of primary health care (Joseph, 2007:72; Pretorius, 2012:515-516).

It appears that the focus of the new scope of practice and B.Psych training planned for 2016, may be more entrepreneurial and move away from private practice (Wilks, 2014). Unfortunately no documentation has yet been released or could be obtained (Wilks, 2014). Mention was made at a continued professional development workshop attended by the researcher, at The South African College of Applied Psychology on the 6th of September,

2014, of the fact that the Masters degree in Gestalt Play therapy (pertaining to this study) has been closed by the HPCSA to registered counsellors.

3.2.2 Struggles facing registered counsellors

Struggles facing registered counsellors include a lack of job creation in the public sector, professional and public ignorance of the competencies of registered counsellors, low remuneration in the few positions available, together with difficulties in communication with the HPCSA (Abel & Louw, 2009:100; Elkonin & Sandison, 2010:93-95; Elkonin & Sandison, 2006:606-607; Joseph, 2007:83-84). Of the sixteen counsellors who had registered in Kotze's (2005) sample, only nine were employed in the counselling field. Ten were earning between R0-R40000 per year, five were earning between R40000-R80000 per year, while one earned between R80000-R120000 per year (Kotze, 2005:56). 72% of Joseph's (2007:83) national sample (n=77) that were employed earned between R0-R72000 per year. While most registered counsellors indicated appreciation for the value of their training and potential role, they spoke of the lack of employment opportunities, being overworked in environments with little interdisciplinary cooperation and which are unorganized, for little pay (Joseph, 2007:74, 80-81). One responded (in Joseph, 2007:75) replied:

It's a calling. It means that you are so committed to the cause that you don't mind being paid minimally and working in the worst of conditions.

The World Health Organization (Joseph, 2007:79-90) sees the government as responsible for the physical and mental well-being of its people. The funding of primary health care has however to date, not made a lot of provision for psychological services. The limited positions for professional psychologists have made the profession one of private practice, and the marketing and job creation for registered counsellors have to date, not realized (Kotze, 2005:56; Joseph, 2007:72, 75).

While the Professional Board for Psychology "dictates that universities should train the registration categories as decreed", Sandison and Elkonin (2010:95) report personal communication indicating that the Board "does not see its role in supporting the need for job creation, saying that psychologists need to lobby to change the employment opportunities for registered counsellors." At the same time Joseph (2007:62) claimed that psychologists within

South Africa don't earn a lot of money and that there is therefore a limited scope for private practice altogether, adding to the difficulties of medical aid covering their costs. This leads to a competitive market.

Elkonin and Sandison (2006:609) report anecdotal reports that psychologists are confused as to what the category of registered counselling entails and view registered counsellors as in direct competition with them. The researcher finds it doubtful that psychologists view job creation of registered counsellors as their responsibility.

3.2.3 Historical predictions fulfilled?

Kotze (2005:68) finds some confirmation of the a-priori estimation of Rock and Hambler in 1994, that the successful implementation of the category for registered counselling would be "implausible". Rock and Hambler (1994) questioned whether "an old package" was not just being marketed in a "new form" reinforcing the self-interest within the profession (cf. Henderson, 2004:7). Henderson (2004:30) refers to a question raised by Dawes in 1992, as to whether a mid-level category is a suitable answer to the servicing problem, pointing out that personnel in nursing and education sectors "who operate at the coal face of deprived communities" could be trained in psychological skills.

Furthermore, it was predicated that it would carry a too high financial cost and may increase the number of professionals in the private sector, based on the lack of posts for psychologists that were already a reality in the public sector (Henderson, 2004:29; Kotze, 2005:78; Rock & Hambler, 1994). Rock and Hambler (1994) described the proposal of the B.Psych qualification as highly problematic in its implications: questioning the wisdom of training black students as registered counsellors while whites predominately still pursue a Masters (which didn't realize in the expected way), thus reinforcing racial division; the unlikelihood that universities would accept fewer undergraduate students which is described as a "prerequisite for flowing a four year model"; and the probability that the private sector would be flooded (Henderson, 2004:29; Kotze, 2005:78). Five years before this plausibility study of Rock and Hambler, Nel (cited by Rock & Hambler, 1994) said:

It is difficult to imagine that a health care service unwilling to appoint any R30 000 p.a. psychologist would be willing to appoint large numbers of 'cheaper'

psychologists, and it does not seem reasonable to address a structural employment problem by creating a larger supply of professionals.

It appears that predictions have become true. Not only did the training not have the intended results of an increase in preventative, on-the-ground level of mental health care, but the career draws predominantly white applicants. Rock and Hambler (1994) predicted that it would “reinforce racial divisions and inequalities” rather than reverse the demographic pattern (cf. Kotze, 2005:62). Elkonin and Sandison (2006:611) indicate that discussions with black master’s degree students reveal that the profession is not yet acknowledged as an integral part of black society, while many graduates are drawn into the commercial world to the well paid job opportunities for black people. According to Pillay *et al.* (2013:48) there is currently still a “gross under-representation of black clinical psychologists” as a result of education policies within the Apartheid era. The profession has consequently not changed much within any of its categories of practice.

3.2.4 The problem around creating a supply and demand within Psychology

Within the profession of Psychology, there is a unique problem that the demand for services are linked to a process called “proto-professionalization” (De Swaan cited by Abel & Louw, 2009:106), referring to lay people adopting the “basic stances and concepts of the profession as means of orientation in their everyday life” (cf. paragraph 3.2.10). People and/or organizations have to both recognize their problems or difficulties in psychological terms and recognize the expertise within the profession, to seek counsel. Abel and Louw (2009:106) question whether the South African society is ready for registered counsellors in the tiered structure proposed.

Participants in Joseph’s (2007:74) study report that counselees expect and seek economical help while having little understanding or felt little need for counselling. Petersen (2004:37) confirms that a lack of familiarity with counselling leads to counselees expecting medication and not returning for follow-up counselling sessions. Pillay and colleagues (2013:48) report that approximately 64% of Black first year students from rural areas have never heard of psychology before enrolling at university, while around 77.5% did not know of anyone within their communities who have consulted a psychologist. Another important factor however, is poverty, as most of the clients, seen in the study, lived within the immediate

vicinity of the community centre (in KwaZulu-Natal) and clients who lived further away could not afford the travelling costs for follow-up treatment (Petersen, 2004:37).

In light of the aim of providing help to previously disadvantaged communities, Abel and Louw (2009:101) find it troubling that after four years of training only 256 counsellors had registered by 2007, compared to an average of 320 new psychologists registering yearly. Furthermore, at that time more than half of the counsellors trained, worked outside of the “profession of psychology because of the aforementioned problems” (Abel & Louw, 2009:100). Demographically, Abel and Louw (2009:100) point to similar employment patterns among registered counsellors to those of psychologists, which they find troubling. Registered counsellors predominantly work in Gauteng and the Western Cape, and the field is dominated by whites (59%) and women (85%) (Abel & Louw, 2009:102; Joseph, 2007:54, 61-62; Kotze, 2005:68). Furthermore, 38% of Abel and Louw’s (2009:68) sample worked within the urban areas, “where people increasingly interpret their lives in psychological terms” or have in other words, been “psychologised” to use a term of Janz and Van Drunen (Abel & Louw, 2009:68).

3.2.5 Career goals of registered counsellors

Registered counsellors in the sample of Joseph (2007:63-66, 82) reported that their passion for people led them to pursue the B.Psych degree. An “unexpected find” has been that many registered counsellors tend to view their training as a stepping stone towards psychology and that as many as 40% in the 2006 sample (n=62) of Elkonin and Sandison (Abel & Louw, 2009:104-105) had that as a goal (23% were already in a professional master’s programme). This trend was confirmed in the sample of Abel and Louw (2009:104-105), where half of their sample (n=82) had that goal. Joseph (2007:70, 82-84) reports that the majority of the registered counsellors in her sample (n=77) wanted to be psychologists and/or saw themselves on route to becoming psychologists.

This trend might be understood in light of Pillay *et al.* (2013:47)’s report that recruitment of candidates for clinical psychology is not difficult in light of the high demand for professional training which “far outweighs available places.” From Pillay *et al.* (2013:47)’s estimates, one gathers that approximately 150 out of every 1500 – 3000 applicants are annually successful

which is 5 – 10 % (cf. paragraph 1.2.1). According to Pillay *et al.* (2013:47-48) the selection criteria vary across universities and include:

...indices such as academic excellence, reflexivity, life experience, and a community orientation... in an attempt to recruit the most appropriate students to enter the profession.

The B.Psych training could be seen as a way to cultivate the qualities and experiences needed to gain entrance into a professional masters degree training.

Joseph (2007:72, 75) found, that most of those who wanted to work in the public health care did not end up doing so. The need for employment that offers financial security weighs heavier than the passion to work with people (Joseph, 2007:66).

Kotze (2005:56) found within her sample (n=23) that about 34.8% of registered counsellors worked in community or NGO settings, 26% in the private sector (not private practice) and 17% in educational sectors. In comparison, Joseph (2007:70) found 34% of her participants (n=77) working in the educational field (more in educational than counselling roles), 31% in private practice, and 8% in the public health sector. Joseph (2007:70-72) suggests that there is more scope for a higher income within the educational field and private practice, in which registered counsellors can work with people. It's "one step closer" to psychology as well as providing a platform for other professional opportunities (Joseph, 2007:65).

Abel and Louw (2009:105) also found some registered counsellors to value private practice in terms of the opportunity for self-employment. The sample of Elkonin and Sandison (2006:598, 604) consisted of 62 of the 84 graduates (between 2002 and 2004) of the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, who could be reached. Abel's (2007:2) sample consisted of 82 of the 286 registered counsellors who had registered by 2007. Kotze's (2005:35) sample consisted of 68 graduates in the Western Cape (University of the Western Cape (n=31) and University of Stellenbosch (n=37)). By 2012 the number of registered counsellors had risen to 1261 (HPCSA, 2012). At the same time, there were 7148 psychologists and 780 intern psychologists (HPCSA, 2012). These statistics reflect the increase in registrations, which Joseph (2007:72) linked to the doors opening into private practice. Six years have gone by since the studies of Joseph (2007) and Abel (2007) and new data is needed to determine whether the reported patterns and motivations still hold.

By the 6th of May 2014, there were 1975 psychometrists (and 162 student psychometrists), 1717 registered counsellors (with 197 student registered counsellors) and 7640 psychologists (with 910 intern psychologists and 1223 student psychologists) registered with the HPCSA (HPCSA, 2014).

3.2.6 Exploring the motivations for entering the profession

An open question may be around the link between the motivations of B.Psych students compared to psychologists. Du Preez and Roos (2008:700) state that registered counsellors should be psychologically minded. This means that they should have the ability to both read and interpret processes within a counselling setting (Du Preez & Roos, 2008:700). Psychological mindedness can be described as a disposition or core tendency “to make sense of the meaning and motivation of behaviour, thoughts, and feelings in oneself and others” (Farber, 1985:170) (cf. Daw & Joseph, 2010:233; Norcross & Farber, 2005:1016).

A high degree of psychological mindedness together with a need to help others and for autonomy (self-employment) form part of twelve recurrent themes identified by Farber *et al.* (2005:1024-1027) as describing clinical psychologists in their career motivation. Abel and Louw (2009:105) report that some registered counsellors value the opportunity for self-employment. One may pose the question at this point in time, how many of the registered counsellors also have an inherent need for autonomy, aside from the lack of employment opportunities.

Some of the frustrations voiced by registered counsellors who have worked in primary health care, had to do with the counselees seeking and requiring more socio-economical help, while not having an understanding or need for counselling (Joseph, 2007:74). Beitel, Hutz, Sheffield, Gunn, Cecero and Barry (2009:379) found that clients with high psychological mindedness (PM) have more of an inner locus of control and motivation for more than one session of counselling. This might contribute to counsellors feeling less effective (if they are not seeing clients for follow-up sessions). On the other hand, 45 of the 77 counsellors in Joseph’s (2009:73-74) study indicated that their practical work opened their eyes to the need in primary healthcare and an increased motivation to work in that field. Employment opportunities remained a hindrance though (Joseph, 2009:74).

3.2.7 Practical problems related to advancing within the profession of Psychology

A general difficulty in getting into a Masters degree in Psychology programme, has led to many registered counsellors pursuing the B.Psych degree (Abel & Louw, 2009:107; Joseph, 2007:70, 92-84; Kotze, 2005:73). Abel and Louw (2009:107) discuss the option of providing more “fully-fledged psychologists, rather than registered counsellors or psychometrists”, speaking of the demand that has not been “debated”. A limited number of internship positions available leads to a bottleneck (Abel & Louw, 2009:107). This problem was overcome in Western Australia where qualified psychologists worked under Board approved supervision for two years, upon which they receive “full recognition as a psychologist” (Abel & Louw, 2009:107).

3.2.8 Registered counsellors and social workers

Perhaps more social workers are needed rather than registered counsellors, although Moriarti and Murray (2007:715, 718) report that problems around the image and status of social workers’ identities add to difficulties in recruitment and retention difficulties within the profession. Elkonin and Sandison (2010:90-91, 93-94) found in their study, that while there were generally high satisfaction among supervisors and employers about the efficacy of registered counsellors, others reported a lack of practical training compared to social workers.

Social workers have many options when it comes to pursuing further training on a Masters and PhD level, while registered counsellors still face the bottleneck. They will stay at a B.Psych level, or become those limited few who become Psychologists, or change career paths.

3.2.9 Recent developments within the field

In HPCSA newsletters, Pretorius (2012a; 2013:58) states that registered counsellors were never intended to be “mini-psychologists”, speaking of internships and work within group and community settings (e.g. schools, children’s homes, police services, prisons, and Non Profit Organizations). Previously the problem with this was a lack of job creation at viable salaries. Pretorius (2012a) goes on to restate that the goal of the category “is to make preventative and developmental counselling services accessible and affordable to all”.

Registered counsellors are to “firstly act as ‘emotional paramedics’ in cases of trauma, to intervene appropriately, and to refer when and where necessary” (Pretorius, 2012a). They are “secondly to act as a resource in communities and to promote health in a socio-cultural appropriate manner”, and thirdly to help “design preventative and developmental programmes, to implement them in the widest possible contexts, and to monitor its effectiveness” (Pretorius, 2012a).

Petersen (2004:34) estimates that a third of the clients that registered counsellors would encounter on a primary intervention level, suffer from psychological problems. A national survey by Tomlinson, Grimsrud, Stein, Williams and Myer (2009:367) between 2002 to 2004, found the prevalence of major depression that is life-time related to be 9.7% of the population and 4.7% of the population would have had a major depressive event within the previous year. That does not include other depressive and/or anxiety disorders. If one looks at the population statistics of 2011, 5 021 744 of the 51 770 560 people in South Africa (Statistics South Africa, 2012:14) would have a major depressive episode at least once in their lives.

Aside from diagnosing and referring cases of mental retardation and scholastic problems, or organizing disability grants, the biggest needs are related to physical/sexual abuse and depression and/or anxiety (Petersen, 2004:34). Tomlinson *et al.* (2009:367) also reports a higher incidence of depression among people with a lower level education. South Africans are also commonly exposed to multiple traumas, often in context of interpersonal violence during their lives which increases distress and risk for clinically relevant disorders (Williams, Williams, Stain, Seedat, Jackson & Moomal, 2007:845-853). Registered counsellors working on a preventative level within community settings will consequently encounter numerous clients who have to be referred to psychologists. The original problem of meeting the needs of the communities may thus remain unless there are psychologists working alongside registered counsellors in these environments.

The proposed revisions of the scope of practice in July 2012 (JVR Group, 2012) include the following changes from September 2011 for registered counsellors: The acts of “performing psychological screening, primary mental status screening, basic assessment, and psychological interventions with individuals aiming at enhancing personal functioning”, and “enhancing personal functioning, performing supportive, compensatory, and routine psychological interventions,” fall away. Instead the proposed scope includes:

- the “design, implementation and monitoring” of preventative and developmental programmes that are appropriate for the particular individual, family, group and community level it is intended for;
- being the first line of community based psychological support; providing preventative and developmental counselling; and
- performing supportive psychological interventions to enhance emotional functioning and mental well-being, etc.

3.2.10 Motivations related to “Scope of Practice”

There is a crises around the identity and relevance within the wider field of psychology, and Pretorius (2012b:509, 516-518) extends a “moral plea for relevance” towards all psychologists towards meeting the community’s needs. At the end of 2012, Pretorius (2012b:514) says the following:

The most important reason for the re-definition of the Scope of Practice in South Africa – in my opinion – is that the old categories did not work according to the needs of South African people.

Pretorius (2012b:514-515) contends that there is a false perception that clinical psychologists can do anything they want, birthed in the medical model behind it. Thus, registered counsellors and psychometrists are not at the bottom of the hierarchy as it appears (Pretorius; 2012b:515). Pretorius (2012b:515) reiterates the important role they have to play in terms of the well-being of people in South Arica as “emotional paramedics” who “should be empowered to do a lot more in the South African context”.

The professionalization of psychology and the creation of the mid-level profession of registered counselling, has been described as a strategy of subordination (Henderson, 2004:2, 14, 31, 33). Through this process the higher status and differential rights (around tasks, knowledge, education, etc.) of psychologists are reasserted while they are protected from competition (Henderson, 2004:14, 33). The term “counsellor” has a familiar ring to it as we speak of “lay counsellors” and “lay public”, and therefore the use of the title “counsellor” reinforces the lower, less professional status (Henderson, 2004:35-38). It was predictable that

the term registered counsellor would reinforce a lower status and would be confused with “lay-counsellor” (Kotze, 2005:26-27).

Henderson (2004:33) argues that the intra-professional division not only reinforces the existing split between private and public mental health services with its social inequalities, but it accommodates it. Consider the difference between restricting registered counsellors to lower-status and lower-income clients within public employment (Henderson, 2004:34) and the benefits of being a community psychologist as described by Watts (2008:102, 105). According to Watts (2008:103, 105) a community psychologist is able to work for a cause as a change agent on the one hand, while having the social privileges and higher income that results from having a PhD.

As registered counsellor the researcher fails to see how people within a category who are kept from further studies (barring gaining entrance to a professional masters degree leading to registration as Psychologist), as well as finding themselves working at a low-income level, would not be seen or experience themselves as being of “lower status” than psychologists.

3.3 SELF OR IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT

3.3.1 Introduction

The “self” is described by Leary and Tangney (2003:9) as “the human capacity for reflexive thinking – the ability to take oneself as the object of one’s attention and thought”. Polster (2006:159) speaks of the “elusive meaning of self” as people tend to define themselves by their worst moments or behaviour. According to Polster (2006:160), the wish to be oneself is a desire to live in a manner consistent with one’s own experiences, values and purposes. “The self is an agency of awareness within ourselves and represents a summary statement about one’s personal nature” (Polster, 2006:160).

3.3.2 Defining the Self from a Gestalt perspective

3.3.2.1 The Gestalt “Self”

People are born into different families within different cultures or societies that shape their styles of relating and thinking patterns (Bandin, 2012:52-53; cf. Joyce & Sills, 2010:27-29). Bandin (2012:51) states the following:

...who we are' is inseparable from *where we are, where we come from, where we are going and whom we are with.*

This unique and ever-changing “point of origin” for the “Self” is described in Gestalt terms as the “field”. This is more than the environment or background or other people around a person, as it is the person’s entire situation which is constantly changing and being re-created (and co-created) by the contact between that person and the physical environment or other people (Parlett, 2005:43; Yontef, 1993:322). A person’s sense of self may also change over time or within different contexts or field experiences. Thus, the “self” from a Gestalt perspective, is seen in terms of a process rather than a structure.

The “self” in Gestalt theory is “the person’s system of contacts” (Lobb, 2005:27; McConville, 1995:7; Yontef, 1993:330). Kepner (2001:10) refers to the self as the integrator of experiences and emphasizes that it is not a “static structure” but a “fluid process” that “has no nature of its own except in contact with or in relation to the environment.” Yontef (1993:330) explains that:

...there is no “core” or “self” apart from an organism/environmental field, and no human environment without the processes that we usually characterize as “internal”.

In this context Polster (2005:23) describes the self as “the configurational entity within the person”.

3.3.2.2 The self is formed within a field through contact and awareness

Philippon (2001:14) describes the field as consisting of processes that represent that which become perceived as reality. In other words two individuals may grow up in the same household but experience their lives differently based upon different locations within the

household, different relationships to others, different temperaments and in short – have uniquely different fields.

A person's perceptual lens is formed by various experiences in the field, into what Mackewn (1997:55, 57) refers to as attitudes, beliefs or gestalts that are helpful in terms of survival in that field. Mackewn (1997:55, 57) goes on to explain that problems related to *self-defeating behaviour* occur when self-regulating techniques or modifications to contact, have become fixed, and are no longer relevant to a new field (cf. Lobb, 2005:33; Joyce & Sills, 2010:106). In a registered counselling context, perceptions of “self” or “identity” that do not line up with the reality of experiencing one's professional life, may cause conflict and pressures towards change or influence the meaning a person experiences.

Classical psychoanalysis looks at personality in terms of the structures of the Id, the Ego and the Super-Ego (Wheeler, 2008:29-30). Gestaltists look at personality in terms of the Id, the Ego and the personality structure from a process oriented description within the “contact cycle” (Ginger, 2007:44; Lobb, 2005:31-32). The differentiation of the field occurs moment-by-moment at the contact boundary which Philippson (2009:19; 2001:14) describes as “three boundaries of self-emergence”. Based on the innate ability of the “Id” structure (that is sensory based) to perceive, a person becomes aware of the organism/environment or the “it/not it” and the function of the boundary is thus “experience” (Philippson, 2009:20). Through the focussing of attention on that which is observed, a person makes an active choice to identify with or alienate from it through a process that is described as the “self/other” or “I/not I” boundary. This ego boundary's function is *contact* and through it one can “purposefully impact and alter one's world” (Philippson, 2009:21).

The personality structure or boundary enables a person to identify the “me/not me” in terms of possibilities (Philippson, 2009:21) (cf. Lobb, 2005:29-30). This is central to what is experienced as “consciousness” and the task here revolve around autonomy. It is at this personality boundary that values, commitments, forming of relationships, and the co-creating of relationally stable environments emerge, which contributes to a sense of me as “ongoing” over time (Philippson, 2009:21).

Not only is the self shaped by our contact within the field (people, experiences, etc.), but the functions of the self are involved in the five phases of contact: fore contact, engagement, contact, disengagement and assimilation of the experience (Ginger, 2007:44). The *Id* engages

the world of sensations and urges in from contact, and submerges again to the background in the withdrawal phase (Ginger, 2007:44). The *personality* is the foundation from which desires emerge and is related to the person's view of self, history, etc. (Ginger, 2007:44). The *Ego* relates to one's conscious and deliberate choices and decisions, related to our wants in the present experience (Ginger, 2007:45). The *ego* is active in engagement, the middle mode of contact and the disengagement phase (Ginger, 2007:45). The middle mode of contact is both active and passive at once, which allows for dialogue-type interaction, full contact, and mutual exchange between "I" and "Thou", or I and my environment (Ginger, 2007:45). In Yontef's (2005:84) words, the basic sense of self or identity is being:

... formed and maintained, expanded and contracted, by the whole field, by the mutual construction of the individual and the rest of the organism-environment field.

A person is "of" a field and not "in" a field (Yontef, 2005:42). Within this process "awareness" is the experience of being in touch with a knowing of *what* one does, *how* one does it, that one has alternatives and that one *chooses* to be as one is (Yontef, 1993:144-145; Joyce & Sills, 2010:31). One of the biggest goals within Gestalt growth is to increase such awareness and to be aware of sensory experiences and of the reciprocal impact of contact within the field (relationships, environment and culture) (Joyce & Sills, 2010:32). Awareness can be located in the "inner zone" which refers bodily-affective states, the "outer zone" referring to how we use the contact functions (sense) to "receive or make contact with the world," and in the "middle zone" which reflects "our thinking, emotions and reactions, fantasies and anticipations" (Joyce & Sills, 2010:34-35). Within this space we make sense of internal and external stimuli, influenced by beliefs and memories from which we "predict, plan, imagine, create and make choices" (Joyce & Sills, 2010:35).

In this study, the whole field of psychology as well as the profession of Registered Counselling, form elements within the counsellors' field, together with their personal histories, interpersonal relationships, economical status, etc. Professional training and experiences shape the self, while a counsellor will choose certain experiences based on their experience of who he/she is. Through increased awareness of the elements of the field as well as conscious choices about what "is me" or "is not me", a reconfiguration of self takes place.

The experiences within a training program and work experience will also shape a counsellor's sense of self or identity, depending on whether the experience and resulting

awareness is accepted or rejected. Schlenker (1985:77, 89, 95; cited in Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001:186) points out that individuals tend to “encounter, perceive and influence the situations and audiences with which they deal” selectively, in terms of the self-image they choose as being desirable.

3.3.2.3 Organismic self-regulation and the paradoxical theory of change

Within the process of the Gestalt contact cycle, individuals will organismically self-regulate and move towards an inherent balance and growth within which adjustments to the context of life (field) will be made (Yontef, 2005:84). According to the “*paradoxical theory of change*”, change in people occur when they become who they are, fully invested in their current positions (Beisser, 1970; cf. Simon, 2009:107) and not when they or others try to make them become who they’re not. Growth or change occurs through “self-acceptance in aware contact with the rest of the organism-environment field” (Yontef, 2005:86). Therefore the genuine (real or dialogical) relationships in the organism-environment field are of crucial importance (Yontef, 2005:48). Gestalt theory perceives both change and awareness to be “at every moment” within a here-and-now framework (Yontef, 2005:89). Introjected messages around identity (Polster, 2006:156-159) and “should”-rules can limit self-knowledge, self-acceptance and also growth (Yontef, 2005:86).

3.3.2.4 The self in relationship with God

The researcher agrees with the basic assumption of Brownell (2010b:115; 2012:93) that God exists as an imminent and transcendent Being, as the Creator, “separate from the ongoing material” of life in terms of nature and humanity. Feinberg (Brownell, 2012:94) defines immanence as “involved with” or “present in the dialogical sense”, and transcendence as “distinct from” humanity. Brownell (2010b:115) describes a theistic spirituality as a matter of relationship. God is present and communicates with human beings, and thus the connection is completed when a person responds to God (Brownell, 2010b:116). Buber (cited by Brownell, 2010b:116) describes a “holding fast to the existing God”.

“God is involved with and *part of* the field” and “God intervenes in our lives in the medium of the spirit” (Brownell, 2012:98-98). “Spirit” is a relational capacity and God communicates Spirit to spirit (Brownell, 2012:97). Spirituality is also intentional, referring to “a God

consciousness”, that requires a person to “focus in the aboutness of his or her spiritual experience and wait on God” (Brownell, 2010a:37). Therefore Brownell (2010b:117) describes a “pneumenal field” as “the unified field viewed in a spiritual attitude”. According to Brownell (2010a:35) this spiritual attitude involves:

... a way of seeing ,breathing, sensing, and of making meaning, but it is not a product of a linear process. It is contextual and relational. It is the light of recognition and reverence for God’s creation, God’s being, God’s presence, God’s actions, and God’s intentions toward mankind.

If a counsellor brings an intentional spirituality into counselling activities, from an inter-subjective sphere of influence, the counselling becomes a three-person field in a meeting of counsellor, client and divinity (Brownell, 2008:230; Tan, 2011:363). Here the counsellor opens himself or herself up to God’s presence, seeking His perspective and guidance (Brownell, 2008:230). In order to incorporate spirituality into one’s clinical practice, it is important that both counsellor and client have the awareness of God’s guidance and capacity to listen to God’s self-revelation (cf. Brownell, 2010b:110).

The researcher expects that Registered Counsellors in relationship with God, may have an awareness of God’s guidance in terms of a calling as well as in relationships with colleagues and clients, whether they incorporate spirituality actively into their counselling activities or not. The perception of how God communicates and leads registered counsellors will influence the process of discerning a calling and of living it out.

The above discussion is reflective of the researcher’s personal Christian worldview which was shared by the majority of the research participants. Within the postmodern framework a counsellor’s personal understanding of Ultimate Transcendence from another perspective, will similarly affect his or her counselling. Counsellors’ are expected to have different viewpoints on the involvement of God (the Ultimate Transcendent) in terms of both their sense of calling as well as guidance within the counselling room.

3.3.2.5 Polster’s view on the formation of “self”

Building on the work of Perls, Hefferline and Goodman (1951), Polster (2006:155) used the concept of *neurotic splitting* together with the approach of encouraging dialogue between split-off selves through personification to identify “*clusters of selves*” (or “*population of*

selves”). Polster (2005:5-15) describes four processes (dynamics) in the formation of the self-identity: point-and-counterpoint, the configurational reflex, animation or the anthropomorphic reflex, and the vying for place of different selves within the “host person.”

- a) *Contra-punctual voices*: Within a person, Polster (2005:5; 2006:156) finds contra-punctual voices of selves that may “vie for ascendancy” (using a musical metaphor). Selves that are in a strict polarization to each other, result in fragmentation and “the aim of wholeness is to hear these voices simultaneously” (Polster, 2005:6; 2006:156). Dissonance is a fact of life, and therefore Polster (2005:15-17) encourages point-counterpoint thinking in terms of a challenge to “embrace the paradoxical qualities we live with” (similar to jazz music).
- b) *Configurational reflex*: Based on a configurational reflex, the “disparate details of personal experience” are formed into a unified pattern, or clusters of experience (Polster, 2005:7-10). Examples may be a “fatherly self”, a “domineering self”, etc. around the more intense experiences or clusters of experiences (Polster, 2005:8; 2006:154).
- c) *Animation or the anthropomorphic reflex*: Polster (2005:10-11) uses the term “animation” referring to the “human inclination to create fiction, forming characters out of characteristics” together with the anthropomorphic reflex (“the tendency to see the human state everywhere”), to describe how people tend to use personification. People personify nature (e.g. “the wind sighs, a bridge groans”, etc.) and God in relating to Him (Polster, 2005:11). Polster (2005:11) also finds anthropomorphism in Buber’s “I-Thou” relationship, where “thou” refers to a deep experience of others, may refer to inanimate objects as well, and relates to the “immersion in the other”. Similarly “individuals also coalesce their personal reality” and relate to themselves as both “observer and the observed, the doer and the done-to” (Polster, 2005:11). Thus we end up with “populations of selves”. When the selves can view each other with caring or empathy, a person is “mobilized” to continue and persevere in self-acceptance, even in the face of disappointment and confusion.
- d) *Vying for place of different selves*: Internal friction is created in a “host person”, when the selves “vie with each other for a place” in his/her life (Polster, 2005:12). Through dialogue the “point/counterpoint interrelationship in the internal struggle for personal

breadth” is addressed, upon which one finds oneself in what Polster calls “the radical middle” (Polster, 2005:13). Polster (2005:13-14) prefers this term to the “creative indifference” used by Perls, as it describes more of the “excitement or the rootedness that exists at the centre.” This “still point of the turning world” depicts oneself at the centre of one’s own universe, where different options presents itself (Elliot in Polster, 2005:13-14; Polster & Polster, 1974:82). Polster (2005:15) explains that a synthesis of selves should retain the “dissonant selves”, rather than fusing them as advocated by Perls.

Through these processes - point/counterpoint voices, configuration, animation and dialogue - various *classes of selves* are formed (Polster, 2005:41; 2006:154). *Essential selves* carry a “compelling identity”, are enduring and are unresponsive to ongoing experience as they “were set early and rigidly into the person’s organizational system” (Polster, 2005:41; 2006:154). *Member selves* on the other hand, are more responsive to immediate or ongoing experience being more field dependent (Polster, 2005:41, 46; 2006:155). Polster (2005:45) gives an example of a man, who from his essential self, saw himself as unintelligent and who only experienced change once the value of the member selves was raised so that the essential self was less of a dictatorial figurehead.

In the case of this study, registered counsellors may thus classify their essential or member selves as a “helper”, a “Christian”, “caring” with a myriad of other possibilities. The paradoxical actual selves and ideal selves, which are in conflict, may refer to “registered counsellor”, “play therapist” and/or “psychologist”.

3.3.3 The formation and growth of self formation from other perspectives

The description of a “self” in terms of a process in flux is echoed by Schachter’s (2004:167) description of the “*identity configuration*”. Schachter (2005:144) describes the postmodern individual as being “embedded in multiple contexts with multiple affiliations to different, sometimes contradicting, social groups”, within the context of rapid social change. The postmodern constructions of the self reflect both contradictory tendencies and multiple selves, which represents a “diversity of identity structures” (Schachter, 2004:168-169; Schachter, 2005:153). In light of the unprecedented range of options from which to choose,

people can currently choose from a far wider pool of alternative selves in the context of occupational choices (Insead, 2012:35).

Rubineau (2007:5) postulates that an individual has “a prior preference” regarding his/her identity, for which verification is sought. The “configuration of self” chosen by individuals indicate a need for a “sense of completeness” or a need for both wholeness and for consistency, but is at the end also “constrained by the need to include all significant identifications” (Schachter, 2004:163). This “configuration of self” shows remarkable similarities to Polster’s (2005:15) description of the configuration of a “population of selves”.

According to Ryan and Deci (2003:253), people are born without an identity, and acquired identities are shaped by interactions with the social groups and organizations and social media, which once formed, contributes to the shaping of the environment. Through identity formation, people “define for themselves a place in society” (Ryan & Deci, 2003:269).

3.3.4 Other components of self or identity

Other important components of identity include an inner sense of agency, a commitment to certain self-representations and/or roles as self-defining, and commitment to a core set of values and a worldview that gives life meaning (Westen & Heim, 2003:646).

In the researcher’s contact with fellow registered counsellors who are of Christian faith, some prefer to classify their working selves as “strictly psychological”, leaving their faith at the door. This is a common view within the field of psychology, viewing it as “scientific practice” separate from “religious or spiritual values and doctrines” (Crook-Lyon, O’Grady, Smith, Jensen, Golightly, & Potkar, 2012:177). Others may incorporate spirituality as described by Brownell (2010b:110-122) and Tan (2011: Loc 8596, 8603; 2003:14). In this case counsellors need awareness of their own values and beliefs as well as training as it may not be appropriate for all clients, and the incorporation of religious/spiritual techniques does not necessarily predict better outcomes (Cummings, Carson, Stanley, & Pargament, 2014:127-128).

Integrating the Christian faith into psychological counselling practice is a significant contemporary development (Tan, 2011: Loc 8596, 8603; Tan 2003:14).

The researcher was trained as registered counsellor to incorporate spirituality where and if appropriate to the client and his/her situation within the Biblically based systemic model of Joubert (2006). Within this model the researcher has been able to focus alternatively as well as concurrently, on the psychological and spiritual realities of clients, while not prescribing or dismissing belief systems. From 2011 she increasingly made use of Gestalt techniques, and from 2014 her practice has shifted in focus towards pastoral counselling, as overarching framework.

Dik *et al.* (2009:627-628) and Dik and Duffy (2009:426) advise career counsellors to explore their clients' religion and spirituality as it pertains to their life and career goals, in light of it being such a salient ingredient for meaningfulness in the lives of many.

3.3.5 The role of counterfactuals in the formation of alternative selves

Self-concept is described by Insead (2012:36) as a “multifaceted and dynamic cognitive structure concerning all of a person's self-representations”. Self-representations refer to self-definitions and/or self-redefinitions which form one's current sense of self (Insead, 2012:36). These representations may include occupational roles (Insead, 2012:36). Self-concept may also include self-comparisons, referring to who one was in the past, would like to be in the future, would ideally like to be or who one thinks one “should” be (Insead, 2012:36).

Understanding “counterfactual thinking” may shed more light on how registered counsellors specializing in Gestalt play therapy may evaluate their self-definitions. Looking back at “what could have” been, leads to a formation of an alternative self which can be perceived as “better or worse than the current self” giving shape to other possible paths in life that “could have been” (Insead, 2012:37).

According to Insead (2012:38) these alternative selves “are similar to” and “yet different” from the concepts that reflect roads not taken. These are “occupational regret” and “unanswered callings” (Berg *et al.*, 2010:973; Insead, 2012:38; Wrzesniewski, Tosti, & Landman, 2005:3).

Usually a calling orientation results in finding fulfilment in work itself, compared to relating to one's work as a job (in terms of material benefits) or career (advancement in occupation) (Wrzesniewski *et al.*, 2005:8).

- *Occupational regret* is associated with a lower likelihood of having a calling orientation to work, decreases intrinsic motivation and has been found to have an adverse effect on mental health and functioning, which relates to “reduced satisfaction with life” (Wrzesniewski *et al.*, 2005:10, 29). Occupational regret has a counterfactual core, but the focus is on the “emotional state associated with the current occupation” rather than denoting “a component of the self-concept in an alternate reality”, which only pictures a better scenario or outcome (Insead, 2012:38-39).
- *Unanswered callings* can be described as a specific subset of alternative selves, as it refers to alternative lives and self-concepts people would have had, had they followed a calling (Insead, 2012:39). Unanswered callings are defined by Berg *et al.* (2010:974) as “an occupation that a person desires to pursue, expects to find intrinsically enjoyable and meaningful, and sees as a central part of his/her identity, but is not experiencing in a work role.” Unanswered callings referring to missed callings relates to more long-term regret than having additional callings (Berg *et al.*, 2010:989).

Alternative selves as self-redefining counterfactuals develop in the process of reflecting on negative events and/or turning points in one's life (Insead, 2012:39-40). Through the telling and retelling of one's life story, self-redefining counterfactuals become internalized into the self-concept (Insead, 2012:41). Alternative selves become salient through reminders of the road not taken as well as critical moments (Insead, 2012:42).

The comparison of current and alternative selves is motivated by a desire to increase one's self-esteem or the regard that others have of oneself, as well as a means through which one can improve on oneself in order to reach one's full potential (Insead, 2012:43). The outcome is linked to satisfaction or dissatisfaction and can also enhance one's self-knowledge (Insead, 2012:44-45). Should registered counsellors perceive being a “psychologist” as an identity that would increase their esteem as well as resulting in a higher fulfilment of purpose, and they may find it hard to let that goal go and find a “new self” that matches their current reality.

3.3.6 Possible selves, adaptability and life changes

Being open to new possibilities or new possible selves involves a future-focus and decision making impacting career planning (Plimmer, 2012:53-70). It is holistic in that it interlinks various life domains through which the complexity of individuals' lives (including social identity, obligations, etc.) is acknowledged. Exploring possible selves helped individuals to identify barriers, solutions as well as new opportunities (Plimmer, 2012:67). Identifying what individuals really want for their lives and moving away from what they thought they "should want" or from what others wanted for them, was found to be very beneficial (Plimmer, 2012:67).

Within the context of this research project registered counsellors have not only to evaluate what they want themselves, but also what others within the profession want of and expect from them.

The career counselling process (involving possible selves) seeks to help individuals adapt to the more flexible career demands of the postmodern society (Plimmer, 2012:63). Within the profession of psychology the more rigid demands around "scope of practice" in context of few options, may lead to registered counsellors resisting other "possible selves" to maintain their sense of identity and agency.

Adaptability is also a key goal within life-designing interventions in order to support individuals through career transitions and vocational traumas (Savickas, 1997:247-248; Savickas, *et al.*, 2009:245). Individuals' adaptability is expected to increase when the five "Cs" of career construction theory, are increased (Savickas *et al.*, 2009:245). The five "Cs" are:

- a) *Concern*, which reflects a consideration of life "within a time perspective anchored in hope and optimism;"
- b) *control*, which is believed to be advantageous in the sense that individuals are believed to need to be able to self-regulate and have a measure of influence within their contexts;
- c) *curiosity* about "possible selves and social opportunities" which lead to increased "active exploration behaviours";

- d) *confidence*, encompassing “the capacity to stand by one’s own aspirations and objectives, even in the face of obstacles and barriers,” and
- e) *commitment* to “one’s life projects rather than a particular job” which opens the door for “new possibilities and experimentations”.

Constructivist career counselling involves a process of helping individuals to articulate their life themes (similar to a plot in literature) (Savickas, 1995:363). This involves a process of self-definition, developmental in nature, which can be described as an identity formation process (Savickas, 1995:363; cf. Brott, 2005:138; Savickas, *et al.*, 2009:239-241).

3.4 PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT

Professional identity can be described in terms of a *figure-ground formation* within the changing field: “non-differentiated” as student, “compartmentalized” as novice professional, and “integrated” as early career professional (Nyström, 2009:14-17).

Within the helping professions, professional identity impacts one’s choice of interventions, ethical decision making and career longevity (Jackson, 2010:1). A professional identity involves more of an investment and amalgamation of one’s self into the function of work, rather than just having a job (Jackson, 2010:1). This becomes a critical process for counsellors as aspects of both their personal and professional identities impacts directly on their counselling activities (Jackson, 2010:1). Professional roles and ethics become integrated with personal morals, values and perceptions, formatting the *professional counsellor identity* or “*therapeutic self*” (Auxier, Hughes & Kline; 2003:25). Furthermore, the development of a greater capacity for intimacy and interdependency is critical to the development of professional counsellor identities (Scholl & Smitch-Adcock, 2006/2007:15).

Definitions of professional counsellor identity indicate a process involving various cycles of experience. Over the course of academic and practical training counsellors’ self-labelling as a professional is shaped by the integration of skills and professional attitudes and the perception of context within a professional community (Gibson *et al.*, 2010:21). A counsellor’s view of “self as a professional plus competence as a professional” forms his/her professional identity (Gibson, *et al.*, 2010:21).

There is both an interpersonal and intrapersonal dimension to professional identity development (Moss, Gibson & Dollarhide, 2014:3).

- In the course of interaction with society and the professional community, counsellors' experiences confirm or disconfirm previous self-perceptions, which are evaluated and internalized or rejected (Gibson *et al.*, 2010:21). Through an immersion into the professional culture new counsellors acquire attitudes, values, modes of thinking and strategies for problem solving (Dollarhide & Miller, 2006:242).
- On an intrapersonal level, professional identity is developed and shaped over time through changing definitions of counselling that counsellors hold, a shifting of the locus of evaluation (from external to internal) and increased self-reflection (Moss, *et al.*, 2014:3).

The development of new counsellors' *professional identity* involves three transformational tasks: a movement from mirroring expert opinions when defining counselling to an internalized definition; a reliance on external teaching and coursework that becomes an internalized responsibility for professional growth; and moving from individual skill set and qualities to a system-level identity which is integrated into the professional community (Gibson, *et al.*, 2010:28-31). Within this developmental process counsellors move from relying on external validation (from peers, supervisors and educators) to experience and increased commitment and self-validation (Gibson, *et al.*, 2010:28).

The *professional identity development* of counsellors continues as they work within their profession (Moss *et al.*, 2014:6). Through experienced guides (supervisors, mentors and peersupervision), work with clients (yielding positive reinforcement) and continuous learning, counsellors experience movement in terms of: adjustment to expectations; confidence and freedom; and separation versus integration (Moss *et al.*, 2014:6, 8). Counsellors let go of their idealized roles, experience an increased sense of confidence together with a freedom in recognizing their own limitations, and integrate their professional selves and personal selves into a unified identity, over the course of time (Moss *et al.*, 2014:6-7). With increased competency counsellors' *personal and professional selves* become more congruent and they become more in touch with how they are affected by both professional and personal experiences (Moss *et al.*, 2014:8).

The profession of counselling (as reflected within the above discussion) is based upon training on master's and doctorate degree levels with a more intensive practical component than the registered counsellor B.Psych training. At the Pretoria University, Du Preez and Roos (2008:700) aimed to increase registered counsellors' skill in self-reflecting, so that they would be more able to read and interpret both content and process (part of psychological mindedness).

Psychological mindedness describes individuals' ability to access their own feelings and to acquire insight into the meaning and motivation of their own and others' thoughts, feelings and behaviours (through reflection and/or discussions with others) which increases their capacity for change (Daw & Joseph, 2010:233). Those entering the psychotherapeutic profession have been shown to have a very strong need to understand others and for intellectual stimulation while being fascinated with human behaviour (Farber, *et al.*, 2005:1015). Daw and Joseph's (2010:235) research finds a significant relationship between psychological mindedness and self-understanding, working alliance with clients, as well as empathy, while it was also related to better psychological well-being and adjustment.

At the same time, registered counsellors, it appears, are not destined to work with populations that generally experiences a high sense of psychological mindedness coupled with a higher internal locus of control (Beitel *et al.*, 2009:379). Clients with lower psychological mindedness have lower motivation to continue with counselling and may share less openly (Beitel *et al.*, 2009:379).

In light of the unique difficulties within the profession of registered counselling, it may be more of a challenge for registered counsellors to develop a professional identity. The *systemic identity* within the profession of psychology (to use the term of Gibson *et al.*, 2010) has not been fixed and there remains uncertainty regarding their place within the profession (Pretorius, 2013:58). Possible difficulties with inter-agency co-operation (psychologists, social work, education system, etc.) puts more strain on the development of a "useful" professional identity (cf. Hymans, 2008:282).

3.5 CALLING, CAREER AND PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT

3.5.1 Calling as mediator between career and spiritual beliefs

The experience of having a calling orientation to work or feeling called to a particular career or other roles, lead to higher satisfaction with life as well as work, regardless of the source conceptualization (Christian God, Higher Power, or other) (Duffy & Dik, 2013:428-436). It has furthermore been shown that living out one's calling fully mediates the link between calling and life satisfaction (for both the religious and non-religious), while intrinsic religiousness is only a significant mediator for the highly religious (Duffy, Allan, Autin & Bott, 2013:43).

Calling has religious roots and relevance, and may facilitate or mediate the connection between career decision goals and religious beliefs for some individuals (Dik, Duffy, & Tix, 2012:121; Dik, *et al.*, 2009:627-628). Some people who are "committed to a religious worldview may frame their career choice concerns as a process" involving the discernment of a calling which is then optimally matched to careers that "explicitly reinforce their religious values" (Dik, Duffy, *et al.*, 2012:121). An alternate pathway would be to discern a calling through the exploration and identification of occupations (not overtly religious) through which individuals may find opportunities "to express their gifts and talents in ways that reflect their religious worldviews" (Dik, *et al.*, 2009:628; Dik, Duffy, *et al.*, 2012:121-122).

In contrast Benefiel, Fry and Geigle (2014) as well as Neubert and Halbesleben (2014) define a spiritual calling in terms of a summons for God related to a "sense of purpose and a pursuit of excellence in work practices." This definition is grounded within the Judeo-Christian view of calling but may also apply to other spiritual/religious traditions (Benefiel *et al.*, 2014).

- A *calling orientation* to life involves the internal meaningfulness to the work itself (Benefiel *et al.*, 2014; Wrzesniewski, 2002:233).
- A *spiritual calling* on the other hand, potentially serves as "an external source of meaning" which may contribute to job satisfaction, while not being conditional in terms of the fit between an individual and a job (Benefiel *et al.*, 2014). Rosso, *et al.* (2010:106) found that individuals frequently turn to spirituality or religion in their fundamental search for meaning and purpose in life. A significant positive

relationship has been found “between the ability to make meaning and personal wellbeing” (Lips-Wiersma, 2002:499).

In searching for mechanisms to explain the link between calling, religion and/or spirituality and work behaviour, Dik, Duffy, *et al.* (2012:120-122) turn to the psychology of religion models of Park (2012) around how individuals create meaning and that of Pargament (Pargament, 1997:86; Pargament, Konieg & Perez, 1997:519-540), which explores religious coping.

- Park (2012:25) proposes that people create global meaning through their “global beliefs, goals, values and sense of purpose” as well as meaning in the context of stressful situations that is based upon their perceptions of the experience. These influence career development, work conduct, stress-management and coping (in work context) and work-related well-being (Park, 2012:25).
- Cummings and Pargament (2012:159) propose that coping with work-related stress takes on a religious character “when a sacred goal is at stake” (i.e. losing a job viewed as sacred calling), or when individuals tap into “sacred beliefs, practices, emotions, or relationships as a way to protect a valued object.”

Rosso *et al.* (2010:91-120) explore the meaning of work as a wider framework around the concept of having a calling orientation or experiencing a sense of calling, while Lips-Wiersma (2002:514) “grounded” the concept of spirituality in a focus on “*meaning*”.

Before exploring the concept and benefits of having a “calling”, the *meaning of work* will be explored. The creation of *meaning* and *religious coping* may shed light on how registered counsellors may deal with the challenges about their professional identities and career building experiences.

3.5.2 The meaning of work

Meaning refers to “a mental representation of possible relationships among things, events and relationships” (Baumeister, 1991:15; cf. Park, C.L, 2010:257), while meaningfulness refers to “a subjective sense of meaning... a sense that one has purpose or direction” (Park, 2010:258). Meaning is also defined as “the sense of, the significance felt regarding the nature of one’s

being and existence” (Steger, Frazier, Oishi & Kaler, 2006:81). The “*meaning of work*” usually refers to “the type of meaning” that employees make of their work, while “meaningfulness” refers to the amount of significance they attach to it (Pratt & Ashforth in Rosso *et. al.*, 2010:94). The self, others, work context as well as spiritual life are all sources of meaning through which counsellors could interpret or make sense of their work or career (cf. Rosso *et. al.*, 2010:94).

Within a *career constructivist theory*, Savickas *et al.* (2009:246) posit that individuals pattern their “past memories, present experiences, and future aspirations” into life themes to impose personal meaning on vocational behaviour. Through creating life stories around personal meaning, individuals shape “biographical bridges” between various jobs, replacing the environment once provided by the organizations that contained the task of self-integration (Savickas *et al.*, 2009:246).

From within the self, *work values* reflect the goals or purposes that people reach towards and which they feel they should reach through working (Rosso *et. al.*, 2010:96). Motivation is described as “the degree to which an individual experiences positive internal feelings when performing effectively on the job” (Oldham in Rosso *et. al.*, 2010:96).

Three main areas of research about people’s beliefs have focused on job involvement, work centrality, work orientation and callings (Rosso *et. al.*, 2010:97).

- *Job involvement* reflects how central one views one’s work in one’s life, which can be linked to whether one perceives the work to meet one’s needs (Rosso *et. al.*, 2010:97; Word, 2012:155). Generally, the more involved one is in one’s work, the greater one’s psychological identification with it and the higher one’s investment of self-esteem into it, making it more meaningful (Rosso *et. al.*, 2010:97; Word, 2012:155).
- *Work centrality* describes how central work is to one’s life compared to other domains such as family, leisure, religion and community involvement (Rosso *et. al.*, 2010:97). When work is more central one derives more meaning from it while experiencing a higher level of “devastation” from losing a job (Rosso *et. al.*, 2010:97).
- *Work orientation* examines people’s beliefs around work in general and is interested in how beliefs about work influence the meaning one derives from work (Rosso *et. al.*, 2010:96; Wrzesniewski *et al.*, 1997:21-31). These orientations describe meaning derived from various occupations which shape people’s reasons for working as well as how they

perform their work (Rosso *et al.*, 2010:98). People with a “*job orientation*” are focused on the material benefits or income derived from work, which they use to enjoy life outside of work through leisure or hobbies (Rosso *et al.*, 2010:98). Those with “*career orientations*” are focused on income as it relates to prestige and status and make advancement (relating to higher self-esteem, increased power and higher social standing) their focus. People with a “*calling orientation*” to work are focused on and motivated by the fulfilment that doing the work brings (Rosso *et al.*, 2010:98).

“Other people” (co-workers, leaders, family as well as groups or communities) also serve as sources for meaning related to work (Rosso *et al.*, 2010:100-102). People tend to psychologically align themselves within the social environment according to, and in order to give shape to, their self-conceptions and self-understanding (Hogg in Rosso *et al.*, 2010: 101). In context of this research study, it is important to note that if people find themselves in what appears to be positions or groups that are “unattractive or lacking in status, or [they] do not personally identify with these groups, their work may take on negative meanings” (Ashforth & Kreiner in Rosso *et al.*, 2010:101).

Work that promotes a sense of purpose and has a positive impact on others increases meaningfulness through perceived significance (of work tasks) (Rosso *et al.*, 2010:103). People across various cultures have been found to value personal freedom at work, opportunity for self-expression, work that is interesting and satisfying as well as financial motivating (Rosso *et al.*, 2010:105).

3.5.3 Models and mechanisms of meaning

The sources of meaning include the self, others, the context and spirituality (Dik, *et al.*, 2014:4). The degrees and ways in which people are either orientated towards themselves or others, as well as their underlying motives which are either directed towards personal agency or uniting (communion) in their motivations, intersect and determines the meaning they experience (Dik, *et al.*, 2014:4; Rosso *et al.*, 2010:114-115).

- *Agency* refers to the drive to differentiate oneself from others, or to “separate, assert, expand, master and create” (Rosso *et al.*, 2010:114-115).

- *Communion* describes the “drive to contact, attach, connect, and unite” with others (Rosso *et al.*, 2010:114-115).

The point where agency and communion intersect, is where the experience of meaningful work resides (created and maintained) through four main pathways (Rosso *et al.*, 2010:114-115):

- a) *individuation* which refers to self-agency reflecting actions that define and distinguishes the self as worthy or valuable;
- b) *contribution* which refers to other-agency reflecting actions perceived as significant “in service of something greater than the self”;
- c) *self-connection* or “self-communion” that reflects actions which serve to align one with the way one views oneself; and
- d) *unification* or other-communion reflecting “the meaningfulness of actions that bring individuals into harmony with other beings or principles” i.e. purpose, belongingness with other individuals, groups, collectives, organization and higher powers.

Individuation is expressed in “control, competence, and self-esteem” while contribution is focused “on impact, significance, and interconnectedness” (Dik, *et al.*, 2014:4). Self-connection expresses self-concordance, identity affirmation as well as personal engagement, while unification expresses interpersonal connectedness and social identification (Dik, *et al.*, 2014:4).

The *work-as-meaning model* of Steger and Dik (Dik, *et al.*, 2014:4) proposes that “comprehension and purpose work in tandem to foster a desire for work to serve the greater good,” rooted in the experience of meaningful work, meaning-making behaviour, and greater good motivations.

The *meaning-making model* of Crystal L. Park (2010:257) proposes that people uses orientating systems or global meaning systems, providing them with motivation and with cognitive frameworks through which they interpret their experiences. When situations arise that will potentially challenge or stress global meaning, “individuals appraise the situations and assign meaning to them” (Park, C.L., 2010:258). The extent of discrepancy between appraised meaning and global meaning is directly related to the level of distress experienced, leading to meaning-making efforts in order to reduce the stress (Park, C.L., 2010:258). People

thus experience meaningful work to the extent that they find congruence between the components of *global meaning* and their *work experiences*, achieved through a process of fitting their global beliefs, goals, and values with their work activity (Dik, *et al.*, 2014:4).

Global meaning encompasses goals and a subjective sense of purpose (Park, C.L., 2010:259). The “violation of goals (e.g., the extent to which the event is not what the person wants to have had happen or to which other goals are rendered less attainable)” accompanied by “a loss of sense of purpose may be even more powerful in generating distress” than a violation of beliefs (Park, C.L., 2010:259). In the face of expectancies of failure, individuals may disengage from efforts and “potentially, from the goal itself” (Rasmussen, Wrosch, Scheier & Carver, 2006:1727).

3.5.4 Spiritual life and mechanisms of meaning

Spirituality is described as both a search for the sacred, as well as a process through which people discover, hold on to and transform (when necessary) that which they hold sacred in their lives (Hill & Pargament, 2003:65). Spirituality also involves the desire to connect to the sacred which is identified as God, “a higher power, guiding force or energy, or belief system” (Rosso *et al.*, 2010:106). More than just a static belief system, spirituality represents a process reflecting individuals’ motivation “to discover, sustain and transform a relationship with something sacred in their lives,” and is the fundamental or key function of religion (Pargament, 2013:271). Spirituality is also a meaning-making construct related to questioning the meaning of our lives or the sense of life (Lips-Wiersma, 2002:500). One may experience spirituality as “a sense of meaning that breathes life into situations” (Savickas in Lips-Wiersma, 2002:500).

Lips-Wiersma (2002:497, 500-501) describes spirituality as influencing purpose, sense making (interpretations that would direct choice and behaviour) and coherence (integrative framing of one’s own life and how that links with that of others into a coherent whole with harmony). It functions as a lens or belief system through which individuals make decisions regarding what worthwhile purposes are, which directs their career behaviour (Lips-Wiersma, 2002:514). Purposes are value driven and reflect the end result of a person’s reasoning about

intensions, the reasons for existence and about what constitutes a worthwhile living (Lips-Wiersma, 2002:500).

Lips-Wiersma (2002:505, 514-515) found spirituality to inspire the following four purposes which affect work behaviour:

- a) “*developing and becoming self*” which goes beyond self-knowledge and personal growth to include an internal process of changing one’s perspective on roles held;
- b) “*unity with others*” expressing the importance of quality relationships beyond meeting work goals;
- c) “*expressing self*” which includes the need to maintain the integrity of “a distinct self in the face of e.g. pressure to conform to organizational culture” as well as expressing agency around actions (e.g. “hanging in there” and “doing something worthwhile”) which express internal standards; and
- d) “*serving others*” which is linked to perceived needs of others and can be lived out in non-service careers as well, and which may be done at personal cost.

Perceived *meaningfulness of work* is influenced by whether the action is directed towards the self, or others, and it appears that “other-oriented actions or experiences serve to broaden or expand the self in some meaningful way” (Rosso *et al.*, 2010:115).

There is a complex interaction between an individual’s interpretation, development and maintenance of own sense of self and one’s relationships to others within various contexts and communities. Aside from the need for individual growth and agency, there is also a need for belongingness or connection, a need to experience life as purposeful and/or worthwhile, and a need to serve others or contribute to others wellbeing within society or God’s kingdom. *Spiritual employees* tend to interpret their work activities through the lenses of “something outside and higher than themselves, related to a higher purpose or meaning” (Rosso *et al.*, 2010:106-107) resulting from an external beckoning, while those with a secular calling experience an “internal beckoning to engage in meaningful work” leading to self-fulfilment” (Neubert & Halbesleben, 2014).

3.5.5 Vocation and calling

Prior to 2007, most discussions on the topic of *calling* were within the field of theology and philosophy (Duffy & Dik, 2013:428). Since then there has been numerous studies within various sub-disciplines of psychology and social sciences, exploring calling in the context of career, work and well-being (Duffy & Dik, 2013:428). Duffy and Dik (2013:428-429) report a lack of consensus on the definition of the term. The “neoclassical” definition reflects the historical interpretations relating to “a sense of duty and pro-social duty” or the job one feels destined to do as well as a duty towards society, while the modern view includes an inward focus towards self-fulfilment, self-knowledge and identity, or personal happiness as a driving motivation (Bunderson & Thompson, 2009:50-51; Dobrow & Tosti-Kharas, 2011:1004; Duffy & Dik, 2013:428-429). Dawson (2005:227) refers to an “ideology of work as source of dignity” and self-worth as a heritage of the twentieth century.

The working definition of Dik and Duffy (Dik & Duffy, 2009:427; Dik *et al.*, 2009:625) used within this research study, describes calling as:

a transcendent summons, experienced as originating beyond the self, to approach a particular life role in a manner oriented toward demonstrating or deriving a sense of purpose or meaningfulness and that holds other-oriented values and goals as primary sources of motivation.

Vocation contains the 2nd and 3rd dimensions of the above definition of calling (Dik *et al.*, 2009:625). Dik and Duffy (2009:428) define vocation as:

an approach to a particular life role that is oriented toward demonstrating or deriving a sense of purpose or meaningfulness that holds other-oriented values and goals as primary sources of motivation.

People who look at work through the lens of “*calling*” and those who use the lens of “*vocation*”, thus differ in that the first group perceive the origin of the call “as originating from a source external to the self” (Dik & Duffy, 2009:428).

In contrast, Abrami (2011:207) describes *vocation* as a talent which forms a call. Another definition of calling is that of Dobrow and Tosti-Kharas (2011:1005), speaking of “a consuming, meaningful passion people experience toward a domain.” Elements of a strong *sense of calling* include feelings of being “destined to do this type of work,” that it is “central to their identity, and that contributes significant meaning which may benefit themselves, their

families and/or society (Bunderson & Thompson, 2009:50-51; Dobrow & Tosti-Kharas, 2011:1005; Rosso, *et al.*, 2010:95).

3.5.6 The impact of a calling

Both the search for and experience of having a calling can be linked to a sense of occupational self-efficacy, which is the mediating factor that links calling to higher career outcome expectations and a sense of meaning and purpose in one's career (Domene, 2012:286, 289). Having a calling orientation has been positively related to: better health, job satisfaction as well as life satisfaction (Wrzesniewski *et al.*, 1997:29, 31); greater professional commitment (Dik & Duffy, 2009:443; Serow, Eaker & Ciechalski, 1992:139-140); and increased career decidedness, work-choice salience and self-clarity in career development among college students (Duffy & Sedlacek, 2007:590, 599).

While there appear to be little difference among people who have a calling, those who are able to live out their calling have greater life satisfaction and well-being (Duffy, Allan, Autin, & Bott, 2013:49). Living out one's calling increases a sense of meaning at work, strengthening one's commitment to one's career path, and results in increased job satisfaction (Duffy *et al.*, 2013:49). Furthermore there are strong links between *life meaning* and *work meaning*, and *work meaning* and *career commitment* (Duffy *et al.*, 2013:49). Living a calling is a "significant direct predictor of life satisfaction" (Duffy *et al.*, 2013:49).

3.5.7 Calling, spirituality and work

There is a "growing integration of religion and spirituality within peoples' professional lives" (Carrol, Stewart-Sicking, & Thompson, 2014:545). *Spiritual calling* has been "associated with a more stable and enduring self-identity" (Neubert & Halbesleben, 2014). The relationship people have with work is a key influencing factor in their self-concepts which affects their quality of life both at work and at home (Benefiel, *et al.*, 2014:175). When people view their work to be an expression of their spiritual beliefs, they may be more committed and experience an increase of intrinsic job satisfaction, while having more resources when it comes to dealing with change or occupational stress (Carroll, Stewart-Sicking & Thompson, 2014:545-546). "Healthcare workers with higher frequencies of spiritual practises" were found to be more likely to remain in their line of work, for three

years or longer (Mittal, Rosen & Leana in Carroll *et al.*, 2014:545-546). At the same time spiritual or religious struggles have been linked to decreased productivity, psychological well-being (e.g. depression and stress), and other work-related outcomes (Carroll *et al.*, 2014:546).

When “spiritual or religious beliefs are central to a person’s life” and more dominant than other influences in terms of the person’s identity, a spiritual calling emerges (Neubert & Halbesleben, 2014). There is a reciprocal shaping influence between identity and contexts (including the religious/spiritual community) when it comes to attitudes and behaviour (Neubert & Halbesleben, 2014). Neubert and Halbesleben (2014) associate a *spiritual calling* with “a more stable and enduring self-identity.” Spiritual calling appear to add to the meaning and purpose of work beyond the perceived fit between a calling and career or the “organization’s performance to expectations,” and thus contributes more to job satisfaction, responsibility and accountability than secular calling (Neubert & Halbesleben, 2014). According to Neubert and Halbesleben (2014) *organizational commitment* can consequently be increased through a sense of spiritual calling in spite of low job satisfaction.

3.5.8 Negotiating meaning towards coping

Life does not always turn out as expected. Various constraints within a society (poverty or economic systems), the workplace (e.g. a hostile work environment and discrimination), or within an individual (e.g., job loss, physical or mental disability) “may hinder individuals from freely making career choices that align with their internal desires” in order to live out a calling (Duffy, *et al.*, 2013:43). Other work related stressors are “workload, role ambiguity, interpersonal conflict, and lack of perceived control” (Cummings & Pargament, 2012:158).

A primary appraisal of every potential stressor evaluates it as being positive, negative or neutral (Cummings & Pargament, 2012:158). Potentially harmful stressors induce anxiety and distress or may be viewed as opportunities for growth and overcoming (Cummings & Pargament, 2012:158). When a sacred goal such as a loss of *sacred calling* is at stake, “coping takes on a religious character” and individuals may turn to prayer, meditations or religious texts (Cummings & Pargament, 2012:159). Initial appraisals tap into global beliefs, which may include beliefs such as: “God being in control of the world or responsible for what

occurs;” the effectiveness of prayer; miracles; a belief that religious coping can effectively be employed; and that “God never visits upon his faithful more than what they can handle,” which can be very helpful (Park, 2012:28).

When individuals perceive a circumstance or stressor to be at odds with their *global belief system*, they “may experience high levels of distress, including sadness, anger, guilt, and confusion” which may motivate them to try to resolve discrepancies (Park, 2012:29). One’s initial appraisal of the stressful event can be changed to assimilate it into one’s *global meaning system*, or the existing *global meaning system* has to be changed to accommodate this information (Joseph & Linley, 2005:268; Park, C.L., 2010:259; Park, 2012:29). Consequently one may for instance experience anger towards God for allowing a situation (perhaps unjustly) but come to view it as part of His will and higher purposes over time, changing the appraisal of the event through assimilation.

Positive reinterpretations focusing on the good outcomes of difficulties (Aldwin, 2007:114; Park, 2012:30) are very adaptive, while *negative appraisals* of God’s intent as being harmful or neglectful “can lead to mistrust, anger, hurt, and disappointment toward God, or even to doubt regarding God’s existence (Park, 2012:30). Changing one’s *global meaning system* may entail a conclusion that God might not be as in control of one’s life than what was originally believed. Cummings and Pargament (2012:168) refer to “negative religious coping strategies” such as loss of faith and feeling abandoned by God, which brings more occupational distress and impairment.

Coming to terms with an event or achieving acceptance of it, reflects “meaning made” (Park, C.L., 2010:260). Aside from *meaning* derived from perceptions of growth or positive life changes (e.g. improved relationships, enhanced coping skills, greater appreciation for life), changed life stories may lead to *identity reconstruction* (Gillies & Neimeyer, 2006:54-55; Park, C.L., 2010:261). Unobtainable goals may be abandoned or substituted for alternative goals (Martin & Tesser in Park, C.L., 2010:261). One’s *sense of meaning* in life may be reduced or enhanced (Park, C.L., 2010:261). When self-reflective activity leading to meaning making is deliberately employed in an active process, growth is more likely to occur (Dik *et al.*, 2014:13; Joseph& Linley, 2005:266).

The following ways to foster purpose and meaning in career development, are proposed by Dik and colleagues in a counselling intervention model (Dik, *et al.*, 2009:627-630; Dik, *et al.*, 2014:5-18):

- a) *identify one's "signature strengths"* (one's four to seven top strengths) or what is most core to one's character at work (Peterson & Seligman in Dik, *et al.*, 2014:6; Seligman, 2006:777; Seligman, Rashid & Parks, 2005:416), which can "transform jobs into callings" (Dik, *et al.*, 2014:6);
- b) *"seek and create situations that induce positivity"* (Dik, *et al.*, 2014:8-9) and use job crafting strategies to increase positive tasks and relationships in a goal-directed manner, and creating "flow" (a focussed or immersed state in goal-directed activity) through investment in activities one is skilled at and which one finds challenging. Flow (a term coined by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi in 1975/1988) is one of three pathways to happiness and life satisfaction together with the endorsement of pleasure and meaning (cf. Peterson, Ruch, & Beermann, 2007:150; Csikszentmihalyi, 2013:1-33; Ullén, Manzano, Almeida, Magnusson, Pedersen, Nakamura, Csikszentmihalyi, & Madison., 2012:167);
- c) *develop gratitude* which increases well-being, using positive reframing methods to find meaning. Love and gratitude are strong predictors of life satisfaction, with gratitude being a stronger predictor than religiosity (Peterson *et al.*, 2007:153);
- d) *foster work-hope* through work-related goals that link up with meaning making behaviours and encouraging agency (active personal engagement);
- e) *use job crafting* to actively shape the work experience to meet work-related needs and to increase job satisfaction and meaningfulness, (Berg, Dutton & Wrzesniewski, 2013:2; Dik, *et al.*, 2014:14). Distinct strategies for job crafting are: task crafting (changing responsibilities, tasks or time on tasks); relational crafting (changing interactions); and cognitive crafting (changing the way one thinks about one's job-related tasks). Job crafting strategies have been found beneficial psychologically for some with "unanswered callings" (Berg *et al.*, 2010:973). Berg *et al.* (2010:973, 979-983) describe job crafting techniques as:

...task emphasizing (highlighting tasks part of one's job to pursue unanswered calling), job expanding (adding tasks), or role reframing (altering one's perception of the meaning of one's work; and leisure crafting techniques (through vicarious experiencing and hobby participating).

- f) *developing a calling*: Living out a calling appears to be more likely among those with higher levels of education and income, indicating that it would be beneficial to help people discern callings and to put together strategies towards implementation. Discerning a calling reflects a process of exploration over time. Job-crafting may be one avenue through which people may create meaning in work and may be useful in the development of a calling (Wrzesniewski, 2003:303).

3.6 CAREER COUNSELLING INTERVENTION

According to Dik *et al.*, (2009:625) the deeper value of the constructs “*calling*” and “*vocation*” may lie within *career counselling intervention*. This counselling model is used in this research study as foundational to the experiential reflections, described in chapter five. Career counsellors are advised to start with assessing clients’ current work meaning (Dik, *et al.*, 2009:628).

- They are to help individuals connect their work meaning to the wider frame of meaning in their lives, through methods such as the narratives within the career construction theory (Dik, *et al.*, 2009:628).
- This is followed by a process in which individuals are encouraged to engage in meaning-making behaviour, such as through using “signature strengths” (Dik, *et al.*, 2009:629).

Seligman, Steen, Park and Peterson (2005:416) encourage individuals to reflect on their lives and identify *personal strengths* together with making an inventory of *character strengths* (i.e. online inventory at www.authentichappiness.org) and to “use one of these top strengths in a new and different way every day for one week.” This process was truncated to identifying signature strengths from the survey and using them more often during the course of the following week (Seligman *et al.*, 2005:416). Dik, *et al.*, (2009:629) suggest that individuals should identify five tasks or behaviours that they do well, and then incorporate at least one of them per day into their work.

Individuals are furthermore encouraged towards “satisficing instead of maximizing”, looking for what is “good enough” as there is no perfect job (Dik, *et al.*, 2009:629). This is a principle described by Seligman, *et al.* (2006:782) towards meaning or engagement. Dik *et al.*,

(2009:629) ask individuals to list the top five things they would like from their jobs and evaluate the degree to which these are currently satisfied and to which they are realistic.

3.7 CONCLUSION

The question addressed in this chapter, was to interpret “why” the situation is what it is? (cf. Osmer, 2008:4). Registered counsellors are no longer allowed into the post-graduate training in Gestalt play therapy and general training in registered counselling, has been halted until 2016, when the newly promulgated scope of practice will come into effect.

The profession of registered counselling was envisioned to meet the needs of disadvantaged communities for “developmental counselling services” which would be accessible and affordable for all (cf. Pretorius, 2012a). It appears that the profession of registered counselling was created in spite of warnings that it would fail in light of economic reasons and that it might strengthen the divides among the South African population. Difficulties relate to the lack of job creation, the expectation that registered counsellors are to work for minimal income, and the lack of proto-professionalization within these communities. In this regard there appear to be more of a need for economic assistance within disadvantaged communities and a lack of understanding or appreciation of the potential benefits of counselling.

A gap between *psychological mindedness* expected within this profession and the population that they are to serve, may decrease work satisfaction significantly. It is also estimated that at least a third of the clients that registered counsellors would see, would need intervention from within the scope of practice of psychologists, and their needs would thus not be met.

A significant number of students who completed the training as registered counsellors did so because of difficulties getting into a professional master’s degree that would lead to registration as psychologists. A lot of them use the registered counselling training as a stepping stone towards their goals. Some of them value the opportunity for self-employment in private practice. Within the population of registered counsellors, is a sub-set of those who entered into the Gestalt Masters in Play Therapy / Postgraduate Studies in Play Therapy. This is a closed door for future registered counsellor applicants and it appears that they are destined to not study further unless they change career paths or become psychologists.

Professional identities are developed through training and work experiences within a profession, as well as through contact with theory, lecturers as well as other professionals in the field. These identities influence the way that registered counsellors will make ethical and counselling decisions and how effective they will be. If they entered the profession of psychology with a preferred identity as a “*possible self*,” they may experience a lack of *life- and job satisfaction* together with a sense of “*unanswered calling*.” Being unhappy within a profession or professional identity will thus not only affect their well-being, but also the effectiveness with which they can help their clients and their interest in remaining in the profession. These difficulties together with the newness of the field which is still experiencing change are expected to impact the development of registered counsellors’ professional identities.

The way that registered counsellors evaluate their counterfactual study and career journeys shapes their self-definition as individuals and professionals. The “self” is viewed in terms of a process of identification and alienation at the contact boundary. This is also the boundary at which registered counsellors encounter God (the Ultimate Transcendent) as guiding, leading, and calling them while shaping their identities.

The experience of having a *calling* may connect religious or spiritual beliefs with career goals, for some. It appears that having a calling, irrespective of the source being God or another form of spirituality, is linked to higher life- and work- satisfaction, a higher willingness to go the extra mile without economic compensation, a higher level of intrinsic job satisfaction and better mental health. A sense of calling from an external transcendent source, such as God, infuses meaning to work activities in a way that may bridge the gap between a person and his or her “fit” to a specific job.

The experience of “unanswered callings” can lead to long-term regret as well as a disruption in the “pneumal field” or relationship with God (the Ultimate Transcendent). Individuals have to change their interpretation of the situational event such as not having employment as envisioned or their *global meaning system*, related for instance, to God’s role in closed doors.

The *meaning* or *meaningfulness* individuals experience within a career is a complex interaction of their needs for individuation as well as contribution to others, and a connection towards “self” and “others.” Career counselling that utilizes calling and /or purpose and meaning, may aid registered counsellors in adjusting to setbacks, reframing the events

through reinterpretation and /or develop a calling or crafting their current work in a way that would increase meaningfulness.

The normative task from within a Reformation perspective will be explored in chapter four, through a Scriptural and literature study.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. NORMATIVE TASK: SPIRITUAL AND SCRIPTURAL REFLECTIONS ON THE CALLING TO REGISTERED COUNSELLING

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The normative task examines the question “What ought to be going on?” (Osmer, 2008:4). In this stage of the study, the researcher would determine through study and evaluation, from the varying perspectives of Scripture, a Biblical and pastoral approach in dealing with the meaning of “calling”.

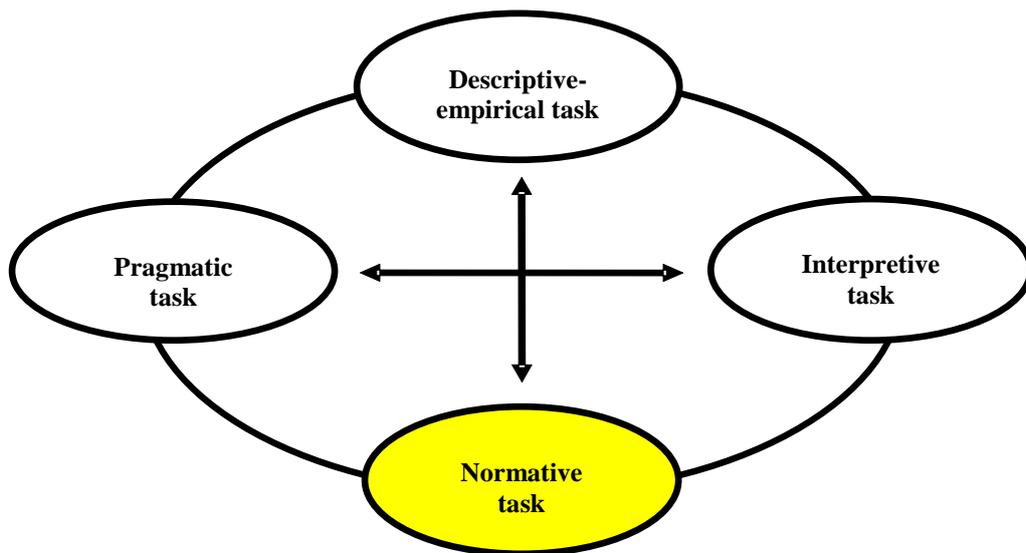


Figure 4.1: Normative task (Osmer, 2008:11)

The aim of the normative task is to establish a Biblical perspective (Osmer, 2008:139) and the researcher would include an evaluation and critical literature review of scholarly work on the meaning of “calling” from various call-texts. Osmer (2008:4) describes the normative task as: “Using theological concepts to interpret particular episodes, situations, or contexts, constructing ethical norms to guide our response, and learning from good practice.”

This would enable the researcher to introduce key concepts arising from the literature review. Exegesis of various Scripture portions will be done according to the grammatical-historical

hermeneutical method based on a literature study of Bible commentaries and other related theological books relating to various call-texts. According to Osmer (2008:138) the normative task is also “...a disciplined way of seeking God’s guidance and sorting out what ought to be done in particular episodes, situations, and contexts.”

The objective of this chapter is:

- To identify and implement Biblical and pastoral principles into a program, to aid the subset of Christian registered counsellors specializing in Gestalt Play therapy.

4.2 CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND

4.2.1 Practical and pastoral theology

While the overall research population is reflective of the postmodern culture in diversity of faith experiences (or lack thereof), this pastoral study seeks to develop a pastoral counselling intervention, to aid the Christian believers within this population.

In order to develop this pastoral intervention as an effective praxis, the theoretical foundations of pastoral theology within the field of practical theology, have to be examined (Heyns & Pieterse, 1990:36-37). Swinton and Mowat (2006:25) define practical theology as:

... a critical, theological reflection on the practices of the Church as they interact with the practices of the world with a view to ensuring faithful participation in the continuing mission of the triune God.

The focus areas of practical theology have shifted over time as it adapted to the shifting contexts within culture (Ganzevoort, 2009; De Jongh van Arkel, 2000:142). The paradigms of the times influenced the paradigms of Practical Theology, and there has been major shifts: from the diaconology (“service of the Word of God”); to practical theology with a focus on the communicative acts of man in relating to God (Heyns & Pieterse, 1990:11); into the postmodern age of the day (Janse Van Rensburg (2000:76, 89). These movements represent a shift from the use of Scripture as point of departure with theological methods, towards a focus on the communicative actions in which the Scripture came to stand alongside (to a larger or lesser degree) the methods of the social sciences (with different emphasis’ on the importance of Scripture). This has culminated in the postmodern approach where various

religions are studied alongside each other, in which the approach is one of “not knowing” (Ganzevoort, 2009; Janse Van Rensburg, 2000:94). Tieleman (De Jongh van Arkel, 2000:144) speaks of a “post-Christian” and the loss of historical faith. In this perspective Scripture is no longer viewed as source of truth (Breed, 2013:1).

The researcher positions herself in the transversal space alongside the reformed tradition of practical theology to be a study of Christian actions.

According to Badham (Louw, 2015:34) theology means “thinking about God.” The process of theologising takes place within a unique field of tension between faith (in God through Jesus Christ, as a gift from God) and reason (science) (Louw, 2015:34-35). Theology’s key assumption is “faith in God’s presence in life (the praxis of God)” (Louw, 2015:34).

Practical theology studies the encounter between man and God from the “perspective of the communication of the Gospel” (Louw, 2015:49). It is about praxis (praxis of God, referring to “the character and nature of God’s involvement with our human misery”), as well as practice (ministerial involvement) (Louw, 2015:52). Practical theology describes “an activity of believers seeking to sustain a life of reflective faith in the everyday” (Swinton & Mowatt, 2006:5).

Pastoral Science is defined by Breed (2013:6) as the scientific study of the Word of God, human beings, reality and applicable sciences, in order to find biblical principles and develop pastoral models. These models have the goal of guiding believers through the work of the Holy Spirit, to a deeper knowledge of God and themselves and to grow in faith. The goal is that they may handle life’s crisis’ with peace, to the glory of God and to further maturity, within the community of believers.

- *Pastoral counselling* is defined as a helping relationship in which the pastor through structured pastoral counselling within a helping relationship of mutual trust aims to guide the counselee to faith development, spiritual growth and maturity (Benner, 2003: 24-25). Christian counselling should according to Clinton & Ohlschlager (2002: 51) be a Biblical clinical process to facilitate the counselling process. It should be based on the fundamental basis of Scripture, be dependent on the inspired guidance of the Holy Spirit and make use of the best helping ministry resources.

In pastoral counselling, the narrative context of storytelling and listening to stories become an important pastoral strategy to help the counselee to understand and interpret his own personal story within the framework of God's Story (Louw, 1998:15; Müller, 2000:99). It is also ideally suitable for intercultural pastoral encounters (Louw, 2010:183).

- *Pastoral care* refers to walking alongside human beings from a Christian faith perspective. Benner (2003:19) placed pastoral care within a broader framework than pastoral counselling. Pastoral care is the spontaneous mutual care that expresses every believer's call to help carry each other's burdens (cf. Gal 6:2). It is the meeting place for theological theory and practice within faith communities. Through "intentional enacting and embodying of a theology of presence", suffering and need is alleviated in context of believers' love for God and their neighbour (McClure, 2012:269-270).

"Mutual care" occurs between believers who support each other within their communities (De Jongh Van Arkel, 2000:161). This occurs in the context of pastoral care which involves the "building up" of believers through dialogical care (De Jongh Van Arkel, 2000:162). Louw (1998:21-22, 38) is of the opinion that pastoral care involves both *comforting* as the effect of helping God's *life-changing power* and *presence* through the Holy Spirit in human life points. Pastoral care, however, is about much more than the individual; it is also a social issue affecting social problems and social structures (Smith, 2014:177). The pastoral dimension of care is issued in love to all people, and is focused on compassion aimed at healing the whole community, the world and all creation – interculturally (Louw, 1998:11-13; Louw, 2010:183).

- *Pastoral therapy* is defined by Collins (2005:4) as a long-term process that focuses on the fundamental change of the client's personality, spiritual values and ways of thinking (cf. De Jongh Van Arkel, 2000:163). Pastoral therapy belongs to specially trained professionals who specialises in strategies to help clients remove impediments of the past that impacts current behaviours and spiritual growth (Smith, 2014:178). The objective of pastoral therapy is healing through pastoral encounters (with the help of the Word, prayer and sacraments) to promote the client's faith maturity and spirituality. Change in pastoral therapy occurs through the redeeming mercy of Christ (cf. Smith, 2014:178):
 - to make responsible, moral and ethical choices;

- to increase in holiness;
- to expect the eternal future and hope; and
- live in interconnectedness and community with fellow believers.

4.2.1.1 Narrative pastoral counselling

A pastoral counsellor meets clients within their concrete situations when making use of life stories (Louw, 1998:133; Müller, 2004:295). Individuals' life stories consist of various shorter or longer stories with some challenges and developments (De Jager & Müller, 2002:1125). Together these stories shape individuals' lives and their identities (Brunsdon, 2010:10-11; De Jager & Müller, 2002:1125). Through reinterpretation, stories become transforming agents (cf. Brunsdon, 2010:11). Individuals "take part in and take initiative for the rebuilding of their (own)" stories (De Jongh van Arkel, 2000:159).

The narrative counsellor embraces the "not knowing" approach, in which the counselee is the "expert" (Brunsdon, 2010:11). Within a pastoral context it takes the pastor out of the role of dispensing knowledge and wisdom and creates the space for careful listening and understanding within a more reflexive approach (Louw, 1998:15; Müller, 2004:295). Problems are framed as "the problems" (not the person), externalizing and naming them (Brunsdon, 2010:12). There is thus a deconstruction and reconstruction of meaning that takes place, in which the pastoral counsellor can become a co-constructor (Brunsdon, 2010:11-12).

Pastoral theology and narrative counselling meets within the meta-narrative of our lives in Christ in context of the gospel (De Jager & Müller, 2002:1233; Müller, 2011b:1-2). The narrative approach becomes qualified within the normative use of Scripture as truth, stories of the construction of identities in Christ, relationship with God, and "faith interventions" (help) that engender hope (Brunsdon, 2010:13-14; De Jager & Müller, 2002:1233). Hope can only be found within awareness of the faithfulness of God (Louw, 1998:8, 12, 121-122; 2010:179).

These points of departure move away from the postmodern philosophy of narrative therapy, in which there is no final truth, a focus on the here and now and a search for solutions within oneself (Brunsdon, 2010:8-9).

4.2.2 Contextual background of scriptural reflections on calling texts

The postmodern society is far removed from the first century (eastern Mediterranean) advanced agrarian society classified as post-horticultural yet pre-industrial (Alfaro, 2008:131-132; Malina, 1997:1; Stegemann & Stegemann, 1999:8). While most of the first century population lived in the country by agriculture, they had a close trade connection to the cities and their economy became more commercialized with the Roman Empire (Alfaro, 2008:132; Stegemann & Stegemann, 1999:8-9). The Western individualistic and competitive society is based on the presumptions of limitless goods even in the face of scarcity and a focal social institution that is one of economics (Malina, 1997:15). In contrast religious and economic institutions were integrated with kinship and politics within the Mediterranean societies (Malina, 1997:15).

The Israelite traditions speak of God calling the early leaders (Abraham – Gn 12:1-9; Moses – Ex 3:1-12; 4:10-17; 6:1-13; 49:1-5) and later others such as Joshua (through Moses in Nm 27:18-23; directly in Dt 31:7-8; 31:23) and Gideon (through an angel – Jdg 6:11-24) to military and political duties (Buss, 1981:12; Duling, 2001:147-148). Prophets were believed to be commissioned directly by God, such as Amos (Am 7:15), Isaiah (Is 6:1-13), Jeremiah (Jr 1:4-19), and Ezekiel (Ezk 1:1-3;15), or they received the task and spirit from an older prophet according to God’s will, such as Elisha (1 Ki 19:16, 19-20; 2 Ki 2:9-15) (Buss, 1981:13; Duling, 2001:148). Kings (especially the first in a royal line) were appointed through prophetic revelation and were thought to possess the Spirit of God, such as Saul and David (1 Sm 10:6, 11; 16:13-14; 2 Sm 23:2). To be called pointed to a lifetime of special service to God, especially if the call came before or at birth (Buss, 1981:13).

The present understanding of vocation in terms of work, career or occupation is not known in Scripture (Badcock, 1998:6; 2006:106; Barth in Davis, 1997:132). Thus, while registered counsellors may view their career as a *calling* or *vocation*, direct Scriptural instruction for the profession can’t readily be found. At the same time the researcher expects general guidelines to emerge for an interpretive frame (cf. Osmer, 2008:4) from a study on this topic.

Starting with the Old Testament calling text in Deutero-Isaiah (Is 49), the researcher will explore the meaning of “calling” in context of the language as well as various other call-texts,

such as that of Moses. After a word study related to the New Testament, calling or commissioning will be explored in terms of the books of Matthew and Mark, as well as the writings of Paul. Before drawing conclusions, the meaning of discipleship and the manner in which one receives a call will be explored. These truths will be brought to bear in the research context of loss and described within Christian belief and a pastoral theology.

4.3 OLD TESTAMENT CALLING TEXTS

4.3.1 The call-text of Isaiah 49:1b & 5a

4.3.1.1 Isaiah 49:1b & 5a in context of Isaiah 49:1-6

Ideal Israel Delivers the Exiles

(The NET translation's notes are added in cursive where relevant; Bible, 2012)

49:1 Listen to me, you coastlands! (*or "islands"; in far-off lands"*)

Pay attention, you people who live far away!

The Lord summoned me from birth; (*"called me from the womb"*)

he commissioned me when my mother brought me into the world. (*"from the inner parts of my mother he mentioned my name"*)

49:2 He made my mouth like a sharp sword,

he hid me in the hollow of his hand;

he made me like a sharpened (*or polished*) arrow,

he hid me in his quiver. (*emphasis on the servant as effective instrument of the Lord*)

49:3 He said to me, "You are my servant,

Israel, through whom I will reveal my splendour." (*Ideal servant "Israel" like Moses of old, who will succeed by establishing justice throughout the earth*)

49:4 But I thought, "I have worked in vain;

I have expended my energy for absolutely nothing" (*"for nothing and emptiness"*)

But the Lord will vindicate me;

my God will reward me. (*"But my justice is with the Lord, and my reward or "wage" with my God"*)

49:5 So now the Lord says, the one who formed me from birth (*"from the womb"*)

to be his servant he did this to restore Jacob to himself,

so that Israel might be gathered to him; and I will be honoured (*“and so I might be honoured.”*) in the Lord’s sight, for my God is my source of strength (*“having been my strength”*)

49:6 he says, “Is it too insignificant a task for you to be my servant, to re-establish the tribes of Jacob, and restore the remnant (*“the protected”* or *“preserved ones”*) of Israel? I will make you a light to the nations, (*cf. Is 42:6*)

So you can bring my deliverance to the remote regions of the earth.”

4.3.1.2 Word study relating to “called” and “formed” in Isaiah 49:1b; 5a and other Old Testament texts

VanGemen (1997:971-974) says the following about *qara'* (קרא): it means, “call, invoke, summon, proclaim, be called, be proclaimed ...calling, assembly, reading of Scripture ... a called person, delegate... or proclamation.” The basic meaning of *qr'* is to draw attention to oneself by the audible use of one’s voice in order to establish contact with someone else, who would then answer (VanGemen, 1997:971). A “common use of the verb is with the meaning to invite” in a judicial sense or being summoned for military service (VanGemen, 1997:971-972). Linked with the word “Yahweh” as subject, the word means “to call someone to be in service of Yahweh” and is frequently used in prophetic literature such as in Isaiah 40:6 (the stars), 41:4 (human generations), 51:2 (Abraham), and 41:9 and 42:1 (Israel) (VanGemen, 1997:972). VanGemen (1997:972) explains that when individuals are called by Yahweh, he (Yahweh) “proclaims his sovereignty over them, he takes possession of them in order to use them for special service, and he remains the ‘primary author’ behind their actions.” As a technical term, *qr'* also indicates “the proclamation of God’s will” (VanGemen, 1997:972).

According to Young (1982:135-137) the word “call” can mean: to say; to cry; to cause to cry (for help); to call, name; to say, speak; to call upon; to lay out in order, collect, say; to call after to oneself; to use a name; to call toward, or to sound, cry. Under “to call, or name” Young (1982:137) finds reference to Isaiah 49:1b: “The LORD called Me from the womb; From the body of My mother He named Me” (NASB; Bible, 1995); “Before I was born the LORD called me; from my mother’s womb he has spoken my name” (NIV; Bible, 2011).

- The word “call” refers to the verb *qara'* (קרא), according to Strongs H7121 (KJV; Bible, 2012a), which includes the meaning under *Qal*: “to summon, invite, call for, call and commission, appoint, call and endow” and under *Niphal-Pual*, to be called, be named, be called out, or be chosen.

The Hebrew verb *qara'* (Strongs H7121) is used 735 times in the King James version (Bible, 2012a), as relating to: “call 528, cried 98, read 38, proclaim 36, named 7, guest 4, invited 3, gave 3, renowned 3, bidden 2, preach 2, miscellaneous 2”.

In the same passage relating to salvation reaching the end of the earth (NASB) (Is 49:1-13), or the Servant of the Lord (NIV) (Is 49:1-7), the servant’s call confirmed in verse 5a: “And now says the LORD, who formed Me from the womb to be His Servant (NASB) (Bible, 1995) / “And now the LORD says - he who formed me in the womb to be his servant” (Bible, 2011).

- The word “formed” is the verb *yatsar* (יצר), according to Strongs H3335 (Bible, 2012b) which under *Qual* includes the framing, pre-ordaining, and/or planning (figurative of divine) purpose of a situation (together with the meaning of forming, fashioning, or framing of human or divine activity). Under *Pual* it means to be predetermined, or be pre-ordained (Strongs H3335 in Bible, 2012b).

The Hebrew verb *yatsar* (Strongs H3335) is used 62 times in the King James’ version (Bible, 2012b), as relating to: “form 26, potter 17, fashion 5, maker 4, frame 3, former 2, earthen 1, purposed 1”.

4.3.1.3 Isaiah 49:1-6 in context of the book Isaiah

Isaiah 44-55 is generally (with some dispute) credited to the authorship of Second-Isaiah, or Deutero-Isaiah, relating to a period towards the end of the exile (Adams, 2004:14; Berges, 2010:28-29; Seitz, 2004:120). After proclamations around the impending fall of Babylon, references are found to Cyrus being raised up by Yahweh as deliverer in Isaiah 40-48 (Wilcox & Paton-Williams, 1988:80-81). Israel is rebuked in Isaiah 48, followed by a shift in focus from Isaiah 49 to the impending return of the exiles and the rebuilding of Jerusalem (Seitz, 2004; Wilcox & Paton-Williams, 1988:84-85). Deutero-Isaiah appears to be

encouraging the Israelites towards renewed hope in Yahweh (Berges, 2010:31) and comfort (cf. Adams, 2004:15).

Adams (2004:194) summarizes the prophetic function of Isaiah 40-55 as Yahweh's explicitly calling his servant "to return to him with an uncompromising allegiance and by embracing the role of his servant." Keiser (2005:487) describes the purpose of Isaiah 40-48 as proclaiming "the incomparability of Yahweh as evidenced in the deliverance of his people" as witness to all the nations.

Isaiah 49:1-6 is the second so-called "servant song" in the book. The servant songs are found in Isaiah 42:1-4; 49:1-6; 50:4-9; and 52:13-53:12 (Lindblad, 1993:115; Wilcox & Paton-Williams, 1988:79). They were described by Klaus Balzer (drawing from the von Rad *festschrift*) as four songs belonging to an antique classification of an "ideal-biography" which he links to the career of Moses (cf. Adams, 2004:121).

4.3.1.4 Isaiah 49:1-6

Three main lines of thought of interpretation can be identified around the speaker in this passage, followed by variations and different opinions (Adams, 2004:184-187). In the first group, proponents such as P.A.H. Boer (cf. Adams, 2004:184-185) view the reference in Isaiah 49:3 to Israel as "fatal" to an individual authorship or speaker of verse 1 and 5 ("I/me"). In this line of thinking H.J. Hermisson (cf. Adams, 2004:184-185) identifies the speaker(s) as a group of prophets assigned with the task of restoring Israel to Yahweh. A small second group hold to a Messianic interpretation of the identity of the speaker in Isaiah 49:1-6 (Adams, 2004:185). At the same time a large number of scholars attribute the passage to Second or Deutero-Isaiah and point to its similarity to the prophetic call of Jeremiah (Jr 1) and Isaiah of Jerusalem (Is 6) (Adams, 2004:185; Story, 2009:105).

Seitz (1996:234) finds a historical prophet as servant or author who steps up to the call in Isaiah 40:1-11 and this "voice" remains hidden behind Isaiah 40-48 in order to carry and bear witness to the Word of God that was already spoken (cf. Adams, 2004:185). Seitz (1996:235-236) describes this servant as sketching his vocation in reference to past prophets, pointing to him picking up the call where Jeremiah left off at the end of his life. The prophet Isaiah is also present in the word behind the text. This leads up to the shift in Isaiah 49 where Israel

herself receives the vocation to witness as servant to the nations (a main focus in Jeremiah) (Seitz, 1996:236-237). For Seitz (1996:328-329) the anonymity of the historical figure reflects the anonymity of the unmarked grave of Moses (his legacy being the Torah), allowing an eschatological focus to emerge.

Using Speech Act Theory in his interpretation, Adams (2004:164) concludes that the “I/me” in this servant song is “intentionally and functionally ambiguous”. A technique described by Thiselton (cited by Adams, 2004:164) as the notion of self-involvement is used wherein “the speaker stands behind the words” in such a way that a self-involved reader of a text steps forward to take up the responsibility and commitment to perform a task, in this case taking up responsibility of the servant. In embracing this role, the servant forsakes sin, acknowledges and confesses Yahweh as God and becomes a light to the nations (Adams, 2004:164).

The conclusions of Adams’ (2004:222) analysis links with the researcher’s focus on “calling”, and it is therefore pertinent to include it. Adams (2004:221) finds two sub-units in the passage: “(i) an individual confession concerning Yahweh’s call (vv 1-4) and (ii) a confessional rehearsal of the call with additional comments on the assignment (vv 5-6)”.

Detailed structure analysed by Adams (2004:221-222):

- “I. Confession to the foreign nations of Yahweh’s call (vv 1-4)
 - A. Summons to the foreign nations to listen (v 1a)
 - B. Confessional call (vv 1b-3)
 - 1. Call proper (v 1b)
 - 2. Yahweh’s provision and protection (v2)
 - a. Introductory speech formula (v 3a)
 - b. Declarative proper (v3a-b)
 - 1) Declared as Yahweh’s servant and Israel (v 3a-b)
 - 2) Purpose (v 3b)
 - C. Return to Yahweh’s call (v 6)
 - 1. Introductory formula (v6a α)
 - 2. Call Proper (v 6a α -b)
 - a. Concerning the nation Israel (v 6a α -a β)
 - b. Concerning the foreign nations (v 6b)”

Based on the use of the “language and imagery of the commissioning of a prophet and king” as well as his other research, Adams (2004:157-196, 222) concludes that this passage is not a song. Furthermore, Adams (2004:222) finds the following call images:

- a) Verse 1b-2 and 4a α resemble the prophetic call (particularly of Jeremiah);
- b) verse 3 sketches the installation of a king resembling Isaiah 42:1-4 and Psalm 2:7-9;
- c) the call to the nations in verse 1b and the military language of verse 2 express royal motifs (cf. Is 11:4; Ps:2:7-9);
- d) the original working in verse 2a α combines aspects of both king and prophet; and
- e) the call from the womb mirrors not only the language used in Jeremiah’s call (Jr 1:5) but “also recalls the royal motif found in both Babylonian and Egyptian texts” (Adams, 2004:222).

Considering this analysis together with the description of the typical “calling” or “commissioning” by Buss (1981) and Duling (2001) (described in the Introduction), the word study in 4.3.1.2, as well as the speech interpretational notion of the self-involved reader that steps up to the call (Thiselton cited by Adams, 2004:164), the researcher concludes that these two references (Is 49:1b, 5a) have an extended applicability.

The typical “calling” or “commissioning” may possibly be viewed in a wider context than just for one particular type of call or one particular historical person and thus increase its relevancy for the context of this study. At the same time the researcher is not intimating that it speaks directly about careers in the current times we live in. The idea of being called from the womb furthermore brings to mind passages such as Psalm 139:16 that speak of our days being preordained and recorded prior to our conception that lead a number of believers to believe that God has a specific plan for their lives.

4.3.2 Other call-texts within the Old Testament

4.3.2.1 Moses

It appears that various scholars over time, using different approaches, had different interpretations as to which parts of Exodus 3 specifically links to the commissioning or call of Moses and how it sketches the story (Davis, 1997; Houtman, 1993; Meyers, 2005; Morosco, 1984; Whybray, 1995). Whybray (1995:71) points out that the call is prefaced by two stories of Moses' youth which sketches the difficulties that Moses would face. Furthermore, Exodus 6 is not to be a second or parallel call, but a statement of what God will do in a way that shifts the burden from Moses to God (Whybray, 1995:71-72).

The classical call-text form or the dialogical *Gattung* (Davis, 1997:133; Middlemas, 2010:133; Morosco, 1984:543; Shalom-Guy, 2008:3) has the following elements (of which not all need be present or in a specific order):

- a) an *introduction* providing a specific setting for the divine commissioning: the background of the Israelites' situation, and Moses shepherding in Midian (Ex 1-2, 3:1);
- b) a Divine *confrontation* bringing the sender and messenger face-to-face at the burning bush (Ex 3:2-6);
- c) the *commission* itself, in which the sender sets forth some specific task and/or message for the messenger. God commissions Moses to lead his people out of Egypt (Ex 3:7-10);
- d) an *objection* to the mission raised by the prospective messenger. Here Meyers' (2005:55) lists the following: Moses says he's unworthy (Ex 3:11); does not know God's name (Ex 3:13); the people will not heed him (Ex 4:1); he is unable to speak (Ex 4:10) and he asks God to send another (Ex 4:13);
- e) a *reassurance* given by the sender to the messenger, which repeats the essence of the commission and renders all objections invalid (Davis, 1997:133). Here Meyers' (2005:55) lists the following reassurances that follow on Moses' objections: God will be "with" Moses (3:12); reveals his name (Ex 3:14-15); provides signs (Ex 4:2-9); will tell Moses what to say (4:12) and will help Moses and Aaron speak (Ex 4:14-17);
- f) a *conclusion* to the episode speaking of the messenger's fulfilment or intention to fulfil the commission (Morosco, 1984:543), or a *sign* (Davis, 1997:133; Shalom-Guy,

2008:3). God instructs Moses to go to the elders, and then to the Pharaoh with them (Ex 3:18);

- g) *information around the difficulties* that the messenger will encounter, may sometimes follow. The difficulties are intimated in the prior situation sketched (Whybray, 1995:71) as well as the actual events sketched between this call and the affirmation of the call in Exodus 5-6. In the specific unit of Exodus 3:1-21, God sketches the difficulties that Moses will face and elaborates on the mission in Exodus 3:19-23.

In fulfilling God's call or commission, Moses fulfilled the following roles: leader; mediator of the covenant or law-giver; military commander; political or diplomatic; prophetic; performing signs and wonders; and a judicial role (Meyers, 2005:136; 306). Meyers (2005:136; 306) describes this judicial role as maintaining social order through settling disputes.

4.3.2.2 Call-texts in the Old Testament

Shalom-Guy (2008:3) finds a deliberate use of the Moses call narrative in that of Gideon (Jdg 6) (especially), as well as other figures. This enhances the message that Gideon is God's chosen messenger and a worthy choice, in the pattern of Moses (Shalom-Guy, 2008:18). Similarly a resemblance between Joshua and Moses establishes his authority as a worthy successor to Moses, while similarities between Elijah at Mount Horeb bring to mind the revelation to Moses in Exodus 33:17-23. After the period of the golden calf, Shalom-Guy (2008:17-18) points to the criticism of those prophets who ask for heavenly vengeance instead of pleading for the sinful people.

O'Conner (2005:135, 137) also identifies Jeremiah as a prophet summoned before birth in a manner similar to the "great prophet Moses" with the unique calling of being a spokesperson for God set against the people of Israel. Jeremiah's calling is depicted as involving a "profound engagement with the world, with God and the local community" through an exclusive allegiance to God, intimate experience of God and absolute obedience (O'Conner, 2005:130, 138)

4.4 NEW TESTAMENT CALLING TEXTS

4.4.1 Word-study related to “call” or “calling

Young’s “Analytical Concordance to the Bible” (1982:135-138) and Louw and Nida’s (1988:19, 398, 403-404, 408, 423-424) “Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament” reveal that the word “call”, “called” or “calling” in the New Testament reflects its use in the Old Testament (cf. Badcock, 1998:4).

“Call” is used in Luke 6:13: “when the day came, he called his disciples to him” and Matthew 15:10 “he called the crowd to him and said to them”, as “to call to, with a possible implication of a reciprocal relation” (Louw & Nida, 1988:423). Call as “to call, or to call to task” refers “to urgently invite someone to accept responsibilities for a particular task, implying a new relationship to the one who does the calling” (Louw & Nida, 1988:424). It is used for example in 2 Thessalonians 2:14: “(God) called you to this through the good news we preached to you”, or “through the good news we preached, which summoned you to do this”; Ephesians 1:18: “so that you will know what is the hope to which he has called you”; or Acts 16:10 “because God has called us to preach the good news to them, or ...to the people there”, or “because God has urgently invited us to preach the good news to the people there” (Louw & Nida, 1988:424).

“Calling” can refer to “the state of having been called to a particular task and/or relation”: Ephesians 4:1 “I ask you then ... live worthy of your calling to which (God) has called you”, or “I ask you then ... live worthy of the responsibility which God has urgently invited you to accept”, or “...live worthy of the task which God has given you to do” (Louw & Nida, 1988:424). Romans 1:1 used the phrase: “may be rendered as ‘urgently invited to be an apostle or even ‘summoned and commissioned to be an apostle’” (Louw & Nida, 1988:424).

4.4.2 The use of the concept of “calling” or “commissioning” in the New Testament

From the word study (4.4.1) it appears that the main focus of the word “call or calling” is to call people to salvation or to discipleship aside from the calling to apostleship or specific ministerial positions in Ephesians 4:11-12 (cf. Nel, 2004:600). While Brands’ (2007) literary interpretation of Matthew looks at its incorporation of material from Isaiah, in terms of the

mission summarized in Matthew 28:16-20, an older study of Morosco (1984) argued that Matthew patterned his commissioning of the disciples on the call of Moses. (While it is a very old study, it seems relevant in light of this study's focus with its focus on the use of the call narrative.)

Pilch (2005:373) points out that Paul alludes to Isaiah 49:1 and Jeremiah 1:5 in Galatians 1:15 when he says,

¹⁵But when the one who set me apart from birth and called me by his grace was pleased ¹⁶to reveal his Son to me that I could preach him among the Gentiles, I did not go to ask advice from any human being...

Paul hereby and with his explicit expression that the gospel which he preached was revealed to him by God (Gl 1:11-12) places himself in the prophetic tradition (Grieb, 2005:157; Pilch, 2005:373). According to Grieb (2005:157) Jesus also “located himself within Israel’s prophetic tradition”, and Brands (2007:77) links the mission of calling people back to God to the nation-wide call by the end of the book of Matthew (Mt 28:16-20).

Badcock (2006:103; 1998:6) and Hardy (1990:91) emphatically state that the word calling or vocation has no Biblical reference to employment and that it pertains to the gospel plan and Christian ethics. It thus seems pertinent to ask the question of what discipleship entails.

After a brief exploration of the use of the call narrative in the New Testament, the researcher will focus on the nature of the call to believers.

4.4.3 The call narrative (*Gattung*) or commissioning scene used in Matthew 9:35-11:1

The short narrative that concludes with a saying in Matthew 9:35-38 focuses not on the mission of the twelve, but rather on that of the sender, Jesus (Morosco, 1984:546). This mission is to preach “the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every disease and infirmity” (Mt 9:35). Morosco (1984:546) argues that using the similar wording in Matthew 10:1, 7-8 places the mission of the twelve on the same continuum as Jesus’, and may “be seen as the inauguration of the twelve (and the Church)”. Describing the crowds as shepherdless (Mt 9:36, cf. Nm 27:17), the story of Moses is evoked, while the concluding saying (Mt 9:38) around the harvest bridges Jesus’ mission with that of the twelve (Morosco, 1984:546).

According to Morosco (1984:547): “The *confrontation* between the sender and messengers is provided by Matthew in a call pericope (10:1-4), which was used by the other Synoptic writers for the original call of the twelve disciples”. Morosco (1984:548) points out that the language usage is also similar to Moses’ confrontation with God (“God called to him”, Ex 3:4) and argues that this call may be a type of secondary call which is “a confrontation call”. This is followed by endowing the disciples with Jesus’ “authority over...” (Mt 10:1), establishing an “authoritative connection with the mission of Jesus” (Morosco, 1984:548).

The commissioning of the twelve (Mt 10:16-23) 1) includes sayings similar to Mark 13:9-13 where it describes the eschatological world mission; 2) expands the mission to the nations and to the time of the second coming (Mt 10:23); 3) includes warning of persecution before Gentiles similar to Moses’ witness before a Gentile king (Ex 3:10); and 4) some of these seem to depict the final phase of the church’ mission rather than the time-frame of the twelve (cf. Mk 13:9-13) (Morosco, 1984:549-550).

No formal objection element as spoken by the messengers is given, but a “traditional logia” appears to have been used to raise and settle the objection issue, putting it in the mouth of the sender (Morosco, 1984:550). Jesus reassures the disciples in Matthew 10:19-20, “Do not be anxious how you are to speak or what you are to say”, which again reminds of Moses’ protest around “his lack of eloquence” (Morosco, 1984:550-551). The difficulties described and “statements about the rejection of the message and the messengers”, evoke images of the problems faced by Moses and the prophets (Morosco, 1984:551). The narrator of Matthew is unobtrusive and uses gaps in the information as well as an inconsistent portrayal of the disciples’ actions, as a means to evoke a reader’s response (Edwards, 1985:49-60). Karen Barta (cf. Edwards, 1985:60) added that an alternation of speech and narration produced an uneven pace or oscillation in the mentioned story.

The reassurance element is found in Matthew 10:24-42 which culminates in the promise of Jesus’ second coming (Morosco, 1984:551). It appears that this commissioning of Jesus will not be completed before the second coming. Matthew uses the clause “fear not” which is “given to Abraham (Gn 26:24), Jacob (Gn 46:3), Jeremiah (Jr 1:8-9) and Moses (Nm 14:9)”, and which Moses used at the Red Sea (Ex 14:13) (Morosco, 1984:551). This “fear not” reassurance is “sometimes linked up with ‘I am with you’ promises in commissioning type scenes (see Jr 1:8-9)” (Morosco, 1984:552). The usual element of encouragement to

undertake the divine mission in spite of hardships as “God will be with [them] and speak through them”, follows the common commissioning pattern (cf. Morosco, 1984:553).

The conclusion which sketches the messenger setting off to fulfil the commission, is found in Matthew 11:1, and again refers back to the mission of the sender rather than that of the messenger (Morosco, 1984:553). It appears that the mission of the twelve (as sketched by Matthew) is linked to typical call scenes in the Old Testament, the original calling of the twelve, later repeated in sending out the seventy-two, and is to be seen as an extension or continuation of Jesus’ mission.

What is the mission of Jesus then? Brands (2007:20-22) speaks of a kingdom mission which ties in with Kazen’s (2008:592) description of “the model of Jesus as an eschatological prophet of God’s kingdom”. This kingdom mission (Brands, 2007:22-23) is a continuation of an Old Testament mission, in terms of being a light to all the nations. This mission enfolds the “full range of needs that would be encountered in the context of the nations”: spiritual darkness, people “in their whole human experience”, social concerns and cultural crises (Brands, 2007:22). Based on his comprehensive study of the book of Matthew, Brands (2007:23) summarizes the way in which the followers are to serve, as being in terms of functioning: they would “draw others into discipleship” in which Jesus’ instructions and the baptism would be observed, while teaching Jesus’ kingdom vision. They would furthermore be “instruments of renewal, healing, and compassion” (Brands, 2007:23).

4.4.4 Call narratives related to the gospel of Mark

In a form-critical analysis of Mark 10:46-52, Menken (2005:273) argues that the story of Bartimaeus contains some unusual characteristics as a synoptic healing miracle, but that it displays “most of the features of a call story”. Menken (2005:276) references Coutts, Droge, and Butts in describing the genre as comprising of the following elements:

- (1) Jesus passes by;
- (2) he sees;
- (3) the object of his seeing is a person (or persons) mentioned by name and sometimes even characterized as the ‘son of...’ (in view of the abandoning of family ties...);
- (4) this person is performing his duty/task (this is mentioned in view of his later abandonment of his occupation and possessions...);
- (5) Jesus calls him;
- (6) the person leaves his duty, possessions and family behind;
- (7) he follows Jesus.

Using the NRSV, Menken (2005:276) presents the following tabled scheme of call-scenes, and the writer has taken the liberty to add Menken's analysis of Bartimaeus' call in an additional column:

Table 4.1: Menken’s analysis of Bartimaeus’ call (Menken, 2005:276)

	Mk 1:16-18	Mk 1:19-20	Mk 2:14	Jn 1:43	Mk 10:46-52
1	As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee,	As he went a little further,	As he was walking along,	The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee.	Leaving Jericho, Jesus passes by where Bartimaeus is sitting at the side of the road
2	he saw	he saw	he saw	He found	
3	Simon and his brother Andrew	James son of Zebedee and his brother John,	Levi son of Alphaeus	Philip	Bartimaeus
4	Casting a net into the lake- for they were fishermen.	who were in their boat mending the nets.	sitting at the tax booth,		is begging by the roadside (cf. Levi sitting at the tax booth, Mk 2:14)
5	And Jesus said to them, Follow me and I will make you fish for people.	Immediately he called them;	and he said to him, Follow me.	and said to him, Follow me.	Jesus calls him indirectly, through the crowd.
6	And immediately they left their nets	and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men.			Bartimaeus abandons his occupation and possessions – 50a:”and he threw his cloak away”
7	and followed him.	and followed him.	And he got up and followed him.		“and he followed him on the way” (v 52).

Menken (2005:277) reports that the pattern of call-scenes may originate in the calling of Elisha by Elijah in 1 Kings 19:19-21. Within the gospel of Mark, the emphasis is on “three predictions of the passion, death and resurrection of the Son of Man” (Mk 8:31; 9:31; 10:33-34) in context of Jesus’ journey to Jerusalem (Van Iersel in Menken, 2005:284). In the dialogues following the predictions, Jesus communicates that his disciples will share his own fate, and the journey is shown to one of trials and testing (Menken, 2005:284, Troyer, 2010:46). Their “first priority should be to follow him in his passion” (Mk 10:38-40) over seeking powerful positions (Menken, 2005:284). Troyer (2010:46) speaks of submitting one’s life to God’s life changing work. The placing of the pericope as well as wording “and he [Bartimaeus] followed him *on the way*” imitates the journey or way to Jesus’ passion and death (Menken, 2005:284). Bartimaeus is contrasted with the rich man (Mk 10:17-22) that

fails to follow Jesus, and the placing of the pericope indicates to Menken (2005:287) that Mark framed Jesus' ministry with call stories. Menken (2005:288) finds a contrast between Bartimaeus and the core disciples (Peter, James and John) who fail "in the way of suffering, which is a way of service" along the way. Believers (or readers) of the gospel of Mark are thus invited to also follow Jesus in a way that they will partake in a life of commitment to him first, to service and to partake in his suffering.

4.4.5 Calling as related to Paul

Together with his prior persecution of the church, Paul's calling as "an apostle to the nations of the world" is crucial to understanding Paul (Hultgren, 2010:362). In Hultgren's (2010:362) words, Paul declared that he was "called by God for a particular vocation" as the prophets before him (referencing Is 46:1-6 and Jr 1:5). Paul said that he was set apart before birth (using language that recalls that of Jr 1:5), that God revealed his Son Jesus to him, and called him to proclaim this revelation to the world (Hultgren, 2010:362). A similar reference to being predestined to a calling is found in Isaiah 49:5a in 2.2.1.2.

Paul's calling is related three times by Luke (Ac 9:1-9; 22:4-16; 26:9-18), while Paul speaks of it in 1 Corinthians 9:1 and 15:8 (Grieb, 2005:155-156; Hultgren, 2010:363). That the Damascus experience indeed shaped and determined Paul's whole life, is Hultgren's (2010:363) evaluation of Paul's work among the nations and his writings (cf. Grieb, 2005:162).

Speaking of his calling as an apostle and his Damascus experience in 1 Corinthians 9:1, Paul referred to a resulting "freedom" while at the same time receiving an "obligation" (1 Cor 9:16-17) around being "entrusted with a commission" (also see Rm 1:1-15) (Grieb, 2005:156). In Galatians 1:11-16 and Philippians 3:4-11 Paul expanded on his freedom and service (Grieb, 2005:156). According to Grieb (2005:158) echoes of Isaiah and Jeremiah can be heard within Paul's story. Paul's words would be "God's weapon" rather than his violence, while suffering hardship, rejection, imprisonment can be expected to follow his opposition to the forces that corrupt Israel (Roman Empire and immoral Gentile customs) (Grieb, 2005:158). The resistance that Paul experienced echoed the resistance which he showed believers before his conversion (Grieb, 2005:158). Grieb (2005:157-158) contrasts the

prophetic model of Isaiah and Jeremiah with “violently zealous prophets like Moses, Elijah and Phinehas” who had slaughtered people towards enforcing the separation from other gods, who may have been Paul’s earlier role models.

In Philippians 3:13-14 Paul speaks of straining ahead “...toward...towards the goal for the prize of the upward [heavenly] call of God in Christ Jesus”. Jesus humbled himself in human form and on the cross before being exalted by God (Phlp 2:6-11), but Paul promotes a leadership style in which Jesus Christ is proclaimed (2 Cor 4:5), thus reflecting a downward movement of humility in contrast to the leaders of his day who proclaimed themselves as “lords” or “masters” (as promoted by the Cynics of his time) (Grieb, 2005:158-160).

Paul encourages believers in 1 Corinthians 8:1-11 to imitate him in the same way that he imitates Christ, or to embrace his relationship to the gospel in a way that Christ’s death for others (its pattern and power) will shape their lives (Ellington, 2011:304). Ellington (2011:306) finds Paul participating in the death of Christ (cf. the discussion in 2.4.4.) and “salvation (or destruction)” of fellow believers in his instructions. Paul models “self-sacrifice for others and their salvation” (Ellington, 2011:305). In seeking what is good for others over that which will be to his own advantage, Paul sets a Christ-like example (cf. Ellington, 2010:312). In a similar vein, Grieb (2005:160-162) points out that Paul speaks of his “apostolic” credentials in terms of the hardships endured (2 Cor 11:23-25) and commends the ministries of his fellow-apostles and fellow-ministers who don’t seek their own self-interests (such as in Phlp 2:20-22, 29-30).

Paul says to believers that being called by God “means to be called out of the idolatry of the nations (Gentiles)” in order that they may serve the living God of Israel, while waiting for the return of Jesus Christ. In the meantime believers are to imitate Paul (1 Th 1:2-10). (Grieb, 2005:162) They are called to a conversion as well as an adoption into a new community in which they are held accountable by others, in what Grieb (2005:162-163) calls:

...fictive kinship terms, as brothers and sisters in Christ, a family that rejoices in the midst of suffering and hardship, and lives ‘in holiness and honour, not with lust like the Gentiles who do not know God’ (1 Th 4:5).

4.4.6 Called to discipleship

Discipleship has a technical or narrow definition related to the “‘teacher’/‘disciple’ relationship with derivative terms like ‘following’/‘on the way’” as well as a wider definition related to the “general Christian existence” or “earliest self-designation” (⁵Longenecker, 1996:1; Segovia, 1985:1). A person who accepted the teachings of Jesus, who can be identified with him, and who is committed to following him, is described as a disciple (Longenecker, 1996:2). This also emerged from the preceding study of call-texts within the New Testament.

From the various studies that Segovia (1985:1-13, 17) edited in his book, he finds the presupposition and ground for discipleship to be belief in Jesus Christ that results in concerns and teaching around the “proper character and context of belief itself” and a specific lifestyle which is “often distinctly patterned on or modelled after the life and ministry of Jesus” himself. A disciple becomes part of a new family in Christ with a total commitment and attachment to Him, and living according to a particular lifestyle within that community. The discipleship theme is found in: the gospel of Mark (Donahue in Segovia, 1985:6-7; Hurtado, 1996:10, 24); the gospel of Matthew where love is described as the greatest commandment (Mt 22:3-40) (Donaldson, 1996:44); and in Luke and Acts where disciples leave old attachments to follow Jesus (Longenecker, 1996:75; Talbert, 1985:62).

The process of formation as well as mission itself is sketched in Luke-Acts, to be “lived out in this world” through the empowering presence and guidance of the Holy Spirit and “shaped by the tradition of Jesus and the apostles” (Talbert, 1985:70, 73). In the gospel of John the disciples are portrayed as a unified group and contrasted with those in the world who rejected Jesus (Hillmer, 1996:79, 82; Segovia, 1985:9). In the book of James “friendship with God” is sketched as opposing “friendship with the world” (Johnson, 1985:166, 170).

The lifestyle of a disciple involves following and obeying the teachings and examples of Jesus Christ, including making other disciples, as sketched in Mark (Hurtado, 1996:24-26; Donahue in Segovia, 1985:6-7); in Matthew (Donaldson, 1996:35-36; Edwards, 1985:52-60); and in Luke and Acts (Longenecker, 1996:75, Talbert, 1985:72-73). In Paul’s words to the

⁵ The two compilations that specifically relates to discipleship in the New Testament, edited by Segovia in 1985 and Longenecker in 1996, were the newest of its kind, that were found.

Philippians one is to imitate Christ as well as to follow his own (Paul's) example in doing that (Ellington, 2011:304-305; Hawthorne, 1996:176-177). Paul's exhortation "to imitate God" in Ephesians 5:1-2, describes the end-goal of Christian discipleship (Wild, 1985:127).

Jesus pointed to the commandment to love as the greatest (Mt 22:34-40), and such a lifestyle is closely linked with a lifestyle of service to others in which one forsakes the pursuit of power and prestige. The theme is found in the gospel of Mark (Donahue in Segovia, 1985:6-7); in the servant leadership sketched in the gospel of Matthew (Mt 18:105; 20:25; 23:8, 10); in an intimate relationship with Jesus in the gospel of John that culminates in service (Hillmer, 1996:84, 93); and in 1 John's message of love contrasted with hate in a community setting, flowing from the knowledge of the truth of Jesus incarnated in flesh (Hillmer, 1996:9-96).

The letters to the Corinthians expand on the character of love where belief flows into action (Belleville, 1996:140-141). Service to others are linked to an emptying of self in terms of self-interests and a humbling of self, such as seen in the letter to the Philippians (Hawthorne, 1996:178; Kurtz, 1985:105-106), the letter to the Corinthians (Belleville, 1996:140-141), and in 1 Peter 5:6: "So humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, and when it is time, he will lift you up." Humbling yourself echoes the teaching of Jesus found in Luke 14:11, 18:14b and Matthew 23:12.

A disciple also trusts God even in the face of suffering and death. This theme emerges in the gospel of Mark (Donahue in Segovia, 1985:6-7); as a natural result of living out the ethic of self-denial in serving others in the Corinthian letters (Belleville, 1996:140-141); and in the apocalyptic vision in Revelation 14:1-5 (Aune, 1996:283). In Hebrews "a call for ultimate certainty and ultimate commitment to Jesus" is given (Lane, 1996:222). Regardless of the cost, a disciple of Jesus has to be willing to endure "exposure to shame, the severance of social ties, and the patient endurance of suffering" holding on to the assurance of God's commitment: "I will never fail you; I will never forsake you" (Heb 13:5).

Discipleship also entails expanding the kingdom by making disciples from among all the nations, teaching them to obey the teachings of Jesus after repentance and baptising them, as seen in the Matthew gospel (Brands, 2007:20, 22). The theme is echoed in Luke and Acts and is based on the redemption provided by Jesus Christ (Longenecker, 1996:7).

Forgiveness (Mt 6:14-15; 18:21-35) and care for “the little ones” (Mt 18:1-14) emerge as important attributes of disciples (Donaldson, 1996:46). The community of disciples are empowered to walk in the footsteps of Jesus through the Holy Spirit, guided and protected by God’s initiative (Longenecker, 1996:75; Talbert, 1985:62, 73).

Prayer is important in light of a disciple’s submission to God’s will within a lifestyle of growth (in faith and practice) where no stronger allegiance may arise (Longenecker, 1996:75). This walk is embedded in a deep understanding of God’s grace, calling all nations while extending a hand to “the poor, the imprisoned, the blind, and the oppressed” (Longenecker, 1996:75).

Other principles emerge, such as Davids’ (1996:233-340) summarizing the message of the book of James, in the words: “controlling the tongue and the wallet.” The take-home values that Davids (1996:244-246) identify for our day, are: following Jesus and living according to his teachings in a total commitment, in which one has to align one’s valuation of wealth and speech with His; allowing trials and suffering to be a context in which one’s faith can thrive, drawing on “the wisdom from above”; and a community perspective that is in contrast with the Western individuality.

Obedience flowing from faith emerges in the letters to the Corinthians (Belleville, 1996:140-141). Submission to God and humility is critical in following Jesus, and Peter’s letter also describes “proper conduct” within various relationships and within the structures of society (Elliot, 1985:186-189). In 1 Thessalonians disciples of Christ are exhorted to live holy lives through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, in terms of their “sexual conduct and in work” (Weima, 1996:118). This call to be holy is also found in 1 Peter 1:15 and 1 Corinthians 1:2 (Schwehn & Bass, 2006:91). In Colossians disciples are shown to continually “being renewed” (Col 3:10) and conformed into the “image” of both “God and of humanity as represented by Christ” (Knowles, 1996:201). Conforming to Christ is also the message of Paul in Romans (Jervis, 1996:161).

Following the call to discipleship requires a commitment as well as a cost flowing out of a faith response, as seen in the gospel of Matthew (Donaldson, 1996:44-45).

4.5 THE REFORMERS AND THEIR PERSPECTIVE ON WORK AS A CALLING

The idea of “work as a calling originated in the Judeo-Christian context”, usually using Genesis 1:28 as a reference to Christians being caretakers or managers of creation (Dik, Duffy, *et al.*, 2012:114). The separation between so-called sacred and secular work that existed among early theologians, lasted until the reformation with Luther and Calvin (Dik, Duffy, *et al.*, 2012:114). The protestant work ethic was aimed at spiritualizing the workplace (Benefiel, *et al.*, 2014:176). Luther put emphasis on believers to live out their faith in whatever “station” they find themselves, while Calvin spoke of living out one’s gifts and callings in one’s service to God (Dik, Duffy, *et al.*, 2012:114). Accordingly, “diligent service within work glorifies God,” which was confirmed by the Puritans (Dik, Duffy, *et al.*, 2012:114) as referring to Colossians 1:20, speaking of “all things” being reconciled by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and to 2 Corinthians 5:18, speaking of the ministry of reconciliation. Thus Christians are responsible for the integration of their values (religious and spiritual) with their work (Dik, Duffy, *et al.*, 2012:115).

The diversity of the workplace of today, though, includes diversity in spirituality and religion (Sandage, Dahl, & Harden., 2012:43). Exploring the issue, Sandage, *et al.* (2012:44, 46) define spirituality as “ways of relating to the sacred” and distinguish between “intrinsic religiosity” versus a quest for religiosity, or “defensive theology”.

- “*Intrinsic religiosity*” describes an “authentic, open-ended process of seeking meaning and tolerating ambiguity”, which correlates positively with religious complexity (Sandage, *et al.*, 2012:4, 46).
- “*Defensive theology*” refers to a religious orientation that functions “to minimize existential complexity and maintain a sense of personal specialness” (Sandage, *et al.*, 2012:46).

Sandage *et al.* (2012:52-53) found “that intrinsic religiosity” relates positively with intercultural competence, which is in contrast to “spiritual grandiosity”. The researcher therefore observes that the matter of exactly how one lives out one’s values and Christian calling at work remains a complicated question.

Schuurman (2004:xii, 1) finds the protestant doctrine of vocation to infuse the “mundane, secular life” with religious meaning. Schuurman (2004:98) discussed Badcock’s view of the

call being “generally to a sacred rather than secular role”, or otherwise restricted to “offices and activity in the religious sphere”, and felt that it “neglects the potential of vocation to inspire and guide Christian obedience in the varied life of the world”. In this context Schuurman (2004:28) refers to Karl Barth’s belief that “the call does not float abstractly above the stream of life”, but that it connects an individual with all aspects of his/her (very particular) “concrete, situated existence”.

The following particular callings within” the community of the people of God” are listed by Schuurman (2004, 30-33):

- a) Paul’s apostleship as both a gift (Rm 1:1) and as a calling (Eph 4:11; Rm 12:3-9), suggesting the “gifts” related to the offices of the church are also callings;
- b) the comprehensive, communal call of Israel within which they had responsibilities as king, soldier, craftsman or shepherd, while some like Moses, David and Amos had extraordinary tasks or offices, and furthermore, specific people were gifted for specific tasks in the building of the tabernacle (Ex 31:2-6; 35:21, 25-26); and
- c) the gifts and callings of believers in the church as described by Paul, is extrapolated (Schuurman, 2004:32) to spheres of “responsibility in marriage, family, economic and political life”, saying that while “*klēsis*” as term is relatively rare in the New Testament, the term for the “Trinity” is not used in the Bible either, which does not invalidate it’s truth.

Additionally, Schuurman (2004:34-35) points to the patterns of responsibility within the New Testament exhortations relating to marriage, parenting, masters and slaves, etc. (Eph 5-6; 1 Pt 2:13,21); Ephesians 4:1 that exhorts believers to be “worthy of the calling” through “humility, gentleness, patience, unity, peace and truthfulness” (Eph 4:2-6, 25); and the phrases “in the Lord”, “for the Lord”, “as unto the Lord”, and “with the Lord”.

Schuurman (2004:35) refers to Paul Minear saying that early Christians viewed “church” as being found within their daily life rather than going to a place of worship. For Bonhoeffer (cf. Schwehn & Bass, 2006:108) a “radical obedience to Christ’s call meant radical freedom to be fully responsible to and for others.” Based on Bonhoeffer’s view, Schwehn and Bass (2006:109) describe vocation as responding to Jesus Christ’s call and from there on living life in boundless responsibility. This may entail for example, not only practicing medicine but

also standing up for social and political practices and justice linked to the field of medicine (Schwehn & Bass, 2006:109).

Schuurman (2004:35-36) highlights the “larger theological pattern of the Bible”, summarized in Romans 11:36: “For from him and through him and to him are all things” in the heavens and earth. Schuurman (2004:35-36) continues that people are “to delight in responsible fellowship with God, mutuality and interdependence with one another, and stewardship over their natural environments” based on Genesis 1:26-28. The wider context is thus the “comprehensive character of God’s kingdom and purposes”, the “redemption of human life in entirety”, and its “extension to the broader society” (Schuurman, 2004:36).

For Beuchner (Schwehn & Bass, 2006:111) “the place God calls [one] to is the place where your deep gladness and the world’s deep hunger meet.” Schwehn and Bass (2006:112) extract from this the practical principle that one’s work is to be both what one needs to do (containing the idea of fulfilment) most and what “the world most need to have done”. According to Schuurman (2004:126, 143) calling or “vocation is [falling into] in the realm of God’s freedom” and requires a prayerful consideration of one’s context and abilities or aptitudes.

Whatever one feels called to do will not contradict God’s command to love Him, ourselves and our neighbour (Mt 22:37-39); to “live by the Spirit” (Gl 5:17); or contrary to the characteristics of “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control” (Gl 5:22-23) (cf. Schuurman, 2004:41).

The modern assumption of vocation or calling in terms of self-fulfilment is rejected by Schuurman (2004:85, 117), as calling relates to “places of service and self-sacrifice”. Thus Schuurman (2004:122) disagrees with Parker Palmer’s (1997:17-18) view of finding one’s “true identity” and “becoming the person I was born to be” (ascribing his views to his Quaker background). Tracing the reformation thought, Schuurman (2004:123-124) finds self-fulfilment only in context of the “fruit of the Spirit to the glory of God” and the next life, while one is to take up one’s cross in this life (cf. Mt 16:24-25). Similarly, Schwehn and Bass (2006:240) find the point of work as calling to be service and not self-fulfilment or idolizing work, finding a balance in Calvin’s description of people being willing to bear discomforts, weariness, etc. in their lives if they believe the burden was placed on them by God.

The researcher finds the arguments of the reformers to line up with the preceding word study. Yet some people still feel called to a specific career over others, so the researcher will consider the way people perceive themselves receiving their call. This happens in context of living in the presence of God.

4.6 GOD (THE ULTIMATE TRANSCENDENT)

4.6.1 Facilitating God's work within pastoral care

The researcher resonates with the pastoral convergence model of Louw (1998:37-38) through which the bipolarity reflected in the attention given to both the “content of faith” and the “existential modes of faith behaviour” is viewed hermeneutically in terms of the “dialogical structure of the God-human encounter.” The convergence model positions eschatology in a directive and normative role within this bipolar tension between the study of God and the communicative interactions between God and human beings. “Faith care” becomes “life care” (Louw, 1998:38).

Pastoral care as *cura animarum* involves the spiritual care of the “total person in all the psycho-physical and psycho-social dimensions” (Louw, 1998:20-21; 2010:176-177). The soul (*psuché, anima*) signifies the centre or principle of human life (Hebrew: *néphés*) “as it is directed to God and as it manifests itself in dynamic relationships” (Louw, 1998:21; 2010:177). In its essence, the meaning of human life involves a life lived by faith in the presence of God. “Soul” refers to a way of “being” and a stance in life that refers to a disposition in which the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5.22) are the virtues one lives by (Louw, 2010:177-178).

The telic nature of the pastoral care framework of Louw (1998:7) is derived from the Greek term “*teleion*.” This term “denotes the task of preparing one to appear before, and to live in, God's presence” in Scripture (Louw, 1998:7). It encompasses the idea of the new being and a mature faith and spirituality reflecting Paul's attitude in Philippians 3:10-11:

I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, to attain the resurrection from the dead.

Pastoral care is grace therapy or *promissiotherapy* in context of the faithfulness of God (Louw, 1998:7; Louw, 2015:62). Phronesis is related to God's position and denotes a creative understanding of God in the context of wisdom which is also connected to Christ's resurrection (Louw, 2010:178). It goes further than logotherapy in context of the human's search for meaning as a resource towards living with joy, gratitude and hope (Louw, 1998:8). It encourages spiritual maturity in the midst of experiencing suffering. Mature faith is not perfection but the "ongoing process of sanctification" (Louw, 1998:122). Ferreira (2010:52) speaks of an emotionally mature life flowing from a pursuit of wisdom, which leads to knowledge of both God and the self. The will of God or divine intentionality (phronesis) is "focused on the meaning and destiny of life" and is expressed in wisdom thinking (as represented in the Torah) (Louw, 2010:176).

The *eschatological* and *pneumatological* perspective within pastoral care is pivotal in understanding pastoral care (Lotter, 2013:1; Louw, 2015:60). The theological stance of pastoral care is defined by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (eschatology) (Louw, 1998:59). The hope embedded in the resurrection imparts hope in context of the new being in the here and now (Rm 6:4) while showing the faithfulness of God. It thus deals with the present reality of people while carrying a future dimension in the second coming (Louw, 1998:64). It reflects the tension of living in the "already" and the "not yet" within God's kingdom. The pneumatological dimension of pastoral care refers to the indwelling and work of the Holy Spirit in the actualization of salvation and in the facilitation of God's presence (Louw, 1998:121-122). Change within the pastoral care context "comes as the result of the work of Jesus Christ, through the Holy Spirit" (Louw, 1998:52).

Louw (2015:58) thus speaks of a "pneumatological approach with its starting point in inhabitational theology", and argues for a "theology of affirmation in pastoral care and counselling." Louw (2015:58) proposes philosophical and noetic counselling, which involves "a return to ontology and the meaning and significance of our 'being' functions." This affects the "status and identity of human beings" and leads to "new patterns of pneumatic living" (Louw, 2015:60). The healing dimension and therapy of intimacy is grounded in the unconditional love of God (Louw, 2010:181). Healing involves changes in how situations in life are viewed (paradigmatic changes) coupled with a "functional philosophical disposition towards [one's] situation" (Louw, 2011:3). The emerging question of living life in a way that would foster meaning, purpose or value, is one to be addressed (Louw, 2011:3-4).

4.6.2 The eternal God

The eternal God (Ex 3:14; Is 44:5; Rv 1:8) reveals himself in Scripture as unchanging (Mt 3:6; Ja 1:17; Rm 4:20-21; 11:29). He is one, and “there is none beside him” (Dt 4:35, 39; Dt. 6:4; Is 44:6; 45:5). In contrast to the description of the Trinity as “three modes of being”, Moltmann (1993:viii) describes God as “a community of Father, Son and Spirit” reflecting “mutual indwelling and reciprocal interpenetration.”

Human beings (male and female), are created in the image of God (Gn 1:26-27). The life of faith is one of a living relationship with God. Jesus speaks of believing in both the Father and himself (Jn 14:1) and portrays himself as the doorway to the Father (Jn 14:6). The heart of the Father is perhaps best captured in the familiar verse in John 3:16:

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

Before his crucifixion, Jesus asked the Father to send the Holy Spirit and for believers to be “one, as we are one” so that they may be “one in us” (Jn 17:21). A Christ-centred life and hope is based upon the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Eph 2:4-5), towards reconciliation and forgiveness (Denton, 2014:6). Pastoral counselling mediates and takes place in the context of communication and relationship with God.

Human beings have legitimacy referring to their innate worthiness, because of being created in the image of God and as a “living soul” (“*nèfèsj*”). In the image of God, they represent God while the source of their lives “is dependent upon God’s creative action and faithfulness” (Louw, 1998:147). This is a fundamental assumption which frames the researcher’s counselling activities.

4.6.3 The foundations of Christian belief

Reconciliation and forgiveness were put into motion when man sinned in the Garden of Eden (Gn 1-2). Given free will, man stepped outside the boundaries of God’s will (his command to not eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge) (Conner, 2007:193). God however is holy in the essence of who He is (Lv 19:2; Ex 15:11; 1 Pt 1:15; Rev 15:3-4). Man’s sin (the transgression

of God's commandments) separates him from God (Is 59:2). God's holiness is the polarity of man's sinful nature, and demands the exposure and judgment of sin (Conner, 2007:198). God's wrath is his righteous reaction against sin and required an appeasement before man could be reconciled with God (Conner, 2007:194-195). This appeasement entails the atonement, *kapar* (כפר), which means "to cover over, atone, propitiate, pacify" (Vines concise dictionary of the Bible, 1999:20). The New Testament word *katallage* (κατάλλαξις) is translated as "reconciliation" (Rm 5:11) and relates to the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ, who died on the cross (Vines concise dictionary of the Bible, 1999:21). This sacrifice of Christ expresses the love of God and his mercy towards sinners.

Jesus Christ is the Son of God as well as a reflection of the Father (Heb 1:2-3). Laying aside His "prerogatives as God to act as God", but not his divinity, he was born as a man (Conner, 2007:163; Denton, 2014:6).

Death had no hold over Jesus and God raised him up into the heavenly realm (Ac 3:23; Ps 16:10). He ascended into heaven (Ac 1:9-11), completing his earthly ministry and making the way for the Holy Spirit to come (Jn 16:7) (Conner, 2007). Sitting on the right hand of the Father, Jesus, the King (Rv 3:21; 22:1), intercedes for mankind (Heb 5:1-10; 8:1) as High Priest (Jn 17:1-4; 19:30) (Conner, 2007:220-221). From there He will return at the end of the age or the second coming towards the renewal of all of creation.

Human beings was created for relationship with God (see Gn 3:8) and to reproduce (participating in) God's nature and character (Gn 1:26; 2 Pt 1:4-7) (Conner, 2007:129-130). Packer (Goosen & Peppler, 2015:14) similarly finds this relationship with God to be the purpose of existence based upon John 17:3 and 1 John 1:1-4. Through this relationship with God man is to be transformed into the image of Christ through the work of the Holy Spirit (Rm 8:28-29; 2 Cor 3:18; 4:4). In essence pastoral care facilitates the salvation message of the gospel (2 Cor 5:19-21) (Lotter, 2005:497-498).

4.6.4 The Holy Spirit and His work

A believer is transformed into the image of Christ not through actions firstly, but through focussing one’s attention on Christ which opens the door for the Holy Spirit to transform the self (Johnson, 2004:107).

The Holy Spirit is not only the Spirit of Christ, reflecting his redemptive work, but He is also the Spirit of the Father, reflecting his work of creation (Moltmann, 1993:8). Moltmann (1993:40) points out that the word “spirit” reflects a Western culture indicating something immaterial, “disembodied, supersensory and supernatural”, an “antitheses to matter and body”.

- In the Old Testament *ruach* (רוּחַ) occurs 380 times, and on 27 occasions reflects the phrase “ruach Yahweh” (רוּחַ יְהוָה) (Moltmann, 1993:40). *Ruach* refers to a gale (i.e. the strong wind dividing the Reed Sea (Ex 14:21), and to something living and moving (Moltmann, 1993:40-41). *Ruach* is “the breath of life” used in connection with both the Holy Spirit and man (Vines concise dictionary of the Bible, 1999:357). Moltmann (1993:41) describes *ruach* furthermore as “the breath of God’s voice”.
- The Holy Spirit has a unique personhood and stands in relationship to both the Father and the Son (Moltmann, 1993:12). He is co-eternal in the Godhead with the Father and the Son (Conner, 2007:75). The New Testament linked the Trinity in the baptismal command of Jesus in Matthew 28:19 and in 2 Corinthians 13:14 and 1 John 5:7-8.

The Holy Spirit convicts the world of sin, righteousness and of judgment (Jn 16:9-11). The work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer is summarized as follows by Conner (2007:79):

	The Holy Spirit	Text reference:
1	brings about the new birth	Jn 3:5,6
2	indwells the believer’s spirit	Rm 8:9; 1 Cor 3:16; 6:17; 1 Jn 2:27
3	gives assurance of salvation	Rm 8:16
4	fills the believer with Himself	Ac 2:4; Eph 5:18
5	by the baptism in the Spirit, enables the believer to speak in unknown languages.	Ac 2:4; 10:44-46; Mr 16:17; 1 Cor 14:2, 4, 18).

	The expression “baptism in or with the Spirit” is a Scriptural expression and experience	Mt 3:11; Ac 1:5; 1 Cor 12:13; Jn 1:33; Lk 3:16
6	speaks to the believer	Ac 8:29; 1 Tm 4:1; Rev 2:7, 11, 17, 29
7	opens the believer’s understanding to the things of God	1 Cor 2:12
8	teaches the believer and guides him into all the truth	Jn 16:13; 1 Jn 2:27
9	imparts life	Jn 6:63; 2 Cor 3:6
10	brings about renewal	Tt 3:5
11	strengthens the believer’s inner being	Eph 3:16
12	enables the believer to pray	Jd 20, Rm 8:26-28
13	enables the believer to worship in spirit and in truth	Jn 4:23-24; Ph 3:3; 1Cor 14:15
14	leads the believer	Rm 8:14
15	enables the believer to put fleshly deeds to death	Rm 8:13
16	produces Christ-likeness in character and fruit in the believer’s life	Gl 5:22,23
17	gives a calling to the believer for special service	Ac 13:2-4
18	guides believers into their ministry	Ac 8:29; 16:6,7
19	empowers the believer to witness	Ac 1:8
20	imparts spiritual gifts to the believers as He wills	1 Cor 12:7-11
21	will bring about the resurrection and immortality to the believers’ bodies in the last day	Rm 8:11; 1 Cor 15:47-51; 1 Th 4:15-18

In the Old Testament the psalms portray “an individual, *inward experience of the Spirit*” (Moltmann, 1993:45) such as in Psalm 51:10-11:

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and steadfast spirit within me.
Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me.

Moltmann (1993:45) finds in this psalm as well as in Psalm 139, a turning of God’s spirit and God’s face (or countenance) towards the person, indicating His commitment to his creation. Spirituality is defined by Moltmann (1993:83) as “life in God’s Spirit, and a living relationship with God’s Spirit.”

From childhood, believers experience themselves through the eyes of others reciprocally (Moltmann, 1993:23-24). Only God can say “I am who I am” as human beings are aligned towards others within their communities in shared experiences (Moltmann, 1993:25). The “*awareness of the self*” is constituted through these experiences (Moltmann, 1993:33). God’s Spirit “binds together I and Thou and Us” in our experience of Himself (cf. Moltmann, 1993:33).

Moving past the “*modern concept of self-consciousness*” one can find transcendence within various experiences with others and the creation within our world (Moltmann, 1993:34). God’s glory fills the earth and holds all things together (Nm 14:21; Col 1.17). Asking what an *experience* may mean “for me” needs to be accompanied by the question of what this experience may mean to God.

- Guidance can be found in answering the question within Scripture to discern what God may be saying. A “reverence for life” and experience is so “absorbed into a reverence for God” (Moltmann, 1993:36).
- Some of the titles of the Holy Spirit describe his attributes and his relationship with believers. He is the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, of knowledge and of counsel and of might (Is 11:2).

In the New Testament Jesus refers to the Holy Spirit as the Comforter (Jn 14:16; 15:26; 1 Jn 4:6). The Greek word *paracletos* (παράκλητος) is translated as the Comforter, Advocate or Helper (Jn 14:16). It is also used in 1 John 2:1 with reference to Christ. As such the Holy Spirit (as does Jesus) pleads believers’ cause with Father God, and He helps them by “defending or comforting” them.

The work of the Holy Spirit is central within the pastoral care encounter. The concept of *paraklesis* is used for both Jesus Christ (as Intercessor to the Father) and the consoling work of the Holy Spirit (Louw, 1998:51). It can be described as the “continual affirmation of Christ’s fulfilled redemptive work” before the Father. At the same time *paraklesis* is also the “continual confirmation of the fulfilled redemption in the hearts and lives of human beings”, through the Holy Spirit. (Louw, 1998:51). The knowledge that the Holy Spirit is at continually work within believers should inspire them to grow in their faith and walk with God (Lotter, 2005:489-490). Growth takes place when people seek and follow God’s lead in everything they do and is indicative of continual communication with Him (Smith, 2014:160).

The *paraklesis* metaphor is also reflective of the Fatherhood of God (Louw, 1998:51). God is the Father of all compassion and mercy. His emotional compassion is expressed through Jesus “Christ’s identification with our human grief” (Louw, 1998:52). “The believer can *encourage* people in difficult circumstances with the *encouragement* with which God, our heavenly Father, *encourages* human beings” (2 Cor 1:3-4). It is the Father’s compassion that should determine the pastoral counsellor’s “motivation, attitude and disposition” (Louw,

1998:52). Both the counsellor and client need to cultivate this compassion (Col3:12). Compassion encompasses both the concept of empathy and sympathy of psychological counselling (Louw, 1998:62).

4.6.5 Discerning the voice of God

In John 10:4 Jesus indicated that his followers (the sheep) will know his (the shepherd's) voice and Christian believers perceive God communicating with them (Dein & Cook, 2015:97). Christians believe that God communicates with them through Scripture, through the person of Jesus Christ, and through the inspiration, empowering and communication (in a variety of forms) of the Holy Spirit (Dein & Cook, 2015:98; Goosen & Peppler, 2015:22-23).

Goosen (2013) undertook an interdenominational study within the community of Muldersdrift in Gauteng, South Africa, to investigate the experience of perceiving God's voice. According to Goosen (2013:2) receiving direction and instruction from God is birthed within the fostering of a deep, intimate relationship with God. Fifty eight percent of the participants in the study indicated that there is a process of learning to discern the voice of God (Goosen, 2013:26; Goosen & Peppler, 2015:3-4). This is consistent with the findings of Dein and Cook (2015:107) in context of evangelical churches in London, England.

While there are examples in Scripture where people knew without a shadow of a doubt what God wanted of them, God mostly communicates inwardly and unobtrusively through the "inward prompting" in people's hearts and minds (Goosen & Peppler, 2015:17-18):

- Abraham (setting out to sacrifice Isaac in Gn 22);
- Ezekiel (acting out symbolic plays of God's prophetic word in Ezk 4);
- Isaiah (walking naked and barefoot through Jerusalem in Is 20:2-3);
- Paul (in response to his encounter on the road to Damascus, in Ac 9:1-6);
- Jeremiah described the inward prompting of the Holy Spirit as urgent and intense, as a "fire shut up in his bones" (Jr 20:9).

These examples in Scripture, where God communicates with people, all acted with absolute conviction on what they heard from God (Goosen & Peppler, 2015:17). The majority of God's communication in Scripture is more subtle through an inward guidance and direction,

such as is alluded to in God's promise of the Holy Spirit in Ezekiel 36:27 (Goosen & Pepler, 2014:18-19).

- In this manner Nehemiah describes acting upon what "God had put within his heart to do" (Neh 2:12; 7:5) (Goosen & Pepler, 2014:19). Acts 15:6 tells of the apostles sending instructions to Gentile believers based upon what "seemed good to the Holy Spirit and (them)." Paul also recounts instances where his journeys were guided through the Holy Spirit (Ac 16:6-7; 20:22). Other examples of the Holy Spirit communicating within the early church is found in the instructions to Philip in Acts 8:29; to Peter while he was thinking about the vision he saw in Acts 10:19; and to the church in Antioch to set Barnabas and Saul apart for the work He had called them to (Goosen & Pepler, 2015:19-20).

Goosen (2013:23) found that ninety percent of the participants in his study thought it likely that they were simply not always aware of the guidance of God. Job speaks of this possibility: "For God does speak – now one way, now another – though man may not perceive it" (Job 33:14; Goosen & Pepler, 2015:20). Goosen and Pepler (2015:20-21) argue that God's preferred method of communication in our day is through subtle guidance, in accordance with the following biblical principles:

- God is Spirit, and longs for us to commune with him in "spirit and truth" (Jn 4:24). Believers are encouraged to: (1) walk by the Spirit (Gl 5:16, 25); (2) set their minds on the things of the Spirit (Rom 8:5); and (3) to pray at all times in the Spirit (Eph 6:18). Scripture furthermore teaches that the things of God are "Spirit-taught" and "...discerned only through the Spirit" (1 Cor 2:13-14).
- Christians are called to live their lives by faith (Hab 2:4; Rom 1:17; Gl 3:11; Heb 10:3), which is described in Hebrews 11:1 as a confidence in what they hope for and assurance in what they do not see.
- While "it is God who works in (us) to will and to act in order to fulfil His good purpose" (Phlp 2:13), believers are collaborators with God (1 Cor 3:9) who retain their "freedom to choose their own path in life" (Ps 32:8; Jn 16:13).

Communications from God generally relate to current, everyday events and provide direction, consolation and empowering (Dein & Cook, 2015:103-105). While these communications may at times be accompanied by supernatural phenomena, they are mostly experienced as

thoughts or impressions, while personal agency (in choosing to follow it or not) is always retained (Dein & Cook, 2015:106; Goosen & Pepler, 2015:23).

Christians, who focus their attention on Jesus Christ and seek intimate relationship with Him, grow in their ability to discern the voice of God. God speaks through unction, still, small voice or thoughts and through a process of obedience and/or practice, believers learn to discern His voice more accurately. These words or impressions are “tested” against Scripture (which remains the primary source of guidance) and in conversation with other believers. Believers are free to follow or discard these communications. This process is in alignment with how biblical characters experienced God communicating to them (Goosen, 2013:25).

Registered counsellors who seek pastoral (or other forms of) counselling in terms of the faith dimension and their perceived calling, are faced with trauma and loss that has to be explored and dealt with.

4.7 TRAUMA AND LOSS IN THE CONTEXT OF CALLING

4.7.1 The ideal possible self

The experience of feeling called to help others within the context of counselling involves a particularly defined sense of a future orientated, “possible self.” Due to the competitive nature of the selective processes for aspirant counsellors or psychologists, students need to be not only committed to their goals, but to put effort into developing qualities that would give them an edge (Pillay, *et al.*, 2013:47). They may for example develop their reflexivity, academic skills and seek volunteer work in the mental-health field. From both the literature as well as the participants’ responses within this study, it appears that a significant number of Registered Counsellors did not have that career in mind as their ideal possible selves, but regarded the training as preparation for a professional Masters degree (cf. paragraphs 1.2.1; 1.2.3; 2.7; 3.2.5).

Each of the categories of counsellor or “psychologist” presents a particular approach that would be reflected within the identity of the therapist. Having intrinsic goals related to community, affiliation, health and self-development (rather than money or status as extrinsic factors), increases a person’s effort and persistence in reaching career goals (Plimmer & Schmidt, 2007:61). Possible selves “encompasses values, roles, lifestyles, self-beliefs, skills

and interests” that become part of the mental schemas formed towards becoming the envisioned self (Plimmer & Schmidt, 2007:64-65).

4.7.2 Loss in context of career

Employment is an important identity marker and the loss of a job has been found to result in grief experiences that are similar to the bereavement experienced after the loss of a loved one (Papa & Maitoza, 2013:152). The perceived value of the work, importance of the occupation, status and judgments of others, impacts the intensity of the grief experience which can lead to a disrupted sense of self (Papa & Maitoza, 2013:152, 154-155). The severity of the grief is furthermore impacted by “individuals’ ability to accommodate the loss related changes within their self-schemas in a meaningful way” (Papa & Maitoza, 2013:154). When individuals’ concepts of themselves are strongly informed by their career path, a loss of that career may bring the threat of a loss of self, leading to feelings of alienation, hopelessness and despair (Haynie & Shepherd, 2011:509). Zikic and Klehe (2006:392) describe involuntary job loss as “one of the most stressful life events.”

The researcher postulates that counsellors or aspirant psychologists, who have invested a great deal of effort into developing their ideal possible selves, may have similar experiences of grief when they cannot reach their career goals. This planning often takes place over a couple of years in context of the expectation that life experience and maturity count towards being successful in the selection process (cf. Pillay *et al*, 2013:47). This could have significant implications in light of the fact that older professionals invest and anchor more of their identities and values into their work lives and career success (Gabriel, Gray, & Goregoakar, 2013:58). Mature adults are more guided by who they would like to ideally be together with having a “narrower and more specialized sense of self” (Plimmer & Schmidt, 2007:62).

Individuals who are religious or spiritual have basic assumptions and schemas which are largely based on their faith (Ter Kuile & Ehring, 2014:354). Those who feel called by God (the Ultimate Transcendent) to the profession of counselling and psychology may thus be also deeply impacted within their faith and relationship to God.

4.7.3 Traumatic experiences

Trauma as it relates to post-traumatic stress disorder and acute stress disorders, usually involve the witnessing (or the threat) of death, injury or physical integrity (of the self or others), coupled with fear, helplessness and/or horror (Friedman, 2006:10-11). Events that challenge or shatter pre-existing schemas or assumptions of the world as meaningful, benevolent and predictable, of the self as worthy and invulnerable, or of God as protective and benevolent, are experienced as traumatic and are difficult to process (De Castello & Simmonds, 2013:536-537; Janoff-Bulman, 2010:3-25; Ter Kuile & Ehring, 2014:354).

Religious individuals have religiously informed schemas which, when challenged, may lead to a loss of faith and the increase of depression, suicidality and post-traumatic stress (Ter Kuile & Ehring, 2014:354, 358). This stems from negative appraisals such as that God doesn't care, in contrast to positive appraisals such as the expectation that God cares and will support individuals (Park, 2012:30) (cf. paragraph 2.7). These assumptions form a "*working model*" of the world (Janoff-Bulman, 2010:15) and develop in the context of early attachments in infancy that is followed by years of personal experiences that "confirm" or "disconfirm" them.

4.7.4 Working through loss towards growth

Trauma and loss similarly influence a person's sense of self and identity if the changes are hard to accommodate within the pre-existing schemas or assumptions. Work related identity loss is described by Conroy and O'Leary-Kelly (2014:70) in terms of the discrepancy that emerges between the *current self* and the *ideal self* or *ought-to sense of self*. The loss may involve valued meaning, positions, memberships and roles that were previously attached to the individual's identity (Conroy & O'Leary-Kelly, 2014:67, 71).

Working through this type of loss requires a process of grieving and identity reconstruction (in a transition period) to move from "who I was" (an identity denouncement) to "who I am becoming" (Conroy & O'Leary-Kelly, 2014:67-68, 72). This involves surrendering the current meaning of the self, and realignment with a new meaning. The transitional period involves a period of identity instability as there is an oscillation between the loss orientation

(“who I am in relation to the loss”) and the restoration orientation (“who I am in a post-loss world”) (Conroy & O’Leary-Kelly, 2014:67-69; Gillies & Niemeyer, 2006:36).

- In the aftermath of traumatic career loss among marines and combat soldiers (whose self-concepts were strongly informed by their previous careers), it was found that transitioning well was strongly related to the effective reconstruction of career narratives (cf. Haynie & Shepherd, 2011:510). However, the construction of a macro-narrative to make sense of the trauma through “re-establishing fundamental assumptions and beliefs about the world and self” first, formed a “launching pad” for the construction of micro-narratives around their career loss and career-related identities (Haynie & Shepherd, 2011:510).

Although the most significant losses can provide the ground for significant growth, a change in the core definition of the self is required (Conroy & O’Leary-Kelly, 2014:81, 83; Gillies & Niemeyer, 2006:36).

- Individuals work through emotions and seek to find meaning and reconstruct their self-concept within the creation of new identity narratives which evolve with changing roles (Conroy & O’Leary-Kelly, 2014:81, 83).
- New and clear possible selves have to be developed (Plimmer & Schmidt, 2007:65). These are tied to values, roles, lifestyles, self-beliefs, skills as well as interests (Plimmer & Schmidt, 2007:64).
- At the same time individuals have to find narratives about the lost self that they can “live with and live into” as well as new provisional (possible) selves, that would be acceptable to the self as well as to other people they relate to (Conroy & O’Leary-Kelly, 2014:72 77).

When important aspects of the self are lost; when narratives are not socially validated; when individuals fail to reconcile themselves with the development of the self that is validated by others; or when unstable narratives remain; individuals may be stuck in an *impasse* (a broken self) or become isolated, aggressive and depressed (Conroy & O’Leary-Kelly, 2014:75, 81). Within the context of grieving for a loved one, both idealisation of and unconscious anger towards the lost object (in psycho-analytic terms), may negatively affect self-esteem and the ability to move on (Berzoff, 2011:265, 268).

Registered counsellors who intended to use their training as a stepping stone or intermediate pathway towards a professional masters degree, have to give up their ideal possible self (cf. paragraph 3.7). This may encompass social and/or professional standing, a means of income within a flexible working environment, academic achievement, and the “permission” to work within specific areas of interest (using specific interventions) which are based on their histories and closely tied to their original goals within the profession of psychology.

De Castella and Simmonds (2013:550) reported that a number of participants to their study related to post-traumatic growth indicated decisions to pursue counselling or psychology, which is an expression of deeply held values leading to goal setting. Post-traumatic growth reports include increases in compassion (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004). It is also consistent with reported links between psychotherapists’ personal and spiritual journeys and their chosen profession (De Castella & Simmonds, 2013:550). Registered Counsellors may thus not only have to revise their *ideal possible selves*, reinterpret and redirect parts of their established identities, but may ironically have to re-interpret the expressions of an experienced call to compassion.

They have to consider options in fields outside of psychology, or related but different roles within the mental health field. Essentially they have to find their fit within their profession or other occupations for the expression of their call to compassion. The fact that Registered Counselling is not yet an established, known or highly esteemed profession within the field of Psychology, may also make it harder to let go of the ideal and embrace the current reality attained.

Professionals and managers within the corporate world who were best adapted after job loss, were found to be those who were prepared to forsake the hopes of return to their previous positions, and who were flexible, and resourceful in combination with opportunities coming their way (Gabriel *et al.*, 2013: 69). Opportunities within the job market may be lacking in spite of being flexible and resourceful. The individuals who managed to move forward had to reconstruct and anchor their identities and self-worth outside of their original careers (Gabriel *et al.*, 2013: 57-58).

4.7.5 Growing with God

Drawing from the grief and trauma literature, individuals with a religious background may be more likely to use religious coping in the reconstruction of their basic assumptions and schemas (Ter Kuile & Ehring, 2014:353, 359). Registered counsellors who felt called to become psychologists have to undergo a reconstruction of the self, and may also need to make adjustments in their assumptions about a benevolent and just God. They have to work *meaning* into their life stories and stories of the lost identity, which may sustain or grow their relationship with God (the Ultimate Transcendent). They might have to answer the questions of why God called them and yet not opened doors, or wrestle with whether they heard Him correctly in the first place, and/or answer the question about whether God changed his mind, and if so, why? (cf. paragraph 2.7; 3.5.1; 3.5.8).

Post-traumatic growth implies that people not only return to their pre-trauma level of functioning but they surpass it and grow (De Castella & Simmonds, 2013:537). This may happen through the processes of: “*strength through suffering*” (include the redemptive value of suffering taught in various religions), “*psychological preparedness*” (rebuilding a viable assumptive world can buffer against future trauma), and “*existential re-evaluation*” (increased appreciation of life) (Janoff-Bulman, 2004: 31-32).

Positive growths happen in context of self-perception, individuals’ approach to interpersonal relationships and within their philosophies of life (cf. Shaw, Joseph & Linley, 2005:2).

De Castella and Simmons (2013:537) find a link between the search for meaning in both spirituality and existential re-evaluation. “Positive religious coping, religious openness, readiness to face existential questions, intrinsic religiousness, and religious participation” may promote post-traumatic growth (De Castella & Simmons, 2013:537). Some may experience a deepening in their spiritual lives, increased or new faith, feel more connected to God (Ultimate Transcendent) and more aware of or able to abide in His presence (Tedeschi, Park & Calhoun, 1998: 13, 57, 101-102; Shaw, *et al.*, 2005:2,4).

In various spiritual and religious traditions suffering is seen as a crucible in which spiritual growth occurs (Shaw, *et al.*, 2005:2). Two contemporary Christian books in the writer’s collection are “*Shattered dreams. God’s unexpected path to joy*” by Larry Crabb (2010), and “*Where is God when it hurts? A comforting, healing guide for coping with hard times*” by Philip Yancey (1990). When dreams of a calling and/or career are shattered, it becomes necessary to deeply engage with the questions relating to shattered theological assumptions.

When those assumptions are not revised and/or rebuilt into a bigger frame that can accommodate the loss which can draw one closer to God, one may not grow or may end up bitter and cynical, losing one's faith (Shaw, *et al.*, 2005:3). While it is painful to deal with these fractured assumptions, it may build the foundational or meta-narrative that Registered Counsellors, who are believers, need from which to restructure their calling and career identities.

In this context anger directed at God and a sense of betrayal need to be released, in order to come to peace with what God allows and to restore a positive collaborative relationship with Him (Exline, Yali & Lobel, 1999:365-367). Anger directed at God "may tap into core beliefs about life's purpose, the existence of evil and suffering and the nature of the Divine" as kind or cruel, loving or distant, and powerful or weak (Exline, *et al.*, 1999:373) (cf. paragraph 3.7). It is important to explore the character of God, as a perception of an essentially *benevolent God* leads to positive religious coping, while perceptions of a *condemning God*, leads to negative religious coping (feeling rejected and judged) which fosters depression (Bryant-Davis & Wong, 2013:677).

Crabb (2010:3-4) tells his readers that God blesses people through suffering, drawing them closer to Himself if they allow Him. The highest dream and deepest desire, is to actually know and experience God on a deeper level (Crabb, 2010:2, 5). In the painful process of rebuilding one's shattered assumptions and self, *hope* emerges. This hope is not only for the higher calling of a more intimate relationship with God, but for finding new definitions and expressions for the perceived call on one's life.

4.7.6 Dealing with loss in the context of pastoral counselling

Within the context of the above discussion, pastoral counsellors have unique tools (Scripture, prayer and sacraments) to use in the context of God's presence, which form a normative foundation in counselling (see Louw, 1998:7). Smith and Dreyer (2003:151, 167) confirm that people's experiences of loss and suffering do not only reflect their previous views of God, but may bring to the conscious old unconscious God-images.

- Intense pain creates the impression that God is absent (Louw, 1998:397; Smith & Dreyer, 2003:163).

- Feeling disconnected from God, life seems meaningless (Smith & Dreyer, 2003:163).

In times of loss the belief in a loving heavenly Father may be replaced with an overvalued one of God as Judge (punishing a person for sins) (Smith & Dreyer, 2003:301). Louw (1998:297) explains that God's involvement with suffering becomes problematic in terms of his omnipotence. A separation of God's love and omnipotence is followed by an attempt to synthesize it in order to maintain God's justice (Louw, 1998:297) (cf. paragraph 3.3.3). In suffering it is both "our dignity and God's faithfulness" at stake, leading to a questioning of our human and spiritual identity (Who am I? Who is God?) (Louw, 2003:386).

God does not stand afar and neutral within human suffering and struggles. His compassion is expressed in Christ's suffering and death which confirms God's covenantal faithfulness (Gen 17:7) (Louw, 1998:398). In the context of this research registered counsellors who do struggle with loss in a faith context, have to change their focus from "Why?" to "To what end?" (Louw, 1998:198; Smith & Dreyer, 2003:295).

Turning to God with their loss and suffering, registered counsellors can experience a shift in perspective and attitude, which enables them to experience more of God's loving presence and to trust God's faithfulness (cf. Louw, 1998:398).

True hope emerges when one chooses courageous living in spite of the limitations set by evil (injustice), "willing to engage painful life events" (Louw, 2003:395). Within the paradoxical tension between resistance and surrender, hope arises in the implementation of unconditional love which is directly connected to wisdom (Louw, 2003:395). In choosing the road (or stance) of wisdom over foolishness, human beings choose the path of "healing exercised in grace, confession, and reconciliation" over "revenge/retaliation, excuse/apology/denial, and hatred/violence/destruction (manifestations of evil) (Louw, 2003:396). Within this context the pastoral care task is to "open up new avenues for discovering meaning beyond the enemy-victim polarity" (Louw, 2003:396).

The theological principles within the context of grace (Louw, 2003:396-397) operate through:

- the intimacy of *koinonia* (place of hospitality);
- accepting personal responsibility (confession of own wrongdoings in their contexts);

- the resistance of evil through lamentation: “God sides with the suffering of vulnerable and helpless people afflicted by injustice;”
- “the overcoming of evil through sacrificial love and reconciliation: to ‘walk in the shoes’ of the enemy in order to understand and to forgive;”
- “the discovery of human dignity, identity, and integrity within the sphere of God’s grace.” Human beings are unconditionally accepted by God and their identities are determined in and through Jesus Christ;
- “the prophetic stance to resist and combat” injustice; and
- “the diaconical stance to reach out to the needs of suffering people.”

Biblical lament in the Psalms does not form a closed circle (that can end in self-pity) typical within endless ruminating, but it anticipates, with hope, the faithfulness of God (cf. Brueggemann in Louw, 1998:399).

- Through Psalms of lament (see Psalm 22 for an example) registered counsellors may turn to God, express feelings and experiences of “helplessness, despair, powerlessness, meaningless and anger” (Louw, 1998:399).
- The next step is a reflection on God’s covenantal faithfulness historically (Biblical assurances and testimonies as well as events in their personal histories) leading to trust. In this context they may make requests and petitions, find comfort and encouragement, and praise God as an embodied form of hope.

The structure of the lament is based on the presupposition that God is “just, compassionate and merciful” (Louw, 1998:401). The awareness and experience of God’s presence, of a future (on earth and beyond this life), and of a bigger overarching calling and significance of being within life, creates a space within which the reality can be accepted and the pain can be worked through. (cf. Smith & Dreyer, 2003:152)

The researcher has used the structure of Psalms to write her own psalms in times of distress, and can attest to the comfort and hope that arises from reflecting on God’s faithfulness and the act of praising God.

The wisdom literature of the Bible inspires and instructs people in qualities and a way of life that reflects maturity (Ferreira, 2010: 47,52). Ultimately being wise or foolish is dependent on one's perception of God and choice in response in "faithfulness and reverence (the fear of the Lord)" (Louw, 2003:389-390). As such it encompasses most of human experience (Brunsdon, 2015:4). Brunsdon (2014; 2015) uses wisdom literature as the basis of a proposed pastoral care model into which the strategies of narrative therapy and positive psychology is incorporated. This is similar to the discussion in paragraph 3.3 where the search for healthy adapting and meaning culminates in career strategies utilising positive psychology, from a different point of the departure. In this way a pastoral care strategy is designed towards promotion of resilience and post-traumatic growth on a spiritual and emotional level (Brunsdon, 2014:7).

Gaining wisdom for practical living starts with the "**fear of Lord**" (Pr 1:7; 9:10) (Brunsdon, 2015:5; Ferreira, 2010:58-59). In search of principles assisting those overcoming deep trauma, the researcher (2010:172) found the "fear of the Lord" to be a viable philosophy of life which can undergird one's belief system, in the pattern of the lives and ministries of both Jesus and Paul. The "fear of the Lord is facilitated by the work of the Holy Spirit and forms a doorway into a deeply intimate, covenant relationship with God (Hayward, 2010: 103,165,172). In this attitude of reverence and obedience towards God (Dt 6), there is a humbling of self which facilitates an attitude of "Not my will but Yours be done" (Hayward, 2010:172). It involves a purposeful choice to turn and draw near to God in the context of acknowledging his covenant love and faithfulness, as seen for example, in Psalm 86. It is within this mindset while seeking God's face that registered counsellors facing loss may find God redirecting them to the over-arching purpose of their lives and to alternative paths of walking that out. Within the presence of God acceptance as well as new purpose may be found.

Interlude from the researcher's life: Facing loss and questioning God's calling

I studied teaching but it was the psychology classes that grabbed my interest for a future career. I was very goal oriented in my studies. Yet the years went on and family and financial constraints prevented me from pursuing a professional masters.

I actively searched out other options and embraced different career goals in order to find another path. This included a B.Com pathway academically and through employment. But it was very unfulfilling.

The B.Psych degree through the ICP for me was heaven-sent. It drew me back to my passion and provided a means towards more responsible counselling than “lay counselling.” I studied hard towards that when I could have gotten a few exemptions based on my Honours in Psychology.

Biblical Studies was my other passion (which I took further out of interest) and my original dreams included studying both Psychology and Theology up to a PhD level.

I loved the Christian psychology. At the same time the possibility of working flexible hours as registered counsellor while studying a professional master's degree (in psychology) in the future, emerged as a possibility.

Calling? I have always felt a call to help others overcome childhood trauma, and this did not diminished after I “completed” a therapeutic journey. I say “completed” as I see growth and healing as a lifelong journey.

The professional Masters degree represented skills and scope of practice for me and it's something I prayed about over the years. I felt I needed to “let it go” a few times, which I did. And then there were the times where I felt steered me in that direction. Was that my own desires? It may be as I did receive a prophetic word in 2008 that God wasn't heading in that direction with me.

The year 2012 brought a different reality – where the blocked door was not merely financial constraints but one of not passing the selection process, which made it far more personal. Processing the loss of set goals, the realities of life, and the self-doubt while re-defining and finding my identity in the context of seeking God's agenda and will for my life at the same time, has taken quite a chunk of time.

Yet the path has brought me to greater self-understanding, greater self-acceptance and a closer relationship with God.

4.8 RECEIVING A CALL

There are examples in the Bible where God communicated with individuals or his people through prophetic word: Paul puts himself in the prophetic tradition in his reference to Isaiah 49.1 and Jeremiah 1:5 (Pilch, 2005:373); Samuel (1 Sm 3:1) received his call through a “vision”; Peter has a vision in a trance (Ac 10:9); Cornelius is directed by an angel to seek Peter out (Ac 10:1-8) a day before the meeting; Stephen sees God's glory and Jesus at God's right hand (Ac 7:55-56), etc. (Pilch, 2002:690-691).

Pilch (2005:374-375) describes the word for “revelation” used by Paul (Gl 1:12, 15) as being “a cultural-ideological interpretation of his altered state of consciousness experience which

could plausibly have been a vision, trance or reverie”, while implying that God’s the source of the information or insight.

God may very well be guiding individuals to various specific career choices, even by context, experiences and aptitudes. The fact that God doesn’t specifically direct our thoughts on calling or vocation within the postmodern world’s career diversity through the Bible in specific texts, does not mean that He does not speak into one’s career. The researcher agrees with Schuurman (2004:41, 76-78, 126-130) that such a call will not violate Scriptural principles such as discussed, it will for the most not be very clear or dramatic (such as for Moses or Paul), it will seldom direct one to do something one doesn’t want to do in another place, or against one’s aptitudes and gifts, and it exists within “God’s realm of freedom.”

Being a disciple involves embracing Jesus’ mission to be a light to the world which encompasses “the full range of needs” of human beings “in their whole human experience” (Brands, 2007:22) (cf. paragraph 1.3.3). Jesus framed his calling in context of salvation and deliverance which include those who are “downtrodden, bruised, crushed, and broken down by calamity” (Lk 4.18, AMP).

4.9 CONCLUSION AND APPLICATIONS

It appears that various people were called to the position of prophet, king, disciple or other positions throughout the Old Testament and New Testament. In the text of Isaiah 49:106 the researcher found a structuring of the text in such a way, that a self-involved reader would “step in” and “accept the call” of a servant who is aligned with God, forsakes sin and becomes a light to the nations. A similar readers’ response is evoked by the gospel of Matthew, in which Jesus’ followers were called to discipleship after the original 12 disciples and eventually culminates in the command to take the gospel into the world. Discipleship involves full devotion to Jesus Christ and obedience to live a life of humility, service, love, depicting the various principles found in the New Testament.

On the one hand there were specific roles or positions that people were called to in the Old Testament, and we find texts relating to ministerial roles in the New Testament. On the other hand, all believers are called to follow Christ, becoming his disciples, which infers a specific lifestyle.

While the careers or work that we find in the postmodern world is not described specifically in Scripture, many describe a *sense of calling* to a specific modern day career. It appears that the way people received their callings in Biblical times form part of “general knowledge” that was assumed by Paul, and others, and that such experiences are not alien at all, in our modern society. In the context of building an intimate relationship with God, believers learn to discern God’s voice and instruction. Through the Holy Spirit, God comforts, consoles and empowers believers in their daily lives and gives a sense of direction.

A sense of being pre-ordained or pre-destined for a specific path in life, which may not always be comfortable or align with one’s human will, or with opportunities available, emerged from the participants’ stories in chapter two. Some reported a sense of having a transcendent and spiritual call and actively sought out God’s will for their careers through prayer and confirmation through other believers. The process of hearing from God within the context of a growing relationship with Him involves learning to discern the voice of God (Dein & Cook, 2015:103-105; Goosen & Peppler, 2015:23).

In Brownell’s (2010a:37) description these believers have an intentional God-consciousness or view the unified field in a spiritual attitude (Brownell, 2010b:117) leading to the experience of a “pneumal field” (cf. 3.3.2.4). Some of the participants’ accounts show experiences wherein God called them into certain directions and opening doors within the profession of registered counselling. These accounts fall within the bigger stories of the participants’ lives that include the reality of limited career options. Schuurman (2004:126, 142) explains that calling falls into the realm of God’s freedom in which a prayerful consideration of one’s context and abilities or aptitude is required (cf. 2.4). Due the bottleneck within the profession of psychology and the limited options for further training, many who remain blocked in their paths (whether that be to become psychologists or to successfully work as registered counsellors), probably have the abilities and aptitude required. The context and opportunities are lacking.

Scripture does not highlight stories of callings that were blocked, implying that God calls and always makes a way for the fulfilment. That leaves Christian registered counsellors with the possibilities that they either heard God wrong or in part, or that they need to keep on knocking on doors until they open up. Other feelings may emerge around the struggle of letting go of what one deeply desires while seeking to believe that it is God-ordained and that He has alternate, better plans ahead.

The blocked paths within South Africa are unique as there are opportunities to pursue different forms of counselling and Christian psychology internationally. With the recently shut doors towards registration through the Institute of Christian Psychology and struggles within pastoral counselling to establish a profession, believers who wish to work within their fields of faith, are reduced to “lay counselling,” a very slim chance of becoming psychologists, or changing careers. Through this state of affairs in South Africa they are furthermore blocked from obtaining training towards responsible practice. The researcher fails to see how this state of affairs benefits the wider population in the country who are forced to seek psychological help at a high cost (where it is available).

The loss experience that may come from a blocked career path may be experienced as intense as the loss of a loved one. Emotions may include anger, helplessness and deep sadness. It is not just about the loss of an opportunity or potential career, but relates to an identity reconstruction. It appears that the exploration and reconstruction of fundamental assumptions about God, the world and oneself, precedes the successful reconstruction of career goals.

Pastoral counselling provides a unique setting through which suffering that comes from loss, perspectives of God-images and the meaning and purpose of life, can be explored. Scripture and prayer can be used effectively towards a re-evaluation and growth into mature faith. This contains an acceptance of the things that one cannot change and a hope for the future, in the context of the indwelling presence of God. It is possible to grow through trauma or deep loss (suffering) in a way that a higher level of functioning that was before the trauma / loss may be attained.

Possibilities for hope can emerge through the use of the lament Psalms which involves a crying out to God, a petition, an expression of emotion, and a contemplation of God’s faithfulness combined with thanksgiving and praise. This relates to the attitude of the “fear of the Lord” which facilitates a deeper intimacy with God and personal growth. The use of wisdom literature is linked by Brunson (2014; 2015) to the benefits of positive psychology in building resilience and facilitating post-traumatic growth and mental health.

Within a pastoral care Scripture and prayer may provide a normative base and direction for growth within a believer’s faith. The researcher proposes that Gestalt techniques could also be powerful tools in exploring the various paradoxes within Scripture such as the wisdom

literature, the “yet and not yet” of the experience of the kingdom, as well as the old identities and meanings compared with the new amidst career changes.

The storied accounts of participants as co-researchers in this study, together with the literature review and normative Scriptural exploration, culminate into a proposed strategy within the pragmatic research task. These will be presented in the following chapter (chapter five).

CHAPTER FIVE

5. PRAGMATIC TASK: EXPERIENTIAL PROCESS TO FACILITATE THE PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT OF REGISTERED COUNSELLORS IN CONTEXT OF THEIR SPIRITUALITY

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The pragmatic research task as described by Osmer (2008:4) asks: “How might we respond?” The task entails the formulation and implementation of a strategy or action plan. Ideally this task should involve a type of servant leadership with the goal of transformation which involves “deep change” (Osmer, 2008:176-177).

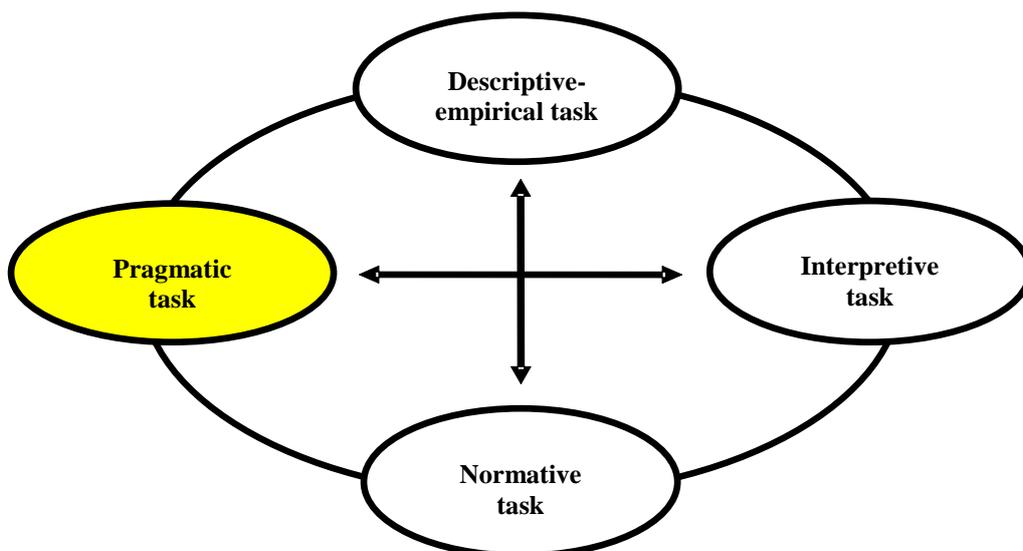


Figure 5.1: Pragmatic task (Osmer, 2008:11)

The objectives of this chapter are:

- To find out and understand how registered counsellors specializing in Gestalt Play therapy, experience their professional identity development after the implementation of the Gestalt experimental mediations.

- To develop a pastoral counselling program that utilizes Gestalt principles of self-formation, around professional identity development as well as spiritual principles within the findings of this study, for the professional identity development of registered counsellors specializing in Gestalt Play therapy (or other specializations).

According to Osmer (2008:176) the pragmatic task involves "... forming and enacting strategies of action that influence events in ways that are desirable." Within this process, strategies of action emerge from the reflective conversations with participants' stories, wherein they are met and contact is made (cf. Osmer, 2008:132).

The researcher will attempt to, according to the pragmatic task, formulate guidelines which will address professional identity development as well as spiritual principles within the findings of this study, for the professional identity development of registered counsellors.

This study is located within the field of pastoral studies, within practical theology. The focus on spirituality is framed within the reformed tradition, as discussed in chapter four.

Spiritually within this study reflects more than one perspective or focus. From a psychological perspective (shared by some participants and within the literature reviews), spirituality is inclusive of various religious perspectives. Research within the psychological context is also interested in the influence of spirituality's commonalities which affects individuals' lives, identity formation and careers (cf. paragraph 1.2.8 & section 3.5). Brownell's (2010) "pneumal model" involves a theistic field view within Gestalt psychology (cf. paragraph 1.2.6 & 3.3.2.5). It is an example of an integration model within the field of psychology.

The experiential reflections as they were originally designed and evaluated are suitable as intervention within a psychology or Christian psychology context (see section 1.2; Appendix E-I). The pastoral counselling intervention model developed within this chapter is aimed at the pastoral counselling field (while it may also be useful within a Christian psychology setting).

The first goal of this chapter will be to explore the development and implementations of Gestalt experiential reflections (meditations).

5.2 THE DEVELOPMENT OF EXPERIENTIAL REFLECTIONS TO EXPLORE REGISTERED COUNSELLORS' PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT

5.2.1 Strategy of action

The experiential reflections which were implemented with four registered counsellors specializing in Gestalt play therapy are based upon career counselling guidelines (cf. paragraph 3.5.8) of Dik *et. al.* (2009:628-629; 2014:5-18), coupled with elements from the career construction theory, awareness principles from Gestalt therapy, and Gestalt theory on the “self.”

Descriptions of experience were gathered in collaboration with participants as co-researchers, as per the third movement of Müller (2004:300; cf. paragraph 1.7.7). The *experiential reflections* were informed by *traditions of interpretation* (movement four, Müller, 2004:300) and thickened through *interdisciplinary investigation* (movement six, Müller, 2004:300).

Participants were individuals who had already been in their own personal processes of dealing with questions around their professional identity and career goals in terms of the calling they have. The experiential reflections appear to “fit” naturally with their own processes, while facilitating additional discovery.

5.2.2 Design and testing of experiential reflections or meditations

Five experiential reflections (originally referred to as meditations within this research project) (Appendix E-I) were developed based upon the career counselling recommendations of Dik *et. al.* (2009:628-629) (as discussed in section 3.5):

- the concept of looking for life themes in “life designing” in career construction counselling (cf. paragraph 3.5.2);
- as well as some of the awareness principles from Gestalt therapy (cf. paragraphs 3.3.1 & 3.3.2.2) coupled with the Gestalt theory on “self” (cf. paragraph 3.3.2).

Participant one completed the experiential reflections (meditations) in a one-on-one setting with the researcher. The other three participants live in various other provinces. Participants twelve and fourteen completed the reflections (meditations) in their own time and space,

reporting in written format, while participant nineteen chose to complete the process via a Skype call.

Participants one, twelve and fourteen respectively registered with the HPCSA in 2006, 2012 and 2013. Participant nineteen has to complete her internship in order to register.

5.2.2.1 Experiential reflection (meditation) one

The first experiential reflection or meditation (Appendix D) **incorporates the Gestalt perspective of various selves that make up the “population of self”** (Polster, 2005:3-40) as discussed in paragraph 3.3.2.5 in context of a basic timeline of participants’ lives. After drawing attention to a sense of calling or vocation, participants are asked to draw a timeline reflecting the major time-periods and events in their lives, as baseline for exploring other themes. In preparation suggestions are made to facilitate relaxation and sensory awareness. Participants are asked to reflect on their various selves without judgment, considering essential selves, member selves and metaphors around their selves. They are then asked to consider what they have written and/or drawn, in terms of their career and vocational choices. This could reflect on old childhood dreams or wishes that may represent a “fractal of the dreamer’s entire life story” (Joyce & Sills, 2010:152).

Participant one narrated two key incidents in her pre-school years which reflected her “*independent self, secure self, adventurous self, curious self, confident and sense of freedom.*” She developed a “friendly self”, “loyal self” and “trusting self” within the context of a primary school friendship. In late primary school she had a very influential teacher which upon reflection, may have sparked her desire to also “[...] make a difference in other people’s lives.” A key experience in her life at age eight, involved “[...] God saying to me that I am not alone...”. Being the oldest child and moving around a lot, she described herself as the “conqueror” or the “guinea pig” who was always first to go into new territory. This she says is also a theme in her life. She took a moment to integrate that with what God had said about not being alone. She links this theme of “conquering” to her “independent self”, which were asserted against her “people-pleasing self” in order to study psychology instead of accounting. Marriage strengthened her “trusting self” and parenting brought her “maternal

self” which is protective, mostly secure yet insecure at time, intuitive, mentoring and responsible.

In the words of participant one:

And then now as a registered counsellor, those selves have manifested in different ways over the last couple (laugh in voice) of years... laugh... From angry self to frustrated self to questioning self – asking what I really want ... if I’m going to stick it out or not. And to confident self ... and I find that despite all of that I still come back to my sense of purpose to restore hope and to inspire which links back to my grade 4 year as well and that spiritual experience.

Themes that repeat in participant one’s life are: “protection, independence, people pleasing”, “[...] what I call a need to inspire, overcoming and also my dominant or determined self.”

Participant nineteen identifies her pre-school years as fun and finds a self that enjoys the outdoors and who is adventurous. Her “adventurous self” came strongly to the fore in grade 7 through an adventure club. Others may have described her as a tomboy and she was confident and happy. During grade 12 her mother may have spoken of her “rebellious self” while she describes being fully accepted among her peers through a “connecting self.” Her friends would also have described her “patient self” and her “self-disciplined self” when it came to her studies. This is also a need for structure she says, that made distance learning through UNISA attractive.

From early high school **participant twenty-one** was curious about people’s motivations for doing things and wanted to both understand and also to help others. The first time she really enjoyed her studies was during the Masters degree in Gestalt Play Therapy, within the supportive and growth environment. She is very frustrated with the internships having been placed “on hold” while being revised and is discouraged around possible work opportunities that the future might hold or not.

Themes that repeat are around her “tomboy self, social or connecting self”, together with a need for structure as well as for balance between studies (a realization that came through this discussion) work and relationships. Dreams as a child included being a police woman at one stage and she enjoys mysteries and suspense.

Considering vocation and calling, **participant twenty-one** mentions a project of Oprah for women in Africa that she would like to get involved with and says that her biggest desire is to make a difference:

In the words of participant twenty-one:

I have a desire to help others, to make a difference. Yes, if one could speak of a big dream, mine would be to win the Lotto and start “a house of hope” for underprivileged children, children from other communities and street children. To teach them basic skills such as needlework, cooking and woodwork ... while providing emotional support... My calling is to make a difference somewhere (translated from Afrikaans).

Some of her shifting interest from one-on-one counselling has to do with her research topic and her “wise” and “inspiring” study leader. Her mother was also a strong woman and a strong role model, and the term “[...] vrouens hoort in die kombuis” (women belong in the kitchen) brings a more feminist side of herself to the fore although the origin may be introjection (from her mother).

Participant twelve describes her various selves as:

Adventurous self, striving self, competitive self, social self, explorative self, mature self, responsible self, fighter self, sporty self, hardworking self, independent self, wife and mom self, determined self, and creative self.

Repeating themes in her life revolve around “[...] hard work, adventures, travelling, studying, and family.” Her dream of having a family has been realised though she “[...] should have become a paediatrician.” Later she says that things have panned out as they should though, as that would have meant “[...] crazy hours.”

The following realizations came to her mind reflecting on vocation and calling:

I enjoy working hard, like working with people (children) – solving things, like to be in charge, enjoy being creative, and going on adventures.

Participant fourteen describes her various selves as follows:

I think I have a couple of selves shaping a holistic view of myself. Firstly I would say my selves have changed throughout my life. Currently I have a ‘family-self’ as a wife and a mother, secondly a ‘professional self’ where I teach and counsel others, a third self would be my ‘social self’ between friends and acquaintances. Although one does not have one true self, an essential self which is a part of me that has always been underlying throughout my life is my religion/Christianity.

Repeating themes in her life revolve around moving often and change together with “[...] lot of self-driven projects/studies to achieve.” The loss of her father had a big impact throughout her life.

Participant fourteen’s dreams revolved around achievement and success, where achievement involves family as well. An awareness through this reflection/meditation arose around “[...] trying to be the ultimate women – wife, mother, housekeeper, cook, working professional – all in happy spirits.” She re-evaluates this and concludes:

I feel that people look at my life and think my goals and aims towards being this ultimate women is wrong, since I put a lot of pressure on myself. But I am at my happiest when I am doing all of these wonderful things and I am always grounded in my priorities – Father God, Family, Others and Work. If I keep these priorities in sight I can do all things.

Thinking about her vocation or calling, she says:

I have always felt connected to others and their emotions. This is why I still strongly believe that should be working in the field of psychology and education.

5.2.2.2 Experiential reflection (meditation) two

The second experiential reflection or meditation (Appendix E) **explores life values and work values as these relate strongly to the meaning and well-being experienced in life and work**. According to the Gestalt perspective, ideas or beliefs that relate to introjections or that are no longer valid within the current context, can become a modification to contact or contact interruption (Joyce & Sills, 2010:117). Values and beliefs that are considered in terms of their current validity can then either be accepted or rejected in a process that is self-defining (Joyce & Sills, 2010:117) (cf. paragraph 3.3.2.2).

Examples of values from checklists by Roberts (1994) and McKay (2013) were given (Appendix F).

Phrases containing values which have directed the lives of the participants are:

- Participant one: “[...] Jack of all trades”

- Participant twelve: “[...] Reputation, reputation, reputation; Early to bed, early to rise...; They are just jealous; and Be truthful, loyal and have good morals.”
- Participant fourteen: “[...] I can do all things (through Christ); Family first; and Sow into peoples' lives; Good work ethic”
- Participant nineteen: “[...] Don’t judge.”

The following values were identified as key values, in the order of importance:

Table 5.1: Values identified as key values

Participant one	Participant twelve	Participant fourteen	Participant nineteen
Wisdom	Independence/autonomy	Faith	Close & quality of relationships
Honesty (open)	Adventure	Family	Growth & personal development
Family	Creativity	Others	Recognition
Responsibility	Loving others	Good work ethic	Helping others
Accountability	Utilise skills & background		Challenge
Efficiency	Respect		Collaboration
Challenges	hardworking		Job security
Adventure			Utilizing skills & background
Close relationships			Achievement

Participant twelve has become more aware of the value of respect for oneself, the environment and others that she values. Her introjections represent the worry over what others may think as well as that money is important, and she will change rather than discard them through reframing. Thus: “[...] Money is necessary but not important,” and “[...] Worry about what you think of yourself. Forget about other’s judgments.” The values that participant twelve would like to incorporate more into her life, are “variety, leisure and collaboration.”

Both **participant one** and **participant fourteen** say that “leisure time” is a value that they’d like to incorporate more into their lives. Participant fourteen thinks that her family values may be introjected from her father’s early death, and that “a good work ethic” is an introjected value from her mother. She is choosing to keep them apart of her value system. Participant one jokes that compensation should become more important in her life. Her

responsibility and accountability are probably introjects which she doesn't find negative though she's had to work on her boundaries in these areas (such as taking care of her sisters).

Participant nineteen is more aware of the value of ecological awareness. While her values around strong women as opposed to “women belonging in the kitchen” were introjected, it's not one that she'll ever discard.

This experiential reflections (meditations) of **participant twelve** culminated in the (re)framing of important values within sentences starting with “I...”, such as “[...] I utilise my skills and background”.

5.2.2.3 Experiential reflection (meditation) three

The third experiential reflections (meditations) is **based upon the counselling guidelines** of Dik *et al.* (2009) which **also utilize the “signature strengths”** of Seligman *et al.* (2005) (cf. section 3.6) (Appendix G).

Participant one identified five talents or behaviours that she does well as “time management, project management, planning and implementing and goal attainment.” She reflects on the fact that organizing and managing came into awareness. They are strengths that she uses daily and would not really change her work behaviour or career path, except that she perhaps “[...] obtain more of that on a regular basis.” That would entail seeking employment and job security. She would prefer to stay within registered counselling though teaching would be the closest fit. If her practice would to fill up a bit and be more predictable, she would not change anything.

Participant twelve was unsure of whether she was doing the exercise correctly, as she was already using the five talents or behaviours that she listed on a daily basis. They are: “coaching/teaching, story writing, counselling, scrap booking and child minding.” She could on a daily basis do child minding, use her creativity, teach, assist and counsel. She added: “[...] I could focus on story writing and create my own line for use in my counselling.”

Participant fourteen listed her talents or strengths as “being a good listener, compassionate, understanding, driven, and punctual.” On a daily basis she could practice her listening skills,

care for someone else, be supportive, give of her time and be trustworthy. To the question as to how this would shape her current work behaviours or career path, she says:

I think from this and previous meditations I have a new realisation of the importance of the field in which I am working. Firstly that it is not merely a job, but that people's lives are affected by my work ethic. Secondly, that my values and priorities shape and form myself. If I am not aware of my selves and my current state of self, I cannot fully engage with others.

Participant nineteen identifies her core talents or behaviours she does well, in terms of her “sensitive nature, compassion, planning skills and ability to manage programs with the autistic children that she works with.” Skills she could practice or use daily would be “[...] interacting with others”. She often goes into work earlier in order to connect with people. Other than that she focuses a lot on language acquisition in her work, she can't put her finger on anything else.

5.2.2.4 Experiential reflection (meditation) four

In the fourth experiential reflections or awareness meditation, participants were asked to **figuratively take off their work shoes and think of what they would like from work**, five things are necessary in order to experience meaning and to consider how it fits their current work situation. These activities are based on the recommendations of Dik *et al.* (2014:5-18) (cf. paragraph 3.5.8 & section 3.6).

Participant one would like the following from a job/work:

[...] financial security, routine, but .. next one – variety. I mustn't be able to predict what's going to happen next, but I want the guidelines... the stability that comes with routine. And to make an impact and receive recognition.

She needs her family and academic studies to experience meaning in her life. Furthermore, she requires leadership, mentorship and ambition but goes on to say that none of that fits within the registered counselling scope of practice, where she has already reached a ceiling. Moving into new areas such as lecturing is difficult without relevant experience.

Participant twelve would like the following from a job:

Fulfilment, wide reaching change (like formulating strategies to remove beggars and create sustaining projects to up-skill and empower them to help others in their community), bring nature into counselling (outside, movement, music etc), have a smash yard for anger management, mentor programs for youth without fathers (clean up environment, make a difference within the community) – e.g. out the box ways to facilitate change.

The five things that she experiences as necessary to experience meaning in her life are: “[...] Jesus, family, chill time, creativity, natural beauty.”

Her current job description or scope of practice doesn't really fit with these desires and requirements. Her job is stressful and there is no time to relax outdoors. She says:

But I guess what I do may help others within their families. I can use creativity with my clients and I could bring nature into sessions.

Participant fourteen would like the following from a job:

- Results and change for others
- Flexibility in my hours
- Challenges to work through and solve
- Working with others
- Remuneration that contributes to my family's needs

The five things that are essential towards experiencing meaning in her life, are:

- [...] My faith
- Having the support and love from my family
- Making a change in others' lives
- Being successful in my work
- Having connections with others (friends)

Participant nineteen describes the ways in which these desires and needs match her current job description or scope of practice, or not, are:

Currently I would say since I am still new to the field it is progressively becoming the meaningful job I have always wanted. I feel like I am heading in the right direction

I am still awaiting my success, especially waiting for results and finalising the process of my studies, attaining registrations with all the relevant boards and

becoming an ethical therapist/counsellor/researcher. (She registered with the HPCSA at the end of that year).

Participant fourteen commented on polarities, saying:

I absolutely think that I have polarities between my selves. For example when busy with work my professional self is very strong. I take my work seriously, but when at home with friends and loved ones I become sometimes a silly version of myself. Almost the opposite from being serious.

Participant nineteen requires the following from a job: “[...] honesty, openness, collaboration, connectedness ... respect, job security and adequate pay.” The following things bring meaning to her life: close and/or quality relationships, recognition, morals and values (both in relationships and work). It is furthermore incredibly important to her to have a job/work that she can enjoy and from which she can walk away from in the evening saying that it was a very enjoyable day at work. She believes that this aspect of work has a big influence on all the other aspects of one’s life, and therefore one has to enjoy one’s work.

Her need for connectedness is being met in her current work situation. This ability to connect is a key to both good therapeutic and counselling experiences that clients may have with any psychologist or counsellor. She furthermore enjoys collaboration within a small team wherein each person contributes something unique. Acknowledgement from others is important to her as well as in context of her work. Children with autism can’t be holistically defined by the autism, as they remain children with needs for love and attention. She does have job security and adequate pay, though being paid per hour is stressful in terms of changes happening within the workplace. At the same time she enjoys the flexibility that this affords her with her studies, compared to being in a salaried position.

This she describes as a polarity within herself: having both the need for flexibility and for adequate pay coupled with job security. Another polarity she identifies is between her love for structure and her love for freedom and flexibility, which may be dependent on contexts.

5.2.2.5 Experiential reflection (meditation) five

The fifth and last experiential reflection (meditation) **describes the cognitive reframing that occurs within job-crafting**, using an example of Wrezniewski and Dutton (2001:190-191) of various hospital cleaners.

Participant one reports that the career counselling she does as registered counsellor matches her need to feel fulfilled personally and seeing hope restored closely. It is not a fit in terms of job stability or financial stability, especially as people seek career counselling at certain times of the year mostly. She says, furthermore:

[...] ultimately I don't want the burden of worrying about how much money I'm going to be earning a month, even if I have to accept a lesser salary, just so that my needs are taken care of. So that I can get on with my ministering – with my ministry of hope. You know – my calling.

Also – why I need stability, is that – I am an emotional processor, with a left brain dominance, so with that I need guidelines. I need structure. And the fact that I do feel things – I need that security that comes with that kind of stability. But I also need to see the concrete end-product of my work, which I don't get to do with career counselling. They don't come back to share what they've decided...

Participant one describes her options as finding employment within a centre or trying her hand at lecturing, “[...] where there is an end product ... seeing other people reach their goals.” To meet her need for a “sense of freedom” as opposed to the ceiling reached as registered counsellor, she would have to do the professional Masters degree in Psychology. She wishes that she had done that from the beginning in light of all the work that she's put into the Masters degree in Gestalt Play Therapy though it was on a part-time basis.

Evaluating her options, **participant one** reports that her ambitious self “[...] doesn't like the idea of being blocked constantly ... kept beneath that registered counsellor ceiling ... called an emotional paramedic...” At the same time she likes quick change rather than long-term counselling, which fits in with her scope of practice. “[...] I just don't like that idea that I'm being “watched over” the whole time, ... scope, scope, scope, scope!” Had she known what lay had looking back, she might have done industrial psychology instead.

Participant twelve reports that her job or career path suits her well. While she enjoys what she does, she “[...] would like it to be less stressful.” She speculates that working in a multi-disciplinary team may alleviate stress while also creating a more social work environment. She describes dissonance as follows:

I would love more freedom to do what I want. To work outside the box, to counsel in a way that fits for me and not according to the text book. To experiment and be – instead of parents dictating what they need to come out of the counselling. To have more free time to spend with my family.

Describing possible changes that she could make, participant twelve says that she “[...] be more decisive in terms of the clients (she) agrees to see” in terms of job tasks. Regarding her career path, she says:

I like my career path – wish I could be a fully qualified psychologist but God has a plan and He has had his part in how I am here right now. There are always opportunities no matter how limiting my qualifications.

She views her work as:

[...] helping with pieces of a puzzle instead of having to put together a 1000 piece puzzle all alone. I cannot solve everything but I can provide opportunities and options for others to solve things for themselves.

Participant nineteen resonates with the examples of hospital workers who adjust their timetable to enhance the flow of work, meaning and satisfaction and of estate agents matching individual families to communities. Through her research and contact with her supervisor, she has become more interested in “[...] the ways of relating and interacting” within schools rather than looking at academic achievement. Her awareness has been increasing through her research process as well as within her current work situation. She experiences dissonance between the Gestalt approach that she has embraced and the behavioural approach used within her current work. In terms of changing aspects of her work she reflects upon the registered counselling and options that there may be moving forward. She will be studying a Post Graduate Certificate in Education in order to counsel within schools, changing the population that she works in. She uses the Gestalt dialogic and non-judgmental (I-thou) stance within her current work, but would like to use more Gestalt techniques.

5.2.2.6 Evaluation after implementation

Participant one reported the process to have been beneficial, eliciting reflection:

Being in counselling you are continuously helping other people, so you don't actually stop just to really think about yourself. And gain that perspective like we did here. To get that bird's eye view back.

Participant twelve's feedback was:

I didn't really feel that I got a lot out of it but enjoyed looking back over my life and where I have ended up.

Participant fourteen says that she has changed her view of her work through the meditations, realizing:

[...] that I work with people and their emotions and aspirations. I can therefore not be whimsical about what I do, but I must realise how much I can impact someone else's life and future. My job requires that I understand it is not just about me, it is about the person sitting across from me.

Participant nineteen experienced the process as valuable in terms of the opportunity to become aware of her different selves and to be able to see the links between them and her early years. She can still see the adventurous and "fun self" within herself, but not as strongly due to work responsibilities, studies and so forth.

Considering the impact of these experiential reflections (meditations) and processes, together with the information gathered from the colloquium (participants one and twelve), and questionnaires (all four participants), they all appear to have wrestled with their identity, calling and career issues in various degrees of intensity. When approached for the questionnaire phase members of the population indicated that the topic was too sensitive at that time, and two participants who completed questionnaires indicated similarly, that the topic was too close to heart to participate in these experiential reflections (meditations) processes (as previously planned). The application value may thus be higher for those members of the population who are experiencing a higher level of emotional distress.

5.2.3 Retrospective reflections of participant one

Practical theology that utilizes social-constructivist theory (within the transversal space) forces a closer "listening" to the "stories of real people struggling" and overcoming "in real situations" which are specific and concrete (Müller, 2004:295). This more reflexive approach "takes the circular moment of practice-theory-practice seriously and brings it into operation" (Müller, 2004:295).

Within this circular perspective, participant one was asked to share more of her journey after the Gestalt masters' degree training, from which she has graduated, around sixteen months after the implementation of the experiential reflections.

On the 20th of August, 2014, participant one enquired about the registration in art therapy, and received the following reply:

Registration and Practice as an Arts Therapist (Davis, 2014):

Arts therapists in South Africa **have to be** registered with the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) in order to practice any of the art therapies. Failure to do so **will** result in prosecution in terms of Section 34 of the Health Professions Act, 1974.

In order to qualify for registration with Council, a two year Masters Degree in Arts Therapy from a registered University plus 1000 supervised clinical hours of practice is the minimum requirement. A Masters in Music Therapy is offered at the University of Pretoria. For the other modalities (Art, Drama and Dance Movement) one would have to study abroad at a registered University. It is hoped that trainings in these Art Therapies will be offered in South Africa soon.

Upon return to South Africa an examination by the HPCSA in order to certify that your training fulfils the minimum standards, ensures your registration.

On the 2nd of November, participant one shares the following:

In terms of coming to peace with my professional identity I had to re-evaluate my scope in line with what I had been taught. I will not, even as a Registered Counsellor specialising in Gestalt Play therapy, see children as children develop close bonds which interventive counselling cannot support. I have integrated creative tools into my interventive counselling. Personally, I find these tools to be so powerful that clients do not need many sessions which fit well within my scope, allowing me to bring hope to them along their life journey. I prefer interventive work so am able to make peace with my career identity.

I am however saddened that I do not meet the requirements to register as an Art Therapist with the HPCSA. The art therapy registration requires overseas study, there is no formal training in South Africa. Gestalt Therapy meets these creative therapeutic interventions. Within a multi-cultural society, expressive or creative therapies could be transformational as language barriers are bypassed. I wonder why our HPCSA does not explore our Masters training in Gestalt to allow us into the category of Art Therapy since no local training is available.

I trust that God will open the best career door for me, where I can be ON purpose daily and using all my training to bring hope to those He brings along my path.

5.2.4 Evaluation – expert opinion

At the time of the implementation, a counselling psychologist, Wendy Kaufman, agreed to participate in this experiential reflective process, within a one-on-one setting. Kaufman says:

I found the meditations very useful in their content and in their structure; building up from one to the next and thus guiding reflections about myself. They lead you in a direction of self discovery and reflection.

I was pleasantly surprised by the outcome of the meditations. Seeing my “selves” and how these were informed by other people's input in my life and their perception of me. I realised that I avoid discussions and journal clubs that could lead to feelings of doubt and inadequacy in my work. I have always been aware of comparing myself to other psychologists but never saw the avoidance per sé.

I have learnt that this is the perfect career for me and it is my calling to. I think I could interact more in group work and with colleagues outside of just the CPD workshops and talks.

Interlude from the researcher's life:

I developed the reflections through applying the information from the research, on myself, using the Gestalt principles I have been using both to process experiences and events in my own life and within my counselling practice. It stirred up emotion and brought some closure through the increased awareness of who I am – and that is who I believe God has made me to be. Of course there've been some things that life experiences brought my way that needed to fall away (or burn away through the hard times and struggles) for the sake of growth and character. The stubbornness that helped me survive my childhood has led to a persistent pursuit of growth (for which I've gotten some good witnesses among close friends and increased effectiveness in my work) but also makes it really hard to let go of what I should, at times.

Recently I took the process up again for another round – around my calling and identity. Praying my way through some grief literature, I found some new peace and closure.

I formulated my calling as goals when I started with ministry and lay counselling over ten years ago: “Leading people into greater intimacy with God and others, through removing the “stuff” that stands in the way.” Those goals have held firm and it feels as if I've been designed by God for that purpose.

I remember that I had some reservations at registering as registered counsellor in 2009. I see the changes that the Gestalt approach brought into my life in 2011 with the short courses, which is why I pursued the post-graduate training. It's

become very integrated into my life and work. I also see that my focus on God has grown stronger over time. I've been using some additional tools from Arthur Burk's ministry (involving ministry to the human spirit) over the course of the last year which are incredibly effective.

Seeking God's guidance for the future and asking who He's made me to be – who He's called me to be, it seems as if I've come to a new place of closure. At heart I am a pastoral counsellor and God's given me some very effective tools for spiritual growth. I am not a registered counsellor in the essence of my being. I am a pastoral counsellor with an additional registration as registered counselling, for some work in that field. I find peace and new excitement in that, which has enabled me to sit and consider what I actually do in my practice, leading to the development of the pastoral counselling model that follows (without detailing the spirit-work tools at this time).

I am privileged enough to be living out my calling of leading people into greater intimacy with God and others, through my pastoral practice, and I'm looking forward to the new, non-academic future ahead of me.

The second goal of this chapter, of developing a pastoral counselling program that utilizes spiritual and Gestalt principles of self-formation towards the professional identity development for registered counsellors specializing in Gestalt Play therapy (or other) will now be addressed.

5.3 PASTORAL COUNSELLING INTERVENTION UTILIZING GESTALT PRINCIPLES

5.3.1 A collaborative approach within the transversal space

In the development of the proposed practical theological intervention, the model for developing a collaborative approach within the transversal space of Brunsdon (2014:5) is used. Three key tasks are identified: self-identification; identification of partners; and identification of usable strategies (Brunsdon, 2014:5).

5.3.2 Self-identification:

The epistemological departure point for intervention in practical theology is found in the eschatological and pneumatological perspectives in Scripture (see paragraph 4.2 & 4.5.1). In

Louw's (1998:258) words the counselling dialogue becomes a triologue within pastoral context, with the Word and Spirit of God as the third factor. The counselee is approached from the frame of the covenantal communication between God and man, expressed in grace and love. An affirmation theology "ascribes human dignity" and leads to "new patterns of pneumatic living (Louw, 1998:60).

The key area of exploration is viewed in context of the Christian faith within human contexts, against God-images, faith development, the quest for meaning and growth (maturity). Scripture is viewed as the communications from God, and as normative for living life.

The outcome aimed at within the pastoral encounter, involves spiritual maturity. Spirituality is defined by Louw (1998:19) as:

... practicing the Christian faith in such a way that it creates an awareness of God's presence. It is a devout obedience within which the believer gradually **becomes** that which he/she already **is** in Christ. Spirituality thus aims to embody faith and to develop a congruency between faith content and daily life. It also attempts to strengthen the "being" functions of the believer with the view of preventing problems.

Spiritual healing involves an understanding and view of life in context of a healthy image of God, through which problems may be met in a responsible and an appropriate way (Louw, 2010:179). Healing occurs in the encounter with God through an awareness of God's presence and the quality of one's being qualities, which inspires faith (Louw, 2010:179). Louw (2010:179) describes the theological principles regarding spiritual healing in context of:

- "... a new state of being" in Christ (2 Cor 5.17) (the eschatological dimension);
- "... a new state of mind: peace. *Shalom* describes a contentedness with God and life" as God is our peace (Eph 2.14);
- "... a new attitude and way of doing and living" which is embodied through the fruits of the spirit (Gl. 5:16; 22-23); and
- "... as wholeness, purposefulness and direction" as part of the hope that people are saved into (Rm. 8:24).

Life fulfilment in the context of Christian spiritual care is indicated through gratitude and joy (Louw, 2010:180).

The unique tools of Scripture and prayer are used by the researcher, while a pastor implementing this model would also have the sacraments within the context of the faith community, at hand (See Louw, 1998:7).

5.3.3 Identification of partners:

The literature review drew elements of knowledge from constructivist and social constructivism (career and identity development), Gestalt theory (self formation) and positive psychology (utilized in the design of the reflections).

Gestalt therapy represents a shared field of study and experience of the researcher and co-researchers (participants), and contributes heavily in various ways to this study and pastoral counselling model. The essential ontology and epistemology of Gestalt therapy are described in the following ways by different practitioners:

- The philosophical basis for Gestalt therapy is found in phenomenology, field theory and holism (all postmodern epistemologies) (Evans, 2007:194).
- Resnick (2009:2) views the “seminal boundary markers” of Gestalt therapy as field theory, phenomenology, and dialogue.
- Gestalt basic concepts are the phenomenological perspective, the field theory perspective, the existential perspective and dialogue (Yontef, 1993:124-126).
- Wheeler (2008:39) speaks of a constructivist field view, in which the sense of self and other is created out of a prior field of relationship, and organizing perception and behaviour in an ongoing subjective/constructive activity that is best understood from the point of phenomenology (the study of the subjective organization of experience).

Field theory represents the basic worldview of Gestalt therapy (Resnick, 2009:2), or the scientific worldview underlying the Gestalt phenomenological perspective (Yontef, 1993:125). It is a way of looking at the “total situation” or whole in terms of parts that are all interconnected, interdependent and interactive (Evans, 2007:194; Yontef, 1993:125). Everything is in flux and in process (Resnick, 2009:2). It describes a non-linear causality (Evans, 2007:196-197) (cf. paragraph 3.3.2.1).

Phenomenology represents a genuine interest in, and profound respect for an individual's experience (who is a subjective subset of the field), while also being a method of attending to another's experience (Resnick, 2009:2-3).

Existentially, the process of awareness leads to the ability to "choose and/or organize one's own existence in a meaningful manner (Jacobs & Yontef, in Yontef, 1993:126).

Existential **dialogue** defines the contact between a therapist and client. It brings forth the relationship, which grows out of contact as an embodied experience (of dialogical encounter) (Levin, 2015:2; Yontef, 1993:126). "Dialogue is both the "healing through meeting" and also the means of access to a person's process... "(Resnick, 2009:4).

The philosophical assumptions that flow forth from the Gestalt ontology and epistemology (Van De Riet, Korb, & Gorrell, 1980) include the following:

- Ethics are dependent on the values and ethics of the people interacting, or the situation in which the interaction takes place.
- "People are collections of processes: ongoing and changing physiological, emotional, intellectual, psychological, and spiritual processes constitute the existence of each human being." People are "of" a field and not "in" a field (Yontef, 2005:42) (cf. paragraph 3.3.2.1).
- From the observation of events, people create order, structure, meaning, or relationships.
- Reality is constructed through language, movements, postures, images and dreams.
- "Absolute and certain knowledge is a myth."
- The "experience of living, which arises from the mutual existence and interaction between that person and his environment," can be brought into awareness.
- While reality is a "sum of all awareness," it is not a mathematical equation, but experience as a "here-an-now completeness, an 'irreducible phenomenon,' a gestalt."
- "There is no intrinsic right or wrong in any event or person." Ethical responsibility is "grounded in each situation."

Meaning is the relationship between the figure and the ground (Resnick, 2009:2). Gestalt acknowledges the profound and subtle way in which individuals filter the world through their

perception, it “stops well short of constructivism.” (Philippon, 2001:11) Constructivism views human stories about the world as the cause for that world to come into being, but the feedback includes an inherent aim to control the environment, “rather than to dialogue with it” (Philippon, 2001:7).

The (postmodern) narrative approach invites clients to create new narratives for their lives (cf. Brunson, 2014:5-6). While the approach is reflected to some extent within this study in putting the stories on the table, it is not used as a counselling agent of change. For Resnick (2009:6) narrative therapy can be manipulative, as clients are not brought into awareness of the fact that they are organizing their own stories, of how they are organizing it, or of all possibilities open to them.

The elements of positive psychology emerged from modern science, and aims to bring holistic and empirical change to bear (Brunson, 2014: 7-8). Louw (2015:60) points out that a theology of affirmation, shares ideas with positive theology and/or fortology. According to Paul Tillich the strength perspective and fortology reflects the meaning of “the ‘courage to be’ in the language of existential theology” (Louw, 2015:60).

According to Resnick (2009:6) any counselling or therapeutic approach with “a grid of principles designed to decide what is true for you” cannot be integrated into Gestalt theory.

If one has “truly field theoretical view, a respect of phenomenology, and a belief that in the dialogue is both the ‘healing for meeting’ and also the means of access to a person’s process and his or her organising characterological stance, then there are many aspects of many different modes of therapy that can be useful and integrative.

The researcher does not propose an integration of a normative pastoral care model into Gestalt practice. Rather, she is interested in incorporating a qualified Gestalt practice (strategies), together with the elements of other disciplines identified, into a pastoral counselling framework.

5.3.4 Identification of usable strategies

Collaborative approaches are always qualified approaches in context of the respect for the identity of each approach involved (Brunson, 2015:5). Strategies of other approaches are used within the pastoral counselling approach, without merging ontology and epistemologies.

The following components of the narrative approach emerge within the context of this study:

- the ethno-autographic accounts of the researcher (see paragraph 1.7.5);
- the stories which are utilized to explore participants' experiences in context of theology (McClendon, 2002:22, 158) (see paragraph 1.7.6);
- the use of narratives in context of career construction (Dik, *et al.*, 2009:628) (see paragraph 3.6) are utilized for the development of the reflections.

The practice of identifying signature or *character strengths* and to develop them further, has been utilized in the development of the meditations (as suggested by Dik, *et al.*, 2009:629; Seligman *et al.*, 2005:46).

The techniques of Gestalt theory utilized within the reflections involve awareness, paradoxical selves and paradoxical realities, and the contact cycle within creative expression (utilizing the timeline and stories) (cf. paragraph 3.3.3.2).

5.3.5 Proposed practical theological intervention for exploring registered counsellors' professional identity development and calling

5.3.5.1 The setting for the proposed pastoral counselling encounter

The proposed reflections were originally developed in a manner that participants who have been trained in psychology (as registered counsellors) and Gestalt techniques, could implement them on an individual basis. This reflects the Western cultural context of the research participants (Louw, 1998:13) and was used to gain feedback regarding the viability of the intervention strategy.

Within pastoral counselling, one is drawn back to “body of Christ” in the “fellowship of believers” (*koinonia*) within a local church (Louw, 1998:70). A pastor implementing this model would have the resources of preaching and other church activities and sacraments, for further support and teaching.

The researcher functions in an independent context (private practice) while she is involved within a local Methodist church community.

5.3.5.2 Description of the proposed pastoral counselling encounter

The model is undergirded by the eschatological perspective of the salvation and sanctification of both the counsellor and the counselee. The pastoral counselling encounter represents an expression of lives lived in the presence of God. Dialogue (through prayer and Scripture) becomes a triologue among God, the counsellor and the counselee. Counselling goals also help to frame the encounter towards the outcome of change that is anticipated.

The counsellor and counselee are both created in the Image of God, and both are presumed to have been created to represent God on earth. Their lives are both assumed to have *purpose* and *meaning* in context of having an earthly as well as eternal destiny.

The use of the Gestalt technique within the pastoral counselling model, involves awareness and the contact cycle (or cycle of experience) together with various techniques which may be applied. The overarching “field” of this pastoral counselling model is the *field of faith*.

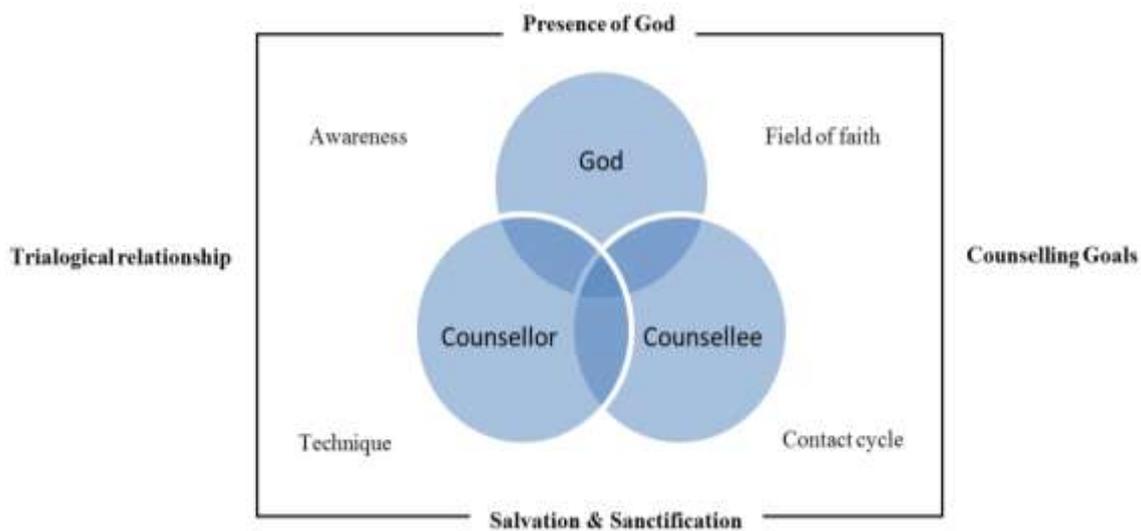


Figure 5.2: Pastoral counselling model for the exploration of calling and identity

5.3.5.3 Discussion of the proposed pastoral counselling encounter

Every human being is unique and has value and worth through the fact of being created in the **image of God** (See paragraph 4.5.1, 4.5.2, & 4.5.3). This is an important presumption, and also one that has to be explored, as the feelings of unworthiness may be a hindrance in the counselee’s ability to connect with God (hear or experience His presence).

While **counselling goal setting** keeps the counselling encounter focused toward a specific direction, the process takes place within the tension of the “already” (way of being in context of salvation) and the “not yet” (the anticipated new being at the time of Jesus’ return). The “**here and now**” being of the counselee is in the **process of “becoming”** through the **sanctification** process which is facilitated by the work of the Holy Spirit. While the Gestalt perspective is anchored in the “here and now” awareness, the “*field of faith*” creates a dual reality between the seen and unseen, as well as the present and the future.

From a Gestalt viewpoint **polarities** are viewed from a “paradoxical rather than an oppositional perspective” (Evans, 2007:196). They are seen as “dialectical, forming two ends of one continuum” and one cannot exist without the other (for example light / dark; good / bad), and so become “two sides of the same coin” instead of contradicting one another (Perls in Evans, 2007:196). The researcher argues that the dual reality of the *faith field* and the “*regular field of life*”, as well as the many paradoxes within Scripture, may be explored effectively with Gestalt techniques.

Within the **eschatological awareness**, the **paradoxical theory of change** within Gestalt (which encourages full awareness of experience and self-acceptance) is qualified. It is agreed that “change occurs when one becomes what he is, not when he tries to become who he is not” (Beisser; 1970; Joyce & Sills; 2010:39). The paradox however is ultimately between the *sinner* and the *saved sinner*, who is saved by grace, and between *who one is in Christ* and *who one is becoming* within the faith perspective. Within the pastoral counselling context the self-acceptance includes the awareness of being made into the image of God, of being “a sinner saved by grace” as well as the “not yet” dimension. Change and growth occurs on a *spiritual* level as well as a *psychological* level. Paul’s prayer in 1 Thessalonians 5:23 is for the sanctification of believers (wholly consecrated to God), in spirit, soul and body. Through awareness within the field of faith and self-acceptance anchored in God’s unconditional acceptance, individuals become who they were created and designed to be.

The paradoxical theory of change is linked to the Gestalt principle of “**organismic self-regulation**” (cf. paragraph 3.3.2.3). This expresses the belief that “people are inherently self-regulating and oriented toward growth.” (Yontef, 2005:84). The inherent moment towards change and growth is not rooted in evolution or existential theory within the pastoral counselling framework, but in the belief that God reaches down to human beings and calls them into relationship with Himself. 1 John 4:19 states, “We love Him, because He first

loved us.” According to Ephesians 2:8, human beings are saved as a free gift through faith (and not through human striving). In John 14:6 Jesus says that he is the way to the Father, and in John 15:16 Jesus says: “You have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you and I have appointed you, that you might go and bear fruit.”

The Gestalt counsellor’s stance of “**creative indifference**”, described as “creative impartiality” or “creative neutrality” by Joyce and Sills (2010:40), involves a lack of investment in any particular result. A Gestalt practitioner is interested in the process and consequences of choices that a counselee makes (Philipppson, 2001:230). This pastoral counselling model adheres to an acceptance of the counselee’s freedom of choice, coupled with a trust and confidence in **God’s continued involvement** within the whole of the person’s life. Freedom of will is defined in terms of the free-will that God has given mankind according to Scripture, and does not preclude the responsibility for the message of the Gospel. The pastoral counsellor’s stance becomes one of being within the “theological middle” where the gospel and other Scriptural truths are normatively proclaimed while at the same time allowing for the counselee to exercise free will in his/her particular process of experience.

The **particular counselling goal** in this study is to explore (professional) identity development (identity in Christ) in the context of calling. It is interconnected with the overarching pastoral counselling outcome of spiritual growth and maturity. Within this context distorted or negative perceptions of God will be explored towards spiritual health and the reframing of current situation, with a view towards transcending the current reality and generating new hope.

Living in the **presence of God**, also has an “already” and “not yet” quality. The presence of the Holy Spirit as the Counsellor is invited into the pastoral counselling encounter, putting the pastoral counsellor into the role of a “facilitator.” As facilitator the counsellor asks what God has in mind for a counselee, both in the here and now counselling process and life, as well as for the future. The role of pastoral facilitator / counsellor necessitates a submission to God taking the lead as the Counsellor, Father, Saviour and so forth. At the same time healing comes from both the **trialogical encounter** (the work of God through the Holy Spirit) and the authentic dialogical encounter between the counsellor and counselee.

The qualities of the **pastoral dialogue** relating within a Gestalt approach, involve genuine dialogue, authenticity and a fully present and validating counsellor. It involves “confirmation” which is more inclusive than acceptance. It holds both *who the counselee “is”* (include what is outside of the counselee’s awareness) and the potential of *who the counselee may become* (Joyce & Sills, 2010:47). As the Holy Spirit is invited into the counselling process, the dialogical encounter is encapsulated within (not extended to) a **trialogical encounter**. In this triologue, God is “Other.” It is an encounter in which the “fear of the Lord” facilitates intimacy and the experience of relationship facilitates a covenant with Him as God (Ultimate Transcendent).

In the context of the above discussion, it is important to note that the pastoral counsellor is helped or limited in effective counselling, by his/her own growth and maturity within all dimensions discussed.

Within this framework of the pastoral counselling encounter, the counsellor attends to awareness, the contact cycle, the field (Gestalt modalities) as well as using various other tools (techniques).

- **The *field of faith*** is unseen and falls outside of the field of perception (Louw, 2015:28). This is a meta-realm of life which “comes into play between the factor of *genesis* and *thanatos*, with *eros* as the in-between of life” (Louw, 2015:28). Hope and the significance of life emerge “within the awareness of transcendence” (Louw, 2015:28). The “unseen” is seen through a spiritual gaze and imagination of hope (Louw, 2015:28). Hope is inevitably linked to suffering and death. Hope entails a stance in life, a new mode of being that transcends optimistic speculation, and instils an existential mode of trust and being (Louw, 2015:28).

The field within Gestalt forms the “ground from which every experience or figure arises” (Joyce & Sills, 2010:28) (cf. paragraph 3.3.2.1). The types of focus typically used in counselling practice includes the “experiential field” (a person’s awareness); the relationship field within the counselling room and the “larger field” (the context in which both counsellor and counselee exist; spiritual, cultural, historical, and political influences) (Joyce & Sills, 2010:28). This field is encompassed within the *field of faith*.

- **Awareness** (cf. paragraph 3.3.2.1) within a Gestalt approach is encouraged within the “*inner zone*” (bodily-affective states), the “*outer zone*” (contact functions using the senses), and the “*middle zone*” (thinking, feeling, emotions, core beliefs and ways of understanding and making meaning) (Perls in Joyce & Sills, 2010:34-35). Within this pastoral counselling frame, awareness includes and starts from a meta-physical realm of the reality of God, relationship with Him, beliefs (include God images), interactions and communications with Him. Awareness shifts among the realm of faith, the realm of contact and experience and the normative guidelines of Scripture.
- The **Gestalt contact cycle or cycle of experience** and the modifications to contact (creative adjustments or interruptions to conflict) stand central within the Gestalt counselling process (Joyce & Sills, 2010:37-39; 105-119; Reynolds, 2005:159-164) (cf. paragraph 3.3.2.1 & 3.3.2.2). Specific cycles within this pastoral counselling process would therefore include contact with God through life experience/skill, Scripture and experience of God’s presence. Due to the nature of the pastoral counselling model, which is contractually defined between the counsellor and client, the contact with the realm of *faith* and *Scripture* form a starting point and a normative point of reference.
- The **techniques** used within this pastoral counselling model are both specific and general. The specific “tools of the trade” involve Scripture and prayer (as well as the sacraments and pastoral community, depending on the training and field of the pastoral counsellor).

a) Scriptural exploration

Possible areas of **Scriptural exploration** within the context of loss that emerged from paragraph 4.6.6 are:

- the use of *lament* (to express painful and conflicted emotions, petition God and to move towards acceptance and hope through praising God);
- exploration of *God-images* (His faithfulness, compassion and so forth) and life through metaphors (like the suffering Servant (Jesus’ compassion and God’s identification with human suffering), or Job’s suffering);
- the meaning of “*being called*” and created for a destiny and a purpose; and,

- themes such as the *fear of the Lord* which is linked to the wisdom literature (promoting a way of life that leads to both maturity and increases resilience).

Specific possibilities will arise within the context of area of need (in terms of the current pain as well as needed growth) and possible distortions in Biblically based beliefs.

b) Prayer

Prayer is used within the pastoral counselling encounter as an inviting of God's presence as well as dialogue with Him. It is important to guide counselees to a place where they can discern God's voice with greater ease and confidence, so that their intimacy levels with God increase together with their faith maturity.

The exploration of **Scripture** and use of **prayer** could also be fostered within a daily journaling journey.

c) Specific areas of meaning within a pastoral-counselling encounter

Specific areas of meaning that can be explored within this pastoral counselling model, which emerged from the participants' stories and literature, include:

- The counselee's understanding and experiences of God and the meaning of relationship with Him;
- Expectations in terms of God's involvement in human life in the following areas:
 - Does God guide people's life, and if so, how?
 - Does God guide people in a work or career context? If so, how?
 - What measure of protection can one expect from God?
 - How actively or non-actively does God steer the course of people's lives?
 - How personally or intimately does God communicate and interact with people? Is there a difference between these expectations and the reality

experienced? If so, what have I (the counselee) contributed to the discrepancy (what's to blame)?

- How would the “fear of the Lord” and “wisdom” affect my response to this situation?
- Facing the career obstacles, the following questions can be contemplated by counselees:
 - How has my understanding of God changed / been challenged?
 - How has my understanding of myself changed / been challenged?
 - How has my understanding of my relationships (with God, people close to me, colleagues and others) changed / been challenged?
 - How has my understanding of the world changed / been challenged?
- Further questions within the context of understanding of the counselee's belief system globally as well as contextually / situational, facing these struggles, are:
 - What does Scripture teach about?
 - Being called into careers
 - Being called as disciples in different work environments
 - Dealing with obstacles and losses
 - Am I finding peace and direction, and a closer relationship with God?
 - Which of my beliefs within the paradigm of my faith can be rephrased, can shift or be exchanged to be in line with Scripture, and to lead to increased maturity or growth?

d) Other tools or techniques

Other tools or techniques that can be employed within a pastoral-counselling encounter include:

- the Gestalt exploration of selves or inner conflict, through “two-chair” work for example (see MacKay, 2011) (cf. section 3.3.2);

- projections using clay or sand work (see Schoeman, 2012: 77-78, 80-83);
- working with dreams (see Schoeman, 2012:59);
- or experiments (see Perls, *et al.*, 2009 [1951]).

The researcher would for instance extend the conversation of meaning, such as which emerges from working with clay (which usually culminates in “what do you think it means in terms of your own life”), by bringing it into conversation with God. Some counselees are concurrently aware of their inner and faith processes, and will spontaneously find and verbalise meaning from both. This occurs in the context of having invited God into the process.

5.3.6 Experiential reflections

The **experiential reflections** may be used as loose guidelines within a face-to-face pastoral counselling encounter, both within sessions or in part as homework. They have been fleshed out within the pastoral counselling frame of this study. In this context a sixth reflection is added.

Safety precaution: Individuals’ who do not have a lot of experience in processing their own life experiences combined with counselling training, or who may be at a vulnerable place in their lives, may need face-to-face support over longer time, to use these reflections. These processes are very powerful, and should a lot of trauma material emerge, they may need additional therapeutic support within a team approach.

5.3.6.1 Experiential reflection one

Please give yourself sufficient time to complete this activity. You may want to complete it over the course of a few days.

- **Safety:** This activity may elicit deep emotions and if you are experiencing significant distress, it is advisable to rather complete it within a safe therapeutic environment.

- **Activity:** Your sense of calling or vocation may be strong, sure or faltering right now. You may even think of searching for one perhaps. The process of discernment is one that appears to grow and even change over time, while some people also report multiple callings. Your ability to examine yourself in terms of your interests, abilities, etc. all mediates the process.

Please take an A3 or bigger piece of paper for this meditative exercise. Using mediums of your choice, draw a horizontal line in the middle of the paper from left to right. This will be the foundational time-line of your life, starting at your conception or birth on the left up to the current day. We usually table the events of our lives in this way – putting the positive experiences at the top and the negatives at the bottom (and these can be rated by intensity). For this exercise however, I'd like major time-periods and events to be your baseline for exploring other themes.

Once you're ready to proceed, please take a few minutes to do a relaxation exercise of your choice. Become aware of your physical sensations. You might want to use music, sit at your favourite spot in your home, and/or use flowers or scented candles to set the mood.

Using your baseline – think of your various selves at various stages of your life (against the backdrop of a career, vocation and/or calling). Remember that we have essential, more enduring selves as well as our member selves – without worrying too much about identifying them “correctly”. There is no “true self” according to Polster (2005) and others – and thus we can just allow the selves to emerge into our awareness without judgment. What are the adjectives that would describe you or your emotions or behaviour at the various phases and key points in your life? Are there metaphors that can give shape to your selves? How did or do these different voices of various selves come together in shaping you?

Sit back and observe what you have sketched and/or written and answer the following questions in light of your career and vocational choices:

1. Describe your various selves shaping your “self.”
2. Describe the themes that repeat in your life.
3. Describe any of your dreams (i.e. daydreams, wishes) that have come into your awareness through this exercise.
4. Describe any sense of vocation or calling, or lack of it, that comes to light.

5. What else do you become aware of that seem significant in the story of your life?
6. Reflect on where God was in these phases of your life, or within these experiences that has come into your awareness. Prayerfully invite God to show you where He was in these phases of your life, or within these experiences that has come into your awareness.
7. Describe key experiences through which you experienced God communicating with you and/or guiding you?
8. Reflect on how you typically experience communication with God.
9. Considering all your “selves”, experiences and experiences with God – who have you been created, destined or purposed to be?

5.3.6.2 Experiential reflection two

In this reflection, you will explore your life values. It is suggested that you use the first activity and reflection as a point of departure.

1. Identity phrases that represent values that have directed your life up to this point.
2. Look at the 1st meditation: what values emerge more strongly than others? Please list them in order of importance.
3. Are there values that you live your life by, of which you were not aware? Which are these?
4. Which values represent introjections?
5. Reflecting upon your introjected values (those you adopted from your family or other people you admired or were taught by, together with societal stereotypical ideas) – which will you incorporate into your value system as a choice, and which will you discard?
6. List any other values that have come to mind, which you want to incorporate into your life, even if they haven't really featured much to date.
7. Rephrase your values in the present tense, starting with “I...”

(Examples of work values by McKay (2013) and personal values by Roberts (1994) are in Appendix F)

8. Considering your belief system, what do your traditions of faith teach about your purpose of being in the context of your values?

Read and meditate on Ps. 139:1-18. What does it mean to you to think that all your days were written in God's book before they came to be?

5.3.6.3 Experiential reflection three

Take some time to reflect upon the various jobs or forms of work you've done over the course of your life. This might include informal as well as formal positions and may not all be in the counselling field. You might want to jot down some notes on a timeline similar to the first meditation, or represent them in other formats. Pictures and phrases can be very useful to give them shape.

From this:

1. Identity five talents and/or behaviours that you do very well.
2. List five behaviours or tasks that you do well and/or enjoy, which you can use or practice at least once a day.
3. Take a month and write a daily journal about something that you are grateful of pertaining to your life or to that day.

Operating from our strengths adds meaning and fulfilment to our lives.

How will this strengthen or reshape (change) your current work behaviours and/or career path?

5.3.6.4 Experiential reflection four

Take a moment to figuratively take off your work-shoes. Consider the following questions without the constraints of a specific position, a specific job description, financial or other constraining factors.

1. List five things that you would like from a job.
2. List five things that are necessary for you to experience meaning in your life.
3. In which ways does this fit your current job description and/or scope of practice?

4. In which ways does this not fit your current job description and/or scope of practice?

In Gestalt language there may be some polarities that you identified within your various selves, perhaps in context with your work environment and career goals. If so – jot them down if you haven't already done so.

How does your work fit in (or not) with what you believe your calling is?

5.3.6.5 Experiential reflection five

One of the examples in literature (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001:190-191) refers to two groups of hospital cleaners. Those who saw their work in terms of the menial tasks, the negative perceptions of doctors and nurses, etc. did not experience much meaning and fulfilment in their tasks. Those who saw their work as a crucial part in the critical care of patients, adjusting their methods and time tables to enhance the flow of work, experienced meaning, satisfaction and fulfilment.

A similar example is an estate agent viewing his/her job as a way to earn a living versus viewing it in terms of matching individual families to the communities and schools that suit them.

One can reframe one's job descriptions/work, in a similar fashion. It is possible to change careers or the focus of or within a specific job, for example the population that you counsel or the environment in which you do so. Consider what would make your work the most meaningful to you within the parameters that you can operate within.

Consider the information from the preceding meditations against your career path and current work activities and describe:

1. The match or fit that you experience with your job/career path.
2. The dissonance of your fit to your job/career path – how does it not fit/suit you?
3. Describe how you will (or can) change either:
 - a. your job tasks
 - b. the timing of certain tasks (during the day or week)

- c. the contact that you have with others (e.g. connecting with friends or colleagues, scheduling certain counselling activities)
 - d. your career path
 - e. your view of your work
4. Consider the meaning that has emerged for you in light of your relationship with God. How has work related experiences impacted your relationship with God? Where could He be guiding you to at this point of time?

The loss of, or disruption of a dream can lead to grief experiences. If this is true for you in terms of your career or calling, consider how you could work through this from both a psychological and spiritual point of view.

5.3.6.6 Experiential reflection six

The experience of having a calling orientation to work or feeling called to a particular career or other roles, lead to higher satisfaction with life as well as work, regardless of the source conceptualization (Christian God, Higher Power, or other) (Duffy & Dik, 2013:428-436).

Calling has been defined by Dik and Duffy (2009:427) as being:

...a transcendent summons, experienced as originating beyond the self, to approach a particular life role in a manner oriented toward demonstrating or deriving a sense of purpose or meaningfulness and that holds other-oriented values and goals as primary sources of motivation.

From a Biblical perspective, the meaning of “calling” refers to being summoned, invited, commissioned, appointed, pre-ordained. Within the New Testament the word “calling” or “commissioning” is used similarly referring to being called as disciples of Jesus within the (new) relationship with Him. Writers such as Badcock (2006) and Hardy (1990) are emphatic in statements that this “calling” relates to the gospel plan and Christian ethics, not to specific employment in our modern world. At the same time many individuals in the helping professions, report that they feel called to the profession.

Consider the following questions:

1. What do you believe the bigger purpose of you calling to be?
2. In which different ways can that be achieved through work tasks?

3. List a few alternative ways of meeting those same goals (both within different work environments and the wider context of your life).
4. Consider your career goals within the context of the specific tasks or bigger purpose that you feel called to. It is up to you to decide whether they match and to change or adapt any of your goals if it doesn't match.

Taking time to continue to reflect on these questions while evaluating various options, may re-confirm where you are headed or lead you to change direction. Journaling and discussions with key people in your life may also bring new ideas into your awareness or foreground. Engaging in such a process may open the ground for you to engage with God through new questions or considerations.

5.3.7 Delineating the experiential reflections for praxis

5.3.7.1 Experiential reflection one

Participants are invited and guided in an activity (cf. paragraph 5.3.6.1) through which a timeline of their lives are drawn up around significant events or phases that reflect their various “selves.” This leads to reflecting on any sense of vocation or calling. This awareness is brought into the spiritual dimension through by further reflections around the individual's relationship with his/her experience of God, in terms of purpose and communication.

5.3.7.2 Experiential reflection two

This activity invites participants to reflect on the various values (cf. paragraph 5.2.6.2) that they live by. Examples are given (Appendix F) and the reflections guide awareness that also flows from the activity and awareness gained in the first experiential reflection. Introjected values that may no longer be pertinent can be evaluated and either assimilated or rejected, while awareness of new values may emerge.

Participants are invited to reflect on their purpose of being in light of their understanding of God in context of Psalm 139:1-18.

5.3.7.3 Experiential reflection three

This reflective exercise evaluates job tasks in terms of core strengths or talents (cf. paragraph 5.3.6.3), leading to a deeper awareness of how they could be incorporated in to work life. This leads to job crafting to enhance meaningfulness experienced through work. This process is extended into a journaling exercise to stimulate gratefulness.

5.3.7.4 Experiential reflection four

Building on the previous reflection, participants are invited to reflect on what they would like from their work as well as things they perceive as fundamental to experience meaning in their lives (cf. paragraph 5.3.6.4). Awareness of polarities within different needs is encouraged through guided reflection.

Participants are asked how these identified needs are being met or not met through their work, and how work fits in with what they perceive their calling to be.

5.3.7.5 Experiential reflection five

The reflections contained in this activity invite further job crafting activity while encouraging adaptive meaning-making (cf. paragraph 5.3.6.5).

The awareness of meaning is then brought into the relationship the individual has with God, considering how the individual may be guided at this time.

Individuals are also encouraged to seek further counselling around grief, should they be experiencing a loss or disruption of vocational dreams or “missed calling”.

5.3.7.6 Experiential reflection six

Reflections on the use of “calling” in Scripture is encouraged in the context of individual’s work lives, as well as the overall or bigger purpose or calling he/she may experience as being

from the Lord (cf. paragraph 5.3.6.6). Reflections are designed to encourage adaptive meaning making that enhances “coping” and well-being.

5.3.8 Theoretical underpinnings for the experiential reflections from a career guidance perspective

The experiential reflections (meditations) have been based on counselling recommendations of Dik *et al.* (2014:5-18) and Dik *et al.*, (2009:628-629) (cf. paragraph 3.5.8 & section 3.7), that relate to the following themes:

- a) Signature strengths (Peterson & Seligman in Dik *et al.*, 2014:6; Seligman, 2006:777; Seligman, *et al.*, 2005:416);
- b) Foster situations that induce positivity (Dik, *et al.*, 2014:8-9) and stimulate “flow” (a focused or immersed state in goal directed activity) (Dik, *et al.*, 2014:8-9; Peterson, *et al.*, 2007:150; Ullén, *et al.*, 2012:167).
- c) Developing gratitude (Peterson *et al.*, 2007:153);
- d) Foster work-hope, the facilitation of meaning and encourage agency (Dik, *et al.* 2014:5-18);
- e) Encourage job crafting which is especially helpful for those experiencing unanswered callings (Berg *et al.*, 2013:82; Dik, *et al.*, 2014:5-18; Peterson, *et al.*, 2007:153).
- f) Developing a calling (Dik, *et al.*, 2014:5-18).

5.4 CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

The transformational change envisioned as a research goal (Osmer, 2008:4) was explored and developed into a pastoral counselling model within the pragmatic task of this chapter.

Experiential reflections (meditations) were developed according to research guidelines given by Dik *et al.* (2014:5-18) and literature explored in chapter three, within Gestalt self-formation principles (cf. section 3.3.2). Four of the research participants took part in this phase of the research, and it appeared that the proposed program both matched processes of seeking meaning and development within their processes, and extended it somewhat towards new meaning and possible growth and resolution. An expert opinion was also given by

Wendy Kaufman (counselling psychologist) who took part in an implementation process. She found it useful in her own positioning of her activities within the field of psychology.

The collaborative approach of Brunson (2014:5) was applied within the transversal space, towards the development of a pastoral counselling model in collaboration with strategies from Gestalt therapy and other approaches.

The setting of this pastoral counselling model is within the practical / pastoral theological field, which frames the approach. After discussing the integration of strategies, possible areas for exploration were highlighted (in this research study context) and the experiential reflections were fleshed out to reflect the pastoral nature of the study.

The pastoral counselling approach that was developed, using mostly Gestalt strategies and principles in partnership, should be extendible to other mental health professionals or pastoral counsellors facing career changes or blockages (tailored to the specific problem within the areas of reflection). The main questions addressed practically are “Who am I?” and, “Where am I going to?” This addresses issues of identity, meaning as well as losses.

It is hoped that this study and pastoral counselling model will be of particular use to registered counsellors facing issues unique to their chosen and ideal profession, including (but not limited to) those who specialized in the Gestalt Play therapy.

This study will be summarized and concluded in chapter six.

CHAPTER SIX

6. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

6.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Registered counsellors specializing in Gestalt play therapy find themselves within the profession of Psychology, in which their work duties are prescribed and restricted to a specific scope of practice (cf. paragraph 1.2.1; 1.2.2; 3.2.1; 3.2.9). Many of the registered counsellors within this study set out on their careers with the hope of becoming psychologists (cf. paragraph 3.2.5; 3.2.6; 2.5.1.7), only to find that there are as little as 5–10 % of applicants per year, who are successful in being selected into a professional master's degree program that would lead to the registration of psychologist (cf. paragraph 1.2.1).

The participants in this study that have chosen to specialize in Gestalt play therapy are not able to use it as freely as social workers (for whom this master's degree has been developed). As from 2013 no registered counsellors are allowed into this program which has also been amended to utilizing various approaches (cf. paragraph 1.2.2).

The profession of registered counselling was developed as a “mid-level” professional, second to that of a psychologist (cf. paragraph 1.2.1; 3.2.1; 3.2.4; 3.2.10). The aim of the category was to train up counsellors who would provide basic mental health care to the previously disadvantaged communities (cf. paragraph 3.2.1). Jobs to facilitate this process were not created however and many registered counsellors to date have been trained in intervention models similar to that of a psychologist and have registered in private practice (cf. paragraph 3.2.1; 3.2.9). A newly promulgated scope and training curriculum will be implemented by 2016 to rectify this situation (cf. paragraph 3.2.1). Currently there are very limited employment opportunities for registered counsellors.

Registered counsellors are left in a very difficult position in terms of their professional identity development, which is usually at least partly facilitated within professional community support (cf. paragraph 3.2.1). Many psychologists and most of the public are not aware of the registration and profession. Also, many registered counsellors did not set out to work in community settings and many may have used (or planned to use) the training and

registration as a stepping stone toward a professional master's degree (cf. paragraph 1.2.1; 3.2.5; 2.5.2.3). It may be that their motivations to work within the profession of psychology are indicative of a specific type of person who would not fit in the positions originally envisioned for them. The hierarchical structure created within the profession of psychology, in terms of their position as mid-level professionals with a more limited scope of practice and earning potential together with the fact that they cannot pursue their professions on a master's and doctorate degree level training, appear to outweigh the assurances that they have a very important role to play within the mental health field in South Africa (cf. paragraph 1.2; 3.2; 4.7).

The “experience of self and identity” and possible “meaning made” within the profession of registered counsellors was explored within the literature, around topics such as: self and identity development (cf. paragraph 3.3); professional identity development (cf. paragraph 3.4); calling, vocation, career and spirituality (cf. paragraph 3.5; 3.5.5; 3.5.7); meaning as it relates to work (cf. paragraph 3.5.2); and mechanisms of meaning and coping (cf. paragraph 3.5.2 – 3.5.7).

Participants stories are told within the following themes: being drawn to a profession (cf. paragraph 2.5.1.1.); the experience of vocation and calling within the context of a life lived before God or not (cf. paragraph 2.5.1.2 – 2.5.1.3); educational journeys and future goals (cf. paragraph 2.5.1.4; 2.5.1.7); practicalities within the profession and finding a professional identity within the profession (cf. 2.5.1.5; 2.5.1.6).

From the storied accounts described in chapter two, it appears that participants within this study represent a sub-population of registered counsellors who have taken the initiative to carve out niches and identities for themselves within the field of play therapy coupled with a desire they always had to make a difference in the lives of children (cf. paragraph 2.5.1.5.). Some of them have experienced disappointment as they had hoped for an enlarged scope of practice, increased recognition, work opportunities and income.

A significant percentage of these registered counsellors have also experienced their career motivations and meanings in terms of a transcendent call. This places additional strain on their relationship with God (the Ultimate Transcendent) as well as their belief systems, in the face of blocked career paths (cf. paragraph 2.5.1.3; 3.5; 5.2).

The significance of the study is found in that this appears to be the first research project related to Registered Counsellors, performed by a registered counsellor who has worked in private practice (rather than a psychologist or student-psychologist). Furthermore it appears to be the first study exploring the professional identity development in context of “calling.”

Limitations of the study: The response rate for this study was low, which compromises the validity of data. With small samples drawn through convenience sampling, less inferences can be made to the wider population (Ellis & Steyn, 2003:51). It may be that some participants were motivated to either participate or not participate, based on the fact that the researcher located the project within the practical theological field. In this case data pertaining to calling and spirituality may not be reflective of the total population.

6.2 ANSWERING THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

6.2.1 The research question

The overarching question to be answered by this research is:

How can registered counsellors specializing in Gestalt Play therapy be helped through pastoral and Gestalt principles around self-formation, in the development of their professional identities?

6.2.2 Secondary research questions

- a) *The first research question* is: How do registered counsellors specializing in Gestalt Play therapy experience the development of their professional identities?

This question is first asked and explored within chapter one before being addressed in chapter two. Chapter two details the storied accounts of participants’ experienced given in context of a colloquium, an individual interview, qualitative questionnaires together with the evaluations from the co-researchers. An account of a pastoral counsellor is also given through the questionnaire data.

The storied accounts are gathered for the descriptive and empirical research task (Osmer, 2008:4). These stories reflect conflict and struggles around professional identity development (their place within the profession of psychology) along with questions of meaning and destiny in terms of God's will, studied through the concept of "calling." This creates a dissonance in their relationships with God. It appears that negative appraisals of the career itself, professional identities and the blockages towards further studies (to become psychologists) can lead to experiences of loss.

The research population represents registered counsellors who have embarked on further studies within Gestalt Play therapy (an avenue now closed), indicating a possible lack of satisfaction with the "status quo" within their professions as well as a devoted interest in being skilled in their work with children. They may thus not represent the general population of registered counsellors, but gives a unique view of those who do want "more."

- b) ***The second research question*** is: Which over-arching principles could guide registered counsellors specializing in Gestalt Play therapy, in the development of their professional identities?

This question is addressed within the literature search in chapter three, which addresses the interpretive task within research (Osmer, 2008:4).

The study addressed the history of registered counselling as profession within South-Africa, professional identity development, the development of "self" (from a Gestalt and other perspectives), calling and/or vocation, meaning making and career research.

- c) ***The third research question*** is: Which Biblical and pastoral principles could guide the subset of Christian registered counsellors within this population specializing in Gestalt Play therapy, in the development of their professional identities?

This question is addressed in chapter four within the normative research task (Osmer, 2008:11). The concept of calling within the Scriptural traditions was researched from Scripture and other literature.

Questions were also asked about the unique nature and contribution of pastoral theology and pastoral counselling in meeting the needs of those dealing with loss (of

career opportunities as well as a sense of meaning and destiny) and shattering of faith assumptions within their relationship with God.

- d) ***The fourth research question*** is: How do registered counsellors specializing in Gestalt Play therapy experience the development of their professional identities after implementation of the experiential reflections?

The transformational change envisioned as a research goal (Osmer, 2008:4) was explored and developed into a pastoral counselling model within the pragmatic task of chapter five.

The fourth question is addressed in the first half of chapter five, also extending the interpretive task of chapter two.

A program using the information gained from the participants (chapter two) and the literature study (chapter three) was developed in the form of experiential reflections (originally called meditations). These were aimed at professional identity development using Gestalt and other principles gained from the career research field. The results of an implementation and evaluation that followed are given.

- e) ***The fifth research question*** is: How can registered counsellors specializing in gestalt Play therapy (or other specializations) in future be aided in the development of their professional identities, through the use of pastoral counselling and Gestalt self-formation principles as well as spiritual principles (based on the findings of this study)?

This question is addressed in the second half of chapter five towards change and healing in the pragmatic task of this research (Osmer, 2008:4). Using the collaborative approach of Brunsdon (2014:5), a pastoral counselling model for intervention was developed.

6.2.3 The central theoretical argument

The central theoretical argument of this study is that a pastoral counselling process utilizing Gestalt principles around self-formation as well as spiritual principles, will aid registered counsellors specializing in Gestalt Play Therapy, to develop their professional identities.

Experiential reflections (meditations) were developed, based upon the storied accounts of participants' as well as the literature. Preliminary investigation indicates that it could be an effective tool within the context of overall population of registered counsellors. The findings are presented in the beginning of chapter five (section 5.2).

A pastoral counselling intervention is developed within Brunson's (2014) collaborative approach, to aid the Christian believers within the research population. It is founded upon the pastoral care counselling model of Louw (1998, 2003, 2010, 2011, 2015), while integrating principle and strategies of change from Gestalt theory. Findings of the normative inquiry (chapter four) and the original experiential reflections are positioned in context of this counselling model, in the second part of chapter five (cf. section 5.3).

6.3 STRUCTURE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT

Chapter one: The practical theological framework used for this study is shaped by the model of Osmer (2008) in conjunction with the post-foundational model of Müller (2004; cf. paragraph 1.7.7). Osmer's (2008) model is representative of the Reformatory theological foundations shared by the researcher in her personal life. The post-foundational model of Müller (2004) places research within a transversal "eco" space in which practical theology converses with other disciplines that has different epistemologies, and was utilized to dialogue with constructivist and social constructivist conceptualizations of "self" and "identity" within the postmodern world as well as the field constructivist paradigm of Gestalt theory.

Chapter two: The **descriptive and empirical research tasks** (Osmer: 2008:4, 28) are reported on in chapter two. Within this research task, the first three movements of Müller's (2004:300) model, are applied (cf. paragraph 1.7.7). The **context** (movement 1) of the situation of registered counsellors specializing in Gestalt Play therapy is **listened to and**

described in chapters one and two (movement 2) (Müller, 2004:300). **Interpretations are made in collaboration** with participants as co-researchers (movement 3) and are reported in this chapter.

Strands of reflection on the presence of God (the Ultimate Transcendent) as understood and experienced within this research context, are found in the descriptions of experiencing a calling and spirituality, in chapter two (the fifth movement of Müller's (2004:300) model; cf. paragraph 1.7.7). It is further explored in depth in chapter four from a normative Pastoral theological perspective.

Chapter three reports on an inter-disciplinary literature study. This study is reflective of the **interpretive task** of Osmer's (2008:9) model where theories are searched in order to understand the patterns of meaning or reality perceived.

The **research context** (movement 1) or situation of registered counsellors specializing in Gestalt Play therapy is explored through literature in chapter one and chapter three. Various traditions of interpretation **inform** (movement 4) **and thicken** (movement 6) the description of experiences to follow in chapter four (cf. Müller, 2004:300; cf. paragraph 1.7.7).

Chapter four: The normative task of research (Osmer, 2008:4) which asks "What ought to be going on?" is addressed within chapter four.

Reflections on the presence of God (the Ultimate Transcendent) as understood and experienced on in this research context, within the fifth movement of Müller's (2004:300) model, are explored in depth in chapter four.

The "Ultimate Transcendent" represents "whoever" a person may perceive God or a "Higher Power" to be within the definition of spirituality used by Hodge (2003) (in the development of the intrinsic spirituality scale used within the study). Within the eco-space of this research project, registered counselling is not linked to a specific form of religion or spirituality. While the majority of participants indicated a Christian belief, other views as well as the results from other research, were accounted for in the term "Ultimate Transcendent".

Spirituality, calling, career and loss are examined in context of the Bible within this chapter. Biblical principles or guidelines are sought to guide the development of a pastoral counselling model to assist the Christian believers within this research population.

Chapter five: The information gathered through the interpretative literature review (chapter three) and the descriptive-empirical research tasks (chapter two) are used within the **pragmatic research task** in which the experiential reflections (meditations) were refined as strategies of action (Osmer, 2008:4, 19).

A **pastoral counselling model for intervention** is developed (through integration and collaboration) within the field of faith, utilizing strategies from Gestalt theory and information gathered in chapter three, the data from the original experiential reflections (design and implementation in the first part of chapter five) and the normative study in chapter four.

Through this action (seventh movement) the development of **alternative interpretations** moves beyond the local community (Müller, 2004:300; cf. paragraph 1.7.7). The original experiential reflections can be used in non-religious contexts, while the pastoral counselling model and fleshed out reflections, which have been uniquely constructed for a pastoral care setting, may also serve a Christian psychological setting.

The intervention model may be helpful to other registered counsellors (who did not obtain the Gestalt Play therapy training) as well as other mental health professionals facing professional identity difficulties and questions related to calling and career paths.

6.4 PASTORAL COUNSELLING MODEL FOR PRAXIS

6.4.1 A collaborative approach within the transversal space

The model for collaborative research within the transversal space of Brunsdon (2014:5) is used toward the construction of a pastoral counselling model into which Gestalt theory principles is integrated as strategies and qualified principles for change.

The epistemological point of departure is found in the eschatological and pneumatological perspectives in Scripture and the “theology of affirmation” of Louw (2015) within the reformatory tradition. The goals of exploring *calling, meaning and identity development* is placed against the overarching goals of developing spiritual maturity, in context of living lives in God’s presence.

The unique tools of Scripture and prayer are used together with Gestalt strategies of change. Within the areas of meaning to be explored (cf. paragraph 5.5.3.1) and experiential reflections (cf. section 5.3.6) other suggestions that emerged from the career and identity literature reviews, are also woven into.

6.4.2 Description of the proposed pastoral counselling model

6.4.2.1 The frame of the pastoral counselling model

The model is undergirded by the eschatological perspective that includes both counsellor and counselee. The pastoral encounter represents an expression of lives lived in the presence of God. Dialogue (through prayer and Scripture) becomes a triologue among God, the counsellor and the counselee. Counselling goals help to frame the encounter towards the outcome of change that is anticipated.

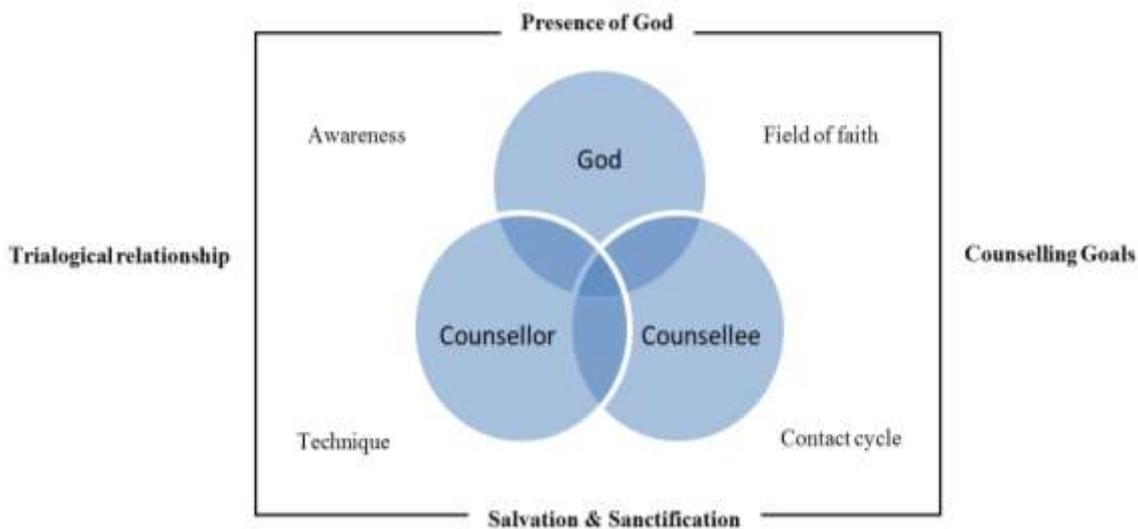


Figure 6.1: Pastoral counselling model for the exploration of calling and identity

6.4.2.2 The self

The counsellor and counselee are both created in the Image of and as representatives of God. Their lives are both assumed to have purpose and meaning in context of having an earthly as well as eternal destiny.

6.4.2.3 Techniques

The unique pastoral counselling techniques involve *prayer* and *Scripture*. The use of the Gestalt technique within the pastoral counselling model, involves awareness and the contact cycle (or cycle of experience) together with various techniques which may be applied. The overarching “field” of this pastoral counselling model is the *field of faith*.

6.4.2.4 Theoretical underpinnings for the pastoral counselling model

- Human beings are created in the image of God (See paragraph 4.6.1, 4.6.2, & 4.6.3).
- Goal setting occurs within the tension between the “here and now” being of the counselee and the process of “becoming” in the context of sanctification through the work of the Holy Spirit.
- The paradoxical or dual realities of the faith field and the “regular field of life”, and the many paradoxes within Scripture, may be explored effectively with Gestalt techniques.
- Within the **eschatological awareness**, the paradox is ultimately between the sinner and the sinner who is saved by grace, as well as between who one is in Christ and who one is becoming within the faith perspective. Self-acceptance includes the awareness of being made into the image of God, of being “a sinner saved by grace” as well as the “not yet” dimension.
- The inherent moment towards change and growth is not rooted in evolution or existential theory within the pastoral counselling framework, but in the belief that God reaches down to human beings and calls them into relationship with Himself.

- The pastoral counsellor's stance is one of being within the "*theological middle*" where the gospel and other Scriptural truths are normatively proclaimed while at the same time allowing the counselee to exercise free will in his/her particular process of experience.
- The **particular goal** in this study is to explore (professional) identity development (identity in Christ) in the context of calling. It is interconnected with the overarching pastoral counselling outcome of spiritual growth and maturity. Within this context distorted or negative perceptions of God will be explored towards spiritual health and the reframing of current situation, with a view towards transcending the current reality and generating new hope.
- The role of pastoral counsellor necessitates a *submission to God* taking the lead as Wonderful Counsellor. At the same time healing comes from both the triological encounter (the work of God through the Holy Spirit) and the authentic dialogical encounter between the counsellor and counselee.
- As the *Holy Spirit* is invited into the counselling process, the dialogical encounter is encapsulated within (not extended to) a **trialogical encounter**. In this triologue, God is "Other." It is an encounter in which the "fear of the Lord" facilitates intimacy and the experience of relationship facilitates a covenant with Him as God (Ultimate Transcendent).
- The pastoral *counsellor's effectiveness* is enhanced or limited by personal growth and maturity.
- The *field of faith* is the meta-realm of life which "comes into play between the factor of *genesis* and *thanatos*, with *eros* as the in-between of life" (Louw, 2015:28). Hope and the significance of life emerge "within the awareness of transcendence" (Louw, 2015:28).
- *Hope* entails a stance in life, a new mode of being that transcends optimistic speculation, and instils an existential mode of trust and being (Louw, 2015:28).
- Within this pastoral counselling frame, *awareness* includes and starts from a meta-physical realm of the reality of God, relationship with Him, beliefs (include God

images), interactions and communications with Him. Awareness shifts among the realm of faith, the realm of contact and experience and the normative guidelines of Scripture.

- Specific *cycles of contact* within this pastoral counselling process would include contact with God through life experience, Scripture and experience of God's presence. Due to the nature of the pastoral counselling model, which is contractually defined between the counsellor and client, the contact with the realm of faith and Scripture form a starting point and a normative point of reference.
- The *techniques* used within this pastoral counselling model are both specific (involving Scripture and prayer) and general (Gestalt and other techniques).
- Possible areas of Scriptural exploration within the *context of loss* that emerged from paragraph 4.6.6, are: the use of lament; exploration of God-images and life through metaphors; the meaning of "being called" and created for a destiny and a purpose; and, themes such as the fear of the Lord which is linked to the wisdom literature.
- *Prayer* is used within the pastoral counselling encounter as an inviting of God's presence as well as dialogue with Him.
- Specific areas of meaning that can be explored within this pastoral counselling model, which emerged from the participants' stories and literature, are discussed in terms of: the counselee's understanding and experiences of God and the meaning of relationship with Him; expectations in terms of God's involvement in human life; facing the career obstacles; and the exploration of global and contextual belief systems.
- Other tools or techniques suggested include: the Gestalt exploration of selves or inner conflict, through "two-chair" work for example (see MacKay, 2011) (cf. section 3.3.2); projections using clay or sand work (see Schoeman, 2012: 77-78, 80-83), working with dreams (see Schoeman, 2012:59); or experiments (see Perls, *et al.*, 2009 [1951]).

6.4.3 Experiential reflections within the pastoral counselling model

Herewith a summary of the experiential reflections described in chapter 5:

6.4.3.1 Experiential reflection one

Participants are invited and guided in an activity (cf. paragraph 5.3.6.1) through which a timeline of their lives are drawn up around significant events or phases that reflect their various “selves.” This leads to reflecting on any sense of vocation or calling. This awareness is brought into the spiritual dimension through by further reflections around the individual’s relationship with his/her experience of God, in terms of purpose and communication.

6.4.3.2 Experiential reflection two

This activity invites participants to reflect on the various values (cf. paragraph 5.3.6.2) that they live by. Examples are given (Appendix F) and the reflections guide awareness that also flows from the activity and awareness gained in the first experiential reflection. Introjected values that may no longer be pertinent can be evaluated and either assimilated or rejected, while awareness of new values may emerge.

Participants are invited to reflect on their purpose of being in light of their understanding of God.

6.4.3.3 Experiential reflection three

This reflective exercise evaluates job tasks in terms of core strengths or talents (cf. paragraph 5.3.6.3), leading to a deeper awareness of how they could be incorporated in to work life. This leads to job crafting to enhance meaningfulness experienced through work. This process is extended into a journaling exercise to stimulate gratefulness.

6.4.3.4 Experiential reflection four

Building on the previous reflection, participants are invited to reflect on what they would like from their work as well as things they perceive as fundamental to experience meaning in their lives (cf. paragraph 5.3.6.4). Awareness of polarities within different needs is encouraged through guided reflection.

Participants are asked how these identified needs are being met or not met through their work, and how work fits in with what they perceive their calling to be.

6.4.3.5 Experiential reflection five

The reflections contained in this activity invite further job crafting activity while encouraging adaptive meaning-making (cf. paragraph 5.3.6.5).

The awareness of meaning is then brought into the relationship the individual has with God, considering how the individual may be guided at this time.

Individuals are also encouraged to seek further counselling around grief, should they be experiencing a loss or disruption of vocational dreams or “missed calling”.

6.4.3.6 Experiential reflection six

Reflections on the use of “calling” in Scripture is encouraged in the context of individual’s work lives, as well as the overall or bigger purpose or calling he/she may experience as being from the Lord (cf. paragraph 5.3.6.6). Reflections are designed to encourage adaptive meaning making that enhances “coping” and well-being.

6.5 THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS FOR THE EXPERIENTIAL REFLECTIONS FROM A CAREER GUIDANCE PERSPECTIVE

The experiential reflections (meditations) have been based on counselling recommendations of Dik *et al.* (2014:5-18) and Dik *et al.* (2009:628-629) (cf. paragraph 3.5.8 & 3.7), that relate to the following themes:

- a) Signature strengths (Peterson & Seligman in Dik, *et al.*, 2014:6; Seligman, 2006:777; Seligman, *et al.*, 2005:416);
- b) Foster situations that induce positivity (Dik, *et al.*, 2014:8-9) and stimulate “flow” (a focused or immersed state in goal directed activity) (Dik, *et al.*, 2014:8-9; Peterson, *et al.*, 2007:150; Ullén, *et al.*, 2012:167).
- c) Developing gratitude (Peterson *et al.*, 2007:153);
- d) Foster work-hope, the facilitation of meaning and encourage agency (Dik, *et al.* 2014:5-18);
- e) Encourage job crafting which is especially helpful for those experiencing unanswered callings (Berg *et al.* 2013:82; Dik, *et al.*, 2014:5-18; Peterson, *et al.*, 2007:153).
- f) Developing a calling (Dik, *et al.*, 2014:5-18).

6.6 STORIED CONCLUSION

Registered counsellors are “mid-level” professionals in the field of psychology, on a “second-tier” to the position of psychologist in spite of the fact that they are told to not perceive themselves at the bottom of a hierarchy. Registered counsellors have completed a four year B.Psych degree (or equivalent) together with an internship in order to register with the HPCSA, and they can only enlarge the scope of their professional activities through passing the selection process into a professional master's degree, which would lead to registration as psychologists upon completion. This is also the only route open to registered counsellors if they want to pursue their careers in psychology further academically.

Registered counsellors’ work tasks were envisioned as providing preventative, basic mental health services to the previously disadvantaged communities. Employment opportunities within this sector have however not realized, and it appears that registered counsellors’ career goals are very often to become psychologists. In a market where they stand a 5-10% chance

annually to be accepted into a professional masters' degree, the B.Psych appears to have become a stepping stone or perhaps a stopgap or alternative for many registered counsellors.

Work opportunities within the profession of psychology are guided by the process of “proto-professionalization” by which a community comes to view their problems in terms of psychological problems that need specific intervention. Not only is the public largely unaware of the category of registered counselling, but the communities they were destined to work in, are hardly aware of psychology. They appear to be framing their needs more on an economic level. The scope of practice for registered counsellors is aimed at preventative and developmental services, but within the work settings they were destined for, they would necessarily encounter a lot of clients with mental health difficulties who have to be referred to psychologists. In light of economic realities these psychologists would probably be intern-student psychologists or clinical psychologists within their one year community service, if available, and to whom registered counsellors would report.

The question is who these registered counsellors perceive themselves to be. Their sense of “self” would have been formed through experiences at the contact boundary through various contact cycles through their lives, and is thus informed by their histories, values and beliefs. This includes their goals of helping others, of making a difference, and goals for entering the profession of psychology. With many having aimed for professional training as psychologists, the researcher expects that registered counsellors will have similar interests, needs and also a psychological mindedness or desire to understand human behaviours. Successful psychotherapy (or counselling) has been linked to a higher level of psychological mindedness among clients as well, which is not being a quality typical of impoverished communities. Aside from a serious lack of employment opportunities one could also ask how much job satisfaction registered counsellors would accordingly get, unless they are able to reframe their goals and life stories in a way that would reconfigure their identities or sense of “self.” This is conceivable but how will they do that?

The researcher also argues that the hierarchy within the profession of psychology that is said to not exist while keeping the majority of students who set out on their academic training with the goal of becoming psychologists, from those goals, will block successful adaptation through taking away individuals' personal agency.

Professional identity formation among professional counsellors encompasses interpersonal and intrapersonal growth tasks as well as acquiring a specific knowledge and skill set which

becomes part of that identity. The researcher assumes that registered counsellors set out on their careers with a preferred sense of self or preferred identity as a “*possible self*” or “*ideal self*”. Their “*caring selves*,” “*helping selves*” or “*confidant selves*” (acting as confidants to others) and various other possible selves accordingly form “a population of selves” within each individual. It may be that “*counsellor selves*” are formed which may be vaguely defined as member-selves initially and over time form “*essential selves*” in the context of training and experience. In Gestalt terms experiences are introjected or rejected as “me” or “not me.”

Individuals who set out to become registered counsellors face the challenges of employment opportunities in a new field where there may be a lack of other professional registered counsellors to confirm and guide them in their identity formation. This becomes more challenging for those individuals had set out to become psychologists. They may thus have been studying diligently for four to six years completing a BA and BA Honours in Psychology (for instance) while having to ensure that they get high academic results to ensure selection into the Honours degree and then into the Masters degree. They may have also started engaging in community activities to get that “edge” into the Masters degree.

Preparing for the selection process involves self-definition or configuration of the self through various types of stories about one’s life and suitability for the training. When one does not pass through the selection process successfully, one does not lose that constructed “preferred identity” overnight. It is also quite common to keep on trying which can stretch this process into years. Unresolved loss and/or shattered faith assumptions may interfere with the formation of new schemas of meaning and identities that could facilitate new meaning and open doors to new opportunities.

It would appear that a lot of these individuals have regrouped and completed internships towards registered counselling as profession while others may have decided on this move earlier on. One could however expect a measure of occupational regret in terms of a sense of “*unanswered callings*” especially for those who originally had other ideals. The helping professions often draw individuals with a *sense of calling* to make a difference, which may or may not be spiritual in origin.

Registered counsellors within this study have completed (or are in the process of completing) the Masters degree in Gestalt Play therapy. This is a degree developed for social workers and will not be open to registered counsellors in future. The researcher expects these registered counsellors to be involved in a process of shaping their own professional identities while

trying to carve out a career for themselves in processes of creative adaption which does not appear to be met with enthusiasm within the larger profession of psychology.

How registered counsellors construct meaning around their *vocation* or *calling* has a direct influence on their life-satisfaction, work-satisfaction, mental health as well as the way they will fulfil any counselling roles they find themselves in.

Christian believers are called to be disciples within the life of faith and proclamation of the gospel (see section 4.3, 4.4, 4.6.8 and 4.9). This entails a lifestyle that mirrors that of Jesus Christ within a faith community (Eph 5:1-2). Jesus pointed to love as the greatest commandment (Mt 22:34-40). This focus of a disciple's love is on God first and is also linked to a life of service in various contexts. The Holy Spirit empowers believers to live their lives of faith.

While the call texts throughout Scripture to the positions of prophet and king for example, cannot be directly applied to modern day careers. Psalm 139:16 says that human beings' lives have been preordained and recorded prior to conception. Many feel called to a specific area of work (such as helping within the field of psychology) through a combination of life experiences, career experiences and communication with God. They may hear God's voice or experience the unction of the Holy Spirit and/or receive confirmation through prophetic word or "God-coincidences" (opened doors and opportunities) in the words of one of the participants.

Believers (and other spiritually minded individuals) may experience additional fulfilment when they feel that they are fulfilling a "transcendent call" as well as additional challenges when it comes to assimilating disappointments and unanswered callings. Such events challenge one's global belief system in the same way that trauma does (see section 4.6). Questions around God's will, guidance and one's relationship with Him, may arise. If it cannot be successfully integrated into this original meaning or belief system, either one's perception of the situational stressor or event, or of one's global belief system, has to shift.

The situation of career goals that are unmet and challenged may be re-interpreted in terms of the alternate plans one may have for one's life over time. Some for instance, may conclude that God may not be so involved in one's life as one originally thought. Positive re-interpretations tend to lead to healthy adaption while negative re-interpretations may lead to anxiety, depression, anger, a crisis of faith, and/or a sense of being abandoned by God.

Through the exploration of *calling* and *identity* in the presence of God, shattered faith assumptions can be rebuilt and new direction and hope may emerge in the knowledge that God is ultimately in charge of individual's destinies, irrespective of the disappointments and losses along the way.

6.7 FINAL SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The experiences of registered counsellors specializing in Gestalt Play therapy as it relates to professional identity development and spirituality, is examined in this study.

Data from literature relating to the profession of psychology, calling and spirituality and work-meaning, is interpreted in light of the participants described experiences or career stories. This is done in context of Gestalt theory. It is extended into a Scriptural analysis of "calling" for the Christian sub-population participating in this study.

The research culminated into a pastoral counselling model built on the *conversion model of pastoral care* of Louw's (1998), and also utilizes *Gestalt principles of change*, within Brunsdon's (2014) collaborative approach. Areas of exploration were identified within the goals and context of this study. A set of "experiential reflections" was also developed through which problems relating to professional identity formation, career choices and spiritual, could be addressed. An initial implementation of the reflections as it relates more specifically to "career" was evaluated by participants, the researcher and a counselling psychologist.

It appears that it may be a useful tool for registered counsellors struggling with their professional identity and spirituality, and may have application value within the wider context of the profession of registered counselling.

Ultimately the pastoral counselling model may lead to new hope for the Christian believer, in the knowledge that God is faithful and that He is the one steering his/her "calling."

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Appendix A: Consent Colloquium

Consent to use Colloquium information of 15 Nov 2012, for research purposes:

On the 15th of November, 2012, you were a participant in the colloquium/focus group led by Prof. Bloem and me. You gave verbal consent for the information to be recorded and used for research purposes.

Could you please confirm that this material may be used for the purposes of the research project: Spirituality and identity formation of Registered Counsellors specializing in Gestalt Play therapy.

Participants' names and identities will be kept confidential.

Karen Hayward (073 533 8692)

I, _____, hereby give formal consent for information gained through the colloquium/focus group that I participated in on the 15th of November 2012, to be used anonymously for research purposes by Karen Hayward.

Appendix B: Research information and consent (Questionnaires & Meditations)

Dear Colleague,

I would like to invite you to participate in my research project related to Registered Counsellors.

Background:

In 2012 I enrolled for the Masters in Gestalt Play therapy, currently presented through the North-West University. I chose to complete it as a PhD building onto my Masters in Pastoral Studies, rather than building on my Honours in Psychology or my B.Psych. The whole scope of practice for Registered Counsellors specializing in Play therapy appeared to be a “hot topic” both in our classes and among others in and around the university, as you may know. This coincides with a restructuring of internship requirements at all training institutes and the general proposed changes in all the categories within the profession of Psychology.

Details of the study:

The study’s title is: “Spirituality and identity formation of Registered Counsellors specializing in Gestalt Play therapy”. I will be investigating spirituality in the sense of feeling called to the profession or a specific task. Literature reveals that it is a well-researched topic both within Christian and non-Christian circles. Hence, a sense of calling may be linked to a person’s Christian worldviews and experience, to other forms of spirituality, or to the needs within society. Furthermore, this project will explore how we as Registered Counsellors perceive our identities (professional and otherwise) as it relates to our work (including our scope of practice) and place in the profession of Psychology. I’d also like to understand how we experience this shaping of our identities. From the literature it is clear that these experiences and perceptions are strongly linked to one’s mental health, productivity and subjective experience of well-being. Calling furthermore, relates to our identity formation.

I’m also developing experiential reflections (meditations) around these topics, as a developmental intervention. It may or may not facilitate growth in the sense of an increased security around your professional identity and profession. It may also help (or not) to consider changes that you may wish to make. In this process I will utilize suggestions by psychological researchers in the field of calling (Dik, Duffy, Eldridge, Savickas and Seligman) as well as Gestalt experiential theory

Implementation of the study in phases:

Some of the current students within the Gestalt Play therapy masters program indicated that they may be willing to fill out questionnaires, but don’t have the time for more direct interaction.

I am asking both students who are currently busy their studies, as well as graduates of the Gestalt Play therapy program, to partake in this project. Students and graduates live in different provinces. I’m

proposing the following phase-approach with options, so that you can be involved to the extent that your schedule and situation allows:

Preliminary phase / phase 1: Reading through this document and giving informed consent to participate in one or both legs of this study.

Phase 2:

2: Filling out a questionnaire: This includes biographical information (which will be kept confidential), information around your career path and goals, identity, calling or vocation and spirituality.

Should you be willing to continue to the next phase, you will proceed to phase 3.

Phase 3: Option 3a or 3b:

3a: This consists of 5 meditations followed by an evaluation of the process, which will be emailed to you. You will be asked to consider the thoughts, get in touch with your experiential response, and return your response via email. The content will be experiential around themes identified as helpful in career guidance and identity development.

OR

3b: Five face-to-face sessions in individual or group format, in Roodepoort on Saturday the 1st of June, followed by an evaluation of the process. The content will be experiential around themes identified as helpful in career guidance and identity development.

Final phase of the Research:

This involves the analysing of data as well as sending you information around the results.

Informed consent to participate in the research project titled:” “Spirituality and identity formation of Registered Counsellors specializing in Gestalt Play therapy”

Name & Surname: _____

Registration category (specialization): _____

Date of completion of Masters in Play Therapy: _____

Rights and responsibilities of participants:

- As a participant, I take cognisance of the fact that I can withdraw from this study, at any time during the process. I can also withdraw the information already submitted.
- I will inform the researcher if I should find any part of the research to be harmful in any way, and discuss ways to deal with that aside from withdrawing from the project. If I feel that I need counselling, I will not hold the researcher responsible for any costs incurred, though options can be explored.
- I retain the right to disclose as much personal information as I'm comfortable with.

Commitment of the researcher: As researcher, I, Karen Hayward, undertake to keep your identity confidential. I furthermore undertake to explore with you, any discomfort experienced. Participants will also receive feedback around the results of the study.

Potential risk:

Discussing one's calling or vocation, or career path and directions, may open up emotional discomfort. This could entail a form of existential doubt, especially if one is unhappy with one's current state.

Potential benefit:

Engaging in this process, especially continuing through all the phases, may open up new avenues of growth that you may want to pursue, including renewed commitment or changes in your career path (which may be a risk or benefit).

I, _____ (Identity number: _____)

(Name & Surname)

agree to participate in the following phases of this research project, giving my informed consent:

_____ **Phase 2:** Questionnaire completed electronically and returned via email,

_____ **Phase 3a:** 5 experiential meditations followed by an evaluation, received and completed in electronic / email format.

OR

_____ **Phase 3b:** 5 experiential meditations followed by an evaluation, within a group format, conducted at 811 Augrabies Avenue, Little Falls, Roodepoort on 1 June 2013.

(Signature)

(Date)

Appendix C: Questionnaire

“Spirituality and identity formation of Registered Counsellors specializing in Gestalt Play therapy”

Questionnaire / Interview Schedule

Biographical data and background information:

Name & Surname: _____ (will not be made public)

Age: _____ Home language: _____ Ethnic / cultural group: _____

Educational history:

University / Institution:	Degree: (E.g. BA Psychology, BA Honours Psychology, B.Psych, MA Gestalt Play therapy, a.o.)	Year obtained

Registration details: (HPCSA and/or affiliations such as with SAAP)

Registration body or organization:	Category:	Date of registration:
HPCSA		

Career as Registered Counsellor:

What career goal did you set out to pursue prior to, or during your first one to three years of study?

What career or other goal did you set out to pursue through your BA Honours or B Psych degree?

What career or other goal did you set out to pursue through your Masters in Gestalt Play Therapy?

Do you have future career goals that will take you in a different direction from where you are now? If so, can you please tell me more?

Can you please tell me about your work experience as a Registered Counsellor? (I.e. in which settings you worked; what kind of duties you've had or what type of counselling you have provided; and how you experienced it)

Can you describe the impact of the Gestalt Play Therapy training on your career?

If you could go back in time, would you have pursued the same studies and/or career path? Or would you have made some smaller adjustments to your career path from the way your studies and working life unfolded? Can you please tell me about that?

Can you describe any childhood or life experiences, events or influences that played a role in your career path goals?

Identity:

Please describe how you view your identity as Registered Counsellor with the play-therapy qualification within the profession of psychology:

Considering the concept of identity in terms of the population of selves, please describe how you view your professional identity in context of who you are.

Work and calling:

In the interest of psychometric reliability and validity, I have incorporated short scales already developed and tested (in both religious and non-religious communities), before asking more detailed questions.

The first requires you to indicate to which degree you identify with three people's approaches to work.

The second is a scale recently developed to measure calling and/or vocation, followed by a brief four question evaluation of the degree to which to you experience a calling (if applicable).

Work-life Questionnaire:

Read the following paragraphs about Ms. A, Ms. B, and Ms. C. and indicate how much you are like either, Ms. A, Ms. B., or Ms. C on the rating scale given. Please read and rate all three paragraphs, even if you feel more drawn to one.

Ms. A works primarily to earn enough money to support life outside of her job. If she was financially secure, she would no longer continue with her current line of work, but would really rather do something else instead. Ms. A's job is basically a necessity of life, a lot like breathing or sleeping. She often wishes the time would pass more quickly at work. She greatly anticipates weekends and vacations. If Ms. A lived her life over again, she probably would not go into the same line of work. She would not encourage her friends and children to enter her line of work. Ms. A is very eager to retire.

Ms. B basically enjoys her work, but does not expect to be in her current job five years from now. Instead, she plans to move on to a better, higher level job. She has several goals for her future pertaining to the positions she would eventually like to hold. Sometimes her work seems like a waste of time, but she knows that she must do sufficiently well in her current position in order to move on. Miss. B. Can't wait to get a promotion. For her, a promotion means recognition of her good work, and is a sign of her success in competition with her co-workers.

Ms. C's work is one of the most important parts of her life. She is very pleased that she is in her line of work. Because what she does for a living is a vital part of who she is, it is one of the first things she tells people about herself. She tends to take her work home with her on vacations, too. The majority of her friends are from her place of employment and she belongs to several organizations and clubs relating to her work. Ms. C feels good about her work because she loves it, and because she thinks it makes the world a better place. She would encourage her friends and children to enter her line of work. Ms. C would be pretty upset if she was forced to stop working, and she is not particularly looking forward to retirement.

Please rate the 3 paragraphs as follows:

How much are you like Ms. A?

Very much Somewhat A little Not like me at all

How much are you like Ms. B?

Very much Somewhat A little Not like me at all

How much are you like Ms. C?

Very much Somewhat A little Not like me at all

What are your thoughts on the three paragraphs? When you consider how you are similar and dissimilar in each instance, what else could you tell me about yourself to help me understand your work-life better? If certain current circumstances would change for instance, how would that affect your responses?

Calling and Vocation Questionnaire (CVQ):

Please indicate the degree to which you believe the following statements describe you, using the following scale. Please respond with your career as a whole in mind. For example, if you are currently working part time in a job that you don't consider part of your career, focus on your career as a whole and not your current job. Try not to respond merely as you think you "should" respond: rather, try to be as accurate and as objective as possible in evaluating yourself. If any of the questions simply do not seem relevant to you, "1" may be the most appropriate answer.

1 = Not at all true of me
2 = Somewhat true of me
3 = Mostly true of me
4 = Absolutely true of me

- 1 2 3 4 (1) I believe that I have been called to my current line of work.
- 1 2 3 4 (2) I'm searching for my calling in my career.
- 1 2 3 4 (3) My work helps me live out my life's purpose.
- 1 2 3 4 (4) I am looking for work that will help me live out my life's purpose.
- 1 2 3 4 (5) I am trying to find a career that ultimately makes the world a better place.
- 1 2 3 4 (6) I intend to construct a career that will give my life meaning.
- 1 2 3 4 (7) I want to find a job that meets some of society's needs.
- 1 2 3 4 (8) I do not believe that a force beyond myself has helped guide me to my career.
- 1 2 3 4 (9) The most important aspect of my career is its role in helping to meet the needs of others.
- 1 2 3 4 (10) I am trying to build a career that benefits society.
- 1 2 3 4 (11) I was drawn by something beyond myself to pursue my current line of work.
- 1 2 3 4 (12) Making a difference for others is the primary motivation in my career.
- 1 2 3 4 (13) I yearn for a sense of calling in my career.
- 1 2 3 4 (14) Eventually, I hope my career will align with my purpose in life.
- 1 2 3 4 (15) I see my career as a path to purpose in life.
- 1 2 3 4 (16) I am looking for a job where my career clearly benefits others.
- 1 2 3 4 (17) My work contributes to the common good.
- 1 2 3 4 (18) I am trying to figure out what my calling is in the context of my career.

- 1 2 3 4 (19) I'm trying to identify the area of work I was meant to pursue.
- 1 2 3 4 (20) My career is an important part of my life's meaning.
- 1 2 3 4 (21) I want to pursue a career that is a good fit with the reason for my existence.
- 1 2 3 4 (22) I am always trying to evaluate how beneficial my work is to others.
- 1 2 3 4 (23) I am pursuing my current line of work because I believe I have been called to do so.
- 1 2 3 4 (24) I try to live out my life purpose when I am at work.

Brief calling Scale (BCS):

Broadly speaking, a "calling" refers to a person's belief that she or he is called upon (by the needs of society, by a person's own inner potential, by God, by a Higher Power, etc.) to do a particular kind of work. The following questions assess the degree to which you see this concept as relevant to your own life and career. Please respond honestly, not according to what is socially desirable or what you feel you "ought" to think. Please indicate the extent to which each of the following statements currently describe you, using the following scale.

- 1 = Not at all true of me
2 = Mildly true of me
3 = Moderately true of me
4 = Mostly true of me
5 = Totally true of me

- 1 2 3 4 5 (1) I have a calling to a particular kind of work.
- 1 2 3 4 5 (2) I have a good understanding of my calling as it applies to my career.
- 1 2 3 4 5 (3) I am trying to figure out my calling in my career.
- 1 2 3 4 5 (4) I am searching for my calling as it applies to my career.

If you feel that you have a calling, what or who do you view as the source of your calling?

Spirituality:

For the following six questions, *spirituality* is defined as one’s relationship to God, or whatever you perceive to be Ultimate Transcendence.

The questions use a sentence completion format to measure various attributes associated with spirituality. An incomplete sentence fragment is provided, followed directly below by two phrases that are linked to a scale ranging from 1 to 10. The phrases, which complete the sentence fragment, anchor each end of the scale. The 0-10 range provides you with a continuum on which to reply, with 0 corresponding to absence or zero amount of the attribute, while 10 corresponds to the maximum amount of the attribute. In other words, the end points represent extreme values, while five corresponds to a medium, or moderate, amount of the attribute. Please circle the *number* along the continuum that best reflects your initial feeling.

1. In terms of the questions I have about life, my spirituality answers

no											absolutely all
questions											my questions
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	

2. Growing spirituality is

more important than											of no
anything else											importance
in my life											to me
10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	

3. When I am faced with an important decision, my spirituality

plays											is always
absolutely											the overriding
no role											consideration
10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	

4. Spirituality is

the master motive of my											not part
life, directing every other											of my life
aspect of my life											
10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0	

5. When I think of the things that help me to grow and mature as a person, my spirituality

**has no effect
on my personal
growth**

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

**is absolutely the most
important factor in
my personal growth**

8 9 10

6. My spiritual beliefs affect

**absolutely every
aspect of my life**

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3

**no aspect
of my life**

2 1 0

Can you please tell me more about the (past and/or current) impact of your relationship with God (or within another form of spirituality), on your career path?

Appendix D: Measurement scores

Participant	Work-life Questionnaire				Calling & Vocation Questionnaire (CVQ)							Brief Calling Scale (BCS)		Intrinsic spirituality scale	
	Job orientation	Career orientation	Calling orientation	Presence-Transcendent summons	Search-Transcendent Summons	Presence-Purposeful Work	Search - Purposeful work	Presence-Prosocial Orientation	Search-Prosocial Orientation	CVQ Presence total	CVQ Search total	BCS-PRESENC E	BCS-SEARCH		
1	3	2	1	10	2,5	10	10	10	9,4	10	7,3	9	3	8,2	
3	3	2	2	9,4	8,1	8,8	8,8	8,8	9,4	9	8,8	8	4	5,2	
8	2	1	3	8,8	8,8	8,1	9,4	7,5	9,4	8,1	9,2	6	10	7,3	
9	3	1	2	9,4	3,8	9,4	7,5	9,4	8,8	9,4	6,7	8	2	6,2	
10	4	4	1	10	4,4	10	8,8	9,4	10	9,8	7,7	9	6	7,8	
11	4	4	1	8,8	2,5	10	9,4	8,1	7,5	9	6,5	10	5	8,2	
12	3	2	3	8,1	3,1	8,8	7,5	8,1	6,9	8,3	5,8	7	4	6,5	
14	3	3	1	10	4,4	10	8,1	10	10	10	7,5	10	2	8,2	
15	4	4	1	10	2,5	10	8,1	10	8,1	10	6,3	10	2	8,3	
16	4	4	2	6,9	6,3	6,3	5	5,6	4,4	6,3	5,2	2	2	1,7	
17	4	3	1	8,8	3,1	10	6,3	8,1	7,5	9	5,6	9	3	6,5	
18	4	3	2	2,5	2,5	3,8	4,4	3,1	3,8	3,1	3,5	6	2	1,7	
19	4	4	2	6,9	5,6	5	5,6	6,9	6,3	6,3	5,8	3	5	6,3	
20	4	2	1	9,4	8,1	9,4	10	8,8	8,8	9,2	9	10	7	6,7	
21	3	1	4	8,1	9,4	8,8	10	7,5	9,4	8,1	9,6	7	9	5	
22	4	1	4	10	5,6	8,8	5	10	5,6	9,6	5,4	9	3	6,7	
23	3	4	2	6,9	3,1	6,9	5,6	7,5	6,9	7,1	5,2	8	3	2,8	
24	4	3	1	8,8	4,4	8,8	7,5	9,4	8,8	9	6,9	8	2	5,8	
25	4	2	2	9,4	4,4	9,4	6,9	10	5,6	9,6	5,6	9	4	8,3	
26	3	1	2	10	5	9,4	6,9	7,5	6,9	9	6,3	9	6	8,3	
27	3	2	4	5	8,1	6,3	9,4	8,1	7,5	6,5	8,3	2	4	1,7	
28	4	2	2	8,1	8,1	7,5	8,1	6,9	6,9	7,5	7,7	7	8	6,8	
				10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10

Work-life orientation: 1 = Very much; 2 = Somewhat; 3 = A little; 4 = Not like me at all

Test Scores and sub-scores are presented as totalling 10, for comparison purposes.

Appendix E: Experiential reflection - meditation one

Your sense of calling or vocation may be strong, sure or faltering right now. You may even think of searching for one perhaps. The process of discernment is one that appears to grow and even change over time, while some people also report multiple callings. Your ability to examine yourself in terms of your interests, abilities, etc. all mediate the process.

Please take an A3 or bigger piece of paper for this meditative exercise. Using mediums of your choice, draw a horizontal line in the middle of the paper from left to right. This will be the foundational time-line of your life, starting at your conception or birth on the left up to the current day. We usually table the events of our lives in this way – putting the positive experiences at the top and the negatives at the bottom (and these can be rated by intensity). For this exercise however, I'd like major time-periods and events to be your baseline for exploring other themes.

Once you're ready to proceed, please take a few minutes to do a relaxation exercise of your choice. Become aware of your physical sensations. You might want to use music, sit at your favourite spot in your home, and/or use flowers or scented candles to set the mood.

Using your baseline – think of your various selves at various stages of your life (against the backdrop of a career, vocation and/or calling). Remember that we have essential, more enduring selves as well as our member selves – without worrying too much about identifying them “correctly”. There is no “true self” according to Polster (2005) and others – and thus we can just allow the selves to emerge into our awareness without judgment. What are the adjectives that would describe you or your emotions or behaviour at the various phases and key points in your life? Are there metaphors that can give shape to your selves? How did or do these different voices of various selves come together in shaping you?

Now sit back and observe what you have sketched and / or written and answer the following questions in light of your career and vocational choices:

- Describe your various selves shaping your “self.”
- Describe the themes that repeat in your life.
- Tell me of your dreams that have come into your awareness through this exercise.
- Describe any sense of vocation or calling, or lack of it, that comes to light.
- Tell me about anything else that seem significant to you at this moment.

I would appreciate a photo or scanned image of what you did with a short description of your relaxation and awareness process.

Appendix F: Experiential reflection - meditation two

In this meditation, you will explore your life values. You might want to use the first meditation as a point of departure.

9. Identity phrases that represent values that have directed your life up to this point.
10. Look at the 1st meditation: what values emerge more strongly than others? Please list them in order of importance.
11. Are there values that you live your life by, of which you were not aware? Which are these?
12. Which values represent introjections?
13. Reflecting upon your introjected values (those you adopted from your family or other people you admired or were taught by, together with societal stereotypical ideas) – which will you incorporate into your value system as a choice, and which will you discard?
14. List any other values that have come to mind, which you want to incorporate into your life, even if they haven't really featured much to date.
15. Rephrase your values in the present tense, starting with "I.."

Begin the process with the first meditation before looking on the 2nd page (below) and the more comprehensive list of values (attached) to add to your understanding as needed.

Examples and Definitions of Work Values (McKay, 2013)

Here are examples of items that could appear on a work value inventory, along with a definition of each one. When reading this list, think about how important each value is to you.

- **Autonomy:** receiving no or little supervision
- **Helping Others:** providing assistance to individuals or groups
- **Prestige:** having high standing
- **Job Security:** a high probability that one will remain employed
- **Collaboration:** working with others
- **Helping Society:** contributing to the betterment of the world
- **Recognition:** receiving attention for your work
- **Compensation:** receiving adequate pay
- **Achievement:** doing work that yields results
- **Utilizing Your Skills and Background:** using your education and work experience to do your job
- **Leadership:** supervising/managing others
- **Creativity:** using your own ideas
- **Variety:** doing different activities
- **Challenge:** performing tasks that are difficult
- **Leisure:** having adequate time away from work
- **Recognition:** receiving credit for achievements
- **Artistic Expression:** expressing one's artistic talents
- **Influence:** having the ability to affect people's opinions and ideas

Checklist for Personal Values by C. Roberts, Fifth Discipline Fieldbook (1994).

This exercise is designed to help you reach a better understanding of your most significant values.

What I Value Most...

From this list of values (both work and personal), select the ten that are most important to you-as guides for how to behave, or as components of a valued way of life. Feel free to add any values of your own to this list.

Achievement	Friendships	Physical challenge
Advancement and promotion	Growth	Pleasure
Adventure	Having a family	Power and authority
Affection (love and caring)	Helping other people	Privacy
Arts	Helping society	Public service
Challenging problems	Honesty	Purity
Change and variety	Independence	Quality of what I take part in
Close relationships	Influencing others	Quality relationships
Community	Inner harmony	Recognition (respect from others, status)
Competence	Integrity	Religion
Competition	Intellectual status	Reputation
Cooperation	Involvement	Responsibility and accountability
Country	Job tranquillity	Security
Creativity	Knowledge	Self-respect
Decisiveness	Leadership	Serenity
Democracy	Location	Sophistication
Ecological awareness	Loyalty	Stability
Economic security	Market position	Status
Effectiveness	Meaningful work	Supervising others
Efficiency	Merit	Time freedom
Ethical practice	Money	Truth
Excellence	Nature	Wealth
Excitement	being around people who are open and honest	Wisdom
Fame	Order (tranquillity, stability, conformity)	Work under pressure
Fast living	Personal development	Work with others
Financial gain	Freedom	Working alone

Appendix G: Experiential reflection - meditation three

Take some time to reflect upon the various jobs or forms of work you've done over the course of your life. This might include informal as well as formal positions and may not all be in the counselling field. You might want to jot down some notes on a timeline similar to the first meditation, or represent them in other formats. Pictures and phrases can be very useful to give them shape.

From this:

- Identity five talents and / or behaviours that you do very well.
- List five behaviours or tasks that you do well and / or enjoy, which you can use or practice at least once per day.

Operating from our strengths adds meaning and fulfilment to our lives.

- How will this strengthen or reshape (change) your current work behaviours and/or career path?

Appendix H: Experiential reflection - meditation four

Take a moment to figuratively take off your work-shoes. Consider the following questions without the constraints of a specific position, a specific job description, financial or other constraining factors.

- List 5 things that you would like from a job.
- List 5 things that are necessary for you to experience meaning in your life.
- In which ways does this fit your current job description and / or scope of practice?
- In which ways does this not fit your current job description and / or scope of practice?

In Gestalt language there may be some polarities that you identified within your various selves, perhaps in context with your work environment and career goals. If so – please jot them down if you haven't already done so.

Appendix I: Experiential reflection – meditation five

Reframe and refocus:

One of the examples in literature refers to two groups of hospital cleaners. Those who saw their work in terms of the menial tasks, the negative perceptions of doctors and nurses, etc. did not experience much meaning and fulfilment in their tasks. Those who saw their work as a crucial part in the critical care of patients, adjusting their methods and time tables to enhance the flow of work, experienced meaning, satisfaction and fulfilment.

A similar example relates to an estate agent viewing his/her job as a way to earn a living versus viewing it in terms of matching individual families to the communities and schools that suit them.

When we want to reframe our job descriptions/work, we can do it in a similar fashion, change careers or the focus of a specific job, for example the population that you counsel or the environment in which you do so.

Considering the information from the preceding meditations against your career path and current work activities, please describe:

- The match or fit that you experience with your job / career path.
- The dissonance of your fit to your job / career path – how does it not fit / suit you?
- Describe how you will (or can) change:
 - your job tasks, or
 - your career path, or
 - your view of your work.