

**Balancing pastoral care and social outreach
in the best interest of rural communities:
A practical theological study**

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This work is dedicated to God the Father,
God the Son and God the Holy Spirit for life,
divine guidance, strength, protection, provision and
illumination that made this study a reality.

DECLARATION

I, Jude Osarogiagbon Edomwonyi (Student Number: 28569393), hereby declare that the mini-dissertation entitled, **Balancing pastoral care and social outreach to best serve rural communities: A practical theological study**, submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree Master of Theology in Pastoral Studies at the North-West University, is my own original work and has not been submitted to any other University for any qualification or award.

Jude Osarogiagbon Edomwonyi

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ABSTRACT

Socio-economic, spiritual and contextual forces combine to compel the rural church by intent or default to often inevitably assume leading roles in provision of services and care to its congregations and rural community members. As a result, rural pastors are faced with the dilemma of a huge demand for services and a shortage of personnel and material resources. This often results in the situation where they are challenged and tempted to concentrate on pastoral care at the expense of social outreach and vice versa. Rural pastors are however essentially expected to find innovative and creative ways to find a balance between their equally demanding and crucial roles of pastoral care obligations to their congregations and social outreach to communities where they operate and exist. As these two constitute significant aspects of the church's mission and clergy call and assignment, markers of success would no doubt be examined in terms of how congregants and communities fare with regards to care and services.

This study aimed at determining the ideal balance between pastoral care and social outreach in the church to best serve rural communities. The study adopted Osmer's (2008:24) typology for practical theological research regarding the descriptive-empirical, interpretive, normative and pragmatic task. It utilized the qualitative phenomenological approach to research to explore the perspectives of six pastors/social outreach workers and six church members who were purposively selected regarding finding a balance between pastoral care and social outreach in the church to best serve rural communities. Data was gathered by in-depth individual interviews with the pastors/social outreach workers and a focus group discussion with the church members and analyzed by the thematic method.

The findings indicated that pastors were actively engaged in pastoral care and social outreach due to huge demand and need in the rural churches and communities and expectedly made a distinction between the sacred and mundane aspects of their pastoral care roles. The sacred pastoral care roles which were regarded as core and accorded priority attention by the pastors included spiritual nourishment/watch over the congregation, counselling, prayer and training/developing ministers/workers. The mundane roles included church discipline and attending to the physical and social

needs/care of the congregants which they felt could be delegated to the laity and volunteers. Social outreach projects included assistance with provision of basic survival needs, evangelism/spiritual development, community development efforts, health promotion and educational assistance.

The findings further suggested that the pastors/social outreach workers encountered immense challenges including insufficient and inadequate training, burnout and stress, a lack of finance, poverty and sickness in rural setting and dishonesty of rural beneficiaries. The study proposed a model for finding a balance between pastoral care and social outreach in the church to best serve rural communities known as P.L.A.N (P=Plan; L=Lump together; A=Assign; N=Network). The model was gleaned from the themes emanating from the analysis of the qualitative data capturing participants' perspectives regarding finding a balance between pastoral care and social outreach identified in organization, integration, delegation and cooperation.

KEY WORDS

Pastoral care, social outreach, balance, rural communities.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION	II
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	III
ABSTRACT	V
LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES	XIII
CHAPTER 1: BALANCING PASTORAL CARE AND SOCIAL OUTREACH IN THE BEST INTEREST OF RURAL COMMUNITIES: A PRACTICAL THEOLOGICAL STUDY	1
1.1 KEY WORDS	1
1.1.1 Pastoral care	1
1.1.2 Social outreach	2
1.1.3 Rural communities	2
1.2 BACKGROUND AND PROBLEM STATEMENT/QUESTIONS ARISING	3
1.2.1 Background	3
1.2.2 Problem statement and questions arising	5
1.3 RESEARCH QUESTION	7
1.4 AIM AND OBJECTIVES	7
1.4.1 Aim:	7
1.4.2 Objectives:	8
1.5 CENTRAL THEORETICAL ARGUMENT	8
1.6 A REVIEW OF LITERATURE	8
1.6.1 Practical Theological Studies on Pastoral care	8
1.6.2 Practical Theological Studies on Social Outreach	12

1.7	RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	15
1.7.1	The descriptive–empirical task (What is going on?)	16
1.7.2	Interpretive task (Why is it going on?)	18
1.7.3	Normative task (What ought to be going on?)	18
1.7.4	Pragmatic task (How might we respond?)	19
1.8	ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS	19
1.8.1	What will be expected of participants during data gathering?	20
1.8.2	Risks and precaution.....	20
1.8.3	Benefits for participants.....	21
1.8.4	Facility where the study will be implemented	21
1.8.5	Goodwill permission /consent	21
1.8.6	Criteria for participant selection.....	21
1.8.7	Participant recruitment	22
1.8.8	Informed consent	22
1.8.9	Voluntary participation.....	23
1.8.10	Privacy/confidentiality.....	23
1.8.11	Incentives and/or remuneration of participants	24
1.8.12	Publication of the research findings	24
1.8.13	Debriefing of participants	25
1.8.14	Management, storage and destruction of data.....	25
1.8.15	Monitoring of research	25
1.9	Study setting/context.....	25
1.10	<i>PROVISIONAL CLASSIFICATION OF HEADINGS/CHAPTERS</i>	26
1.11	SCHEMATIC PRESENTATION.....	26
1.12	CONCLUSION	28

CHAPTER 2:	DESCRIPTIVE-EMPIRICAL TASK OF FINDING A BALANCE BETWEEN PASTORAL CARE AND SOCIAL OUTREACH ALISM MARRIAGE AND CULTURE.....	30
2.1	INTRODUCTION	30
2.2	RESEARCH APPROACH OF THE DESCRIPTIVE-EMPIRICAL TASK	31
2.3	RESEARCH DESIGN OF THE DESCRIPTIVE-EMPIRICAL TASK	32
2.4	RESEARCH METHODS OF THE DESCRIPTIVE- EMPIRICAL TASK	34
2.4.1	Population and sampling	34
2.4.2	Data collection	36
2.4.3	Data analysis	39
2.4.4	Ethical issues and consideration	40
2.5	DEMOGRAPHICS OF PARTICIPANTS OF THE STUDY	40
2.5.1	Demographic information of pastors/social outreach workers.....	41
2.5.2	Demographic information of church members.	42
2.6	PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS: THEMES AND SUB-THEMES	43
2.6.1	THEME 1: Pastoral care duties.....	44
2.6.2	Theme 2: Social Outreach Programs/activities	53
2.6.3	Theme 3: Experiences of pastors/social outreach workers	60
2.6.4	Theme 4: Balancing pastoral care and social outreach.....	67
2.7	DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS OF THE DESCRIPTIVE-EMPIRICAL DATA	74
2.8	CONCLUSION	78

CHAPTER 3:	AN INTERPRETATIVE PERSPECTIVES ON PASTORAL CARE AND SOCIAL OUTREACH	80
3.1	INTRODUCTION	80
3.2	LITERATURE REVIEW ON CARE AND SOCIAL OUTREACH FROM RELATED HELPING PROFESSION: NURSING.....	81
3.3	LITERATURE REVIEW ON CARE AND SOCIAL OUTREACH FROM RELATED HELPING PROFESSION: SOCIAL WORK.	83
3.4	LINK BETWEEN DESCRIPTIVE-EMPIRICAL DATA AND INTERPRETATIVE PERSPECTIVES ON PASTORAL CARE AND SOCIAL OUTREACH	86
3.5	CONCLUSION	87
CHAPTER 4:	THE NORMATIVE TASK OF FINDING A BALANCE BETWEEN PASTORAL CARE AND SOCIAL OUTREACH	89
4.1	INTRODUCTION	89
4.1.1	Normative theological perspective on the office and role of the pastor	89
4.1.2	Normative theological perspectives on social outreach.....	98
4.1.3	Normative theological perspective on finding a balance between pastoral care and social outreach	103
4.2	LINK BETWEEN THE DESCRIPTIVE-EMPIRICAL DATA AND NORMATIVE PERSPECTIVES ON PASTORAL CARE, SOCIAL OUTREACH AND FINDING A BALANCE.....	116
4.3	CONCLUSION	118
CHAPTER 5:	THE PRAGMATIC TASK OF FINDING A BALANCE BETWEEN PASTORAL CARE AND SOCIAL OUTREACH IN THE BEST INTEREST OF RURAL COMMUNITIES.....	120
5.1	INTRODUCTION	120

5.2	ELUCIDATION FROM THE CHAPTERS OF THIS RESEARCH AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE TO PROPOSE PRACTICAL-THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES AND GUIDELINES	120
5.2.1	Elucidation from the descriptive-empirical task of priestly listening.....	121
5.2.2	Elucidation from the interpretative task of sagely wisdom.....	123
5.2.3	Elucidation from the normative task of prophetic discernment	124
5.2.4	Integration of results for a strategy for the pragmatic task	127
5.3	MODEL FOR FINDING A BALANCE BETWEEN PASTORAL CARE AND SOCIAL OUTREACH: P.L.A.N	127
5.3.1	P - Plan	128
5.3.2	L- Lump together.....	131
5.3.3	A – Assign.....	133
5.3.4	N - Network	135
5.4	LINK BETWEEN THE DESCRIPTIVE-EMPIRICAL DATA AND NORMATIVE THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES REGARDING FINDING A BALANCE BETWEEN PASTORAL CARE AND SOCIAL OUTREACH.	136
5.5	CONCLUSION	137
CHAPTER 6:	KEY FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS	138
6.1	INTRODUCTION	138
6.2	AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY	138
6.3	FINDINGS OF THE STUDY AS PER THE AIM OF THE STUDY	139
6.4	THE FINDINGS OF THE STUDY AS PER THE OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY	141

6.4.1	The descriptive-empirical task: To determine a clear depiction of the current situation of the balance between pastoral care and social outreach in the church to serve rural communities.....	141
6.4.2	The interpretative task: To conduct a literature study of the other related sciences in order to provide understanding and explanation of the current situation of social outreach to serve rural communities.....	142
6.4.3	The normative task: To determine the normative and ethical perspectives that scripture provides for the balance between pastoral care and social outreach in the church to serve rural communities.....	144
6.4.4	The pragmatic task: To propose a practical-theological perspective and guidelines for a model to the church to find a balance between pastoral care and social outreach.	145
6.5	CONCLUSIONS DRAWN BASED ON STUDY FINDINGS.....	146
6.6	CONCLUSION.....	148
REFERENCES		149
ANNEXURE A:	INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENTATION.....	158
	DECLARATION BY PARTICIPANT	165
	DECLARATION BY PERSON OBTAINING CONSENT	166
	DECLARATION BY RESEARCHER.....	168
ANNEXTURE B:	IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW QUESTIONS/GUIDE.....	169
ANNEXURE C:	FOCUS GROUP WITH CHURCH MEMBERS DISCUSSION GUIDE.....	171

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

TABLE 2. 1	DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF PASTORS/OUTREACH WORKERS	41
TABLE 2.2	DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF CHURCH MEMBERS.....	42
TABLE 2.3	PRESENTATION OF THEMES AND SUB-THEMES.....	43
FIGURE 1.1:	OSMER’S MODEL.....	16
FIGURE 5-1:	SUMMATIVE VIEW OF DISCUSSION PLAN	121
FIGURE 5-2:	FINDING A BALANCE BETWEEN PASTORAL CARE AND SOCIAL OUTREACH: P.L.A.N	128

CHAPTER 1:

BALANCING PASTORAL CARE AND SOCIAL OUTREACH IN THE BEST INTEREST OF RURAL COMMUNITIES: A PRACTICAL THEOLOGICAL STUDY

1.1 KEY WORDS

Pastoral care, Social outreach, Rural communities

1.1.1 Pastoral care

Pastoral care is practically ubiquitous through Christian cultures and sects, and constitutes providing emotional and spiritual support to one's flock or congregation (Beaumont, 2011:117; Hughes, 2015:2; Langley & Kahnweiler, 2003: 5). Within the church body, pastors have traditionally performed this ancient tradition, and it has generally been presented in the form of services or ministries. Various denominations within the Christian faith apply the term to indicate more specific perspectives of a particular pastor's ministry; for instance, counseling or visitation. Moreover, the central concept of pastoral care is ideally that pastors should provide care and support; the term pastor is derived from a Latin word that means "shepherd", referring to a pastor's obligation to take care of the flock of God (Beaumont, 2011:118; Langley & Kahnweiler, 2003: 8; Stone, 2006: 8). Beyond planning and giving sermons, pastors also render biblical counseling, pay visits to the sick and the injured in various hospitals or homesteads, and provide discipleship to congregation members by making phone calls, attending lunch meetings, and other social commitments. Numerous pastors provide services as chaplains within hospitals, prisons, workplaces, and the military (Stone, 2006:7).

Pastoral care incorporates all of the above-mentioned forms of ministries. In essence, pastoral care ministries reflect a form of providing religious and therapeutic leadership which is as valuable as delivering sermons (Langley & Kahnweiler, 2003: 9; Stone, 2006:8). Providing care to an individual coping with a difficult time or personal issue and being present through times of distress are examples of times when pastors are most needed. More also, praying with a person or family who is in a particular crisis is the time when disciples are most primed for spiritual interventions requiring pastoral care

(Hughes, 2015:2; Karner, 2013: 1; Langley & Kahnweiler, 2003: 12). While traditional sermons are a crucial cornerstone of the Christian practice, ministering through pastoral care and providing a personal touch can be equally important.

1.1.2 Social outreach

Social outreach refers to an exercise of rendering services to sections of society who would otherwise have no access to the services offered (Koch & Johnson, 1997: 346). A key element of social outreach is the mobility of the groups providing the services, which enables them to address the needs of those who require outreach services in the most isolated areas of rural Bahamas. Additionally, social outreach programs have an educational aim, and look to raise awareness regarding the services offered. Social outreach is usually intended to plug gaps in the social services provided through mainstream services, especially that of governmental organizations (Carter-Edwards, Hooten, Bruce, Toms, Lloyd & Ellison, 2012:3; Koch & Johnson, 1997: 349; Stecker, Fortney, Steffick & Prajapati, 2006:513). While pastoral care directly deals with the spiritual and emotional health of the flock, social outreach attempts to address their physical health needs as well.

1.1.3 Rural communities

Cromartie and Bucholtz (2008:2) succinctly observe that there is general consensus amongst rural researchers that the term “rural community” is not easy to define and that there is no single best definition that precisely and adequately captures and measures this theoretical category. This lack of consensus has inevitably culminated in the development of various definitions across and within disciplines with each having its own strengths and weaknesses. Despite the lack of general agreement regarding the definition of a rural community, most researchers point to common characteristics which distinguish and delineate it. Mohatt, Bradley, Adams and Morris (2005) opine that perhaps the most prominent distinguishing feature of rural communities is low population density relative to more urban areas. They further state that rural areas or communities are characterized by higher rates of poverty, unemployment and underemployment and uninsured and underinsured compared to urban areas and communities.

Scott and Lovell (2014) share a similar view on their part discussing that rural towns are characterized by small population size, isolation from other communities and limited access to essential social services. This reality makes the church one of the most vital resources in the rural communities where congregations often live in economically depressed, disproportionately lower-class families mostly comprised of fixed-income elderly persons. Scott and Lovell (2014) posit correctly that in this scenario, rural pastors face the dual challenge of being involved in a “helping profession” and also being located in geographically remote areas. This definition, view and conceptualization of rural communities is shared and upheld in this study.

1.2 BACKGROUND AND PROBLEM STATEMENT/QUESTIONS ARISING

1.2.1 Background

The church has several roles to play in a rural setting. Apart from engaging in pastoral care, the church is also expected to engage in social outreach within the concept of holistic approach to pastoral care and action. This seeks to embrace an extra-ecclesiastical vision of the world whereby the worsening living conditions of the poor and deplorable communities are viewed as part of the church thus broadening and extending its scope of influence and responsibility in a reconciliatory manner (Heitink, 1977:135). However, balancing the two is sometimes difficult. Some churches may concentrate on pastoral care at the expense of social outreach. To be effective, churches are required to find a balance between pastoral care and social outreach, especially those found in rural settings where the church may provide the majority of community support (Francis, Village, Robbin & Wulff, 2011: 9). Pastoral care has roots going all the way back to the foundation of the church (Ragins & Kram, 2007: 676). In the church, pastoral care emphasizes healing and helping persons in the community who suffer from spiritual and emotional problems (Steyn and Masango, 2011:2). On the other hand, social outreach handles the primary physical needs of the community at large (Goldman & Roberson, 2004:368; Ragins & Kram, 2007: 677). Through both pastoral care and social outreach, the church can improve people’s lives by helping to meet needs in people’s spiritual and social dimensions. This is particularly important in rural settings, where it is difficult to distinguish where pastoral care stops and social outreach begins, and vice versa. Therefore, it is always beneficial for the church to find

the right balance between pastoral care and social outreach; however, there is limited research on how to find the right balance between pastoral care and social outreach in a rural setting. Both the New and Old Testament describe the task of a shepherd as characterized by the provision of loving concern towards the flock (Stetzer & Bird, 2007: 22). The position of pastor implies that the well-being of his flock is equally as important as his own, and that there is a link between the two. While there is a symbiotic relationship between a pastor and their congregation, the flock's health is ultimately a very important priority (Dillen, 2017:1; Hendron, Irving & Taylor, 2011:221; Morse, 2011:5).

The practice of loving concern, which incorporates one's urge to spiritual nurture, evolved from having formed an intimate connection with the congregation. This analogy essentially modelled the pastor's association with his/her flock to his/her duty in the church. Biblical literature dating to the earliest era of the church helps to bolster this analogy by stating that a pastor should be in a position to give direction and guidance to people under his/her responsibility (Van Rheenen, 2006: 13).

Social outreach is a vital component of the mission of the church to be "salt, as well as the light" to people around it (Van Rheenen, 2006: 18). Social outreach forms a crucial stage for the evangelistic efforts of the church. Botes (2020:iv) argue that this evangelistic efforts could best be achieved by seeking to show and demonstrate acts of righteousness by engaging in community development projects which seek to rectify practices that negates social justice through the building of collaborative relationships. Though many churches desire to provide outreach services to the community, few possess a clear comprehension of how to commence this project. Pastoral care and counseling focuses on tackling the spiritual issues of individuals (Johnson, 2015:4, 5; Karner, 2013:1, 2). They are also rooted in the theological and spiritual foundation of the church, while being supplemented by several social science theories (Van Rheenen, 2006: 19). Most of the initial societal foundations of kindness and charity owe their origins to religious institutions. The inherent desire to assist others and the subsequent commencement of social outreach is a central and cultivated element of religion (Magezi, 2012:261; Van Rheenen, 2006: 19). Religious values and traditions and concern for public and community good have considerably affected the goals and process of social outreach programs (Van Rheenen, 2006: 24).

Religious institutions such as the Christian church have long maintained their role as the major center of communities for their social outreach practices (Stecker *et al.*, 2006:514; Van Rheenen, 2006: 22). Social outreach took on such a high degree of importance in the church because of a necessity to better meet the basic physical requirements of its congregants (Carte-Edwards *et al.*, 2012:194). The Church remains a crucial and influential establishment in delivering social services, as well as informal medical assistance and services accessible to individuals and families (Campbell, Hudson, Resnicow, Blakeney, Paxton & Baskin, 2007: 213; Van Rheenen, 2006: 23). This forms a point of exploration, as well as a connection for people who render their services in the assisting professions, for instance, social work. The above collaborations provide an invaluable setting for practice, in addition to a chance to help faith-based communities like churches to meet the needs of communities more effectively (Adderley-Kelly & Green, 2005:147; Adler & Rehkrophf, 2008: 235; Van Rheenen, 2006: 22). The essential contribution of this study is obvious. It demonstrates the necessity for shared care in interventions seeking to address the needs of congregants and communities. It further contributes in developing appropriate models that would prove most invaluable in achieving this goal. This is underpinned by the need to maintain balance and boundaries which underlies the notion of shared care. This stems from the realization that potential damage could be caused due to a lack of this compelling the ideal of maintenance of balance between pastoral care and social outreach in pastoral duties in the quest for effective and meaningful spiritual leadership. This could assist in adverting the potential of possible burnout capable of producing devastating and debilitating effects for themselves and others in operating in their roles and duties to church congregants and community members.

1.2.2 Problem statement and questions arising

In order to be effective in their work in a rural setting, churches should provide both pastoral care and social outreach to the surrounding community, even though many of them may be far-spread across miles of farmland. Apart from providing counseling services and visiting the sick or those in prisons, religious leaders who perform these services should also address some of the physical needs of individuals in rural areas (Meyerstein & Ruskin, 2007: 113). This can be done by providing food and medicine to the rural inhabitants. However, today it is not uncommon to find a church emphasizing

pastoral care at the expense of social outreach. Conversely, some churches tend to overemphasize social outreach at the expense of pastoral care. However, both are important if a church is to make a real and lasting impact on the lives of its rural congregants (Morse, 2011:1).

Without balancing social outreach and pastoral care, rural dwellers will continue missing an important component of the missional outreach that should be provided by the church. Doing this will mean that the church has failed in one of its core roles, either in providing pastoral care or social outreach. Studies document the adverse effects that improper balance between pastoral care and social outreach engender. In this regard, loneliness, isolation, burnouts, imbalance between personal life and professional life, absence of self-care activities, ineffectiveness or engagement in behaviour that are destructive to themselves and others are paramount (Morse, 2011:1; Scot and Lovell, 2014:788). Dillen (2017:1) offers a model of adequate form of self-giving based on shared care deriving from a combination of kerugmatic or sacramental and a model of the “presence” approach in pastoral work and ministry. While moving away from the sacrificial model of pastoral care, she argues that the ecclesiological and theological ideas that tend to view the pastoral role as an encompassing and elastic resource exact undue pressure on the pastor that they feel pressed to sacrifice themselves for others while neglecting themselves. This study builds on knowledge in this area concerning the notion of shared responsibility in pastoral care provision that supports the idea of self-giving and sacrifice when extremely needful in terms of the shepherd and good Samaritan approach to pastoral care work (Hiltner, 2005:47; Stevenson-Moesner, 2005:62). The researcher will examine how the church can find a balance between pastoral care and social outreach to best serve rural communities. This will be done by seeking the perspectives of local church-goers and the church itself on how they think one can balance between pastoral care and social outreach.

It is however worth noting that this study conceptualizes pastoral care and social outreach in terms of the church as a whole –body dynamics at work within the whole rural community because the pastors and social outreach workers are its agents and vehicle of contact and impact.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTION

The research question for this research can be formulated in the following manner:

How can the church find a balance between pastoral care and social outreach to best serve rural communities?

Based on Osmer's (2008) practical theological research methodology, the following questions will be asked in order to answer the research question:

- RQ1:** Which perspectives from a descriptive-empirical study contribute towards a comprehensive description of the current situation of the balance between pastoral care and social outreach in the church to serve rural communities?(Following Osmer's (2008:4) descriptive empirical question: "What is going on?")
- RQ2:** What interpretation do other related sciences provide in the understanding and explanation of the current situation of social outreach to serve rural communities? (Following Osmer's (2008: 4) interpretative question: "Why is this going on?")
- RQ3:** What are the normative and ethical perspectives that Scripture provides for the balance between pastoral care and social outreach in the church to serve rural communities? (Following Osmer's (2008:4) normative question: "What ought to be going on?")
- RQ4:** Which practical-theological perspectives and guidelines can be given to the church to find a balance between pastoral care and social outreach to best serve rural communities? (Following Osmer's (2008: 4) pragmatic question: "How might we respond?")

1.4 AIM AND OBJECTIVES

1.4.1 Aim:

The overall aim of this study is to determine how the church can find a balance between pastoral care and social outreach in the church to best serve rural communities

1.4.2 Objectives:

This research intends to address the aforementioned questions by pursuing the following objectives:

- To determine a clear depiction of the current situation of the balance between pastoral care and social outreach in the church to serve rural communities. (Following Osmer's (2008:4) descriptive empirical question: "What is going on?")
- To conduct a literature study of other related sciences in order to provide understanding and explanation of the current situation of social outreach to serve rural communities. (Following Osmer's (2008: 4) interpretative question: "Why is this going on?")
- To determine the normative and ethical perspectives that Scripture provides for the balance between pastoral care and social outreach in the church to serve rural communities. (Following Osmer's (2008:4) normative question: "What ought to be going on?")
- To propose practical-theological perspectives and guidelines to the church to find a balance between pastoral care and social outreach to best serve rural communities. (Following Osmer's (2008: 4) pragmatic question: "How might we respond?")

1.5 CENTRAL THEORETICAL ARGUMENT

The central theoretical argument is that with the help of the necessary practical-theological perspectives, the church will be able to find a balance between pastoral care and social outreach to best serve rural communities.

1.6 A REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1.6.1 Practical Theological Studies on Pastoral care

The review of literature relies on information collected via literature searches utilizing at least the following search facilities and databases available to the researcher, i.e. NEXUS (the database of the NRF with current and completed research), SACat (national catalogue of books and journals in South Africa), SAePublications (South Africa

journals articles), EbscoHost (International journals articles), Medline (OVID) PsycInfo (OVID), PubMed, and Embase (OVID),and ProQuest (International theses and dissertations in full text).

As part of pastoral care programs, churches provide counseling services to their parish. Generally, persons are not required to pay for these services. Faith-based communities may be utilized to help persons diagnosed with depression, anxiety, and other minor mental health issues (Kramer *et al.*, 2007: 136).

Each rural family requires a pastor, an individual who has the capability to minister, as well as to render services to them always and within any circumstances. For a pastor in a rural setting to pay a visit to the church members at their dwelling places less than one or two times every year could be regarded as an insult (Koch & Johnson, 1997: 348; Randall, 2011:118). Apart from providing counseling services, church members and pastors visit the sick. The frequency of visits is dependent upon the state of the family. A family with a sick child will expect more visits from a rural pastor than a healthy family in the same congregation. In these meetings, members of the church may decide to visit the persons who are in the hospital or those recuperating at home. Knowing that their community supports them and the company of a visit can bring a lot of comfort to patients (Meyerstein & Ruskin, 2007: 119). Visiting the sick also maintains the relationship between the community and the family. Although some patients desire spiritual inspiration and comfort, traditional medicine does not adequately offer this support (Meyerstein & Ruskin, 2007: 119). Using music, prayers, and other rituals can help the patients to cope with their difficult circumstances (Meyerstein & Ruskin, 2007: 120). Sickness is both a spiritual and physical condition (Meyerstein & Ruskin, 2007: 121), and so such visits can be utilized by the church to alleviate the suffering of a patient and their family.

Additionally to be an effective pastor in the rural context is also to be a counselor (Koch & Johnson, 1997: 349). Nevertheless, it is worth noting that rural pastoral counseling will presumably be quite distinct from that seen in an urban setting. Pastoral counseling in the rural setting is more informal, regularly undertaken in informal environments; for instance, at a local restaurant (Dollinger & Chivalisz, 2011: 528; Jones, Cook & Wang, 2011:145; Koch & Johnson, 1997: 350). The counseling is also regularly initiated by a

pastor in the public rural setting, whereby everyone knows about the difficulties and struggles faced by others.

The counseling might entirely involve talking through possible solutions and guidance action in response to personal problems, all in hope that the individual undergoing counseling will pick up on the seeds of faith and continue to improve their life themselves. While some advocate for the separation of administrative and pastoral duties, rural congregations often can't afford a separate administrative staff, or depending on how isolated the community is, doesn't have access to people with the necessary skills. Churches in the rural context cannot import talent or leadership like urban congregations do. Therefore, it is up to a church minister to identify talent among his congregation and enhance leadership (Van Rheenen, 2006: 14; Berry, Francis, Rolph & Rolph, 2012:165). The development of gifts and talents from inside the local church congregation need to be afforded priority in a rural church, otherwise there will not be sufficient skilled leadership available to subsequent generations (Van Rheenen, 2006: 15). While the church awaits people to fill these roles, the pastor may end up taking on many responsibilities.

An investigation into the existing literature reveals that several similar investigations have been conducted, particularly about the pastoral role in the Christian church. This section is largely built upon the most important of those studies. For example, Blizzard initially did a wide-ranging study concerning pastoral roles (Hage, 2006: 303). He had categorized pastoral roles into administrative, pastor, priest, organizer, teacher, and preacher roles. Blizzard's surveys found that preacher and pastor were ranked top in terms of importance (Hage, 2006: 304). Priests and teachers were ranked in the middle, while organizers and administrators were at the bottom (Hage, 2006: 304). The above study involved numerous churches from various denominations. Whereas earlier researchers had consolidated teaching and preaching to be a part included in the role of shepherding, a study classifies the pastoral role as a unique one (Langley & Kahnweiler, 2003:9).

While traditional wisdom held that administrative duties fall under the role of the pastor, it could also be distinguished as being deserving of its own role (Langley & Kahnweiler, 2003: 11). This definition of a pastoral role is rather narrow, as it seems to eliminate feeding and direction in administrative terms. Studies suggest that "shepherding" is a

domain associated with pastoral care, though without a very clear definition of the term (Langley & Kahnweiler, 2003: 13; Stone, 2006:25). Numerous earlier authors, as well as Biblical literature, suggest that leading, preaching, teaching, and correcting all were part of shepherding a flock.

Langley & Kahnweiler (2003:15) report Robert Anderson, a member of the Baptist Church, to separate the above tasks as different tasks associated with a pastoral role. Additionally, evangelizing is not regularly mentioned as an element of a pastoral role. However, studies indicate that without evangelizing, a pastoral role could be considered deficient (Anderson, 2007:151; Langley & Kahnweiler, 2003: 17; Stone, 2006: 26). With regards to a pastoral role, the Bible draws the duties of the pastor's service in broad terms, providing the pastor with a large deal of independence and creativity within the actual accomplishment of his responsibilities (Langley & Kahnweiler, 2003: 17). The Bible portrays the role with a wide brush, under which almost any credible role undertaken by the modern pastor may fit into the kinds of ministry laid out by the Bible (Langley & Kahnweiler, 2003: 19; Stone, 2006:26). It is noted that this appears to be extensively broad and all-inclusive account of the pastor's role, as it does not present many parameters (Langley & Kahnweiler, 2003: 20).

Anderson (2007:149) seems to subscribe to a wider description of a pastor than the Bible would warrant. Nevertheless, he finishes by stating that the nature of a pastoral service is an equipping ministry (Langley & Kahnweiler, 2003: 20; Stone, 2006:25). Anderson (2007:150) closes on a non-objective note by stating that a pastor should equip other people in specific tasks in order for them to concentrate his time and efforts on areas which he/she reckons to be most fruitful, as well as tasks of high priority (Langley & Kahnweiler, 2003: 21). Additionally, he implies that pastors are not equally experienced in all elements of a pastoral role; thus, they should consider delegating areas where they may have a weakness (Langley & Kahnweiler, 2003: 21).

In another study employing similar categories as those of Blizzard, Hage observed that leaders from five American Baptist churches of differing sizes (there is no indication as to whether the churches were located in rural areas or urban), ranked identically to Blizzard's, with the exception of teacher being ranked lowest in importance (Hage, 2006: 305).

Hage (2006:306) further observed that the common churchgoer ranks the spiritual life of the pastor as a very important element of pastoral roles. A pastor's relational duty is ranked second in significance, while preaching fell to the bottom of the list of priorities (Hage, 2006: 306). Notably, the preferences of pastors and professors from the study were somewhat inconsistent with the laity's expectations. Studies indicate that for rural churches to emerge standing from a period of change requires capable ministers. A minister in a rural setting cannot afford the gratification of living as a specialist, unlike most urban parishes (Dollinger, & Chiwalisz, 2011:528; Koch & Johnson, 1997: 347). A rural church is not a place for the "one-man-band" pastor (Koch & Johnson, 1997: 354). Additionally, a church in the rural setting requires a pastor who is also a priest; for instance, one who is able to keep the rites and traditions of a church and community in acceptable ways within a certain culture (Koch & Johnson, 1997: 356). Traditions and a community's history are more crucial in a rural context than an urban one. Creativity could be an advantage within urban settings, but in a rural community, individuals will often require that customs like marriages and funerals be done in traditional and appropriate ways (Hendron, Irving & Taylor, 2011:221; Koch & Johnson, 1997: 357). Moreover, the establishment of the church service is a culture that cannot be altered easily.

The minister has to be a generalist who has capabilities in various areas. In numerous rural areas, pastoral roles are still viewed as the central focus of a church ministry (Koch & Johnson, 1997:347; Randall, 2011:117). The congregation demands a competent pastor, but they anticipate him/her to utilize language and ideas that are comprehensible to a rural mind set (Koch & Johnson, 1997: 348).

1.6.2 Practical Theological Studies on Social Outreach

Studies also indicate that in spite of the secular development of community support and welfare, religious groups have consistently provided social outreach throughout history (Hibbert, 2009: 319). Clinical fields have been used in this outreach, including counseling, cell groups consulting, marriage and pre-marriage sessions, in addition to other related instructive experiences, consultation in churches with large congregations, community ministries guidance, as well as social action implementation assistance (Hibbert, 2009: 321). The church's social outreach and social work share the collective

mission of giving assistance, direction, and help to people in need, though there are differences between the two (Hage, 2006: 307).

Studies show that, for instance, a few individuals in the assisting professions do not value religion, and do not think that churches contribute significantly towards human services. Moreover, some people believe that people who are secular should not assist in faith-based professions, in case some of their behavior does not incorporate the tenants of the Christian faith (Hibbert, 2009: 317). Still, faith does not indicate skill, and there are many roles in the church that could perhaps best be filled by a non-religious person, depending upon the local population and availability (Carter-Edwards *et al.*, 2012:197). The positions where one is most likely to find a non-Christian in a church are secretaries, organizers, and other administrative roles (Hibbert, 2009: 317). Though one may expect the situation to be uncomfortable for everyone involved, it is not at all uncommon for non-Christians to fill a role for a religious institution.

Hibbert (2009:322) categorize congregational social outreach into such areas as immediate requirements, educational and health needs, community development actions, evangelical outreach, efforts that are humanitarian in nature to under-developed regions or nations, and public advocacy. The church affords significant input to the above collaboration; for instance, spiritual tools and traditions, forgiveness processes, and reception of others, in addition to calls for volunteerism that bolster professional practice (Hibbert, 2009: 329). The religious and the spiritual wisdom devices offer numerous tools to improve societal, psychological, interpersonal, and physical functioning (Snook, 2010:112). Additionally, the church presents a connection to mental health guards, possible resources for individuals, and a link to an instituted support community (Snook, 2010: 112).

Christian experience cannot be compartmentalized down into individual units, and church workings cannot spill over to the requirements of the individuals around it (Snook, 2010: 113). Additionally, a robust Christianity has almost always exposed its vast ideas concerning God, salvation, and the social duty towards the normal relationships of personal living (Snook, 2010: 115). Therefore, while being committed to social service could be a regular outflow associated with the church, there is a need to recognize that the mission and the culture are distinct.

The church principally is a fellowship, and it is a misrepresentation of the church's purpose to view any church as a group whose primary role is the handing out of money (Martin, Bowles, Adkins & Leach, 2011: 171). Although the church possesses a unique function and purpose, it has a rich history of engagement in social welfare. Almost all social services rendered today may be traced backward to origins in religious establishments (Tino & Brink, 1999: 45). Early Christian groups were particularly noted for their charity work. During the middle Ages, monasteries employed significant portions of a village's population, and took care of the sick and elderly. During the nineteenth century, the Methodist Churches and the Salvation Army began to offer specific outreach programs towards the most overlooked and marginalized residents of the interior cities (Tino & Brink, 1999: 45).

At the start of the twentieth century, the Southern Baptists located in Louisville, Kentucky, rendered services and support to the settlers and poorest inhabitants of the city (Martin *et al.*, 2011: 172). Social outreach through the church is described as utilizing the knowledge, benefits, and experiences of social workers in the church and using them resourcefully. Congregations can be a perfect setting for social work, depending upon the individual congregation's characteristics (Martin *et al.*, 2011: 173).

Social outreach is unique in the setting of the church in that most of the work that occurs happens on a voluntary basis, though this mainly depends upon the culture of the individual congregation (Tino & Brink, 1999: 46). What literature there is on social outreach in the church is mostly limited to ancient text, some edited books, and a few research articles.

A pastor in a rural setting needs to prioritize relationships instead of tasks since small rural churches function on community support and not bureaucracy (Hibbert, 2009: 323). It is imperative that all church members experience a sense of belonging. According relationships priority above tasks means that a rural pastor has to work harder to develop relationships, as well as credibility with other leaders of the church, and utilize the relationships as chances to instill seeds of possible change (Hibbert, 2009: 324). Moreover, rather than attempt to begin novel programs, a pastor in a rural setting will be more effective in building on what is already in place, and working with the community's traditions so that change may take shape and develop (Hibbert, 2009: 324). The pastor could bring about the necessary change by enabling the local church

leaders to grasp the seeds of their concept and sustain them to grow in the local church congregation (Beaumont, 2011:118; Hibbert, 2009: 328; Robbin & Francis, 2010:57).

Established church leaders will possess the established relationships and credibility required to convert their ideas into reality (Martin *et al.*, 2011: 168). The pastor in the rural context should allow his church leaders to establish the pace when coming up with new concepts, so that community relations are sustained and the concepts are developed in culturally acceptable ways (Martin *et al.*, 2011: 168).

Since most denominational plans are largely program oriented, a wise pastor in the rural setting does not try to implement programs like those offered by the particular denomination (Martin *et al.*, 2011: 170). He instead brings forth the seed concepts to his principal leaders in order to collectively adapt the idea into one that will be fitting and fruitful in a rural setting (Martin *et al.*, 2011: 171).

1.7 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This proposed research will employ the research methodology that was introduced by Osmer, as this method is most suitable for the research questions, aims, and objectives of the proposed study (Osmer, 2008: 12). This model incorporates four queries that essentially guide a researcher to focus on four intertwined, intellectual tasks associated with practical theological research (Osmer, 2008: 24). The four central tasks linked to practical theological research and guided by the four questions are to be examined in this research (Osmer, 2008:6) and they are the following:

- The descriptive-empirical task analyses the prevailing situation ("What is going on/What happened?") (Osmer, 2008: 6).
- The interpretive task attempts to comprehend from a literature study of multiple associated sciences what circumstances gave rise to the prevailing situation ("Why is it going on/ Why is this happening?") (Osmer, 2008: 8).
- The normative task incorporates the normative and ethical perspectives the Scripture provides to describe the desired situation ("What ought to be going on/ what should happen?") (Osmer, 2008: 7).
- The pragmatic task involves the formulation and the implementation of a strategy or action plan for the solution of the problem formulated in the

empirical-descriptive task ("How might we respond/ How should we act?") (Osmer, 2008: 7).

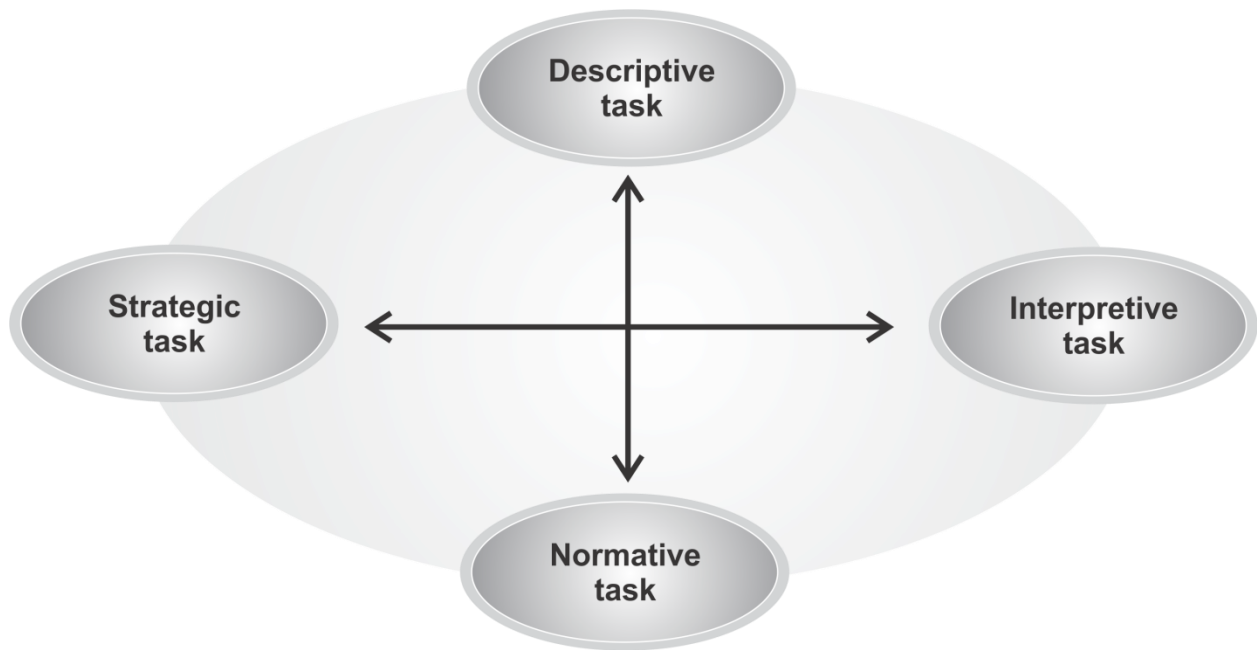


Figure 1.1: Osmer's model

1.7.1 The descriptive–empirical task (What is going on?)

The descriptive–empirical task is centered on the query: “what is going on in this situation?”(Osmer, 2008: 6). The query will be answered from the empirical research and information that is obtained through a qualitative research design, as well as semi-structured interviews. The object of the empirical analysis is to investigate the balance between pastoral care and social outreach in a rural setting.

During this state, information and data is gathered regarding specific episodes, circumstances, or contexts within the community. Qualitative research techniques do not necessarily treat persons as objects; hence, they are compatible to priestly listening (Osmer, 2008: 11).

The qualitative data in the proposed study will be obtained through semi-structured interviews with six pastors/outreach workers and a focus group discussion comprised of six church members in a rural setting. This will hopefully not only establish, but also give insight into and explain the meanings, difficulties, views, and experiences of church members who have been influenced by social outreach and pastoral care. Social

outreach workers shall also be interviewed to determine their experiences, attitudes, and beliefs towards social outreach within the church.

A qualitative study is suitable due to the character of the proposed research questions. Qualitative research encompasses different methods or paradigms with every approach possessing distinct methodological principles, theoretical backgrounds, and objects (Neuman, 2002: 32). A qualitative researcher is interested in understanding instead of quantifying, with natural observation being the primary activity instead of controlled measurements. A qualitative research program entails a subjective examination of facts from an insider's perspective, rather than the views of outsiders that are more common in quantitative research (Neuman, 2002: 33).

1.7.1.1 *Sampling methodology*

Sampling in qualitative research involves selecting units to represent relevant features of the study (Neuman, 2002: 12). The proposed study will employ a non-probability sampling approach, since it is most suitable for qualitative studies whose aim is not to obtain a statistically representative sample. Target sampling techniques will be employed, and respondents will be selected based on the criteria that they belong to a church in a rural setting and are willing to participate. Criteria for eliminating individuals during sampling will involve excluding persons who are unable to participate due to scheduling conflicts, as well as individuals who are unable to express their feelings meaningfully during interviews as a result of poor cognitive capability.

Participants in the study will be asked to fill in a checklist whereby background questions, like when/where/how questions, are asked regarding pastoral care and social outreach. The ethical significance of confidentiality, as well as informed consent, shall be clarified to respondents at this point. Steps considered to guarantee that a breach of privacy will not occur will be explained to the participants, such as how the information they provide will be used. Detailed information in writing concerning the research and a letter of informed consent shall be given to each respondent. The above checklist will be followed by semi-structured interviews where the ideas of social outreach and pastoral roles will be expounded to respondents to ensure that they fully comprehend the concepts.

The questions presented to church members will be as follows:

- Describe in which ways the social outreach practiced by your church has played a role in overcoming your personal challenges?
- Describe how pastoral roles have been beneficial to you in times of difficulty?

The questions posed to the social outreach workers will be phrased as follows:

- What is your experience with working with members of the rural communities?
- What do you think are the needs and challenges of persons in the rural setting?
- What do you think is the responsibility of the church in assisting its members to overcome their challenges?

The data obtained from the semi-structured interviews will be analyzed by reviewing the raw information, then identifying the relevance of separate data sections to specific codes so as to ultimately identify and display the results of correlations between the various themes (Neuman, 2002: 15).

1.7.2 Interpretive task (Why is it going on?)

The interpretive task asks the question “why is this going on?” (Osmer, 2008:4). A review of literature from related sciences will be done to tackle one of the objectives of the proposed study, which is to determine the benefits of balancing between pastoral care and social outreach, hence, establishing the interpretive view. The literature review will obtain information from previous studies in pursuit of sage wisdom concerning the benefits of balancing between pastoral care and social outreach (Osmer, 2008: 8). The interpretive task will be conducted by means of a review of literature based on secondary sources which included national as well as international scientific resources, academic books, journal articles and websites. Various search engines will be used that will help in this process: EBSCO HOST; Psych Info; PsychArticles; Google Scholar; SACat, SAEPublication, Health Source.

1.7.3 Normative task (What ought to be going on?)

The normative task questions relate to the topic: “what ought to be going on?” (Osmer, 2008:12). It attempts to discern God’s will for prevailing realities, and Osmer refers to

this task as prophetic discernment (Osmer, 2008: 12). The proposed research study will also incorporate the normative task. The third objective of the proposed study which is determining the normative and ethical perspectives the scripture provides for regarding the pastoral care and social outreach of rural church families, will be determined by doing exegetical studies associated with relevant passages such as Acts 20 verse 28 and 1 Peter 5 verses 1 – 2 for example, found in the Scriptures. The exegesis approach that will be conducted for the proposed study will be a grammatical historical method (Osmer, 2008: 13). The normative views obtained from the method of exegesis will then be compared and contrasted to the earlier interpretive viewpoints; thus, determining how sage wisdom appropriately correlates with God's Wisdom (Osmer, 2008: 33).

1.7.4 Pragmatic task (How might we respond?)

The pragmatic task seeks to answer the question: “how might we respond?” (Osmer, 2008: 7). The synthesis confirmed through a hermeneutical synergy between the study results obtained from the normative, interpretive, and descriptive tasks will be employed to propose practical theological perspectives that may guide the church in finding a balance between pastoral care and social outreach to best serve rural communities (Osmer, 2008: 31).

1.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical traditions in research are intended to limit the researcher from abusing the respondents in any form (Osmer, 2008: 59). Strydom (in de Vos *et al.*, 2011:113) takes this further by commenting that the issue of ethical considerations in social sciences and humanity research covers a wide scope of areas and are complex. The author observes that ethical issues arise in research due to the fact that the subject of investigation is human beings who cannot be studied without adequate consideration accorded to their rights and safety. Gravetter and Forzano (2012:77) resonate with this stressing that ethical issues in social sciences relates to both the responsibility of the researcher to adhere to certain rules in carrying out and reporting the research. They add that it also involves the commitment of respecting and protecting and upholding the rights of the participants. They define ethics as follows: “Research ethics concerns the responsibility of researchers to be honest and respectful to all individuals who are

affected by their research studies or their reports of their studies' results" (Gravetter & Forzano. 2012:77).

The estimated ethical risk level of this proposed study is minimal. This is because the qualitative data obtained through semi-structured in-depth interviews with individual pastors /outreach workers and in the focus group discussions with church members do not exceed more stress than they experience on a daily basis. There will also be no conflicts of interest to declare in this study. No inducements have been offered to potential interviewees that may in any way influence the responses they give in the interviews. The qualitative data will firstly, give insight into and explain the meanings, difficulties, views, and experiences of church members who have been influenced by social outreach and pastoral care. Secondly, social outreach workers will also be interviewed to determine their experiences, attitudes, and beliefs towards social outreach within the church.

In order to ensure compliance with relevant ethical practice in this research study, the researcher will consider attending to the following ethical issues discussed below.

1.8.1 What will be expected of participants during data gathering?

Individual interview with pastors of maximum one hour and a focus group discussion with church members of one-hour duration.

1.8.2 Risks and precaution

Risks:	Precautions:
No identifiable risk envisaged	If psychological risk however occur, participants will be offered counselling and debriefing.

1.8.3 Benefits for participants

Direct benefits for participants:	Indirect benefits for society at large or for the researchers/institution:
The study offers opportunity for participants to understand the challenges associated with their pastoral and outreach work and practical strategies to overcome them and become more productive.	The study offers an opportunity for participant's (Church) outreach work and contribution to be seen and better engineered to better meet community and society's needs

The overall benefits (risk/benefit analysis) outweigh the risks.

1.8.4 Facility where the study will be implemented

Individual interviews with pastors/social outreach workers will be conducted at their respective churches by mutual agreement while the focus group discussion will be conducted at Church of the Good Shepherd, Grand Bahama premises by mutual agreement.

1.8.5 Goodwill permission /consent

Participating pastors' and church members' consent were sought and obtained before commencement of the study. Pastors and church members are selected to participate in the study because of their experience in pastoral care and social outreach

1.8.6 Criteria for participant selection

The following inclusion and exclusion criteria will be used to select participants:

Inclusion criteria:	Justification:
Being a pastor and engaged in pastoral care and social outreach. Being a member of a congregation and beneficiary of pastoral care and social outreach.	Included because of rich first-hand experience.

Exclusion criteria:	Justification:
Criteria for eliminating individuals during sampling will involve excluding persons who are unable to participate due to scheduling conflicts, as well as individuals who are unable to express their feelings meaningfully during interviews as a result of poor cognitive capability.	Excluding persons who are unable to participate due to scheduling conflicts, as well as individuals who are unable to express their feelings meaningfully during interviews as a result of poor cognitive capability.

1.8.7 Participant recruitment

Participating pastors involved in pastoral care and social outreach and church members who benefit from pastoral care and social outreach are identified in local participating assemblies. They are thereafter contacted through phone and personal contact and invited to participate in the study. The study aims and objectives are explained to them and the relevant ethical issues relevant to the study is explained to them. Their voluntary participation is solicited and their consent and willingness to participate obtained before the commencement of the study (Annexure A).

1.8.8 Informed consent

Gravetter and Forzano (2012:84) comment that informed consent refers to the right of the participants to know what the research is about, how it will affect them, the risks and the benefits of participation and the fact that they have the right to decline participation if they wish to. Bhattacharjee (2012:138-139) shares a similar view opining that informed consent involves ensuring that participants are fully intimated about what the research is about, their role in the research and what possible consequences it may have on them so that they can willingly agree or not to participate. In a practical theological research project that will adopt the qualitative research approach, the researcher will utilize the non-probability purposive (judgement) sampling technique to select six pastors/outreach workers and six church members who are actively involved in pastoral care and social outreach and who are full time members in rural areas in the Bahamas. Participant inclusion criteria will include pastors and church members who are actively involved in

and benefit from pastoral care and social outreach. It will also include being able to communicate their experiences in English and willing to participate in the study. Fuller information is given in chapter two (2.4.1). The researcher will identify and make appointments by telephone or approach in person the participants who will be from the major churches on the island, from the Pentecostal, Anglican, Baptist or Roman Catholic denominations. The study purpose and aims and objectives will be discussed with them. It will be essential to gain their voluntary consent to participate in this research project. After obtaining their consent, the pastors will be interviewed at their church office for data collection at a mutually agreed upon date. The individual interview will last for 1 hour while the focus group discussion will be conducted at the researcher's church office (Church of the Good Shepherd,) with their consent and it will last for 1 hour also.

1.8.9 Voluntary participation

Babbie and Mouton (2009:521) observed that social research often, if not always, involves an invasion into the private lives of the participants. They opine that the necessity for researchers to comply with the ethical issue of voluntary participation of people in social science and humanity research is a way to ensure and guarantee that the rights of participants are not compromised in any way. Du Toit (2013:95) states correctly that through adherence to the ethical issues related to voluntary participation, it becomes possible and easy to ensure that participants' who participate in any study do so out of their own choice. Compliance to this ethical requirement results in the provision of information about the social reality under investigation that could be regarded as factual and genuine. This is because they participate without being forced, deceived or as a result of lack of alternative. This aspect will be applied by the researcher by including the clause relating to voluntary participation of the participant in the consent form which they will sign after explanation has been made in this regard. They will be made to understand that their participation is voluntary and that they are free to withdraw from the study at any time without any harm or repercussions.

1.8.10 Privacy/confidentiality

Green and Thorogood (2009:69) state that the concept implies that only the researcher and possibly a few other relevant people (such as the researcher's supervisors,

promoters, a translator or an independent coder) should be aware of the identity of participants and that these other relevant people should also make a commitment to keeping the participants' identity details confidential. The proposed study will ensure that the identity of participants is not divulged. The researcher will be guided by Green and Thorogood's (2009:69) suggestions which advocates changing the details of the participants so that informants would not be recognized, thereby concealing their identity and information. This will be achieved in this research by providing participants with pseudonyms that ensures and guarantees that the researcher will also be able to recognize the linkage to their real names on the tape recordings and transcripts. Participants will be assured that data gathered by the researcher will be stored safely and securely by them. Additionally, the proposed study will make sure that the venue of the interview remains private.

1.8.11 Incentives and/or remuneration of participants

No remuneration is offered to the participants. The study is not funded by any person or institution. The researcher will ensure that the participants do not incur any cost in the course of the study.

1.8.12 Publication of the research findings

Making the research findings available to all participants will also be dealt with by the researcher in this study. The researcher fully understands his duty to make the research results available to the participants and will explain this to them. The researcher will also ensure that the results of the study are a reflection of the reality it aims to investigate. The findings of the proposed study will be published as articles in a relevant accredited research journal. In addition, the author of this study will communicate the results of this research to the pastoral practitioners and church members after this thesis has been completed and subsequently approved by the examiners appointed by North-West University. He will in the first instance phone each participant to inform them that the study has been completed and that the results are now available. There will at that point be an opportunity for a brief discussion of its findings. Afterwards, a fuller account of the finding of this study will be sent by email to them.

1.8.13 Debriefing of participants

In case a respondent suffers psychological distress owing to a study, the informants must be granted adequate ways of coping with the distress (Osmer, 2008: 61). The proposed research will ensure that the informants undergo a debriefing session immediately after their interview period. This will be focused on reviewing the emotions experienced during the session.

1.8.14 Management, storage and destruction of data

Data management: Qualitative data will be collected through the use of individual interview and focus group discussion. The individual interviews and focus group will be audio recorded and field notes used with the permission of the participants. The emanating data will be transcribed and coded and ultimately stored away in a secret cupboard with only the researcher and possibly the supervisors having access to it. The data will however be ultimately stored in the library at North West University for five years after which it would be destroyed.

Storage and destruction of data: The data (audio-tape and field notes) will be stored at the library at North West University for five years and then would be destroyed and discarded effectively and safely.

1.8.15 Monitoring of research

The researcher will ensure that he complies and adheres to the conditions and guidelines outlined in the ethical clearance obtained in respect of the execution and conducting of the study at all times. This will entail conducting myself professionally and competently without attempting to take advantage of the participants or manipulate the outcome or direction of the research.

1.9 STUDY SETTING/CONTEXT

The study was conducted in Grand Bahamas which is the fourth largest of The Islands of The Bahamas and the second most popular destination among visitors to the Islands (FAO-AQUASTAT, 2015:3). It is approximately 530 miles and divided into three main sections: East End, Freeport and West End. Participants were drawn from churches in three rural settlements of East End Grand Bahamas, namely: High Rock, McLeans

Town and Deep Water Cay. The three rural settlements are sparsely developed areas with secluded beaches with agriculture and tourism representing the main stay of the economy. The Grand Bahamas accounts for 15% of the total population of the inhabited thirty Islands of The Bahamas with New Providence accounting for 70 % while The Family Island accounts for the remaining 15%. Reports indicate that 52% of the population of the study area are male while 48% are female with 2% of the economically active population involved in agriculture being only male (FAO-AQUASTAT, 2015:3). These demographic statistics of the study area have important implications for the character and role of churches in the rural area and informed the choice of the area for study.

1.10 CLASSIFICATION OF HEADINGS/CHAPTERS

Chapter 1	Introduction: Research proposal
Chapter 2	A descriptive-empirical task of finding a balance between pastoral care and social outreach
Chapter 3	An interpretive pastoral study of finding a balance between pastoral care and social outreach
Chapter 4	The normative task of finding a balance between pastoral care and social outreach
Chapter 5	The pragmatic task: The function of finding a balance between pastoral care and social outreach
Chapter 6	Conclusion

1.11 SCHEMATIC PRESENTATION

TITLE: PASTORAL CARE AND SOCIAL OUTREACH: A BALANCING ACT TO BEST SERVE RURAL COMMUNITIES		
Research question	Aim	Research method

Understanding the function of a good balance between pastoral care and social outreach.	The overall goal is to examine the function of how a church can balance between pastoral care and social outreach.	Semi-structure in depth interviews to be recorded analyzed and interpreted. Journals entries and personal notes of participants to be incorporated.
Questions arising from the research question	Objectives	Methodology
What is the descriptive empirical task concerning the function of how the church can better balance between pastoral care and social outreach?	To do a comprehensive descriptive empirical overview to examine the function of balancing between pastoral care and social outreach.	Descriptive Empirical Task: Semi-structure in depth interviews to be recorded analyzed and interpreted.
What are the interpretive tasks concerning the function of how the church can balance between pastoral care and social outreach?	To do interpretative research to examine the function of balancing between pastoral care and social outreach to rural church families.	Interpretive task: A literature study is to be undertaken to investigate and evaluate some of the perspectives theories regarding the function of balancing between pastoral care and social outreach.
What is the normative task concerning the function of how the church can balance between pastoral care and social outreach?	To examine the normative task concerning the function of balancing between pastoral care and social outreach to rural church families.	Normative Task: Perspectives from scriptures concerning how to balance between pastoral care and social outreach.
What are the pragmatic tasks concerning the	To examine a pragmatic task concerning the function of balancing	Pragmatic Task: To provide research to

function of how to balance between pastoral care and social outreach?	between pastoral care and social outreach to rural families	pastors and church workers to enhance understanding in the area of balancing between pastoral care and social outreach.
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1.12 CONCLUSION

This chapter dealt with the introduction and general background of the study. It presented the statement of problem, the research questions and aims and objectives of the study and central theoretical argument. It further discussed the research methodology employed in the study and the ethical issues concerned and how they were addressed while providing a definition of key terms. It performed a brief literature review of practical theological studies on pastoral care and social outreach while detailing the layout, structure and schematic presentation of the study and ends with a conclusion.

The next chapter deals with the descriptive-empirical task of finding a balance between pastoral care and social outreach where the findings of the study are discussed.

CHAPTER 2:

DESCRIPTIVE-EMPIRICAL TASK OF FINDING A BALANCE BETWEEN PASTORAL CARE AND SOCIAL OUTREACH ALISM MARRIAGE AND CULTURE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter deals with the question of what is happening which according to Osmer (2008:4) is the main focus and concern of the descriptive-empirical phase of research. In this chapter, Osmer's (2008:4) typology is employed to understand what is happening regarding pastoral care and social outreach. This is done by presenting data from participants' individual interviews and focus group discussion. This revealed the reality under investigation as it was experienced first-hand by the participants. The data obtained from the interviews and focus group were generated from questions posed to pastors/social outreach workers and members of the rural churches that participated in the study in a way that will answer the first research question: "to which perspectives does a descriptive-empirical study contribute towards a comprehensive description of the current situation of the balance between pastoral care and social outreach in the church to serve rural communities?".

Participants' narratives obviously provided an opportunity of gaining empirical understanding of the phenomenon of pastoral care and social outreach with regards to how it unfolded in the study setting. This enabled the achievement of the research first objective which was: "to determine a clear description of the current situation of the balance between pastoral care and social outreach in the church to serve rural communities". This promoted the "gathering of information that helps us discern patterns and dynamics in particular episodes, situations, or contexts" (Osmer, 2008:4). The next section presents a brief discussion on the research methodology applied in this study highlighting the research approach, research design and research methods. It is followed by a presentation of the demographic information of the study participants after which a discussion of the findings which were derived from a thematic analysis of the empirical data from individual interviews and focus group discussion is presented.

2.2 RESEARCH APPROACH OF THE DESCRIPTIVE-EMPIRICAL TASK

A research approach which is sometimes referred to as research strategy is commonly used to imply the general approach adopted in studying a particular phenomenon of interest to any researcher. Marlow (2010:13) states that there are two broad approaches or strategies observed in the literature: quantitative and qualitative. The quantitative approach on the one hand are those mainly epitomizing the positive tradition who stick to the use of quantitative, structured, statistical method of studying natural reality as obtained in the natural sciences. On the other hand is the qualitative approach or strategy epitomizing the interpretive, constructive tradition concerned with human beings and social reality. Maslow (2010:13) argues that social reality cannot be subjected to the same quantitative methods used in the natural sciences. This is because the object of the arts, human and social sciences are human beings with complex behaviour which may not always be amenable to objective observation and measurement.

Green and Thorogood (2009:5, 38) offer a very perceptive insight into the issue of the decision regarding which research approach or strategy to adopt in a study. They opine that the goal, aim, or purpose of a study (among other factors) would ultimately determine which approach or strategy to adopt in a study. They continue to maintain that if the aim of the research is “to understand the perspectives of participants, explore the meaning they give to phenomena, or observe a process in depth, then a qualitative approach is properly appropriate” (Green & Thorogood, 2009: 38). This insight proved invaluable in guiding this present study along the lines of choosing and adopting the qualitative approach. This was in the light of the fact that as a practical theological study dealing with pastoral practitioners involved in pastoral care and social outreach, the qualitative approach was the most suitable in exploring, describing and understanding how they constructed and made meaning of their own experiences and social world in this regard. The researcher viewed the participants (pastors/outreach workers and church members) as the people with the first-hand knowledge and experience of the phenomenon under investigation (empirical depiction of pastoral care and social outreach) and thus more suitable and qualified to provide information and empirical evidence in this regard.

2.3 RESEARCH DESIGN OF THE DESCRIPTIVE-EMPIRICAL TASK

Fouché, Delport and De Vos (2011:142, 143) note with concern the difficulty involved in defining the term “research design” with clarity and unambiguity. They state that this state of things arises from the use of multiple terminology to refer to the process of designing a research study. They however refer to a research design as connoting a step in the research process meaning “groups of small, worked-out formulas from which prospective quantitative and qualitative researchers can select that is suitable to their specific research goals and objectives” (Fouché, Delport & De Vos, 2011: 142- 143). For Creswell (2009:5) research design is the plan or proposal to conduct research which involves the interconnection of philosophy, strategies of inquiry and the specific methods. Creswell (2009:5) further states that in planning a study researchers need to consider properly the philosophical worldview assumptions that they hold about the study, the strategy of inquiry that is related to this worldview, and the specific methods or procedures of research that convert the approach into practice. In this conception, it is suggestive and discernible from Creswell’s stand that the philosophical worldview that a researcher holds will eventually determine the research design. This is because it will eventually determine the methods to be employed as it would seem that the three are intertwined and go together. Fouché and Schurink (2011:313) and Creswell (2009:13), state that qualitative researchers have numerous options to choose from in conducting their research. These include the following research designs: ethnographic, biographical, grounded theory, case study, phenomenological, narrative, explorative, descriptive, explanatory, and contextual research designs. Bhattacharjee (2012:6-7) offer similar idea about the different types of research designs described in the qualitative literature identifying phenomenology, ethnography, grounded theory, case study, biographical research and historical design.

Bhattacharjee (2012:7) states the definition and different social context and situations that best suits the application and employment of each. The author opines that phenomenology basically involves searching out the essence of social phenomena and focuses on the study of lived experiences of a people. The author views this design, in this sense, as thus best suited for studies desiring to understand the lived experiences of individuals and their intentions within their “life-world”. This makes the design most appropriate in providing answers to research questions that seeks to explore “what it is like to experience a social phenomenon?” which equates Osmer’s (2008:8) descriptive-

empirical task concerned about “what is going on/what is happening?” Ethnography seeks to gain an understanding of a people by scientifically studying their culture or subculture through the analysis of their symbols, rituals and customs. This involves observing them and proceeding to document information about their daily life experiences as observed. Grounded theory research design on the other hand generate and derive theoretical explanations about a phenomenon from data and information gathered from the experiences of participants affected by the social phenomenon under study. This information is then utilized in providing insight and explanation on that reality (Fouché & Schurink, 2011:312-313; Wiid & Diggines, 2013:55-56).

Bhattacharjee (2012:7) states further that case study designs focus on a small sample of participants studied in a more detailed and in-depth way while biographical research designs are noted to be systematic studies focusing on providing comprehensive information about individuals. This is executed by the use of life stories normally obtained through the use of interviews. Similar to this, historical research design according to Nieuwenhuis (in Maree, 2010:72-73) is concerned with obtaining a new perspective or insight about a phenomenon by studying its past unfolding through the study and examination of records, archives, diaries, books, videos or biographies in order to know what has been, what is and what ought to be. On their part, Wiid and Diggines (2013:55-56) noted that a researcher may employ specific objectives in a qualitative study which may be explorative, descriptive, conclusive and causal in terms of its goals.

With reference to this observation and in line with Osmer’s (2008:8) descriptive-empirical task of finding out “what is going on/happening?”, the type of qualitative design that this study utilized was the phenomenological, explorative, descriptive, and contextual design. This was in line with the goal and objective of the study as expressed in this phase in Osmer’s typology which was to explore and describe the empirical depiction of pastoral care and social outreach to find a balance to best serve rural communities.

- It included explorative design in order to gain and develop insight, understanding and information about the empirical depiction of pastoral care and social outreach in order to propose and develop a model to find a balance to better serve rural communities.

- It contained a descriptive phenomenological design because the study sought to provide an in-depth empirical description of the phenomenon under study (Wiid & Diggins, 2013:56).
- It aimed at advancing important information that informs on the extent of the particular problem (Bhattacharjee, 2012:6-7) and gathering rich first-hand information and data based on facts and reality as experienced and related by pastoral practitioners and church members themselves (Wiid & Diggins, 2013:55-56).
- It finally included a phenomenological contextual design because the study sought to examine the experiences of pastors/social outreach workers and church members in a specific context (rural communities in the Bahamas) as it acknowledges the influence of the natural environment on the perspectives, experiences and responses of participants (Green & Thorogood, 2014:36-37). It was more so because most causal processes are

2.4 RESEARCH METHODS OF THE DESCRIPTIVE- EMPIRICAL TASK

2.4.1 Population and sampling

Population and sampling is concerned with determining and establishing from whom or what to obtain data for the research project and is the next crucial step the researcher attends to after the research question (or hypothesis), goal and objectives have been identified. Bhattacharjee (2012:66) offers valuable insights that suggest that the qualitative researcher may obtain their data from multiple sources stretching beyond a variety of individuals or groups to audio-visual and electronic records. This means that the sources of qualitative data might be situated in a number of participants and/or objects. A “universe” is the term used to refer to all the objects/participants from which the researcher wants to draw conclusions from, while a population sets the boundaries and refers to participants/objects in the universe who possess certain characteristics that the researcher is interested in (Strydom, 2011:223). The population of a research study is therefore defined as the total number of participants/objects associated with the specific focus of a research problem and research question (Strydom, 2011:223). For Bhattacharjee (2012:138) the study population refers to all the people or items with the characteristics that one wishes to study. Gravetter and Forzano (2012:138) posit that a

population is the larger group of interest to the researcher. The population of this study included all the pastors/social outreach workers and their church members in the rural area of the Bahamas who were involved in pastoral care and social outreach and were full-time members of their church congregations.

Researchers are aware of the difficulty and near impossibility of including the entire identified population in any given study as it will create problem of waste of resources regarding time and other cost. Strydom (2011:224) concurs stating further that the use of sampling in the research process is vital to enable the researcher to overcome the difficulty or impossibility of being able to gain access to all the participants. The study sample has been defined by authors in various ways. Gravetter and Forzano (2012:138) see a study sample as the “set of individuals selected from a population intended to represent the population in a research study”, while Wiid and Diggens (2013:181) prefer to view a sample as a number selected from the population that is assumed to reflect the population that the researcher is interested in. Available data point to the fact that qualitative research involves smaller sample sizes than those utilized in quantitative research (Dudley, 2011:146; Nicholls, 2009:639). While Nicholls (2009:639) argue that samples in qualitative studies should provide relevant and adequate insight into the subject of study and should enable rich and in-depth explanation and exploration of the subject by the researcher, Gravetter and Forzano (2012:137) opine that the probability sampling method or technique is best suited for quantitative studies. Strydom and Delport (2011:390-391) however argue on the other hand that the non-probability method of sampling is advisable and best suited for a qualitative research study where the researcher desires to collect the richest data. This sampling method provides the researcher with a choice to handpick the sample according to specific knowledge and experiences that will provide answers to the research question. On their part, Dudley (2011: 144) and Descombe (2010:34-38) identified four sampling techniques for selecting a sample for qualitative research. According to them, these four sampling techniques are convenience sampling, purposive (judgement) sampling, quota sampling and snowball sampling. *Convenience sampling* involves the selection of the most accessible subjects whilst *purposive (judgement) sampling* involves the researcher using their own judgement to handpick participants from a target population for inclusion in the study based on inclusion criteria. *Quota sampling* refers to a technique used in a context such as in market research where the population is not known to the

researcher. In this case the decision entirely rests on their discretion and on what events or people would make up the required number within each category where two groups or more are compared. *Snowball sampling* technique involves the use of participants who are already identified and asked to identify and refer other people who are also knowledgeable on the subject especially in cases where it is difficult to locate participants (Descombe, 2010:37).

As a practical theological research project adopting the qualitative research approach, the researcher utilized the non-probability purposive (judgement) sampling technique to select six pastors/outreach workers who were actively involved in pastoral care and social outreach and six church members who were full time members in rural areas in the Bahamas. The researcher identified and telephonically made appointments or approached the participants. All the participants were either from the Pentecostal, Anglican, Baptist or Catholic Christian faith and the study purpose and aims and objectives were discussed with them after which their voluntary consent was obtained to participate in the study. Participants were included in the study if they were pastors/social outreach workers and actively involved in pastoral care and social outreach. They were included if they were full members of their church congregation and benefited from pastoral care and social outreach. This decision guaranteed information-rich and first-hand experiences of the phenomenon under investigation (Balancing Pastoral Care and Social Outreach in the Best Interest of Rural Communities: A Practical Theological Study). Furthermore, being able to speak and understand English and describe and express thoughts and experiences fluently was an inclusion criterion. Further inclusion criteria were the availability and willingness to participate in the study out of full consciousness of what it entailed.

2.4.2 Data collection

There is a general awareness by researchers that collecting data for a study is important and involves certain steps. Creswell (2009:178) posits that these steps include setting the boundaries for the study, collecting information through unstructured or semi-structured observations and interviews, documents, and visual materials, as well as establishing the protocol for recording information. A vast and large body of knowledge concerning how data could be gathered from a qualitative research design and approach exist. According to Marshall and Rossman (2011:137), qualitative data

gathering methods commonly utilized by researchers include interviewing, focus-group interviews and participant observations. On his part, Nicholls (2009:642) identified three main methods employed by the arts and social sciences research from a qualitative approach as observation, in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. As a practical theological research project adopting a qualitative phenomenological, explorative, descriptive and contextual research approach and design, two common methods of data collection were utilized, namely in-depth interviews and focus group discussions (Marshall & Rossman, 2011:173).

- An in-depth interview, or qualitative research interview, according to Green and Thorogood (2009:285) “aims to allow the participant to speak at length, in details, in ways in which (he is) most comfortable, on a given topic”. The interviewer/researcher might have a topic guide, but not a strict pre-determined schedule of questions. Nicholls (2009:640) described this process as a semi-structured or focused interview. He posited that in this type of interview, the researcher is flexible with their wording and the ordering of the questions contained in the interview guide which they use to guide and direct the interview. This is to enable them to respond to the way the interview is developing without losing focus on the issues to be covered. For the purpose of collecting data for this study, in-depth interviews with the aid of the semi-structured interview guide were utilized with a great degree of flexibility approximating an unstructured, one-to-one ‘conversation with a purpose’ style (Greeff in De Vos *et al.*, 2011:348). This was chosen as it enabled the researcher and the participants to explore their opinions, facts and perceptions regarding their experiences in pastoral care and social outreach in rural communities. This researcher is aware of the important place of questioning as an interviewing technique. Open-ended and close-ended questions are observed to be the major options available to researchers from which they can choose when employing either structured, semi-structured or unstructured interviews methods of data collection in executing their research study. For the purpose of this study, open-ended questions were employed so that participants could express themselves fully on the questions and the topic. This was with the hope that it would facilitate the researcher’s understanding of their experiences of pastoral care and social outreach in rural communities and how they

interpreted their experiences. For example, the researcher included the following questions in the interview guide in individual interviews with the pastors/social outreach workers focusing specifically on the research topic: “Do you engage in social outreach programs/activities?” “What kind of programs/activities are they?” and “What is your experience with working with members of the rural communities?” Good interview skills such as listening and probing techniques were utilized during the interview to elicit as much information as possible from the participants. During the preparation and pre-interview stage, the location and approximate time that the interviews would take was discussed and agreed on mutually before the interviews were conducted. Interviews were conducted at the participants’ offices and each interview lasted for about one hour. Field notes and audio-tape recorder with permission and consent from the participants were utilized during the interview to record the information.

- Focus group discussion with church members was the second method utilized in this study to gather information from participants in addition to individual interviews with pastors/social outreach workers. Green and Thorogood (2009:127) offer a simple yet perceptive and valuable definition of a focus group discussion. They see it as a small group of participants normally between 6-12 people who are brought together to discuss a given topic or issue. This is normally done by a facilitator or moderator who has a prepared list of topics that is used to guide the discussion. Researchers have noted the purpose of focus groups discussions. One outstanding purpose is the promotion and enabling of self-disclosure by participants that facilitates a deeper revelation of their thought and feelings. This is made possible by the creation of the environment that enables them to build on each other’s ideas and comments, therefore, generating an in-depth view which is not possible to obtain from individual interviews (Maree, 2010:90). Greeff (2011:361) opine that it is also useful in generating multiple viewpoints and responses on a particular issue and essential in obtaining complex information while saving on time and costs. A focus group discussion consisting of six church members belonging to the Pentecostal, Anglican, Baptist and Catholic churches in rural Bahamas was conducted for intense and in-depth discussions revolving around their benefit

and experiences with pastoral care and social outreach. The focus group discussion was guided by a discussion guide and the session lasted for about one hour. An example of the question asked included: “Do you benefit from any social outreach programs/activities of your church?” and “What kind of programs/activities are they?” The discussions was audio-taped with permission and consent form the participants while notes were also taking to aid the quality and precision of recorded data. The focus group discussion was conducted at the church office of the church of the Good Shepherd Grand Bahamas with the agreement and consent of the participants.

2.4.3 Data analysis

Hunt, Chan, Qiuebec and Mehta (2011:193) aptly stated that the ultimate aim of qualitative research is to obtain data which could be transformed into findings. Schurink, Fouché and De Vos (2011:397) comment that this process of conversion of data to findings is known as data analysis, and noted that it involves and entails the process of “reducing the volume of collected raw information, sifting significance from trivia, identifying significant patterns and constructing a framework for communicating the essence of what the data reveals”. Swanborn (2009:1) takes this further stating that qualitative data analysis is a “non-numerical process of examining and interpreting data in order to discover and gain understanding of underlying meanings and pattern of relationships”. It is clear from the above definitions that data analysis refers to how the researcher makes sense of the information gathered from participants in any particular study. Since this present study was a practical theological research project adopting a qualitative phenomenological approach, it utilized the qualitative data analysis style, method or pattern expressed in thematic analysis. This entails the coding procedure which is employed to reduce the information to themes and categories (Creswell, 2009:184-185).

Creswell (2009:186) proposed a step-wise format comprising of eight steps for qualitative data analysis adopting the data coding process in applying the thematic method following the tradition of Tesch. The eight steps are as follows:

- 1) Write down, word for word, the interviews you audio taped. Once you have completed this, read through to get a sense of the whole. Read through all the

transcripts carefully. Make a note of your idea as they come to mind, (2) select one document (one interview) – the most interesting/the shortest/the one on top of the pile. Go through it, asking yourself what is this about? Do not think about the “substance” or content of the information, but about its underlying meaning. Write down your thoughts in the margin, (3) when you have completed this task for several informants, make a list of all the topics. Put similar topics together. List these topics in columns that might behead “major topics”, “unique topics”, and “leftover”, (4) find a fitting abbreviation for each of the identified topics, (5) find the most descriptive wording for your topics and turn them into themes or categories, (6) make a final decision on the abbreviation for each theme or category and alphabetize the codes, (7) using the cut and paste method, assemble the data or material belonging to each theme or category in one place and do a preliminary analysis and lastly (8) if necessary, recode the existing data. Otherwise, start reporting your research findings.

In accordance with the above, the researcher utilized the thematic method of data analysis for this study following the guide by Tesch (in Creswell, 2009:186).

2.4.4 Ethical issues and consideration

As noted in section 1.6.6 in chapter one, ethical traditions in research are intended to limit the researcher from abusing the respondents in any form (Osmer, 2008: 59). As Strydom (2011:113) rightly observed, the issue of ethical considerations in social sciences and humanity research covers a wide scope of areas and are complex. However, as seen in section 1.6.6.1 – 1.6.6.5 in chapter one, the core and relevant ethical issues relating to participant informed consent, voluntary participation, privacy and confidentiality, publication of research findings and debriefing of participants which were considered in this present study in terms of how they were applied was fully discussed. Ethical clearance for this study was obtained from the Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Theology of the North-West University, South Africa.

2.5 DEMOGRAPHICS OF PARTICIPANTS OF THE STUDY

The table below displays the relevant demographic characteristics of the participants of the study

2.5.1 Demographic information of pastors/social outreach workers

Table 2. 1 Demographic profile of pastors/outreach workers

Participant	Age	Gender	Marital Status	Pastor/Outreach Worker	Religious denomination
1	45	Male	Married	Pastor	Pentecostal
2	48	Male	Married	Pastor	Pentecostal
3	50	Female	Married	Outreach Worker	Catholic
4	44	Male	Married	Pastor	Anglican
5	47	Female	Married	Pastor	Anglican
6	55	Male	Married	Pastor	Baptist

From the table above displaying the demographic information of the pastors/outreach workers who participated in the study, it is clear that the majority (five) of the participants were pastors and were head of the pastoral team and branch of their church. The other participant (one) was a social outreach worker. The social outreach worker was actively involved in her church outreach missions even though she was not ordained as a pastor and member of the pastoral team or clergy. She possessed sufficient knowledge and experience of the phenomenon under investigation and thus was included in the study. All the pastors/social outreach worker participated in individual interviews which lasted between 35 minutes to 50 minutes.

The average age of participants was 48.1 with the youngest being 44 and oldest 55 years. While a majority (four) were male, two were female with all participants reporting to be married and residing with their spouses. All the participants were Christians but differed in terms of denominational affiliation with two each reporting to be Anglican and Pentecostals respectively while Catholic and Baptist were represented by one participant each respectively. All the participants were actively involved in pastoral care and social outreach and thus possessed rich, first-hand knowledge and experience about the reality and were able to communicate their perceptions, attitudes and experiences of it which unveiled information about the phenomenon.

2.5.2 Demographic information of church members.

Table 2.2 Demographic profile of church members

Participant	Age	Gender	Marital status	Membership status	Religious denomination
1	45	Female	Married	Full member	Anglican
2	49	Female	Married	Full member	Anglican
3	42	Male	Single	Full member	Anglican
4	56	Female	Widowed	Full member	Pentecostal
5	47	Male	Married	Full member	Baptist
6	40	Female	Single	Full member	Catholic

From the table above, it could be seen that the average age of participants was 46.5 with the youngest being 42 years and the oldest 56 years. Of the six participants in the focus group discussion, majority (four) were female while two were male with a majority of them (three) reporting to be married, two single and one reported her marital status as widowed. All the participants were Christians and full members of their churches with differing denominational affiliation identified as Anglican (three), Pentecostal (one), Baptist (one) and Catholic (One).

This finding on the demographic information regarding the marital status of pastors and social outreach workers found in this study did not come as a surprise as members of the clergy are expected to have a solid family background. This is because it promotes responsibility and discipline and portrays them as responsible models and leaders of the flock. The profile of participants in this study resonates with other studies conducted in rural communities by Carter-Edwards *et al.* (2012:197) and Scott and Lovell (2014:71) who found that the majority of the pastors were male, married, full time ministers and aged between 40 and 60 years.

2.6 PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS: THEMES AND SUB-THEMES

The following table presents findings of the study in terms of the themes and sub-themes. The themes and sub-themes were derived from data from the narratives and responses of participants in the individual interviews with pastors/social outreach workers and focus group discussion with church members. The interviews and focus group discussion were audio-recorded with the permission of the participants. Recordings were then transcribed and read and re-read in order to sort the data in conceptual categories so that themes and codes relating and connected to each other could be identified and captured (Neuman, 2002:15). Four main themes emerged from the data analysis with sub-themes as shown in the table below. The data captured the empirical depiction and description of the reality of pastoral care and social outreach as experienced by rural pastors and congregants and fully assisted in obtaining ground level readings of the phenomenon thus answering the study objective in this regard.

Table 2.3 Presentation of themes and sub-themes

Themes	Sub-themes
Pastoral care duties	Sacred duties: Spiritual nourishment/watch Counselling Prayer Training/developing ministers/workers Mundane duties: Church discipline Physical and social needs/care
Social Outreach programs/activities	Basic survival needs Evangelistic/spiritual drive Community development efforts Health promotion Educational assistance
Experience of pastors/social outreach with working with rural communities.	Insufficient and inadequate training Burnout/stress Lack of funds

Themes	Sub-themes
	Poverty and sickness in a rural setting Dishonesty of rural beneficiaries
Balancing pastoral care and social outreach	Organization Integration Delegation Cooperation

2.6.1 THEME 1: Pastoral care duties

In order to gather empirical evidence and information on the current depiction of pastoral care, pastors were asked what they thought were the responsibilities of the church in assisting its members to overcome their challenges. Since this question directly concerned the pastor's duties in relation to his congregation as a shepherd, narratives and responses unveiled the kinds of duties/care executed in this capacity to promote and meet members' spiritual and psychosocial needs and thus resolving and eradicating challenges in this area. As indicated above in Table 2.3, interesting sub-themes emerged from the data analysis which could be divided into sacred and mundane care duties and are reported in the following section.

2.6.1.1 Sacred duties

2.6.1.1.1 Sub-theme 1: Spiritual nourishment and watch

Providing spiritual nourishment and watching over the flock or members was a major sub-theme which came up during individual interviews with pastors as part of the sacred duties in their pastoral role. This was regarded as essential in meeting members' needs and resolving their challenges and problems. All the five pastors mentioned that as pastors their major duty and role was to ensure that they nourished their congregation and provided spiritual services that empowered them as they lived their daily lives and carried out their normal social functioning. They reported that a major part of this role entailed administering Holy Communion, baptism, confession and sermons and messages which would build members up and provide directions, wisdom and

instructions that would make them able to withstand challenges and overcome them. This sub-theme could be seen from the statement of this participant:

As a Pastor I know that my major duty is to care for the sheep by making sure they are well nourished in the word of God so that they can face any of life's challenges and overcome. This makes me spend so much time in studying the word and prayer in order to prepare my sermon and message. I know the word is the greatest need so I take time to focus on the delivery of the word so the congregation would be well nourished. That is what makes up more than 60% of my job. I watch over them in the word and prayer to guarantee their wellbeing and spiritual safety (Participant 3).

Another participant made the following statement which further buttressed this point

You see as a pastor my role is to ensure that the spiritual service to the congregation is well attended to and carried out with utmost care. My sacred duties include attending to and performing the Holy Sacraments like administering the Holy Communion, baptism and confessions and confirmation of congregants in addition to sermons (Participant 6)

A majority of the participants (four) indicated that a lack of adequate nourishment of members in the word of God and a failure on the part of the Pastors to give themselves in prayer to watch over the church spiritually was responsible for the challenges and defeat of many church congregations. They reported that this was the crucial role of Pastoral intercession which ensured that members were spiritually protected and shielded from the evil of the world and strong to combat the forces of darkness that may contend with them. They agreed that this responsibility demanded much attention and time commenting that it was however a crucial duty that determined the success of their ministry and congregation.

One Participant said this during the interview:

Part of our duty as a Pastor is to make sure we stand in the gap for our members in prayers so that there would be a spiritual covering as it were over them to prevent the enemy from afflicting them. Also we need to ensure that they are well trained in the word of God so that they would be able to fight the good fight of

faith. When they lack the word and spiritual backing from the Pastor congregants are likely to fail and be defeated by the enemy and circumstances. I think this is our first assignment as Pastors. I give my time to this as I know Christ admonished us in this regard (Participant 1).

2.6.1.1.2 Sub-theme 2: Counselling/counselling referrals

Another major sub-theme that emerged from the analysis of data from the interview with participants which fell under their sacred duties as Pastors was counselling. All the participants reported that a significant part of their pastoral care roles entailed offering counselling services to their members even though some (four) agreed that they did not have professional knowledge and skills to do so. They reported that they relied on knowledge of the word of God as many of the problems like choice of spouse and marital dispute for example could be directly addressed by application and reference to scriptures. They indicated that they referred members with severe problems like depression, drug and alcohol problem for example, which they felt required some specific skills to handle, for more professional help and counselling.

This sub-theme could be gleaned from the response of one participant who said:

As a Pastor you are saddled with the responsibility of offering counselling to your congregation and this takes so much of your time but you cannot run away from this task. Whether on phone or physically in your office, members want to talk to you about their problems and they do not care whether you can solve it or not. They see you as a highly spiritual person and their leader and assume that once they talk to you their problem would be solved. Most of them have emotional and psychological problems due to the poverty and circumstances of living in the rural area and you are saddled with helping them to lighten their emotional and psychological burden and stress by the scriptural advise that you give them (Participant 2).

Another participant reported along this line when he said the following:

Counselling is a major part of the work we do as Pastors. Your congregation see you as more spiritual and mature in the things of God than they and so depend upon you for support and counsel in times of challenges. They come with their

marital challenges, difficult children behaviour, business and career problem and even their personal spiritual problem and expect you to act to help them resolve it. You have to attend to them because these are sensitive and serious issues that you cannot delegate especially if you do not have capable hands. This takes great part of our time but it is a very big part of our pastoral care roles (Participant 5)

Participants indicated in their narratives that the issue of counselling was a very central role as a Pastor in the rural area. This was so due to the increasing number of people requiring counselling given the economic, social and environmental conditions. This made members vulnerable to stress that negatively impacted on their emotional and psychosocial wellbeing requiring professional and spiritual intervention. They indicated that it is one area for which they would love to undergo proper professional training and development since it constituted a significant portion of their daily pastoral caretaking. Participants suggested by their narratives that this was crucial as it largely determined their success and effectiveness which ultimately impacted on retention of the members of the congregation and the growth of the church.

2.6.1.1.3 Sub-theme 3: Prayer

Being available to pray for members in times of difficulty, trouble and challenges which they faced and encountered in their lives emerged as another important sub-theme in the study. All the participants reported that church members' consultation with Pastors for prayers before, during and after services for themselves and friends and loved ones was an integral part of rural Pastoring. They indicated that much attention was accorded this task of praying for members due to its value and importance in promoting and enhancing the health and wellbeing of the congregation and member – Pastor relationship. Participants suggested that congregants measure the amount of love and care that Pastors have for them in terms of how accessible and helpful they are when they need prayers in difficult situations.

One participant mentioned this during the interview that brought this sub-theme to light:

One important aspect of our Pastoral care role that we take very seriously is being available and ready to pray with and for members who approach the church for prayers when they feel challenged or overwhelmed with their circumstances or in combat with the adversary. People are always in need of prayer for one reason or

the other and you will not be fulfilling your Pastoral role if they cannot access you to pray for them. Though as a pastor you pray for them in your closet yet most of the time before, during and after service members queue up to see you for prayers relating to their family, business, work, relationship and health which takes much time and energy to deal with (Participant 1)

A similar response could be deduced from the narrative of another participant who made this statement:

Every day and in almost all services members want to see you for prayers and some even refer their friends and family members who may not even be members of the congregation for you to pray for them. Even when you have a Pastoral Assistant that you can refer them to they would still want you as the head Pastor to pray for them probably because they have more faith in you than in the person you want to refer them to. This takes your time and energy but produce great result as you are able to demonstrate that you care and love them. It's a great part of the task as a Pastor that you make yourself available to meet their needs in times of prayers. It's very important (Participant 6).

The participants' narratives in this regard threw light on the crucial place that prayer occupied for the congregation and for them. While hinting that they taught members the need to take personal responsibility to pray and how to do it and regularly organized congregational prayer, they still encouraged and gave adequate time and attention to members' consultation with them for prayers. They suggested that it not only represented one-way members benefited from their pastoral care in times of difficulties but constituted a major responsibility of the church in assisting members resolve their problems and overcome their challenges.

2.6.1.1.4 Sub-theme 4: Training/developing ministers/workers

Training and developing ministers and workers for the work of the ministry was another sub-theme that emerged from analysis of the data from interviews with the pastors relating to their sacred duties. Five of the participants mentioned this as an essential and crucial part of their pastoral role. They indicated that it was imperative as a means of ensuring that there were enough hands to help in the work of the ministry to the congregation to avoid burnout and stress which they faced in the rural setting where

they were inevitably compelled to take on multiple roles to the congregation and community. A narrative from one of the participants brought this sub-theme out when he said:

As a pastor it is an important part of my duty to raise and train men and women for the work of the ministry especially in this situation in the rural area where we hardly have capable hands to help us in ministering to the congregation. We need to build them and equip them so that they could assist with many aspects of the church work like administration and evangelism in order to give us time to attend to more crucial aspects of the work. You cannot do everything yourself otherwise you will soon become ineffective. So we make sure we train members who can handle certain things so that they too will become strong and able to do the work of the ministry (Participant 3)

The participants said though the task of training, raising and developing ministers/workers to assist with the work in the church was herculean yet it was worth the effort. This was because it not only ensured that there were capable hands to support the work but it generally increased the spiritual maturity of the congregation and numerical growth of the church. One of the participants made this comment to this effect during the interview:

You see it is very important as a Pastor that I give myself to raising leaders and the development of the members so that they could grow spiritually and mature to be able to assist with some of the church work. The long term benefit of this is that the church would have spiritually mature people who would influence others and lead them in the things and ways of God so that there would be less babes and novices in the church. Though this necessitate great sacrifices on my part in terms of time and energy in developing materials and meeting with them, at the end the church would grow in number and spiritual maturity and this is good for the Pastor (Participant 4).

It is understandable that the pastors considered this aspect of their pastoral care role as crucial in the light of the realization that they 'often must run the church or rather be the church in every respect, from the sacred to the mundane' (Scott & Lovell, 2014:72). This

reality of almost finding themselves as lone ministers hardly having support should necessarily call for the need to train, raise and develop workers and ministers. This is supported by other rural studies by Berry *et al.* (2012:165) and Francis *et al.* (2011:9).

2.6.1.2 MUNDANE DUTIES

2.6.1.2.1 Sub-theme 5: Church discipline

This was another important sub-theme that emerged from the data in relation to the mundane duties of the pastors in the study. This sub-theme came out of the narratives and responses of three of the pastors. Church discipline included such pastoral activities and tasks that revolved around attending to disciplining and correcting members who were found to have erred against church rules or involved in sinful acts. It also included the settlements of disputes and quarrels between members. While the other three pastors seemed to suggest that they were not directly involved in church discipline in their churches, they however hinted that it was an integral part and aspects of pastoral care role. They however suggested that they still had to deal with the issue of setting and enforcing general church order and decorum which fell under church discipline. The following statement of one of the pastors brought this sub-theme out:

As a pastor it is my responsibility to make sure that the church runs smoothly and members who have issues with each other are settled and quarrels are resolved. At times you have to deal with issue of members or leaders who err and sin and they need to be corrected in love and all this can take your time (Participant 1).

Another pastor made this comment in this regard:

At times you have to mediate between husband and wife and make sure they resolve whatever grudges they have against each other amicably so that they continue their marital union and fellowship. It is the work of the pastors and you may delegate if you have capable assistants that you can hand over the task to (Participant 4).

Participants' narratives highlighted some of the nature and forms which the church discipline took. It included suspension from a service group if a serving member, having

to engage in spiritual work like studying some selected portions of the Bible and engaging in a fast and having to apologize or make open confession where necessary in some instances. The involvement of the pastors, whether directly or indirectly, in the issue of church discipline was seen to be cardinal to ensuring that congregants strove to be like the master. This was to be achieved by learning to govern their lives and conduct with the dictates of the Bible and in promoting congregational peace, harmony, and orderliness. Part of this process according to the pastors included continuous efforts at imparting knowledge and instilling discipline aimed at changing congregants' attitudes and behavioural patterns in every aspect to conform to that of Jesus. This finding is supported by Smith (2015:6) and Willard (2006:24-30) who found that pastoral roles in imparting knowledge and discipline was vital in empowering congregants to build the character and traits associated with the Christian life and faith.

2.6.1.2.2 *Sub-theme 6: Physical and social needs/care*

Ministering to congregants' physical and social needs was an important sub-theme that emerged from the data in relation to the pastors' mundane duties as pastors of their congregation. All the participants mentioned that ministering to the physical and social needs of the congregation was perhaps the singular most common assignment and challenging one at that, that they were saddled with after the sermon. Participants indicated that this pastoral role spanned from assistance with provision of basic needs such as food and clothing at times of emergencies like periods of hurricane to victims and to the poor members of the church. It also included visiting sick members at home and hospital and organizing and attending funerals and wedding. This sub-theme could be discerned from the following narrative of one of the pastors:

The most important aspect of our role as pastors is to see to the general welfare and wellbeing of the congregation not just spiritually but physically and socially. Most of these people are poor, old, sick, unemployed and generally suffering financially and materially. We are the only hope of the majority of them. So what we do is to identify such members in those circumstances and encourage the members who are financially okay and strong to make a contribution that we normally channel to cater for them (Participant 4).

The study finding showed that tending to the physical and social needs of the congregants was quite an integral part of the ministry and essential to the mitigating and overcoming of members' challenges in this dimension. One pastor said the following which buttressed this point:

As a pastor I understand that we are not just called to preach but to reach these people. It is important that to reach them you need to attend to the things the Bible say are needful to the body and that is talking about their daily bread like food, clothing and housing. Though we cannot do all yet we try our best because for most of them we are the lifeline especially the elderly and poor. The little efforts we are able to make do go a long way to make a difference in the lives of many who really depend on the church due to unemployment, poverty and sickness and ill-health (Participant 6).

Another pastor said this in connection with the social aspects of their pastoral care roles:

You see the church is a family unit and most of the members are taught and encouraged to see each other as a family and be there for each other. As a pastor we have to ensure that every member is shown a sense of belonging and family as we rally round them in times of bereavement and funerals or celebration during weddings. Most of them see the church as their family and is good for them to have a sense of belonging and attachment. So as a pastor you need to make sure they feel loved and not alone in these kinds of time and this goes a long way to heal them and give them emotional and psychological stability and security which promote health and wellbeing (Participant 3)

Though the pastors alluded to the sensitive nature and difficulty associated with tending to congregants' personal physical, material and social needs due to some factors mainly financial, yet they agreed it was the only way to prove the sincerity and validity of their missional work. They suggested by their narratives in this regard that the church was only truly representing the ideals of Christ and the early Apostles to the extent it was able to impact members materially and socially and not just spiritually as these dimension of needs and care were as equally important.

2.6.2 Theme 2: Social Outreach Programs/activities

In order to determine a clear depiction of the descriptive-empirical situation of social outreach, pastors/outreach workers and congregants were asked what kind of social outreach activities they engaged in and how the outreach benefited them respectively. Responses to these questions as expected revealed important sub-themes which provided powerful insights into the current situation of social outreach in the church in rural setting. The sub-themes are discussed below.

2.6.2.1 Sub-theme 1: Basic survival needs

Assistance with basic survival needs mainly food parcels, groceries, toiletries, clothing and vegetables emerged as a sub-theme from the data in relation to pastoral outreach program/activities to the rural communities. All the participants indicated that they were actively involved in supporting identified households and families in the communities in the surrounding neighbourhood of their churches with basic items that could at least ensure their survival and social functioning. This sub-theme could be gleaned from the statement of this pastor as follows:

An important aspect of our social outreach activities to the communities around us is to assist the households and families that struggle to meet the basic survival needs such as food and clothing. Our church do take vegetables and other groceries and clothes to them every Tuesday at the particular point we normally ask them to assemble for the distribution. This is normally at the house of our local cell leader. We give them groceries (food items) such as milk, bread, rice, eggs and toiletries that will normally last the household for four days. This is just to keep them going because we know that the need is really big but we can't do much (Participant 1)

Participants indicated by their responses in this regard that they however differed in terms of the range of materials delivered depending on their financial strength and base. Narratives from the pastors suggested that engaging in distribution of food and other material items to support families, especially children and the elderly was a necessary and inevitable consequence of the nuanced situation of widespread poverty and unemployment in the rural setting. They hinted that the rural congregants and dwellers almost had a perception of the rural church as a social service provider and expected

churches to engage in this humanitarian and welfare gesture. A statement from this pastor in this connection brought this out succinctly when he said:

As a church in the rural area we are either by intent or default saddled with the roles of 'helpers' and 'savers'. We cannot run away from this responsibility because we can actually see that there is a big need to assist the members and the communities around us. There is poverty and local people and members look unto you as not only spiritual saviour but physical caretaker and helper and expect the church to come to their rescue (Participant 5).

This sub-theme also came out in the focus group discussion. Four of the church members mentioned the crucial importance of material assistance in form of food and groceries and other household items which their church distributed to them in their mission outreach that contributed towards their sustenance and survival. They indicated that it went a long way in helping them cope and overcome challenges that poverty and unemployment posed in this regard. One of the participants in the focus group discussion said this:

I am very grateful and thankful that my church thinks about us and makes provision to assist those of us who are unemployed and struggling to make ends meet. The food parcel and groceries they give to me goes a long way to assist me in providing for my children and household because they supplement my effort which ensures that we do not really suffer lack and hunger (FG2).

The pastors/outreach workers indicated that they gave preference to their church members and Christians in their outreach to the communities in terms of distribution of material assistance. They however hinted that they assisted and gave welfare materials also to people from other faiths and religions that approached them and were present in their distribution site. They suggested that this gesture was necessitated by the scriptural injunction that admonishes believers to do good to all men but especially to those of the household of faith.

2.6.2.2 Sub-theme 2: Evangelistic/spiritual drive

Another sub-theme that emerged from the data in relation to social outreach activities that the pastors/social outreach workers engaged into the rural communities was evangelism and spiritual drive. This sub-theme came out of the responses of all the participants in the study. All the participants commented that they were first and foremost interested in the salvation of the souls of the rural community dwellers and were highly motivated by the need to carry the gospel to them to save them from the power of darkness and turn them to God. The following response of one of the pastors during the individual interview brought this out when he said:

We are called to this rural area to shine the light of the gospel of salvation to them. Their spiritual welfare and salvation is central to our involvement with them. They need to hear the word and so we carry the gospel to them in their homes and communities because we know that it is difficult for some of them to come to the church. We go to them with the word and cater for their spiritual needs by evangelizing in the community in the hope that some of them would eventually join our church (Participant 2).

They suggested that getting involved in their welfare and striving to assist them with food and other basic necessities of life was not only informed by the reality of poverty in the communities. It was more so principally, to demonstrate the act of love and compassion which the Bible teaches in order to secure their attention and acceptance of their salvation message. A response from one of the pastors during the interview buttressed this point when he said the following:

The salvation of the souls of these people is our paramount object for engaging in the outreach work. We desire to carry the gospel to them for their salvation, but you cannot just go there and pretend not to see the condition of existence they are living in. We preach the word to them and carry out evangelistic work and use every effort including welfare and social assistance to win them to the kingdom. But the primary reason we are reaching out to them is to see that they are saved and spiritually prepared to meet the Lord (Participant 6).

This sub-theme also emerged in the focus group as church members suggested by their narratives that this evangelistic/spiritual drive was very important to them as it played a great role in helping them overcome the challenge associated with their spiritual growth and development. Three members commented that this was because it provided them with local platforms in the form of cell groups where they assembled in the community to worship and fellowship and also network together socially. A member made this statement to this effect:

The evangelistic outreach program is very instrumental to our spiritual growth and development in the rural area. It helps us immensely because it makes it possible for us to have a local assembly where we can worship and fellowship together in the community when we cannot go to the church due to distance. The cell group meetings also serve as a social network platform as we are able to support each other and rally round each other during challenges and difficult times since we are a family in the group (Participant 4).

2.6.2.3 Sub-theme 3: Community development

Community development was another significant theme that emerged from the analysis of data in the study. Narratives from four of the pastors/outreach workers revealed that spirited and genuine efforts were tremendously invested in social and community engineering and development programs in the community. This took the form of running of programs whereby church members and other targeted and selected rural community dwellers could learn trades and acquire skills such as computer repairs and operation, farming skills, hair dressing and fashion design. The statement of this participant during the individual interviews with the pastors/outreach workers brought this theme out when he commented as follows:

We are committed to the development and improvement of the communities in the rural areas where we operate by uplifting the lives of our members and others who dwell there. We equip them with skills so that they will be able to obtain employment or create jobs which will ultimately make the community a better place to live (Participant 3)

Another participant said this in this regard:

Our goal to develop the communities around us is by engaging in efforts at empowering rural people by building their capacity and developing their knowledge and skills base. This is so that they will be able to live productive lives by engaging in creative and profitable ventures that will better their lives and the community. We offer them training and skills as alongside spiritual care (Participant 1).

This sub-theme came out during the focus group discussion as members bared their minds and views on the important value that the church social outreach represented to them in assisting them in combating and overcoming challenges of unemployment and financial hardship. One member said this during the focus group discussion:

I can say that my church has played a great role in helping me and others in my community to overcome the challenge of poverty and unemployment because they have assisted us in developing the skill and capacity to fend for ourselves. I was trained as a plumber which I now use to provide for myself and family. I render services to the community, and I am now working for myself and able to cater for my family which is a big contribution of my church to my life (FG4)

2.6.2.4 Sub-theme 4: Health promotion

Health promotion campaigns and programs came out as another important sub-theme in regard to the social outreach of the rural churches that participated in the study. Five of the participants commented that they were involved in programs that catered for the health needs of the rural people especially children and the elderly. This included engaging in partnership with government health institutions in promoting children's immunization, health talks and awareness campaigns especially around HIV and AIDS, drug and other substance and alcohol use and abuse counselling, treatment and awareness, teenage pregnancy, family planning and high blood and sugar level controls and treatment. This statement from one of the social outreach workers buttressed this point when he said:

You see there is so much sickness and disease in the community and you cannot just help but do something about it. There is little services from the local authorities and government and the rural people look on us to

compliment and supplement local authority efforts by being the light that will shine to eradicate this darkness so to speak. We take proper hygiene talk to the rural areas where our members live and through this outreach, we are able to do the little we can to help them live better and healthier lifestyles (Participant 2).

Another participant said this along this same line:

I think we have a religious and scriptural obligation to our rural congregants and communities to be the light and salt to them as the Lord admonished. We try to support the efforts of the local authorities and government in the area of the peoples' health care needs by providing services to the elderly and children such as high blood pressure testing, treatment and management, diabetics and arthritics management and family planning and immunization. We also help in conducting awareness and information campaigns around pressing health and hygiene issues in the communities in order to promote and encourage healthy behaviour and lifestyles in these areas (Participant 5).

The following comment from a member of the focus group discussion alluded to this sub-theme when she highlighted the importance and value of the health promotion program of the social outreach of her church to her rural community as follows:

I am very fortunate and glad to have health care services and support from our church in our community that assists me and others with supplies of medication for high blood and diabetics and other health care issues we are challenged with. In this our community we hardly have enough attention and supplies from the local authority and council but thank God our church runs a program where I and others like me can benefit and it is very helpful to have them (FG6).

Narratives and responses of the pastors and social outreach workers and members of the community suggested that the programs were in most cases lifelines to congregants and rural dwellers as they not only went a long way in meeting their health care needs but were to a large extent the only source of hope. The leading role that the church play in promoting the physical and mental health and wellness of rural congregants and

rural communities have been found to be a result of the increasing needs and decreasing ability to supply and respond from government and rural councils and authorities (Carter-Edwards *et al.*, 2012:197; Magezi, 2017:1)

2.6.2.5 Sub-theme 5: Educational assistance

Provision of educational assistance program to the congregants and rural communities especially migrant communities like the Haitian community was another important sub-theme that emerged from the analysis of data from the study. This came out from the comment of four of the participants during the interview. Responses and narratives in this regard indicated that significant efforts were invested in assisting needy members and their families and community members with school uniforms, books and other school related stationaries, drop in centres where after care services and school work and home work assistance were provided. One of the participant made this following statement during the individual interviews which buttressed this sub-theme:

We are glad that we are able to assist our members and their rural community neighbours with their school and educational needs as much as we can. We know they are struggling due to their circumstances, but we are anxious to ensure that they get education so that they would be able to improve their lives. We provide them with school uniforms and books and other basic school needs so that they can always be in school (Participant 2)

This sub-theme could also be discerned from the focus group discussion as members pinpointed the great relief and respite the social outreach in this regard accorded and provided them. They suggested that it went a long way in overcoming challenges associated with the educational training and schooling of their children. One member said this:

No doubt we are very thankful that we can get support from our church and other churches that do come to our aid in our community by helping us with such things as school uniforms, school shoes and books at times. They help us a lot with ensuring that the kids are in school and even help the kids with their school and homework at the drop in centre in the community hall (FG5)

2.6.3 Theme 3: Experiences of pastors/social outreach workers

A major theme emerged around the experiences of pastors/social outreach workers regarding their involvement and delivery of social outreach programs and activities. This gave evidence and revealed tremendous ground level readings useful in determining a clear depiction of the current situation regarding social outreach in rural communities especially in the study context. In order to generate data in this regard, pastors/outreach workers were asked during the individual interviews to describe fully their experiences of working with members in the rural communities and what they thought were the needs and challenges of persons in the rural communities. A number of quite significant sub-themes came up from the analysis of the data as discussed below.

2.6.3.1 Sub-theme 1: Insufficient and inadequate training

Insufficient and inadequate training was a notable sub-theme that came out of the data analysis from interviews with participants of the study. This sub-theme came out from the responses of four of the pastors who felt that they lacked the adequate skills and training to effectively provide the type of services and programs that they were engaged in and involved with in the community. The following response from this pastor brought this sub-theme out when he said:

The problem and challenge that I personally think we experience as pastors in this outreach programs is that we are not really well prepared and trained for this social work activities and functions. There is danger in assuming that because we are pastors and spiritual people, we know everything. I believe there is more we can do if we are well trained and equipped especially with the high levels of poverty, disease and depression and all other severe social and physical and health problem and issues that we face every day that require specialized and professional knowledge and skills (Participant 4)

The narratives of participants in this regard suggested that they thought that though they had theological and seminary training yet they felt that professional knowledge and training was fundamental and instrumental to being able to effectively address the issues such as health promotion, counselling and poverty that they were involved with in their community outreach programs. They suggested that this would have prepared them to better articulate and conceptualize the varied dimensions of the problems and

its impact and thus more effectively intervene and respond. One participant made this statement during the interview as follows:

As we engage in social outreach in the rural community one thing I have noticed is that we are increasingly faced with issues, challenges and problems in the rural areas that require skills and knowledge that our seminary and theological training and education does not cover adequately and robustly. We are forced to partner with professionals and skilled workers who are not necessarily Christians since we desire to serve the rural communities sincerely and genuinely at all cost provided it is within relevant and legal parameters. I am convinced that the issues of healthcare, welfare and social services that underpin our outreach work in these rural contexts would be better approached with scientific knowledge and skills which must be part of theological training as practical experiences now reveal in our work in the field (Participant 1)

Participants felt they were not doing too badly with their current state of social outreach delivery. However, they indicated that had they been prepared in either their theological training or through other form of formal professional training they would have been more effective and able to do more than they were doing currently. Their narratives underscored the importance and necessity for organized scientific and knowledge-based approaches in twenty-first century welfare, charity and philanthropism. One participant said this|:

I know we are doing great work considering the circumstances surrounding our operations as we execute our projects in the rural setting. One big challenge I know we face as we carry out rural social outreach program is a disjuncture between the issues and problems that we deal with in the contexts and our ability to respond effectively and efficiently. These are complex human and social issues for example substance and drug abuse and bereavement and trauma surrounding death arising from the HIV and AIDS epidemic. They require comprehensive and thorough understanding, knowledge, and skills in order to intervene and resolve them. We do not have this type of professional training and this limits our scope of operation and effectiveness (Participant 3).

2.6.3.2 Sub-theme 2: Burnout/stress

Burnout and stress is another sub-theme that came up from the analysis of data from the interviews with pastors/outreach workers in the study. Three of the participants mentioned this in their responses regarding their experiences in engaging in social outreach activities in the rural communities. This particularly concerned pastors with smaller congregations who had limited support staff and assistance and so had to be virtually directly involved with all stages of the work. All the other participants however seemed to indirectly indicate that doing outreach work was stressful no matter the level of involvement and engagement. This sub-theme could be evident in the statement of a participant who said:

I think one of the greatest experiences in carrying out these outreach activities is the enormous stress that can lead to burnout feelings associated with it. As a pastor with a small congregation without much support and assistance to rely on it means I practically have to be involved in all aspects of the projects. This spans from the identification of beneficiaries, analysis of needs, sourcing and obtaining of aids and materials to the logistical arrangements and organization regarding the distribution of the materials and then follow up for evaluation and all that. It is very cumbersome, but we do it for the love of it and for the gospel and kingdom sakes (Participant 6).

Another participant said:

Yes, one fundamental experience you encounter with working with rural social outreach projects is the tedious and laborious nature of it because it is very demanding, and you could experience feelings of burnout. I mean this is both physical and emotional investments we are talking about here. You see yourself genuinely desiring to make a difference in their lives in order to alleviate their sufferings, so you just want to give and keep on giving. Before you know what is happening you are left drained of physical and emotional energy and strength and this is worse when you do not have capable hands and assistance (Participant 2).

The narratives of the participants regarding experiences with stress and burnout seemed to suggest that it had a dual origin. Firstly, it was due to the fact that they had to

give attention to pastoral care roles and social outreach activities thus having too much to deal with. The second reason was the fact that the emotional and psychological investment that characterized the care and social outreach work exacted and impacted on them heavily leaving them drained and exhausted. This was so in the face of the overwhelming sufferings and needs they come face to face with in the rural communities and the realization and awareness that they could do so little to assist. One participant said this in this regard during the interview:

This outreach work is very demanding because you are dealing with the sufferings of the people who you care for and sincerely hope to make a difference in their lives for the gospels' sake. One thing is that you are bound to feel stressed and burnout due to the emotional and psychological frustrations that results from your perceived limitations regarding your intervention (Participant 5).

2.6.3.3 Sub-theme 3: Lack of funds

Lack of funds also came up as another sub-theme regarding the experiences of pastors/social outreach workers in the analysis of the data from the study. All the participants mentioned lack of funds as a fundamental challenge that they experienced which they indicated hindered or limited them in their outreach programs. The lack of a strong financial base meant they were not able to carry out projects that could address a larger scope of social problems and issues and that could reach a larger and wider audiences and beneficiaries. A participant mentioned this during the interview that alluded to this point when he said:

One of the biggest challenges that hinders and defines our limits no matter how much we intend to do to alleviate the sufferings of the rural communities is finance. Funds are not always available and handy and so we just do the little we can and reach the little we can reach. It is so disheartening to see and know that there is a lot that needs to be done to assist these rural people to ensure the supply of basic survival needs and other health, educational and social needs but no funds and finance to execute them. It is frustrating and a big challenge to us (Participant 1)

This statement from another participant further buttressed this point:

Social outreach no matter the scope and nature requires and entails financial spending and financial investments to execute and funds in most cases are exceedingly difficult to come by. However, we do our best, but it is very frustrating in most cases because we are forced by financial limitations and challenges to cut on our scope and coverage of assistance and profile and type of beneficiary (Participant 4)

Most of the participants (four) suggested that their church was principally responsible for the funding of the projects. The funds came from internal generations mainly through offerings and members' contributions even though they had little assistance from some external sources. They seemed to suggest that had they access to larger funding and financial base they could have been able to do more since they saw and knew the dire needs of rural people. One participant made statement in this regard:

The funds we utilize for our church outreach projects in the rural communities come mainly from the coffers of the church. You can imagine that it will definitely not be enough considering the magnitude of the needs and demands of the rural people. Though we are doing our best we recognize that we can do more when we have more funds. We are actually looking at ways we can raise funds externally so we can increase our outreaches. It is very important that we do this, and we are giving attention to it (Participant 2)

2.6.3.4 Sub-theme 4: Poverty and sickness in rural setting

Poverty and sickness were another sub-theme that emerged from the analysis of the data from the responses of the participants in the study regarding their experiences of working with members of the rural communities. All the six participants mentioned with a rather sad tone the grim reality of the prevalence of widespread poverty and sickness which rural people faced and that formed a sad part of their existence. This statement from this participant pointed this out during the interview when he said:

As a rural outreach worker one quick observation you are likely to make is the ubiquitous poverty and sickness especially amongst the elderly in the rural communities. You will be shocked at the rate of disease and sickness and the need for healthcare and information in this setting. This forces us to do something physically and medically to help in addition to our spiritual work

in evangelizing and preaching in these communities. There is too much poverty, and this promotes sickness and disease which leads to death and bereavement with their own unique challenges for children and families (Participant 4).

Another participant commented on the reality of poverty and sickness that they experienced in their outreaches in rural communities that they dealt with in this way:

You see when you begin to work in these rural settings one thing you will notice easily is the serious poverty and sickness and disease that seems to be quite common. This makes rural living a hell and rural people desperately in need of social and welfare assistance to be able to carry out optimal social functioning. This is a big experience and challenge for us because it compels action and demands our empathy and sympathy (Participant 3).

Still on this point of the experiences with regards to outreach in rural communities, this participant said this:

A quite common scenario in the rural communities is the issue of unemployment and poverty and large-scale sickness and disease that you will come in contact with and experience as a rural outreach worker. Many people who live there are sick and poor and depend on the government, church and other welfare agencies for survival and existence. It is a very sad sight and more saddening to note that a significant portion of them are not reached due to lack of funds and other logistics problems (Participant 6).

Participants' narratives indicated that most of the outreach projects embarked upon by the churches revolved around issues of poverty and sickness and represented efforts to combat them and alleviate rural community members' sufferings and ordeal in this regard. This resonates with Carter-Edwards *et al.* (2012:194) and Scott and Lovell (2014:73) who found that one fundamental feature of rural congregants is that they lived in economically depressed communities and that pastors and social outreach workers increasingly undertake social welfare roles geared towards alleviating challenges in this regard and prompting rural people's normal psychosocial functioning.

2.6.3.5 Sub-theme 5: Dishonesty of rural beneficiaries

Dishonesty of rural beneficiaries of outreach materials came out as a sub-theme in relation to the experiences of pastors/social outreach workers with rural community members. All the participants mentioned this experience suggesting that it was a common feature. Their narratives indicated that the dishonesty took the form of rural community members falsifying and lying about their identities in order to benefit from multiple church outreach programs. One pastor made this comment during the interview:

One common challenge and experience we all encounter in our outreach work in the community is the phenomenon of rural congregants and rural community members engaging in unscrupulous means to receive and collect multiple welfare materials such as food parcels, groceries and clothing and other household items. They benefit from our church program and also enlist fraudulently as new beneficiaries in other church projects operating in the community thus making it difficult to really reach new and genuine people who have needs and have not been served (Participant 2)

Still commenting on this experience of the dishonesty of rural beneficiaries, one other participant made this statement during the interview that buttressed the point:

There is actually a great challenge in the distribution and delivery of social and welfare relief materials in our outreach projects in the rural communities that we are involved with because the people are fraudulent and not honest. This results in many people being served multiple times due to their benefiting from multiple outreaches in the community. Many take advantage of the fact that we do not have a well-organized and coordinated approach and we are beginning to think about how we can take care of this to avert this trend (Participant 5).

Another participant's response suggested that the dishonesty of rural beneficiaries had to do with the reality of poverty and poor organization and coordination of the delivery of the outreach programs which made it easy for rural communities to exploit. This statement revealed this sentiment:

We experience a lot of cases of multiple beneficiaries in our outreach projects in the rural communities that we serve and this is mainly due to the severe poverty in the rural setting. You see these people depend on the food parcels and groceries they get from us and can do anything to increase their benefits not knowing it affects the supply to other needy ones in the community. I think it is also perhaps because they take advantage of our generosity knowing that we may not turn them back because we are church organizations. They know we do not yet have proper systems in place to detect cases of multiple beneficiaries as our records and list of beneficiaries are not shared amongst the various churches engaged in the outreach programs in the communities (Participant 1).

One participant alluded to the negative impact of the experience of this reality. He commented that it was capable of making difficult the possibility of reaching a wider scope of beneficiaries and those who were in dire need of assistance by eradicating their chances of being served and reached. He said:

The major problem we encounter and experience with the issue of multiple beneficiaries is the fact that it stretches our lean and limited resources and makes it difficult to evenly spread it in order to cover more people in need. This is capable of rendering the programs and projects ineffective and not well targeted. We are looking at ways to resolving this and this may involve request for presentation of proper identity documents or so (Participant 3).

2.6.4 Theme 4: Balancing pastoral care and social outreach

A major theme emerged around balancing pastoral care and social outreach from the analysis of data from the individual interviews with pastors/social outreach workers and focus group discussion by church members in the study. To answer the research question: “how can the church find a balance between pastoral care and social outreach to best serve rural communities?” in order to fulfil the study objective: “to propose practical-theological perspectives and guidelines for a model to the church to find a balance between pastoral care and social outreach to best serve rural communities”, pastors/social outreach workers and church members were asked what they thought was the best way a pastor could balance the role of pastoral care and social outreach to

best serve rural communities. Four sub-themes emerged from the responses and narratives of participants that provided insights on their views on how the church could find a balance in this regard. The sub-themes are discussed below:

2.6.4.1 Sub-theme 1: Organization

Organization was a major sub-theme that emerged in this category. This involves purposeful planning, setting of boundaries and effective management of time. This came out from the responses of four of the pastors/social outreach workers who participated in the individual interviews and in the focus group discussion by the church members. One pastor made this statement that brought this sub-theme to focus as follows:

You see I understand that as a pastor in a rural church there is tremendous demand for my attention by my congregation and people in the community. They expect us pastors to fill multiple roles in serving them and meeting their needs and indeed to a large extent their expectation in this regard is genuine. What I do is to try to be creative in coming up with solid work organization and structure which involves scheduling of work, good management of my time and development of boundaries which enables me to provide services in these two dimensions of ministry and still remain effective without having negative impact on me and my family (Participant 4).

Another participant shared similar sentiment as follows:

It is very important to realize that in this demanding profession as a clergy and pastor in a rural community you have obligations towards your church congregation and people in the rural community. You need to understand that you cannot expect to be effective and last long in ministry without purposeful planning and designing of innovative way of setting boundaries between your pastoral care roles to church congregation and your social outreach commitments to the community around you. To succeed in striking a balance you need to ensure that you adhere strictly to the developed work schedules in these areas and manage time properly (Participant 2).

Narratives of participants suggested that a balance between pastoral care and social outreach could easily be attained when there was organization and order. This was because it would save time and ensured that proper planning was in place. This would prevent ad hoc, crisis-oriented intervention and response prone to time and energy wastages as opposed to carefully planned, holistic approach. One participant said this in this regard:

It is very important that pastors have a clear understanding of their pastoral care roles expectations and duties and their obligations towards the people in the community. Also, they must ensure that there is proper planning and organization in form of formal policy put in place regarding work schedule in these two areas if they are to be effective. This policy would seek to provide guidelines of intervention to address issues of social outreach for example in terms of who to help, duration of such help, qualification for such help and how to source and generate such help. This would have to be in place in order to succeed in gaining a balance between pastoral care and social outreach ministries (Participant 6).

This sub-theme came up also in the focus group discussion by church members. Church members noted the pressing demands of congregants and community for the pastor's attention stressing that both of the ministries were equally important and defining factors of the church's vision and mission. Their responses captured the importance of developing a plan of action and adhering to an organized and structured work schedule in ensuring a balance between these two crucial aspects of a pastor's ministry. This statement from this participant in the focus group pointed this out as follow:

I think the best way to maintain a balance between his pastoral care roles to congregants and social outreach commitment to the community is to make sure that he organizes his work and plans very well and sticks to his plan in dealing with his duties both in terms of pastoral care and social outreach. He must be able to set work and task boundaries and have set time to counsel for example and time to be on the field for outreach or to supervise outreach projects. The plan must be developed well in advance as a matter of church

policy which he must strictly observe and keep so that he would be more professional and effective (FG5).

2.6.4.2 Sub-theme 2: Integration

Integration was another sub-theme that emerged from the analysis of data emanating from the individual interviews and focus group discussion regarding how the church can balance pastoral care and social outreach to best serve rural communities. Integration involved clustering and grouping congregants and community members together in provision of pastoral care and social outreach work especially those with similar characteristics and care needs. It also involved making congregants and community members an integral part of the service provision by offering them roles in the process that would provide respite for the pastor/social outreach worker. Three participants mentioned this in their responses in the interviews. One participant said this:

To strike a balance between pastoral care roles and social outreach commitments to communities and ensure that neither of them suffers, I think it is best to bring them together in a group where possible in service provision. Our members reside in the communities and need food and clothes for example as do community members. So to ensure that they are both reached and to avoid time wasting and save energy and strength and even resources while not neglecting or omitting any party or set of beneficiaries and duties, we can group them together in providing service to them (Participant 3).

Another participant made this comment as follows in this regard:

To make it easy to better serve the congregation and communities without neglecting either of them and to afford stress and strain associated with the roles of the pastor in this area, it is creatively beneficial to combine and group beneficiaries in terms of their characteristics and profile of needs. What I do is to have days of visitations to those who are sick or bereaved and time and days for counselling for example and members of the community and church congregants are attended to in these days in a combined effort. This saves time and ensures even spread of care and attention (Participant 1)

This idea of integration of church members and community members expressed in involving them in pastoral care roles and social outreach in a bid to strike a balance between the two ministries to better serve communities was highlighted by the statement of this participant during the interview as follows:

What we normally do to ensure that we are able to maintain a balance in serving our members and the rural communities is to involve our members who live in the area of our operation in the social outreach projects in their communities and neighbourhood. Currently we have local cell units in the communities and appoint cell leaders who are actually expected to be the face of the church in their communities through whom we distribute our welfare programs and social services. They are actively involved in the projects and are also beneficiaries of the programs so that they and the community members are served at the same time. This saves time, resources and increases our effectiveness (Participant 5).

A focus group member offered a similar opinion when she said this in this direction as follows:

I think it is very important and pertinent that the pastors involve and inculcate members and rural community beneficiaries in the projects and programs so that they would be actively runners and owners of the programs. Congregants and rural community members have the same needs and we live in close proximity in the communities. We could be grouped together in terms of kind of needs and area of residence and then served while at the same time actively involved in the project life. This way the pastor can have time to focus more on his pastoral care duties while being able to serve us members and community as well (FG1).

2.6.4.3 Sub-theme 3: Delegation

Delegation came up from data analysis as another important sub-theme in relation to the participants' view regarding striking a balance between pastoral care and social outreach to best serve rural communities. Delegation in this context referred to creating structures and training opportunities and raising capable hands that would be saddled with the responsibility of executing social outreach projects which is regarded as the

mundane aspect of the pastoral care ministry. This practically meant delegating the work of social outreach to church members or special volunteers who may not necessarily be church members but whose duty it is to oversee the execution of the outreach ministry with the pastor taking either a supervisory or advisory role. This came out from the responses of five of the participants in the individual interviews. One pastor commented in this regard as follows:

To be able to maintain a balance between pastoral care and social outreach to best serve rural communities, it is important and beneficial to assign the work of social outreach and welfare assistance to rural communities to church members or people who would be tasked with this responsibility when possible. This way you would be able to have ample time to attend to the spiritual and sacred aspects of the pastoral care roles while not failing in this other aspect (Participant 3).

Another pastor similarly mentioned this in his response during the interview:

Both pastoral care to church members and social outreach to rural communities are two equally important aspects of the ministry of a rural pastor. I think the pastor's first priority is the sacred aspect of pastoral care which directly relates to his function as a priest who represents God before the congregation and community. He could concentrate on this aspect while delegating the mundane aspects involving social outreach to capable members or volunteers while taking a role that is less active yet not too passive to a point of negligence (Participant 6).

This same line of thought regarding the delegation of social outreach duties to other people who would be directly involved with serving the community while the pastor takes a secondary role came out in the focus group discussion. Narratives suggested that it was to enable the pastor to focus more on the sacred aspects of priestly duties while not however neglecting the ministry to the communities. One member said:

The pastor can assign the work of social outreach and welfare projects in the church and community to special welfare committees while focusing on his pastoral care roles like preparing and delivering sermon, counselling church and community members and prayers because these require spiritual

maturity and authority. The committees could give him feedback and report to him just so he could be able to monitor and supervise the programs to ensure that they run according to church vision and mission policies (FG 4).

2.6.4.4 Sub-theme 4: Cooperation

Cooperation was another sub-theme that emerged from analysis of the data in relation to participants' thoughts on how to obtain a balance between pastoral care and social outreach to best serve rural communities. This sub-theme came out from the narratives of five of the pastors who participated in the individual interviews and also in the focus group discussion by church members. Cooperation refers to partnering and networking with other churches and outreach workers in the rural areas in order to better serve the communities. A pastor made this following statement that brought this sub-theme out during the interview:

I think the best strategy would be to enter into partnerships and network with other churches and agencies in the rural communities where we can combine our resources and work together to serve the rural communities. We can look at creative ways whereby we can combine forces together to address the issues and problems of the rural congregants and communities where we operate since we are pursuing the same purpose and goal which is to alleviate their sufferings and win souls for the kingdom (Participant 4).

This participant made similar point along this line when he stated:

The best way to go about this issue of community and rural social outreach to be very effective is for us to strategize on how to pull our resources together and engage in partnership and networking which would save us resources and minimize issues around multiple beneficiaries exploiting the system for example (Participant 1).

Another participant commented on the need for partnership and cooperation however observing that factors such as denominational divide and an aspect of outreach goal of evangelism for church growth may hinder it from materializing. He said:

No doubt we could do more and do it in a more organized and effective way if we could partner together and network as service providers in serving rural communities. This may be difficult or almost impossible due to many factors like church affiliation and denominational differences. The truth is that we have more to gain when we pull our efforts and resources together than when we work separately because our goals at the end of the day is the same (Participant 3)

This sub-theme also came up in the focus group discussion. One member commented along this line as follows:

We have many churches who are interested in helping us in the rural areas and what I think will work better is for them to work together and build service partnership and relationships. This will make their presence more impactful and their service better spread while it becomes more difficult to exploit the system (FG 2).

2.7 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS OF THE DESCRIPTIVE-EMPIRICAL DATA

The themes and sub-themes generated from the data from the study gave considerable and powerful descriptive-empirical insights and revelation regarding the current depiction of the reality of pastoral care and social outreach. Four major themes with sub-themes emerged that provided insights to these realities. The four major themes were pastoral care, social outreach programs/activities, experiences of pastors/social outreach workers with working with rural communities and balancing pastoral care and social outreach.

With regards to *pastoral care*, it was obvious from the narratives of participants that they made a distinction between the sacred and mundane aspects of their roles and ministries as clergy. It was clear that priority was accorded the sacred duties which they felt related to their office and role of spiritual guidance, leadership and stewardship. Such sacred duties constituting pastoral care as the study found included spiritual nourishment of and watching over the congregation, counselling, prayer and training/developing ministers/workers. The mundane aspect of their pastoral care role included church discipline and attending to the physical and social needs/care of the congregation. This revolved around such practical areas of pastoral care such as

provision of assistance with basic needs, attending to issues of visitation in times of sickness and bereavement and celebrations which the study found principally aimed at ensuring the social and physical and health and wellbeing of members. Pastoral care roles and duties as depicted from the descriptive-empirical data emanating from the study quite feed into mainstream scriptural admonition. This relates to the need to give adequate attention to the spiritual and psychosocial and health needs of the congregation. This was found in the study to be an important element in fulfilling and validating the vision and mission of the rural churches. It was also a platform that promoted the possibility of the demonstration of compassion to congregants and rural community members. This had the effect of reaching and bringing in the unchurched and unsaved.

The *social outreach programs/activities* executed by participants in the study gave powerful empirical testimony pointing to social realities in rural areas. It gave insights to the central and conspicuous place and role that the rural churches occupy and play either though intent or default in today's rural communities and societies. Social outreach activities and program included provision of basic survival needs to rural community members, engaging in evangelistic drive to win souls and reach the unchurched and engagement in community development and improvement efforts to make live better for rural dwellers. It further included the provision of health care services and promotion of healthy lifestyle and provision of educational assistance. These programs as the study found were eloquent evidence that indicated that rural churches are effective channels for the delivery of basic social services needed for normal daily social functioning of rural congregants and community members (Beaumont, 2011: 117; Carter-Edwards *et al.*, 2012:194). This is in the face of the fact that the rural congregants live in economically depressed circumstances with multiple vulnerabilities (Scott & Lovell, 2014: 73) compelling rural pastors and clergy to face the challenge of doubling as "helping profession" and lone pastors in remotely located areas (Scott & Lovell, 2014:74). What was clear from the social outreach efforts of participating churches, no matter their size, denomination or affiliation was the fact that considerable physical and financial burden and costs were involved. These gave practical expression to their vision and mission and revealed their compassion for the congregants and rural community members. The study found that though much could have been done with more financial and material resources yet the current available

programs went a long way in meeting and fulfilling members and community psychosocial and emotional needs (Magezi, 2017:1).

With regards to the *experiences of pastors/social outreach workers with working with rural communities*, significant insights which feed into existing literature of what is already known in this regard were gained. Experiences of insufficient and inadequate training, burnouts/stress, lack of funds, the reality of widespread poverty and sickness in rural setting and dishonesty of rural beneficiaries which emerged as sub-themes in this study have all been documented in other studies (Berry *et al.*, 2012:165; Carter-Edwards *et al.*, 2012:194; Francis *et al.*, 2011:9; Hendron *et al.*, 2011:221; Hughes, 2015:1; Innstrand, Langballe & Falkum, 2011:241). These experiences revealed the excruciating nature of pastoring and serving rural congregations and local communities and the reality of the peculiar challenges embedded in this setting. It also more importantly reaffirms the obvious finding that the rural church is one of the few multidimensional resources in most rural areas (Scott & Lovell, 2014:74). These findings in this regard come as no surprise considering the contextual difficulties of rural life and existence. This is coupled with the fact that social outreach and caregiving practice is marked by shortage of human and financial resources to resolve challenges in this regard as this study found. It was clear from participants' narratives that they wanted to do more even though they felt inadequately trained to engage in some aspects of care work and lacked financial resources to respond to wider needs area and beneficiaries. Despite this, the range of outreach services provided and the passion and compassion with which they were executed indicated abundantly that the rural churches were deeply aware of and concerned about the grim and deplorable situation of rural life. It revealed that they were committed to serving to alleviate and ameliorate it at least to the best of their abilities and within available resources.

As the descriptive-empirical data indicated from the study with regards to *balancing pastoral care and social outreach*, organization, integration, delegation and cooperation were highlighted as inevitable and necessary. This was in the face of the possibility of the experience of the continual and often difficult crossings of the boundary between the personal and professional spheres of life which is characteristic of a rural pastor due to lack of support that they get being often lone workers (Scott & Lovell, 2014:73). This was found in the study to be the antidote for failure and ministry inefficiency in this

regard. Purposeful planning and setting of boundaries and effective time management was seen by participants as essential in addressing these challenges. This would not only enhance productivity but also avert burnout and stress associated with crossing of boundaries and lack of self-care likely to surface when proper care was not taking in this regard to prevent and address it (White, 2014:2). Development of church guidelines and policies regarding social outreach represented practical measures that the participants alluded to as essential components in this venture.

Narratives of participants indicated that church members and rural communities can benefit from pastoral care and social outreach when there is proper and well facilitated integration of members and delegation of duties and roles to beneficiaries. Integration would happen by the pastor facilitating and promoting the involvement and support of church members for one another. This could give an opportunity for familial ties and relationships to develop which could become strong support and social networks capable of meeting congregational and community members' needs. Similarly, it was gleaned from their narratives that pastors could encourage and train members in the word and other skills required to equip them to unite together with the clergy and community members in the dispensing of projects that meet and fulfil their spiritual and psychosocial and welfare needs. Cooperation manifesting in practical and broad partnership and networking between churches and agencies involved in rural community social outreach sprang out of due consideration of the many benefits it portended. As the study findings showed in this regard, building active, collaborative partnerships and networks was indispensable in the face of glaring financial and resources shortages and challenges and administrative porousness in order to be more organized and efficient (Magezi, 2017:1). Working together could make them more organized and able to provide wider range of services and reach far more beneficiaries. This may however be difficult and challenging to accomplish due to differences between denominations and affiliations with other agencies.

The findings of this study regarding the current descriptive-empirical depiction of pastoral care and social outreach in rural communities align with mainstream literature. The findings regarding pastoral care in this study resonates with studies by Hughes (2015:42-47), Robbin and Francis (2010:57) and Streets (2014: 1) who found that adequate attention to the pastoral needs of the church such as counselling,

weddings/marriages, hospital visit/health priorities, bereavement, educational support and prayers were essential to fulfilling scriptural injunctions and producing a healthy congregation. The findings regarding social outreach programs and activities in this study is supported by other studies by Beaumont (2011:117), Berry *et al.* (2012:165), Carter-Edwards *et al.* (2012:197), Francis *et al.* (2011:9), Magezi (2017:1) and Scott and Lovell (2014: 73) who found that rural churches were effective vehicle for rural health promotion and delivery of social services either through intent or default. Collaboration of the findings of this study regarding the experiences of pastors with working in rural communities come from studies of Berry *et al.* (2012:166), Hendron *et al.* (2011:221), Innstrand *et al.* (2011:241) Johnson (2016:59), Scott and Lovell (2014:73-74) and White (2014:7). Findings on the balance between pastoral care and social outreach is supported by Hughes (2015:36-42), Magezi (2017:5), and Smith (2015:6) who found proper organization and management of time and effective partnership were crucial to missional and social outreach success in rural communities.

2.8 CONCLUSION

This chapter presented the findings of the study which were derived from the analysis of qualitative data emanating from the individual interviews with the pastors and social outreach workers and a focus group discussion with church members. The data provided a descriptive-empirical depiction of pastoral care and social outreach as it was experienced first-hand by participant themselves. The chapter presented findings in terms of the themes and sub-themes that emerged from the data analysis while also providing information on the demographic profiles of study participants. Four major themes emerged with sub-themes in the study. The first theme that emerged was pastoral care duties with spiritual nourishment/watch, counselling, prayer, training/developing ministers/workers, church discipline and physical and social needs/care as sub-themes. The second theme was social outreach program/activities with basic survival needs, evangelism/spiritual drive, community development efforts, health promotion and educational assistance as sub-themes. The third theme was experiences of pastors and social outreach workers with working with rural communities. Sub-themes under this category included insufficient and inadequate training, burnout/stress, and the lack of funds, poverty and sickness in rural setting and

dishonesty of rural beneficiaries. The fourth theme of balancing pastoral care and social outreach had organization, integration, delegation and cooperation as sub-themes.

The next chapter discusses the literature review on previous studies from the field and related sciences on the subject of pastoral care and social outreach. This is done in order to provide broader understanding and explanation which could assist with obtaining sage wisdom on the benefit of balance between pastoral care and social outreach.

CHAPTER 3:

AN INTERPRETATIVE PERSPECTIVES ON PASTORAL CARE AND SOCIAL OUTREACH

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter is concerned with the second phase of research in the conception of Osmer. Osmer (2008:83) posits that this phase of research is concerned with the reliance on data from the arts and sciences for theoretical interpretation of phenomena, episodes, situations or contexts in order to answer the question: why is it going on/why is it happening? The interpretative task attempts to comprehend from a literature study of other fields and disciplines concerned with the object of study – pastoral care and social outreach – the circumstances giving rise to it. This is pursued in the belief that it could contain and reveal sage wisdom (Osmer, 2008:8) important in providing more understanding and explanation on pastoral care and social outreach especially with regards to how to achieve a balance between the two thus answering the second research question: “What interpretation do other related sciences provide in the understanding and explanation of the current situation of social outreach to serve rural communities?”

The objective of the study was: “To conduct a literature study of other related sciences in order to provide understanding and explanation of the current situation of social outreach to serve rural communities”. The proposal which forms the Chapter One of this dissertation presented a review of information from previous practical theological studies on pastoral care and social outreach in 1.6. This chapter elaborates on this by reviewing literature from related helping professions and fields such as nursing and social work on care and social outreach. The chapter endeavours to link the theme and subtheme around Social Outreach Programs/Activities which emanated from the empirical data as reported in Chapter Two to the findings from literature study. This is in an attempt to demonstrate degree of similarity or departure in this regard. It ends with a conclusion.

3.2 LITERATURE REVIEW ON CARE AND SOCIAL OUTREACH FROM RELATED HELPING PROFESSION: NURSING

The central concerns of pastors and churches with individual health and psychosocial wellbeing and community optimal development and functioning are not unique to them. They have found attention also in other helping professions like the nursing profession even though their methods and approaches slightly differ. McClung, Grosseohme and Jacobson (2006:14) opine that the nursing profession has a long-standing history of professional commitment to the holistic care of patients that encourages adequate attention being paid to their biological, psychological, social and spiritual dimensions and aspects. As with pastors, nurses' concern with sickness and disease in people is underpinned by the belief and realization that it is of both a spiritual and physical origin (Meyerstein & Ruskin 2007:121).

There is increasing awareness in the nursing profession that hospitalized patients are now beginning to place immense emphasis and value on having their physical, emotional and spiritual health needs met. Nurses are consequently now more than ever before paying adequate attention to these dimensions of care needs due to their central place in patient's healing and recovery, patient's satisfaction, coping and spiritual fulfillment (Clark, Drain & Malone, 2003:659). With regards to the spiritual aspects of health care, the nursing profession adopts a broad view of spirituality as denoting a person's sense of purpose in life and the connections associated with things believed to be of greater value and worth than self. Meisenhelder (2006:151) states that spirituality conceived of in this way includes, but is not restricted to, religious expression, religion being applied narrowly to imply a set of communally held beliefs that find expression in public acts and actions. This would in reality divide between religiosity and spirituality, the former being the endeavour of some while the later the endeavour of all. In other words, not everyone is religious while all people are spiritual.

Van Leeuwen and Cusveller (2004:234) found that the opportunity for nurses to intervene in promoting the actualization of patients' spiritual needs presents itself in three main ways. The first way is seen in the level of supporting the everyday ritual of the patient such as dietary restrictions, reading, meditating and praying. They state that these traditions are to be promoted and supported as they have invaluable benefits to the spiritual wellbeing of patients. The second level of intervention involves the provision

of assistance to enable patients to deal with normal occurring stressors associated with or resulting from such positive experience such as child birth or negative experience such as diagnosis of a serious medical condition or disability. The authors conceive nurses' third level of intervention in patients' spiritual care as involving support in times of actual spiritual distress episodes and experiences of patients expressed in such feelings and attitudes as abandonment, anger, depression, guilt, betrayal, despair, fear, meaninglessness, regret, sorrow and anxiety. While it is noted that spiritual care is an important component of nursing practice as they play direct roles in supporting patients in times of actual spiritual distress as identified above, some constraints and challenges have however been documented (Van Leeuwen & Cusveller, 2004:234).

Evidence suggest that the demands and complexities of today's health care system often hinder nurses from being able to assume independent role and adopt comprehensive approach in providing for the spiritual needs of all patients. Van Leeuwen and Cusveller (2004:235) observes that this constraint provides the opportunity for collaboration between the nursing profession and the clergy as they could work with chaplains as members of the health care team to address patients' spiritual needs. This way the professional and societal mandate of medical-surgical nurses to provide spiritual care would be better promoted, actualized and fulfilled. In this collaboration, nurses could conduct spiritual assessment which would enable them recognize patients' needs for spiritual intervention and chaplain referral (McClung, Grosseohme & Jacobson, 2006:156). Chaplains are better equipped and positioned to offer care as they are trained extensively to provide spiritual care to patients, families and staff which assist towards meeting organization's mission. This collaboration between nurses and chaplains have been observed to form a formidable organizational infrastructure which help nurses to timely respond to patients' spiritual needs and ensure the meeting and fulfilling of them (Clark, Drain & Malone, 2003:660).

Apart from the realization of the patient's need for spiritual care buttressing the spiritual dimension and origin of sickness, there is a general knowledge in the nursing profession that people's health status is determined by many other factors. Shamian (2014:867) found that only 25% of the factors that determine and influence people's health status is related to the health care system stressing that 75% is linked to social factors and determinants such as education, housing and employment. This realization informs the

basis of the distinction made between illness and disease. The former is based on peoples' "subjective" awareness within which illness is conceived as a personal state whereby the individual feels unhealthy. The latter is based on "objective" scientific criteria within which disease is conceived as concerned about cells and organs that are affected by the disease process (Omorogbe, 2015:29).

The objective scientific conception of disease as dysfunction of cells and organs underlie the germ theory which represents the medical conception of disease. Omorogbe (2015:30) states that the medical concept of disease based on the "Germ Theory" sees disease in the light of biological discontinuities which are linked to the malfunctioning of a part of the human organism that results in personal discomfort. Germs or hereditary factors are often identified in this medical standpoint or model as the reason for the discomfort when some parts or organs of the body fail to function and as such the first point of focus and attention in striving to restore normal healthy and effective functioning (Omorogbe, 2015:27). While noting that this 'Germ Theory' principally underpin western style medical model of medicine and nursing, Omorogbe (2015: 30-31) opine that the 'Cultural Bound Theory' of disease broadly pointing to the social determinants of illness and health sees disease as emanating from three main sources: natural, pre-natural and mystical. With these conceptions of sickness and disease, the role of the nurse is to facilitate and promote the development, direction and implementation of patient and family-centered programs that seek to restore them to optimal functioning and health (Shamian, 2014:867).

3.3 LITERATURE REVIEW ON CARE AND SOCIAL OUTREACH FROM RELATED HELPING PROFESSION: SOCIAL WORK.

Widespread poverty and unemployment were visible realities that the participants of this study encountered in the study setting. Eradicating poverty and developing rural communities' social and human infrastructure and capital in order to alleviate the sufferings of rural people and church members have been seen to be major preoccupations of the church over the years, as also evidenced in this study. Other helping professions, especially the social work profession, have also been very concerned about the issue of poverty in societies. Baikady, Pulla and Channaveer (2017:26) have succinctly observed that poverty is a multi-dimensional social problem and one that is difficult to define due to its connections with socio-economic, cultural

and political conditions of the people and society which show varying contrasts from context to context. They however offer a minimal definition of the concept of poverty as referring to inability of getting choices and opportunities and violation of human dignity. This means practically a lack of ability to participate actively and effectively in economic activities and also inability to provide and meet basic needs such as food, clothing and health care. While recognizing that eradicating poverty is a major area of concern of every government the world over, they identified three levels of poverty: extreme, moderate and relative (Baikady, Pulla & Channaveer 2017:25; International Federation of Social Workers, 2012).

Extreme poverty is said to occur or manifest when families cannot obtain the essential and basic needs for survival which means that they may often be hungry, lack safe drinking water, cannot afford education for their children, may lack shelter and have insufficient clothing. Baikady, Pulla and Channaveer (2017:25) and International Federation of Social Workers (2012) noted that this dimension of poverty and the moderate type, where families just barely meet their basic needs, are most likely to be found in developing countries while relative poverty, where household income is below a given proportion of national income is associated with developed countries. Twikirize, Asingwire, Omona, Lubanga and Kafuko (2013:32) state that poverty is a situation where an individual is unable to meet or provide for his basic and essential needs such as food, clothing, housing, hygiene and basic services like medical care and education.

No matter the type or dimension of poverty, the principal driver of the phenomenon has been traced to the resultant effect of a permanent or enduring forms of policy precariousness that ignore and gloss over the capacity of individuals, families, communities and population groups to assume fundamental rights enshrined and guaranteed in the International Bill of Human Rights (International Federation of Social Workers, 2012). Poverty in developing countries of Africa for example has been seen to be attributable to numerous factors including corruption and poor governance, limited employment opportunities, poor infrastructure, poor resources usage, war and unending conflict, poor World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) policies among others (Addae-Korankye, 2014:149-150). Further, cultural and structural factors have also been adduced as causes of poverty. This results from the lack of capacity to influence social processes, public policy and resource allocation. Further, it is a result of lack of

access to essential and relevant skills, education and knowledge important and useful in stimulating personal improvement indispensable in improving their livelihoods. Addae-Korankye (2014:150) and International Federation of Social Workers (2012) observed correctly that to overcome poverty, especially structural poverty, the establishment of strong governmental institutions coupled with equitable distribution of resources are vital and essential.

Social work's concern about poverty has been observed to increase due to its age long history of working with the less privileged, marginalized, excluded and vulnerable who lack resources that present the breeding ground for experience of poverty (Rwomire, 2011:114). As a helping profession, social work is committed to social change and adheres to the principles of human rights and social justice as it seeks to assist and empower individuals, groups, communities and organizations to promote their problem solving and coping mechanism. Social workers like clergy, play important role in this dimension in many levels. They play an important role in influencing and stimulating policies and legislations that seek to address the plight of rural communities and societies in the area of improvement of societal structures and creation of opportunities and social services capable of improving the living conditions, and wellbeing of people in communities and society (Baikady, Pulla & Channaveer, 2017:26). Poverty alleviation and reduction programs thus designed by the state and its agencies at the instance of insights and spearhead of social work could also be managed and run by social workers in communities. This is the second level of intervention of social work in rural community poverty eradication and development efforts. This level of practical social work intervention is seen in reality in two major approaches. Baikady, Pulla and Channaveer (2017:27) comment that social workers play a crucial practical role in assisting social groups such as orphans and children in need and their families cope and come out of poverty by a remedial approach. This happens in situations whereby relief assistance are provided in form of distribution of food parcels, accommodation and medical care. While this is a temporary measure, more lasting approach is the developmental approach that has to do with the capacity building and development of the people and improvement of the community structures and services to better serve and meet the needs of the people (Baikady, Pulla & Channaveer, 2017:27).

In these roles, social workers are seen promoting individual and group development by encouraging and supporting them to start income-generating enterprises which are invaluable in creating positive conditions capable of removing them from unemployment with its concomitant lack of income or low incomes. These income-generating activities produce the added advantage of engendering opportunities that make the care and support of vulnerable groups such as the elderly, children, the sick and women and entire communities possible and realizable (Twikirize *et al.*, 2013:37). Baikady, Pulla and Channaveer (2017: 27-28) discusses this further by stating that the social work role of capacity building and skills development of rural community members, provide crucial and vital opportunities. This address underlying problem and difficulties of limited knowledge and skill which community members needed in being involved in the production process which lead community members to feel powerless. What is clear is that both approaches discussed above define social workers and the social work profession's efforts at empowering individuals and promoting their problem-solving and adjusting and coping capacity and the development of the community in order to alleviate and reduce poverty.

3.4 LINK BETWEEN DESCRIPTIVE-EMPIRICAL DATA AND INTERPRETATIVE PERSPECTIVES ON PASTORAL CARE AND SOCIAL OUTREACH

There are great observations to be made from the information that flow from the literature review and the data that emanated from the study regarding pastoral care and social outreach. To a large extent, it could be discerned that in both literature and this study, convergence are gleaned in the area of the context, driving factors and nature of programs and activities that constitute pastoral care and social outreach. From the literature review presented in section 1.6.1. and 1.6.2 in Chapter One regarding practical pastoral studies and social outreach, and in section 3.2 and 3.3 above in this Chapter regarding social outreach by related disciplines such as nursing and social work, we see convergence in context and drivers. It is obvious that widespread poverty, a lack of or limited government provision of resources and social services for rural dwellers are paramount. This creates suffering which often time contributes to stress and illness and combined with a general lack of development and opportunities in the rural area, fuels rising demand and needs for alternative care sources. The rural church often comes as the first choice to fill this gap. The nature of pastoral care and social

outreach in both literature review and the study reveal increasing similarities. As expected, both pastoral care and social outreach targeted and responded to identified relevant needs in congregations and communities in the areas of their spiritual, physical social and economic dimensions.

In this study, significant and interesting sub-themes emerged which captured the nuanced situations in the rural setting of the study which registered in the mainstream literature as could be seen in the review. As seen in the literature, pastors made a distinction between the sacred and mundane aspects of their pastoral care roles as was also seen in this study. Sacred or core functions of a pastoral role in the study which could also be found in practical studies reviewed included spiritual nourishment and watch of the congregation, counselling, prayer and training/development of ministers/workers. Mundane duties found in this study which also could be corroborated by practical theological studies reviewed were church discipline and physical and social needs/ care.

With regards to social outreach programs/activities, striking similarities are also shown from data emanating from the descriptive-empirical investigation and interpretative perspectives determined by the literature study. As would be expected by the contextual realities of rural existence, great bulk of social outreach programs/activities targeted the provision of basic survival needs (food parcels, groceries and clothing to ensure survival and enhance social functioning). It also included evangelistic/spiritual drive (salvation of souls, demonstrating love and compassion for the lost as taught by the Bible) in order to equip communities to overcome challenges associated with their spiritual growth and development. Other sub-themes were community development effort, health promotion and educational assistance. All these social outreach programs/activities embarked upon by rural churches in the study were also show from literature study to be true in respect of the contribution from other related helping and care profession such as the nursing and social work professions.

3.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter discusses interpretative perspectives on practical theological studies through a literature review on pastoral care and social outreach to determine what other related care and helping sciences talk about the subject. The reviewed literature

contained and revealed sage wisdom (Osmer, 2008:8) important in providing more understanding and explanation on pastoral care and social outreach. It builds and elaborates upon Chapter One, section 1.6.1-1.6.2 which reviewed information from previous practical theological studies on pastoral care and social outreach. It reviewed in above section 3.2. and 3.3 materials from related helping professions such as nursing and social work on pastoral care and social outreach and indicated the linkage between the data.

Findings of the literature review resonates with the findings of this study in terms of nature of pastoral care and social outreach projects and the reason for the involvement of the church and clergy. Fundamentally, literature suggest that pastoral care roles include sacred roles such as counselling, prayer, sermonizing, training and development of workers and spiritual authority and leadership over the church and congregations as this study also found. Mundane roles included such activities as assistance with material and financial needs and social and health care needs of congregations like weddings and funerals and visitation of the sick which this study also found. Social outreach included provision of basic survival needs such as food and clothing, spiritual care as in evangelism, community and human development and capacitation in a bid to alleviate and reduce sufferings associated with poverty and sickness.

Individual and structural drivers accounted for the prevalence of the social and spiritual problems such as poverty, sickness and depression that informed pastoral care and which social workers and nurses and outreach workers encountered in the rural settings they served.

The next chapter deals with the biblical exegesis of relevant passages found in scriptures on pastoral care and social outreach as an attempt to discern God's will for the prevailing realities which Osmer referred to as the task of prophetic discernment (Osmer, 2008: 12).

CHAPTER 4:

THE NORMATIVE TASK OF FINDING A BALANCE BETWEEN PASTORAL CARE AND SOCIAL OUTREACH

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter deals with the normative theological and ethical perspectives the scriptures provide to describe the reality of pastoral care and social outreach under investigation. This corresponds to the third phase in Osmer's conceptualization of research phases which principally involves attempt at answering the question: what ought to be going on/what should be happening? (Osmer, 2008:4-7). This chapter presents a Biblical examination and exegesis of scriptures relating to pastoral care and social outreach in order to obtain a normative theological and ethical view of the phenomenon. It begins with an exegesis of scriptures relating to the office and role of the pastor and then that relating to social outreach and strategy to balance pastoral care and social outreach. This is done in the hope that this task of focusing on the detailed analysis of these scriptural texts in their original language and original historical situation and context will serve to reveal and determine the normative and ethical perspective that scripture provides on the subject thus fulfilling the study objective in this regard. The exegesis is done by adopting Stuart's model. Stuart's (2009:68) model of exegesis involves six steps namely: (1) text and translation, (2) literary-historical context, (3) form and structure, (4) grammatical and lexical data, (5) biblical and theological context, and (6) application.

4.1.1 Normative theological perspective on the office and role of the pastor

To establish the theological perspective on the office of the pastor the following scriptures are selected for exegesis: Ephesians 4:11; 1 Corinthians 12:28; Acts 20: 17 – 18; Acts 20: 28; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Timothy 3: 1-7 and 1 Peter 5: 1-4. These scriptures are included to establish a theological perspective on and interpretation of the office of a pastor and because of their importance and contribution to increasing our understanding of the concept. The attempt here is to try to trace through scriptures the various terms and word used to refer to the office of the pastor in order to enhance our understanding. It is important to establish the biblical perspective and interpretation of the office of the pastor as a ministry gift so that we would be able to determine a normative theological perspective of their role as indicated and revealed in scriptures.

- **OFFICE AND ROLE OF THE PASTOR: Ephesians 4:11**

The word “pastor” appears in Jeremiah 3:15 and Ephesian 4:11 but in other New Testament passages in other terms and words which we would examine in this section. As Davis (2000: 169) noted, the word “pastor” comes from “poimen” which is a word used for shepherd. Adopting the traditional reading or position, Davis (2000: 169) observes that Paul presents and lists the office of a pastor as one of the ministry gifts in his epistle to the church at Ephesus in Ephesians 4:11 as can be seen from the King James Translation of the Bible: “And he gave some, apostles, and some, prophets, and some, evangelist, and some, pastors and teachers”. Paul was addressing the issue of the spiritual growth and development of the church and gave them hint on the fact that God had set these ministry gifts in the church as it continued to grow and developed for a reason: “For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ (verse 12)”. The traditional reading or position of the Ephesian 4:11-12 text which Davis (2000:169) represent argue that the work of the ministry is the exclusive preserve of the gifted persons (pastors) of verse 11. This view sees the role or work of the pastor as that of perfecting the saints and building them up. This is opposed to the modern, revisionist reading or view represented by Hoehner (2002: 538) that argues that the work of the ministry belongs to the “saints”, that is, the church congregation. This is believed to be so as the saints are essentially to be trained and prepared by the pastors after which they would minister to each other. Paul highlighted God’s intention and goal for the need of these ministry gifts including that of the pastor thereby indicating their roles and duties as: “Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ (Verse 13)”. The effectual functioning of the ministry gift of the pastor and the others listed by Paul was intended by God to ensure that the church was spiritually mature and developed to the point “That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive” (verse 14). Hoehner (2002:538) concurs with this summation stating that, “the central point of this portion of scripture is the distribution of gifts to the church which are given to unify and build up the church”.

- **OFFICE AND ROLE OF THE PASTOR: 1 Corinthians 12:28**

Congote (2009: 6) noted that Paul is seen in the above text also addressing the issue of spiritual growth and of church government, structure and organization and associated spiritual gifts in his epistle and letter to the Corinthian brethren and church. In 1 Corinthians 12:28 Paul wrote: “And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues”. While Paul talks about the fivefold ministries – people that God has called and given to the church or offices that God has set in the church to minister to the body of Christ – in both Ephesians 4:11 and 1 Corinthians 12:28, it is however listed more clearly in Ephesians 4:11 than in 1 Corinthians 12:28. It is to be observed that the list of ministry gifts in Ephesians 4:11 are obvious: apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. Aguilar (2007:33) share similar sentiment opining however that, in 1 Corinthians 12:28 while the offices of the apostle, prophet and teacher are clearly listed, that of the evangelist and pastor are not as clear. Pascuzzi (2005:76) comment that the reference to the ministry gifts of evangelist is made here in this context by Paul as “miracles” and “gifts of healings” since these gifts are mostly associated with and accompany this office although it is not exclusive to it. Here, we see Paul referring to the office of the pastor as “governments” (1 Cor 12:28). Applying Stuart’s (2009) approach to biblical exegesis which emphasizes the need to examine the historical and literal context whereby inductive and deductive analysis is applied to get the bigger picture in interpreting and finding the meaning of any text, this would make more sense, logic and meaning. In this sense, Congote (2009:6) succinctly captures the historical context situated in the early stage of the development of the church where there was multifaceted religious enthusiasm causing many of the members to misuse and abuse spiritual gifts and talents and offices. Paul was in Ephesus in his third missionary journey and he receives a delegation from members of the church in the household of Chloe (1 Cor 1:11). They brought reports and expressed concerns surrounding certain issues happening in the church and wanted answers and clarification on them.

Congote (2009:7) states further that some of the concerns and questions they brought involved problems of disunity, sexual immorality, lawsuit, church government, practice of the Lord supper and concerns about the way spiritual gifts were applied and used. Pascuzzi (2005:77) lends voice to the above adding that probably as more congregations were established outside Jerusalem following the persecution that arose

after the death of Stephen, Paul was confronted with the duty of setting things in place in terms of doctrine and ethical standards in all the churches he had been involved in establishing including the Corinthian church (cf. 1 Cor 1:17). It is instructive to note that Paul's use of the word "government" in this passage refers to the pastoral office because he is addressing the question on ministry gifts and listing the ministry gifts that God placed in the church for its edification and building. The subject had not changed as there was a progression of thought from his epistle to the Ephesian church as a general trend at that specific historical context where it was necessary and important to establish his theological perspectives on these subjects as the church grew and developed. Congote (2005:5) and Pascuzzi (2005:76) affirm that Paul's intention was to properly delineate the ministry gifts and offices and stop the abuse and misuse of spiritual gifts associated with a lack of proper training, spiritual immaturity and a lack of order and decency.

Stenschke (2010:66) notes that the debate and confusion over the leadership and government of the local church and assembly in the early church (1 Cor 1:10-13) had arisen because of the peculiar circumstances that pervaded. Historically, it is important to understand that the church at Jerusalem was the only local church that first existed and that the local body was confined to it (Stenschke, 2010:67). Although Jesus had instructed the disciples and apostles to witness of Him in Jerusalem, Judaea, Samaria, and to the uttermost parts of the earth (Acts 1:8) before ascending to heaven, they had not done that and had remained at Jerusalem for a period of time until the persecution. Because they had remained in Jerusalem, the Jerusalem church was the only church in existence and for that period of time. In this circumstance, preaching and teaching in the early church was done by the Apostles of the Lamb and initially therefore all ministry was confined to the Jerusalem church. Stenschke (2010:68) opined that through the missionary activities of the returning Jewish pilgrims to Jerusalem and the persecution that arose after the death of Steven, the church was scattered abroad and works in other areas were started. However, the apostles still remained at the church in Jerusalem though they later began to establish congregations in other areas themselves. Acts 8:1 gives us the first account of believers leaving Jerusalem to evangelize and this happened some years after Pentecost. As new congregations began to spring up following the dispersal of the apostles and believers to other areas where they preached the gospel, Stenschke (2010:69) noted presumably that it became

necessary to set up people who would oversee or govern the local churches and govern them. At this time, because the early church was still in its inchoate stage and believers had not grown and developed spiritually enough in the things and knowledge of the word, when disputes arose about doctrinal matters the disciples would return to the church in Jerusalem where the Apostles of the Lamb and the elders would consider and resolve it (Acts 15:1-6).

It is important to observe that at this stage of the development of the church when there had not been sufficient time for God to develop and raise ministry gifts such as pastors, when Paul or any of the apostles started a new congregation they would normally just choose one or more of the older men in the congregation to oversee the work (Stenschke, 2010:73). This was because it took time for ministries to be established and for churches to grow and develop spiritually. These older men who did not necessarily have the calling to ministry or the spiritual development and maturity had the oversight until God had enough time to develop and raise pastors who were anointed and called for the office of government and leadership in the local churches. Piper (2018:4) agrees with this assertion observing that the Greek word “elder” “presbuteros” which in turn is from the root “presbos” literally means an older person. He states further that these elders were the older men of the community who, because of their wisdom in counsel and the natural honour due to them (Lev 19:32) became the official administrators or leaders of the community.

However, some of these men who were chosen to oversee the new congregation until God had time to raise up qualified men to stand in the pastoral office apparently developed and matured spiritually and became qualified and spiritually equipped to stand fully in the pastoral office over the time (Stenschke, 2010:76

This made it possible as the early church grew and developed over time to have men who were called of God and spiritually equipped as pastors to take the oversight of the flock. At this time of the growth and development of the church it was no longer necessary to select someone simply on the basis of age or maturity but now emphasis and recognition was placed on spiritual qualification of their call to the office and ministry.

- **OFFICE AND ROLE OF THE PASTOR Acts 20: 17 – 18**

Piper (2018:5) notes that in the New Testament the office of the pastor appears in the words 'elder', 'bishop', 'shepherd' and 'overseer' and these words are used interchangeably. The Greek word for elder which is 'presbuteros' and its root word 'presbos' means 'old' and bishop or "overseer" is from the Greek word "episkopos". It is the word for superintendent, a manager. One who looks or watches over something or someone. Pastor is from the Greek word "Poimen" which as we have seen is the word for shepherd. Piper (2018:4) argues that to determine whether a passage is referring to the pastoral office as a ministry gift with the word elder or as an older person we have to examine what role, task or duty it is associated with. He continues to state that when their duties are associated with the sacred and spiritual aspect of ministry and leadership of the local church, the word elder would normally be referring to the pastoral office in the New Testament. In Acts 19: 1- 7 we read of how the church in Ephesus came into being. It came into being when Paul came to that area and preached the gospel to them many years after the day of Pentecost. When Paul was leaving he probably would have chosen the older people among them due to their age to have the oversight of the work. But years later, after the riot at Ephesus, Paul left, and sometime later returned by that way. Rather than going to the city itself, he called the elders of the church to him at the seaport of Miletus and told them he would not see them again intimating them of the impending trials ahead of him. In Acts 20: 17 we read: "And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church". However, we find that in Acts 20:28 Paul gave them instructions about the flock and from what he said we know these elders were no longer just older men but spiritually mature and divinely called and equipped with a ministry gift filling the pastoral office. Acts 20: 28 reads: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood". Stone (2006:46) observes that the same elders had grown and developed spiritually and had been called by God and equipped to fill the pastoral office and take on the leadership and government of the local churches. These were no longer just older men by age but by spiritual development and calling because he addressed them as overseers (bishop) and told them to feed "poimaino" (shepherd), tend, guide and pastor the flock (Stone, 2006:47). The words "shepherd" and "pastor" come from the same Greek word "Poimen" as indicated earlier. Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words (1940:167) offers a very perceptive definition of the word "poimen"

carrying the notion of shepherd as: “A shepherd, one who tends herds or flock (not merely one who feeds them), is used metaphorically of Christian “pastors”. Pastors guide as well as feed the flock”. It is also instructive to note that the same Greek word that is translated “overseer” in this passage of Acts 20:28 is translated as “bishop” in 1 Timothy 3:1. It is the Greek word “episkopos” as earlier indicated and is translated “superintendent, bishop, or overseer” which Vine (1940:167) concludes is another term referring to an “elder”. These elders were now pastors who were in charge of the local churches and attended to the spiritual matters and nourishment of the congregation. They were now a fully developed ministry gift capable of feeding the flock the word of grace (Acts 20:32) and the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27). Stone (2006:46) agree with this summation stating that, ‘so one can see that the role of elder should be for a spiritually mature man known for his experience and wisdom in God’s word’

- **OFFICE AND ROLE OF THE PASTOR Titus 1:5-9**

Stone (2006:47) argue that the Greek word “episkopos” translated “bishop/overseer”, used in Titus 1:7 refer to men who were selected from among the elders to take special oversight of the assembly and outreach work of the church. Stone noted that Paul also addressed the issue of church government and leadership in Titus 1: 5-9 and I Timothy 5: 1-4 and provided a list of the qualifications of elders and overseers which have the same reference to the office of the pastor. While the ethical standards and expectation defining the qualification for the post is revealed, we are further furnished with the essential duties that constitute the pastoral role. In Titus 1: 5-9 we read:

For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee: (6) If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly. (7) For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; (8) But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; (9) Holding fast the faithful word, as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.

Paul emphasizes the importance of a strong and disciplined character and a holy lifestyle as well as a sound knowledge of God's word as crucial credentials. This was in respect of the leadership of the church filled by the elders and bishops who are overseers and pastors of the congregations and local assemblies. Stone (2006:52) posit that this was necessary with regards to upholding the dignity of the position and office as leaders and people handling the spiritual and sacred things of God. They were supposed to be found clean and above reproach and blame in order to effectively execute their pastoral duties and serve as role models to their congregations. We have suggestions in verse 9 that the primary duty of the pastor is to commit to the ministry of the word in terms of expounding and defending the doctrines as delivered by the apostles to them. Stone (2006:57) argues that this reveals that the reference in this scripture to "elder" would no doubt exclude just ordinary older men selected on the basis of age to lead as in the early stage of church development and growth. Piper (2018:5) observes that this was because they would not have the anointing on them for the ministry and be spiritually equipped to feed the people the word and lead them effectively. The passage gives much insights that suggest that these "elders" were now actual and true pastors who had the pastoral oversight and divine calling and ability to feed the congregation spiritually.

- **OFFICE AND ROLE OF THE PASTOR: 1 Timothy 3: 1-7**

Piper (2018:6) observes that the same specific qualifications regarding character and godly lifestyle is recommended and put forward with regards to the pastoral office in 1 Timothy 3: 1-7 here referred to as office of a bishop. Paul wrote:

This is a true saying, if a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. (2) A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach, (3) Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous, (4) One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (5) (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) (6) Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. (7) Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.

Piper (2018:6) argues that the ethical position and condition for filling the pastoral office is fundamental due to the holy and sacred nature of the pastoral office and as a proof of competence. The pastoral care roles involves the administration of the word and general care of the congregation in verses 2 and 5 in the phrases, “given to hospitality, apt to teach” and “...how shall he take care of the church of God” respectively.

- **OFFICE AND ROLE OF THE PASTOR: 1 Peter 5: 1-4**

Similarly, Piper (2018:7) notes that in 1 Peter 5: 1- 4 as in Acts 20, Peter writes to the elders of the churches scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia where we see the words “shepherd” (pastor), “elder”, “overseer” (bishop) used together to refer to the local church government or pastoral office and their duties.

The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: (2) Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; (3) Neither as being lords over God’s heritage, but being examples to the flock. (4) And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

Piper (2018:7) observes that Peter who obviously was himself an elder (pastor) exhorts the elders who apparently were in charge of the local churches to feed (shepherd, tend, pastor) the flock and take the oversight (occupy the position of a bishop, overseer) and govern the congregations. They were to principally see to the spiritual growth and wellbeing of the congregation by feeding them the word of God.

We observe the fact that the words “shepherd” and “pastor” come from the same Greek word “poimen” and that the same Greek word “episkopos” meaning superintendent, bishop, overseer and elder according to Vine’s Expository Dictionary of New Testament Word (1940:167) translated “overseer” in Acts 20:28 is translated “bishop” in 1 Timothy 3: 1. Stone (2006:51) posit that we can thus conclude that the words bishop, overseer, shepherd, pastor and elder all describe the pastoral office and refer to the same person in these scriptures. Their duty is primarily to take on the leadership and government of the local church and feed them the word and provide other pastoral care essential for their spiritual and psychosocial growth, development and wellbeing.

4.1.2 Normative theological perspectives on social outreach

The general concern of Christianity with social outreach to individuals, communities, societies and the world at large is predicated on the very fundamental nature of God and Jesus Christ as benevolent, compassionate and loving God. Meredith (2014: 10) agrees stating further that social outreach projects, no matter what the nature and form, are thus construed as efforts geared towards not only following in the footsteps of God as followers and adherents. They are also as a show of reverence and obedience to Him and a proof of 'true heart experience' and conversion. Christianity and social outreach in this conception is composed of 'a simple and sincere devotion to God' which finds practical expression through 'compassionate relationship' with one's neighbours. Dei (2015:47) share a similar sentiment viewing Christianity and social outreach whether by the church or individual Christians as demonstrated attempts to follow Jesus Christ, believe Him, worship Him and to live as He did. True Christianity is seen in this view as an absolute focus on the person of Jesus Christ and striving to live like He lived. In discussing the normative theological perspective of social outreach, the following scriptures are selected for exegesis: Mathew 25: 34 - 40, James 1: 27, 1 John 3:17-18, and Romans 15: 25-27. These scriptures are selected because they have a lot to tell about social outreach as revealing and epitomizing the nature of God and the central place that living for the common good of all has in His heart. They also point to the fact that social outreach is an expected responsibility of the church and individual member of it and proof of one's true and genuine experience of salvation and claim of followership of Christ and God.

- **SOCIAL OUTREACH: Mathew 25: 34 - 40**

The first scripture selected for exegesis is Mathew 25: 34-40. In the King James Version of Mathew 25: 34 – 40 we read:

Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: (35) For I was hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: (36) Naked, and ye clothed me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. (37) Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we then an hungered, and fed thee? Or thirsty, and gave the drink? (38) When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee

in? or naked, and clothed thee? (39) Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? (40) And the King shall answer and say unto them, verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

Meredith (2014:11) states that Jesus reveals the nature of God the Father in this passage as not only a God that is compassionate and generous and willing to do good to all but also one that encourages and rewards acts of generosity. Those who do good are said to be rewarded by the Father who prepared a kingdom for them. In this passage, Christians (the sheep on his right hand in verse 33 and the righteous who answered him in verse 37) are portrayed as and by implication are exhorted to be mercy-givers or doers of acts of mercy and kindness. This characterization illustrates the nature and attitude of the father towards the needy. While Christians are expected to exemplify the father in these six deeds of mercy: food, drink, hospitality, clothing, nursing care and visitation (verses 35-36) and in many other areas needed for daily living and wellbeing, Meredith (2014:10) note that they are nevertheless admonished to direct these acts to "...one of the least of these my brethren..." (verse 40). The Greek word used here is "adelphon mou" (my brothers) which could be literally translated brothers and sisters by the word, "adelphos" referring to "members of my family". Dei (2015:48) opine that by indicating to the surprised mercy-givers who asked in verse 37 when, where and how they showed him the deeds of mercy and acts of kindness that the acts done to "one of the least of my brethren, ye have done it unto me", Jesus suggested that He and the father expected Christians to take very seriously the needs of those around them as they would take Him and the father serious in their devotion and worship. Dei (2015:48) states further that the definition of the "one of the least of these my brethren" no doubt would refer to any person in need as God loves all people and could be expected to reward our generosity to any person in need (Prov 19:17; Exod 22: 22-27; Mark 10:21).

This is with regards to the fact that Jesus' acts of mercy in His earthly ministry was without discrimination as He did good everywhere He went (Acts 10:38). It would also refer to Christians in need as in the New Testament we notice that 'adelphos' (brother) was used to refer to Christians (Acts 6:3, 1 Cor 5:11). It could further also refer to needy Christians engaged in the proclamation of the Gospel such as Evangelist and

missionaries. Meredith (2014:11) adds that this idea is buttressed by the Jewish concept of “*shaliah*”, which regards the king’s emissary as if he were the king such that any kindness or insult afforded the king’s emissary is counted as a kindness or insult rendered to the king (Matt 10:40 - 42). This passage in Mathew 25: 34 – 40 provides a great background and foundation with regards to our duty and responsibility as Christians. This refers to tell people that Christ will bless those who show mercy to “the least of these adelphon mou” and to encourage them to watch for opportunities to minister (social outreach) to first, needy people in general, second, to needy Christians and thirdly, to needy Christians engaged in the proclamation of the Gospel.

- **SOCIAL OUTREACH: James 1: 27**

The second scripture selected for exegesis regarding normative theological perspective on social outreach is James 1:27. In James 1: 27 we read: “Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this: To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world”. As with other scriptures selected for exegesis regarding normative theological perspective with regards to social outreach, Meredith (2014:11) observes that in James 1:27, the apostle James connects social outreach to the nature and attitude of God. Dei (2015:48) argues that it shows that God not only expects Christians to engage in helping the less fortunate and needy but in fact, the act does serve to validate our claims to love God and being a disciple and follower of Him. We are able to see this more clearly when we contextually analyse this text and notice that the thesis and flow of thought from previous verses is that the Apostle James is dealing with acting on the word and instructions of God as evidence of our belief in Him and a channel for the flow of His blessings and reward. James seems to conceive of religion (faith and belief in God) as external evidence of inward piety; that is, worship as expressed in ritual acts. In verse 26 James examines a question of what constitutes acceptable and worthy religion and provides the answer in verse 27. James suggests in verse 27 that pure and undefiled religion, the kind that pleases God and brings glory to His name is found in believers taking care of the less fortunate in the church and neighbourhood and communities and in endeavouring to live holy and purified lives. This situates acts and deeds of kindness and goodness to the needy in the church and communities as not only what God expects and how to please Him but what they point to our allegiance or claim of our belief in the Christian faith. While James does not portray the right kind of religious practice that pleases God to be

restricted to the control of the tongue and helping those in need (the fatherless and widows in affliction) and a commitment to holy living, he however here highlight some salient areas of concern that believers of all eras should consider as important goals. This was seen to provide a great motivating force to the participant of this study who engaged in pastoral care and social outreach with great sense of divine purpose which was obligatory by assent.

- **SOCIAL OUTREACH: 1 John 3:17-18**

The third scripture for exegesis is 1 John 3: 17-18. In John 3: 17 -18 we read: “But whoso hath this world’s good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? (18) My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth.” Jeon (2013:1) affirms that this scripture further reinforces the truth in the fact that social outreach, whether to fellow Christians in the church or neighbours in the community is expected as a responsibility and proof of salvation and conversion. In other words, God expects His children to do good to each other and to others in the community as a divine responsibility and evidence that they are truly His children as it reflects His nature and attitude regarding the subject. Jeon (2013:2) writes that the author provides ample evidence that reveals that the nature and attitude of God and Jesus His son is to do good and engage in vicarious sacrifice to ensure the wellbeing of all especially those of the household of faith (Gal 6:10). This is shown in the preceding verse where the love of God for the church and by extension the whole world is demonstrated, “...because he laid down his life for us...”; (1 John 3:16). Jeon (2013:10) observes that John asks a rhetorical question here in verse 17, “how dwelleth the love of God in him?” that seems to suggest that all Christians are reasonably expected by God to demonstrate the same sacrificial love for the brethren and neighbours as evidence of possessing the love of God – that is salvation experience. It would follow logically from the question that the individual member of the church who has the world’s goods and possessions from the Greek word, “bivo” (bio) (translated as resources needed to maintain life, means of subsistence) and yet fails to show any compassion for fellow Christians or neighbours in need demonstrates that he or she does not have God’s love residing within them. Stenschke (2010:67) states that such statement by the author in verse 18 proves that the action of doing good and reaching out to one’s brethren and neighbours is God’s way of validating love and knowledge of Him and our discipleship.

- **SOCIAL OUTREACH: Romans 15: 25-27**

The fourth scripture selected for exegesis regarding normative theological perspective of social outreach is Romans 15: 25-27. In Romans 15: 25-27 we read:

But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints. (26) For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem. (27) It has pleased them verily; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things.

Stenschke (2010:67) opine that Paul is establishing a theological perspective regarding the care of the poor and the needy in the church and by extension the community as a primary responsibility of the church worthy of serious attention and commitment and expectation from God. Jeon (2010:12) offers a historical and contextual analysis of the text showing that Paul's concerns and commitment to the poor saints at Jerusalem (Jewish believers) arose from the widespread poverty they were faced with. This resulted from the ill treatment and oppression from the Jewish religious leaders who did everything they could to prevent them from obtaining work and employment as part of the persecution agenda. Besides, there was widespread famine and the poor saints in Jerusalem had to depend on external supplies and support from the Gentile believers. Piper (2014:8) states in addition to this was the fact that Paul constructed a social device through this kind of relief contribution as a cohesive and cementing strategy considering the tension and strain in relationship between the Jewish and Gentile believers at that time. This could be gleaned from verse 26 in the word, 'contribution' which actually comes from the Greek word 'koinonia' meaning 'fellowship' or 'partnership'. Paul uses this ministry and offering project from the Gentile believers to care for the poor and needy Jewish believers in the hope that it would engender a bonding and cementing effect. This is so when the Jewish believers come to the realization and knowledge that their supplies and support comes from their Gentile brethren as it is common knowledge that we feel and experience a sense of kinship and partnership with someone who helps us or with someone we are able to help. Piper (2018:7) notes that in verse 27 Paul suggest this bonding and sense of oneness naturally flowing from and encapsulated in the principle of social reciprocity. Believers in Jerusalem had shared the good news of the gospel, a spiritual virtue and good with the

Gentile believers in Macedonia and Achaia and felt that it was only natural and logical that they reciprocated by offering to assist with supplying their physical needs which they had capacity to do.

Meredith (2014:12) posit that while Paul felt or regarded this reciprocal gesture as a debt on the part of the Gentile believers, his attitude towards the care of the poor and needy in the church and community no doubt reflects God's opinion on the matter and thus occupies a central place in his theological prescription. This assertion is further buttressed by the fact that the elders of the church in Jerusalem shared similar notion with regards to the care of the poor and needy as being a fundamental responsibility that constituted pastoral care roles and believers' attitude towards their fellow believer and neighbours. In Galatians 2:10 in Paul's encounter with James and John and Peter who were elders of the church at Jerusalem regarding clarification of the message which he taught in his missionary work, the apostles admonished him to consider the care of the poor and needy as a matter of divine obligation and cardinal in his mission work to which Paul assented and pledged his commitment. Stenschke (2010:69) observes that in staying true to his promise and commitment to the care of the poor and the needy in the church and community, Paul is seen here in Romans 15: 25-27 facilitating the process for the collection, distribution and delivery of materials for the poor and needy saints in Jerusalem. This theological stance of Paul and the other apostles of the early church no doubt influences and forms the basis of contemporary social outreach of the church to its members and immediate communities as observed with the participating churches in this study.

4.1.3 Normative theological perspective on finding a balance between pastoral care and social outreach

Biblical perspectives exist which recommend innovative and constructive ways and strategies that could be engaged by the clergy and the church to ensure a balance between pastoral care and social outreach. These models are crucial and indispensable to attempt at ensuring that the crucial pastoral care roles of attending to the needs of church congregations and social outreach to communities are balanced in very exclusive, eclectic, complementary and continuing ways. This is in order that both important aspects of clergy and church ministries and duties are not impeded but enhanced, promoted and sustained for the achievement and attainment of the ultimate

benefits of congregations and communities. Scriptures selected for exegetical analysis in this regard include Exodus 18: 13 – 25, Acts 6: 1-7 and 1 Corinthians 16: 1-4. While these scriptures are not the only scriptures that provide relevant theological perspectives in this regard, these are however selected in this section of the study because they contain and reveal important insights indispensable to the promotion of a healthy and effective ministry that facilitates the achievement of personal, congregational and community good and wellbeing.

- **FINDING A BALANCE: Exodus 18: 13 – 25**

In Exodus 18: 13 – 25 we read:

And it came to pass on the morrow that Moses sat to judge the people: and the people stood by Moses from the morning unto the evening. (14) And when Moses's farther-in-law saw all that he did to the people, he said, what is this thing that thou doest to the people? why sittest thou thyself alone, and all the people stand by thee from morning unto even? (15) And Moses said unto his father-in-law, Because the people come unto me to inquire of God: (16) When they have a matter, they come unto me; and I judge between one and another, and I do make them know the statutes of God, and his laws. (17) And Moses' father-in-law said unto him, The thing that thou doest is not good. (18) Thou wilt surely wear away, both thou, and this people that is with thee: for this thing is too heavy for thee: thou art not able to perform it thyself alone. (19) Hearken now unto my voice, I will give thee counsel, and God shall be with thee: Be thou for the people to Godward, that thou mayest bring the causes unto God: (20) And thou shall teach them ordinances and laws, and shalt show them the way wherein they must walk, and the work that they must do. (21) Moreover thou shalt provide out of all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens: (22) And let them judge the people at all seasons: and it shall be, that every great matter they shall bring unto thee, but every small matter they shall judge: so shall it be easier for thyself, and they shall bear the burden with thee. (23) If thou shalt do this thing, and God command thee so, then thou shalt be able to endure, and all this people shall also go to their

place in peace. (24) So Moses hearkened to the voice of his father-in-law and did all that he had said. (25) And Moses chose able men out of all Israel, and made them heads over the people, rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens.

This passage records the visit of Jethro, Moses' father-in-law to him, the subsequent happy family reunion and the timely and divinely inspired direction regarding hierarchical organization and governance which he offered and its impact. It gives us invaluable insights which are relevant as a working model for striking a balance between pastoral care and social outreach.

Piper (2018:8) notes that by adopting a literary appraisal of the passage, we can readily see that the structure of the passage can be divided into three obvious sections with subsections: First, the initial situation at hand regarding the judgement of the people and the confrontation (verses 13 – 16) with its subsections including the judgment of the people (verse 13), confrontation from Jethro after observing procedures and processes (verse 14) and Moses' response and explanation for his actions (verses 15-16). The second section consists of Jethro's timely and inspiring advice (verses 17 – 23) with its subsections being the reason why Moses should change the procedure and processes (verses 17-18), the strategy of setting up hierarchical structure of judges (verses 19-22), and the associated benefits and blessing for doing so (verse 23). The third section deals with Moses' heeding the advice of Jethro (verses 24 – 27) with the subsection involving dealing with the actual implementation of the advice and plan (verses 24-25). The passage begins in Exodus 18:13 with the situation: "Moses sat to judge the people". His father-in-law Jethro "saw all that he did to the people", and this observation inevitably led to a confrontation. Jethro's confrontation arose from his observation that: "the people stood by Moses from the morning unto the evening". The confrontation in verse 14 comes in the form of a question: "what is this thing that thou doest to the people?" Piper (2018:8) opines that this was probably triggered by a sense of bewilderment and curiosity intended to arrest and draw Moses' attention to the fact that what he was doing was not right and correct. His further statements: "Why sittest thou thyself alone, and all the people stand by thee from morning unto even (evening)?" seem to suggest the reason why Jethro thought Moses was going about the process in a wrong way. Moses was the only judge and the process took quite a long time (from morning to evening),

was physically demanding and involved arduous and cumbersome physical exertion and exaction.

Moses gives his father-in-law a response that could be gleaned in three factors which he adduced to the phenomenon in verses 15 and 16. Piper (2018:8) suggests that the first reason Moses adduced: “because the people come unto me to inquire of God” reveals his role as a prophet-teacher who the people relied on for connection to God and performance of sacred duties that underlined their spiritual existence. He stood before God for them and stood for them before God. An essential part of this role would no doubt be: “to make them know the statutes of God, and his laws”. Meredith (2014:12) succinctly observes that while this could be seen to constitute his sacred roles, he further intimates about his second reason for the observation of Jethro stressing that: “when they have a matter, they come unto me; and I judge between one and another...”. Dei (2015:49) observes that this would suggest mundane roles such as settling of disputes and quarrels and discipline and enforcement of rules and regulations in the congregation and camp of the Israelites. This would suggest that the people sought more than spiritual guidance and direction from Moses and entrusted the whole business of daily social existence into his hands. Piper (2018:8) states that this could account for the large number of people he had to deal with as Jethro observed in these passages under consideration. Moses then averred a third reason for his actions and the process claiming that: “I do make them know the statutes of God, and his laws” which we identified earlier as occupying a central place in his sacred duties as a prophet-teacher. This role no doubt would be seen to play a significant role in correcting the people and teaching them from God’s word what they ought to do to avoid the problem in the first place. It would also teach them how to deal with ensuing and presenting challenges that brought them to him so that they could learn to deal with problems themselves and become independent in this regard. Piper (2018:9) agrees stating further that it may also be a revelation from God concerning specific steps to take in their specific cases as a response from Him on the matter. This may be the case in the light of the fact that there had not been any record of receipt of statutes and laws before this time until Exodus 19: 1-23: 33, except as Piper (2018:4) opined that either the passage was chronologically misplaced or they had received statutes and instructions at an earlier stage but was not recorded.

In verses 17 and 18 we see Jethro sternly rebuking Moses on the ground of the perceived inefficiency and ineffectiveness of his procedure and process regarding the judgement of the people. He started by saying: “the thing that thou doest is not good”. Meredith (2014:12) argues that this statement probably came out of his own personal experience as a Midianite priest who had probably been in the same position before. It further probably arose due to the observed negative impact it would likely have on him and the people, “thou will surely wear away, both thou, and this people that is with thee”. Jethro bases his argument on the fact that since Moses was the only one administering and executing the judgement, he was likely to suffer from compassion fatigue and burnout. It was also probably based on the fact that the slow judicial process and delay in resolving the peoples’ problem could lead to possible exacerbation and complication of the issues. Piper (2018:8) resonates with this noting that Jethro would seem to emphasize and suggest by his next statement: “for this thing is too heavy for thee; thou art not able to perform it thyself alone” the crucial importance of harnessing the help and assistance of others. These are people who have been trained and raised to be involved in the administration and leadership of the congregation and camp of Israel. This help and assistance was to Jethro the only panacea for cooperate effectiveness and personal health and wellbeing.

Piper (2018:8) continues to state that In verses 19 and 20, we see Jethro building on his theory of the indispensability of help and assistance as he proposes a potential solution to Moses. His beginning words that: “I will give thee counsel, and God shall be with thee” establishes the fact that his counsel in this regard was from God and approved of him. This becomes clearer and more indicative when we see him in verse 23 declaring: “...and God commands thee so...”. Dei (2015:48) observes that while the invocation of God’s name was probably necessary in order to secure Moses’ attention and compliance, it no doubt reveals God’s views about this subject thus establishing the normative theological perspective of it. When we consider the fact that Moses heeded and implemented Jethro’s plan and advice in verses 24 and 25 we see that he respected and acknowledged his spiritual authority. Jethro’s plan is seen to make a distinction between the sacred and mundane duties associated with pastoral care even as we observed with regards to the participants of this study. Piper (2018:8) advances that his statement in verses 19 and 20 that “be thou for the people to Godward, that thou mayest bring the causes to God. And thou shall teach them ordinances and

laws...” while delineating the core sacred duties as a prophet-teacher, succinctly demonstrates the exclusiveness of the role and divine expectation with regards to the office. Jethro advises Moses further to do three major things with the people as part of his plan to secure an effective and efficient administration of judgement and leadership of the people.

- The first of them which involves “teach them ordinances and laws” seem to endorse, affirm and confirm Moses chief role even as he earlier hinted in verse 16.
- Second, Jethro advises Moses to “show them the way wherein they must walk” suggesting the establishment of the ethical standard regarding conduct, behaviour and lifestyle befitting their office and roles as judges.
- Thirdly Jethro advises Moses to “show them the work they must do” indicating the necessity for a clear cut direction and instruction regarding boundaries. This is with regards to roles and duties inherent in offices and expected of the officers and rulers in order to avoid confusion and intrusion characteristics of a situation of ambiguity and blurring in this regard.

Meredith (2014:12) discusses that while this advice serves to buttress the importance of assistance and help with the process of judgement that Moses needed, it more than anything else provides insight into the need to divide and distinguish between roles. This refers to their importance and value in terms of the congregation. It emphasizes the importance of Moses taking responsibility for the larger and more pertinent issues that affect the entire Israelite camp rather than individual issues that he could raise men to assist him to do.

In verse 21 Jethro fully put forward his typology carefully delineating the structure and ethical requirements. He elucidates and highlights four qualifications which by extension dictates and underlines the ethical standard for the roles as, “able men”, “such as fear God”, “men of truth”, and “hating covetousness” while demarcating the hierarchical structure as, “to be rulers of thousands”, “and rulers of hundreds”, “and rulers of fifties” and “rulers of tens”. Piper (2018:9) opines that Jethro’s reason for prescribing this kind of men with this character would probably not be unconnected to the fact that as men who would be put in position of leadership they needed to be above reproach and

blame so that they could command respect and honour from them. This kind of structure and hierarchy may speak to the need for capacity and ability as each position must align with the capacity and ability of the occupant in order to perform effectively and efficiently. However, the true wisdom in this ethical requirement of the men to fill the position and the hierarchical structure was to ensure that the devolution of duties would cut down on the overall volume of cases and problems that Moses would eventually have to deal with. This is because these men would be able to deal with the cases considering their character and capacity. This way, Moses would have extra time and energy to handle the most important cases thus increasing his effectiveness while reducing the possibility of burnout and stress.

In verse 22 an explanation is given by Jethro regarding the nature and role of the hierarchical system. These men were to “judge the people at all seasons” suggesting that they were to be full time judges in a well-organized system instead of an ad hoc arrangement. This would mean that cases and problems would enjoy speedy and expedited attention unlike before when it was very slow because it was only Moses doing the judging. Meredith (2014:11) notes that they were to bring “every great matter to thee, but every small matter they shall judge” not only spells out the demarcation of duties thereby intimating of the nature and enormity of the responsibility that Moses was to shoulder, it also reveals the benefit and reason for it, “so shall it be easier for thyself”. It is apparent that Jethro was concerned about Moses wellbeing in addition to his desire for the people to “bear the burden with thee” which suggests that he subscribed to a participatory system of leadership whereby the people had a say in the affairs and governance of their lives.

In verse 23 Jethro intimates Moses with the potential and actual benefit of the plan saying: “then thou shalt be able to endure, and all this people shall also go to their place in peace” suggesting a dual profit – personal and cooperative. Piper (2018:8) opines that by saying: “if thou shalt do this thing” he reveals the authority and autonomy of Moses buttressing the fact that Moses was not under any obligation to do it. But by saying: “and God command thee so” he was establishing a theological perspective regarding the administration of judgement and leadership. This he knew Moses would not gloss over or ignore seeing he was sensitive to God’s word and desired His will and stood to represent God before the people. In verses 24 – 25 we see Moses acting in humility and

carrying out the plan and advice of his father-in-law which also demonstrates his confidence in his spiritual authority and his conviction of the efficacy of the plan. Moses actually chose men and set them in hierarchical position of leadership of the people in line with the advice and recommendation of Jethro.

- **FINDING A BALANCE: Acts 6: 1-7**

The second scripture selected for exegesis regarding the normative theological perspective on finding a balance between pastoral care and social outreach is Acts 6: 1-7. In Acts 6: 1-7 we read:

And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration. (2) Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, it is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. (3) Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. (4) But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word. (5) And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch. (6) Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them. (7) And the word of God increased: and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.

Stenschke (2010:68) discusses that the literary structure of this passage could be broken into three divisions: the background of the situation, approach to resolve the situation or problem and the outcome. This has very significant lesson for the development and design of a theological model invaluable in resolving problems in pastoral care roles in this regard in order to strike a balance between pastoral care and social outreach.

In verse 1 we are intimated with this problem: “there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews” and the reason for this we are told is “because their widows were

neglected in the daily ministrations". We also catch a possible glimpse of the overarching reason for this neglect that led to the murmuring of the Grecians: "when the number of the disciples was multiplied". Stenschke (2010:67) offers a discussion that looks at the bigger picture and from historical analysis of the context which showed that the church in Jerusalem had already organized a program for feeding the needy, especially the widows in the church and probably outside of the church which was referred to as: "daily ministrations". In preceding chapters we know that "they were together and had all things common and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as they had need" (Acts 2: 44-45). Jeon (2013:2) opines however that as the church grew in number it may have become increasingly difficult to continue to effectively manage the number and organize the feeding program leading to some of the widows of the Grecian group being neglected although not deliberately. Notwithstanding whether it was deliberate or not, the instructive observation is that it led to the Grecians feeling cheated and neglected by the majority Hebrew Jews.

In verse 2 we see the apostles who were the leaders of the church and having the oversight getting hint of the problem and their stand in the matter. Jeon (2013:2) succinctly notes that important insights are gleaned from this verse. First, the apostles were probably aware of the tension and division along the racial lines between the majority Hebrew Jews and the minority Grecian or Hellenist Jews. There is suggestion here that this informed their decision to move in an astute manner to broker peace and reconciliation while at the same time resolving the point of contention by "calling the multitude of the disciples unto them" and integrating them in the decision and problem resolution process as we see in verse 3, "wherefore brethren look ye out among you seven men". Jeon (2013:2) argues that this decision to carry the congregation along and integrate them in the process of finding solution to the problem no doubt revealed and pointed to their leadership skills and prowess. Second, more than anything else, it speaks of the enormous importance that they accorded to the word of God as they portrayed it as their indispensable duty, one that occupied central and priority place in the scheme of things by saying, "it is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables". To the apostles, anything other than attending to the word of God and praying for the congregation was 'serving tables' which ordinary members of the congregation could be saddled with in order for them to have more time to devote to these areas of priority.

In verse 3 the apostles set out the qualifications and standards that the men should meet in order to fill the position: “honest report, full of the Holy Ghost, and wisdom”. Stenschke (2010:68) posit that this suggests that there was need for spiritually grown and developed members of the church to carry out the duties associated with the daily ministration. This was so as they would be expected to have the maturity to overcome the temptation to heed to favouritism, nepotism, segregation and other wrong doing and sins likely to surface due to their increasing popularity, power and fame (1 Tim 3: 6-7). Jeon (2013:3) discusses that the apostles’ reference to “whom we may appoint over this business” indicated the serious nature and important place that the early church accorded the care and nurture of the poor and needy, especially the widows within and outside of the church. It further reiterates the fact that they expected the church to understand that their primary pastoral care role was exclusively related to the sacred aspects of the ministry.

In verse 4, the apostles continue to build their argument for the need to refrain from being involved in serving tables (mundane aspects of ministry) suggesting the need to avoid distraction. This is so as to have time to focus and concentrate on the sacred aspect of ministry which is their priority assignment and duty. This is brought out more succinctly and pointedly when they said, “...but we will give ourselves continually to prayer; and to the ministry of the word”. We observe that in verse 5 the saying of the apostles in this direction is said to “please the whole multitude” suggesting that they understood that the apostles needed to be left alone without distraction. This is so that they would have time to focus on their more important roles of dispensing the word and praying for the congregation. Stone (2006:18) opines that it could also further suggest that the whole multitude could have probably perceived the answer to the problem to be in the suggestion and advice of the apostles to select men from among the congregation to take care of the business. This may have received general acceptance and widespread popularity amongst the multitude, especially among the Grecians, as it would mean that they would have the opportunity to own the project and take responsibility for decisions regarding their wellbeing and welfare. We see that in verse five the church had the opportunity to choose Stephen, Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas and Nicolas. Though it is not clear how they selected this men, yet we know that they were guided by the qualifying standards and conditions set by the apostles as the apostles ultimately confirmed and approved of them. They may have

been observed to possess these qualities in character and capacity as they lived and interacted with the multitude on a daily basis. Also, since all these men were from the minority ethnic community affected, they may have been deliberately chosen by the apostles to represent their ethnic group in a context of racial tension.

We see in verse 6 that the apostles “prayed and laid hands on them” suggesting that though the congregation selected the men based on the qualifications set out regarding the position, yet the apostles still had a role to play in the final process of the appointment. This involved consulting with God in prayer to ensure that they were in His will before laying hands on them which Stenschke (2010:68) noted signified ordination, confirmation and appointment. This may have been further necessary in order to empower them and for the whole church to respect and honour their authority and cooperate with them in the execution of their duties. In verse 7 we see the decision of the apostles to abstain from meddling with serving tables but rather delegating the assignment to others, so that they could focus on the ministry of the word and prayer. It was a great success. Jeon (2013:3) observed that this manifested in the fact that: “the word of God increased: and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith”. Since there were no further record of murmuring or complaint regarding the distribution or administration of the further grievances in the daily food project by any group, it indicated and pointed to some important developments. Piper (2018:9) argues that first: it suggests that the men appointed to administer the daily ministrations (food and welfare project) were effective and that they did their job well. Second, it reveals the fact that the apostles were right about the important place that the word and prayer occupied in regard to the general wellbeing of the church and actually gave themselves to it as a matter of priority. Thirdly, that the delegation of duties and the integration and involvement of church congregation in church projects that concern and speak to their welfare and wellbeing were fundamental to pastoral care success and congregational wellbeing which are vital in the promotion of church growth.

- **FINDING A BALANCE: 1 Corinthians 16: 1-4**

The third scripture selected for exegesis regarding finding a balance between pastoral care and social outreach is 1 Corinthians 16: 1-4. The value of this scripture in this regard lies in its usefulness in showing the importance of order and time management in

being able to find a balance between pastoral care and social outreach. In 1 Corinthians 16: 1-4 we read:

Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. (2) Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come. (3) And when I come, whomsoever ye shall approve by your letters, them will I send to bring your liberality unto Jerusalem. (4) And if it be meet that I go also, they shall go with me.

Piper (2018:9) discusses that in verse 1 we find a clue to the effect that giving for charitable causes to support the poor and needy especially within the church is a common and regular activity in the early church. In this verse we see that the apostle Paul's writing, "Now concerning the collection for the saints" shows that the Corinthian brethren were already in the habit of giving. Jeon (2013:3) shares similar notion stating further that Paul was apparently not writing to them to introduce the subject to them as they were already committed to acts of giving to the poor. He only just needed to address them regarding the manner and time as he had set in other churches like the Galatian churches, so he said, "As I have given order to the churches in Galatia, even so do ye". Historical and contextual study reveals that the Christians living in Jerusalem were greatly impoverished due to widespread persecution and discrimination. Stenschke (2010:69) argues that this resulted from the enmity of their countrymen to the Gospel of Christ which led them to treat followers and those who professed it with hate and cruelty to the extent that they were been spoilt of their goods (Heb 10:34). This general pervading atmosphere made the early church to teach and encourage members to see it as a duty and responsibility to help another when in distress.

In verse 2 Paul fully describes the order that he had set in the Galatian churches which he recommends to the Corinthian church in this letter to them. Meredith (2014:12) observes that while this reveals a systematic and organized way of doing charity and social outreach, it however provides further invaluable insights into the matter concerning who should give and what quantity to give and where to give. Jeon (2013:2) posit that these no doubt are great lessons in establishing the normative theological perspective on the subject with regards to the place of good time and resources management in striking a balance between pastoral care and social outreach. Jeon

(2013:2) states further that Paul's words, "upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gathering when I come" indicate clearly that he wanted them to be very organized in their contribution and not be haphazard about it. This is how he had directed, enjoined, commanded and arranged for it to be done with regards to the Galatian churches and the successes in those churches may have compelled him to introduce it to the Corinthian churches. The collections and contributions were to be taken "upon the first day of the week" after they would have had time to calculate their blessings and make a decision on what to give in advance before they arrived church. The contributions and collection was to be taken from "every one of you" as it was a responsibility that the whole church congregation was to participate in without exception. Jeon (2013:3) observed that the quantity or how much to give was not a matter of fixed amount but "as God hath prospered him" and it was to be freely and willingly given (2 Cor 8:12; 9:7). There was to be a central purse designated for the purpose, "lay by him in store" and "there be no gatherings when I come" to emphasize and instil orderliness and discipline. These all demonstrate elements of organization and management and effective administration that are crucial in promoting and enhancing effectiveness (Jeon, 2013:3).

In verse 3 Paul continues to show the importance and need for an orderly, disciplined and effective time and resource management approach as it relates to its value in promoting a balance between pastoral care and social outreach. He suggested and introduced elements of transparency and accountability here in saying, "when I come, whomsoever ye shall approve by your letters, them will I send to bring your liberality unto Jerusalem". Piper (2018:8) opines that the letters probably represented a system of accountability as it must have been signed and sent by the congregation at Corinth designating their appointment and authority and also probably stipulating mode of disbursement. It is instructive to note that what Paul is setting up is an orderly way of doing charity or social outreach which would promote and enhance optimal achievement and attainment of set goals and objectives.

In verse 4 he intimates that his physical presence is not very important when the structure or order that he created or directed is followed. Stone (2006:18) resonates with this and succinctly posit that his statement, "And if it be meet that I go also, they shall go with me" suggests that with the letters the appointed delegates from the

Corinthian church could take the contributions and collections to the Jerusalem churches themselves without needing him to go with them. His presence or his having to go with them would not be judged desirable. The delegation would be able to do the outreach without him having to be there because the system and order installed made the collection and delivery process transparent, accountable and effective.

4.2 LINK BETWEEN THE DESCRIPTIVE-EMPIRICAL DATA AND NORMATIVE PERSPECTIVES ON PASTORAL CARE, SOCIAL OUTREACH AND FINDING A BALANCE.

There are significant links and associations between data emanating from the descriptive-empirical investigation and normative perspectives regarding pastoral care, social outreach and finding a balance. Data from the descriptive-empirical study show immense alignment with and convergence, with regards to pastoral care, social outreach and finding a balance, to data from normative biblical perspectives. If not for anything else, it would be observed and noted that they could be perceived as having roots, guidance direction and motivation from biblical perspectives. This pertains to what pastoral roles are and what it ought to address, the nature of social care outreach and strategies for effectively combining pastoral care and social outreach for profitable outcomes.

- As implicitly and explicitly normatively expected of pastors captured in the designation “elder”, “bishop”, “shepherd” and “overseer”, participants in the study perceived their major roles as consisting primarily of feeding the flock the word of God and caring for their entire welfare and wellbeing.
- Feeding into mainstream normative perspectives therefore, this study found that pastoral care duties and roles manifested in core sacred duties such as spiritual nourishment/watch, counselling, prayer and training/development of ministers/workers.
- The secondary or mundane duties included church discipline and physical and social needs/care of the congregations. These roles exemplified those filled by the Apostle Paul and his son in the faith Timothy and the deacons who were ordained by them and tasked with the duty of endeavouring to meet the spiritual and other psychosocial needs of the congregations.

We see a large degree of convergence in terms of contextual difficulties and circumstances driving personal, social and community needs, and the necessity for the church and clergy to respond to needs in both dimensions amidst shortage of resources. Expectedly, the descriptive-empirical data reflects and epitomizes normative ideals in both the experiences, nature of social outreach and strategy for finding a balance in nuanced situations in this regard.

- Normative perspectives enable us to see the biblical admonition on the deeds of mercy such as in Mathew 25 and the work of the early church and the Apostles who were deeply involved in sacrificial service in this regard to bring about personal and community development and progress. In the same vein, pastors in this study engaged sacrificially in assisting congregants and communities with the provision of the basic survival needs such as food and clothes. They engaged in evangelistic/spiritual drive, community development efforts, health promotion and rendered educational assistance in order to capacitate congregants and communities to better cope and function. As with the Apostles and early church, this came with great cost which made the emphasis on qualification in the issue of character and integrity and motive paramount and important. This is as participants experienced insufficient and inadequate training, burnout/stress, lack of funds, poverty and sickness in the rural setting and dishonesty of rural beneficiaries while executing their tasks and duties. These contextual realities in this light, as we see from the normative biblical perspectives, informed and provided background for the innovative strategy designed for the church to respond to finding a balance between pastoral care and social outreach to better serve rural communities.
- Worthy of note in this regard is the encouragement and admonition, as exemplified in the advice of Jethro to Moses , to select and train men who will assist him in carrying the burden of caring and administering the congregation and community. This was also the strategy advanced by Paul in his admonition to Timothy to commit to able men duties of daily care and administration in order to ease his caseload. This trend we also saw in regard to the early Apostles in Acts 6 who admonished the brethren to select men to whom may be committed the duties of daily care for the mundane needs of the congregation. We see in all three instances a normative perspective defining the need to

separate sacred duties from mundane duties in pastoral functioning. More so, it is evident that a collaborative, participatory relationship between clergy and congregations is encouraged and advanced as a panacea for overcoming challenges surrounding the crossing of boundaries in pastoral care and social outreach. This often results in burn outs, inefficiencies and ineffectiveness in life and ministry of the clergy. As expected and in line with normative perspectives in this regard, the descriptive data revealed pastoral practice manifesting in this light. This is covered in chapter five which deals with balancing pastoral care and social outreach.

4.3 CONCLUSION

This chapter dealt with the normative theological and ethical perspectives the scriptures provided to describe the reality of pastoral care and social outreach under investigation. This corresponded to the third phase in Osmer's conceptualization of research phases which principally involves attempt at answering the question: what ought to be going on/what should be happening? (Osmer, 2008:4-7).

This chapter presented a Biblical examination and exegesis of scriptures relating to pastoral care and social outreach adopting a grammatical-historical perspective in order to obtain a normative theological and ethical view of the phenomenon. It began with an exegesis of scriptures relating to the office and role of the pastor which were mainly expressed in the words "elder", "bishop", "shepherd" and "overseer" which mainly revolved around feeding the flock the word of God and caring for their entire welfare and wellbeing. It then turned to an exegetical analysis of scriptures relating to social outreach where we see that it not only emanate from but underlie and substantiate divine nature and identity. It further presented an exegesis of scriptures providing insights on theological and normative perspectives and strategies on finding a balance between pastoral care and social outreach. It revealed that increased personal and cooperate effectiveness and efficiency defined and underpinned admonitions and prescriptions in this regard. A link between the data emanating from the descriptive-empirical study and that from the theological normative perspective was made to show points of similarity and departure. It indicated that the descriptive data was significantly related and similar to theological normative perspective in these areas.

The next chapter deals with the model for finding a balance between pastoral care and social outreach to better serve rural communities. This relates to the pragmatic task which seeks to answer the question: “how might we respond?” (Osmer, 2008: 7). The model proposed in the chapter emanates from a synthesis confirmed through a hermeneutical synergy between the study results obtained from the normative, interpretive, and descriptive-empirical tasks. This is provided for possible use by pastoral practitioners in the pastoral care and counselling of members of the church and social outreach in the rural setting (Osmer, 2008: 31).

CHAPTER 5:

THE PRAGMATIC TASK OF FINDING A BALANCE BETWEEN PASTORAL CARE AND SOCIAL OUTREACH IN THE BEST INTEREST OF RURAL COMMUNITIES

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter deals with the pragmatic task of finding a balance between pastoral care and social outreach. This stage according to Osmer (2008:7) is concerned with the formulation and implementation of a strategy or action plan for the solution of the problem. It is concerned with the question: “How might we respond/how should we act?” (Osmer, 2008:4). In the light of a hermeneutical synergy between the study results obtained from the normative, interpretive, and descriptive-empirical tasks, this chapter proposes a practical-theological perspective and guidelines for the church to find a balance between pastoral care and social outreach. This could prove invaluable for possible use by pastoral practitioners in the pastoral care and counseling of members of the church and social outreach in the rural setting (Osmer, 2008: 31).

5.2 ELUCIDATION FROM THE CHAPTERS OF THIS RESEARCH AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE TO PROPOSE PRACTICAL-THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES AND GUIDELINES

The following results of the preceding chapters of this study will be discussed according to Osmer’s (2008:4) methodology of practical theological research and the objectives of the study, to determine the significance and application thereof in the current chapter to propose practical-theological perspectives and guidelines.



Descriptive-
empirical

Chapter 2 - Priestly listening: depiction of the current situation of the balance between pastoral care and social outreach in the church to serve rural communities.



Interpretative
task

Chapter 3 - Sagely wisdom: a literature study of other related sciences in order to provide understanding and explanation of the current situation of social outreach to serve rural communities.

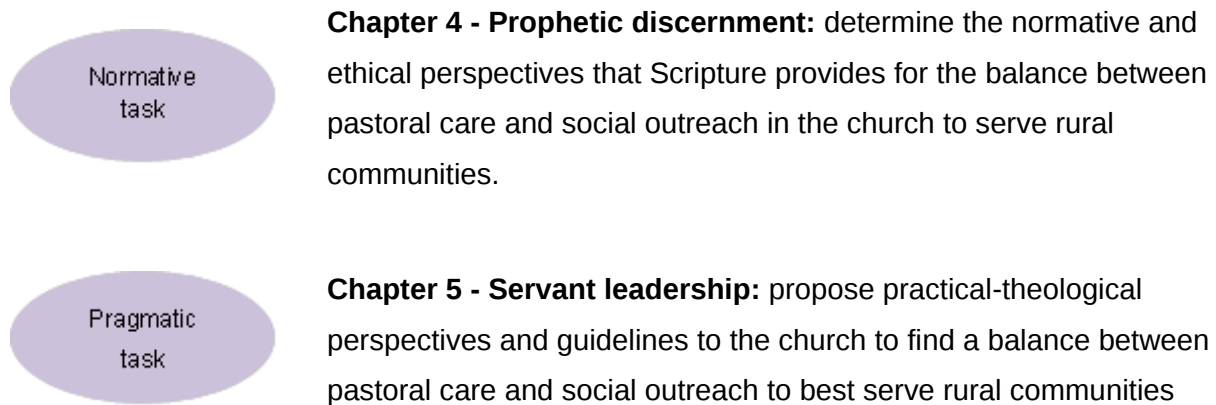


Figure 5-1: Summative view of discussion plan

5.2.1 Elucidation from the descriptive-empirical task of priestly listening

Priestly listening implies listening to people and having compassion with them (Osmer, 2008:35). The qualitative data from chapter 2 gave considerable and powerful descriptive-empirical insights and revelation regarding the current depiction of the reality of pastoral care and social outreach as it was experienced by participants themselves. Four major themes emerged with sub-themes in the study. The four major themes were pastoral care, social outreach programs/activities, experiences of pastors/social outreach workers with working with rural communities and balancing pastoral care and social outreach.

- The first theme that emerged was *pastoral care*. It was obvious from the narratives of participants that they made a distinction between the sacred and mundane aspects of their roles and ministries as clergy. This revolved around practical areas of pastoral care such as provision of assistance with basic needs, attending to issues of visitation in times of sickness and bereavement and celebrations which the study found principally aimed at ensuring the social and physical and health and wellbeing of members. This was found in the study to be an important element in fulfilling and validating the vision and mission of the rural churches. It was also a platform that promoted the possibility of the demonstration of compassion to congregants and rural community members. This had the effect of reaching and bringing in the unchurched and unsaved.

- The second theme was *social outreach programs/activities* executed by participants pointing to social realities in rural areas. It gave insights to the central and conspicuous place and role that the rural churches occupy and play either though intent or default in today's rural communities and societies. Social outreach activities and program included provision of basic survival needs to rural community members, engaging in evangelistic drive to win souls and reach the unchurched and engagement in community development and improvement efforts to make live better for rural dwellers. It further included the provision of health care services and promotion of healthy lifestyle and provision of educational assistance. What was clear from the social outreach efforts of participating churches, no matter their size, denomination or affiliation was the fact that considerable physical and financial burden and costs were involved.
- The third theme was the *experiences of pastors/social outreach workers with working with rural communities*. Experiences of insufficient and inadequate training, burnouts/stress, lack of funds, the reality of widespread poverty and sickness in rural setting and dishonesty of rural beneficiaries emerged as sub-themes. These experiences revealed the excruciating nature of pastoring and serving rural congregations and local communities and the reality of the peculiar challenges embedded in this setting. This is coupled with the fact that social outreach and caregiving practice is marked by shortage of human and financial resources to resolve challenges in this regard as this study found. It was clear from participants' narratives that they wanted to do more even though they felt inadequately trained to engage in some aspects of care work and lacked financial resources to respond to wider needs area and beneficiaries. Despite this, rural churches were deeply aware of and concerned about the grim and deplorable situation of rural life. It revealed that they were committed to serving to alleviate and ameliorate it at least to the best of their abilities and within available resources.
- The fourth theme of *balancing pastoral care and social outreach*, organization, integration, delegation and cooperation were highlighted as inevitable and necessary. This was in the face of the possibility of the experience of the continual and often difficult crossings of the boundary between the personal and professional spheres of life which is characteristic of a rural pastor due to lack of

support that they get being often lone workers. Purposeful planning and setting of boundaries and effective time management was seen by participants as essential in addressing these challenges. This would not only enhance productivity but also avert burnout and stress associated with crossing of boundaries and lack of self-care likely to surface when proper care was not taking in this regard to prevent and address it. Development of church guidelines and policies regarding social outreach represented practical measures that the participants alluded to as essential components in this venture.

The significance of the above elucidation to propose practical-theological perspectives and guidelines is that church members and rural communities can benefit from pastoral care and social outreach when there is proper and well facilitated integration of members and delegation of duties and roles to beneficiaries. Integration would happen by the pastor facilitating and promoting the involvement and support of church members for one another. It was gleaned from the descriptive-empirical insights and revelation that pastors could encourage and train members in the word and other skills required to equip them to unite together with the clergy and community members in the dispensing of projects that meet and fulfill their spiritual and psychosocial and welfare needs. As the study findings showed in this regard, building active, collaborative partnerships and networks between churches and agencies involved in rural community social outreach was indispensable in the face of glaring financial and resources shortages and challenges and administrative porousness in order to be more organized and efficient.

5.2.2 Elucidation from the interpretative task of sagely wisdom

The findings of the interpretative task regarding pastoral care and social outreach in rural communities align with the results from the empirical study. The findings regarding pastoral care in this study resonates with studies by Hughes (2015:42-47), Robbin and Francis (2010:57) and Streets (2014: 1) who found that adequate attention to the pastoral needs of the church such as counselling, weddings/marriages, hospital visit/health priorities, bereavement, educational support and prayers were essential to fulfilling scriptural injunctions and producing a healthy congregation. The findings regarding social outreach programs and activities in this study is supported by other studies by Beaumont (2011:117), Berry *et al.* (2012:165), Carter-Edwards *et al.*

(2012:197), Francis *et al.* (2011:9), Magezi (2017:1) and Scott and Lovell (2014: 73) who found that rural churches were effective vehicle for rural health promotion and delivery of social services either through intent or default. Collaboration of the findings of this study regarding the experiences of pastors with working in rural communities come from studies of Berry *et al.* (2012:166), Hendron *et al.* (2011:221), Innstrand *et al.* (2011:241) Johnson (2016:59), Scott and Lovell (2014:73-74) and White (2014:7). Findings on the balance between pastoral care and social outreach is supported by Hughes (2015:36-42), Magezi (2017:5), and Smith (2015:6) who found proper organization and management of time and effective partnership were crucial to missional and social outreach success in rural communities.

The reviewed literature contained and revealed sage wisdom (Osmer, 2008:82) important in providing more understanding and explanation on pastoral care and social outreach. The insights gained from the interpretive literature review resonates with the findings of this study in terms of nature of pastoral care and social outreach projects and the reason for the involvement of the church and clergy. Fundamentally, the literature suggests that pastoral care roles include sacred roles such as counselling, prayer, sermonizing, training and development of workers and spiritual authority and leadership over the church and congregations as this study also found. Mundane roles included such activities as assistance with material and financial needs and social and health care needs of congregations like weddings and funerals and visitation of the sick which this study also found. Social outreach included provision of basic survival needs such as food and clothing, spiritual care as in evangelism, community and human development and capacitation in a bid to alleviate and reduce sufferings associated with poverty and sickness. Individual and structural drivers accounted for the prevalence of the social and spiritual problems such as poverty, sickness and depression that informed pastoral care and which social workers and nurses and outreach workers encountered in the rural settings they served.

5.2.3 Elucidation from the normative task of prophetic discernment

The normative perspective presents a Biblical examination and exegesis of scriptures relating to pastoral care and social outreach adopting a grammatical-historical perspective in order to determine a normative theological and ethical view of a cross-disciplinary dialogue in which the interpretative perspectives relates to and interacts with

the Wisdom of God (cf. Osmer, 2008:162). The exegesis of scriptures relating to the office and role of the pastor, which were mainly expressed in the words “elder, bishop, shepherd and overseer” mainly revolved around feeding the flock the word of God and caring for their entire welfare and wellbeing. The exegetical analysis of the scriptures relating to social outreach not only emanates from but underlies and substantiates divine nature and identity. The presented exegesis on scriptures provides insights on theological and normative perspectives and strategies on finding a balance between pastoral care and social outreach.

The descriptive-empirical data analysis and the interpretative perspectives in the study show immense alignment and convergence with the normative theological and ethical view of biblical perspectives, with regards to pastoral care, social outreach and finding a balance between pastoral care and social outreach. In determining the normative and ethical perspectives that Scripture provides it could be perceived that pastoral care and social outreach have their roots, guide, direction and motivation from biblical perspectives.

- Participants in the study perceived their major roles as consisting primarily of feeding the flock the word of God and caring for their entire welfare and wellbeing.
- Pastoral care duties and roles manifested in core sacred duties such as spiritual nourishment/watch, counseling, prayer and training/development of ministers/workers.
- The secondary or mundane duties included church discipline and physical and social needs/care of the congregations. These roles exemplified those ordained and tasked with the duty of endeavouring to meet the spiritual and other psychosocial needs of the congregations.
- The selected scriptures for exegesis to establish the normative theological perspectives on the office and role of the pastor were Ephesians 4:11; 1 Corinthians 12:28; Acts 20: 17 – 18; Acts 20: 28; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Timothy 3: 1-7 and 1 Peter 5: 1-4. From the exegesis, we see that the words bishop, overseer, shepherd, pastor and elder all describe the pastoral office and refer to the same person in these scriptures. Findings indicated that spiritual and psychosocial

and physical care of congregants and community members are intricately associated with the role and duty of the pastor who is the head of the local church assembly. Their duty is primarily to take on the leadership and government of the local church and feed them the word and provide other pastoral care essential for their spiritual and psychosocial growth, development and wellbeing.

- Mathew 25: 34 - 40, James 1: 27, 1 John 3:17-18, and Romans 15: 25-27 were selected for exegesis to establish normative theological perspectives on social outreach. These scriptures have a lot to tell about social outreach as revealing and epitomizing the nature of God and the central place that living for the common good of all has in His heart. They also point to the fact that social outreach is an expected responsibility of the church and individual member of it and proof of one's true and genuine experience of salvation and claim of followership of Christ and God. The theological perspectives reveal the socio-economic and political context of daily living which makes social outreach inevitable. They show that the multidimensional nature of congregations and community needs can only be effectively met and addressed through an organized and holistic approach and method.
- The biblical admonition on the deeds of mercy, such as in Mathew 25 and the work of the early church and the Apostles who were deeply involved in sacrificial service in this regard, were determined to bring about personal and community development and uplifting. As with the Apostles and early church, this came with great cost which made the emphasis on qualification in the issue of character and integrity and motive paramount and important. Contextual realities informed and provided background for the innovative strategy for the church to respond to finding a balance between pastoral care and social outreach to better serve rural communities.
- Scripture provide encouragement and admonition, as exemplified in the advice of Jethro to Moses to select and train men who will assist him in carrying the burden of caring and administering the congregation and community. This was also the strategy advanced by Paul in his admonition to Timothy to commit to able men duties of daily care and administration in order to ease his caseload.

The early Apostles in Acts 6 admonished the brethren to select men to whom may be committed the duties of daily care for the mundane needs of the congregation. In all three instances a normative perspective defining the need to separate sacred duties from mundane duties in pastoral functioning is discerned. A collaborative, participatory relationship between clergy and congregations is encouraged and advanced as a panacea for overcoming challenges surrounding the crossing of boundaries in pastoral care and social outreach.

The normative and ethical perspectives that Scripture provides for the balance between pastoral care and social outreach in the church revealed that increased personal and cooperate effectiveness and efficiency defined and underpinned admonitions and prescriptions to serve rural communities.

5.2.4 Integration of results for a strategy for the pragmatic task

The pragmatic task deals with the practical-theological perspectives and guidelines for finding a balance between pastoral care and social outreach to better serve rural communities. Osmer's (2008:10, 176) fourth tasks of practical theological reflection focuses on identifying strategies and actions that are undertaken in order to adjust the current situations (as described by die empirical task) to the ideal situation or desired goals (as described by the normative task). It asks: "How might we respond in ways that are faithful and effective?"

The practical-theological perspectives and guidelines, proposed as a model for finding a balance between pastoral care and social outreach, emanates from the synthesis confirmed through a hermeneutical synergy and interpretation between the study results obtained from the normative, interpretive, and descriptive-empirical tasks (Osmer, 2008:176).

5.3 MODEL FOR FINDING A BALANCE BETWEEN PASTORAL CARE AND SOCIAL OUTREACH: P.L.A.N

In the light of the central theoretical argument that practical–theological perspectives and guidelines could be given to the church to find a balance between pastoral care and social outreach to best serve rural communities, the researcher has designed a model

to meet that need. The acronym **P.L.A.N** represents the four major areas of the model where **P** stands for *Plan*, **L** stands for *Lump together*, **A** stands for *Assign* and **N** stands for *Network*. This model is derived principally from the descriptive-empirical data from the narratives of the participants in the study in response to the question seeking their perspective regarding how to balance pastoral care and social outreach. As presented in chapter two in sections 2.6.4.1 – 2.6.4.4 where organization, integration, delegation and cooperation were highlighted as inevitable and necessary in this regard, this model encapsulates, revolves round, gives expression to and epitomizes these averred narratives. In this regard, ‘P’ (Plan) derive from organization, ‘L’ (Lump together) from integration, ‘A’ (Assign) from delegation while ‘N’ (Network) comes from cooperation.

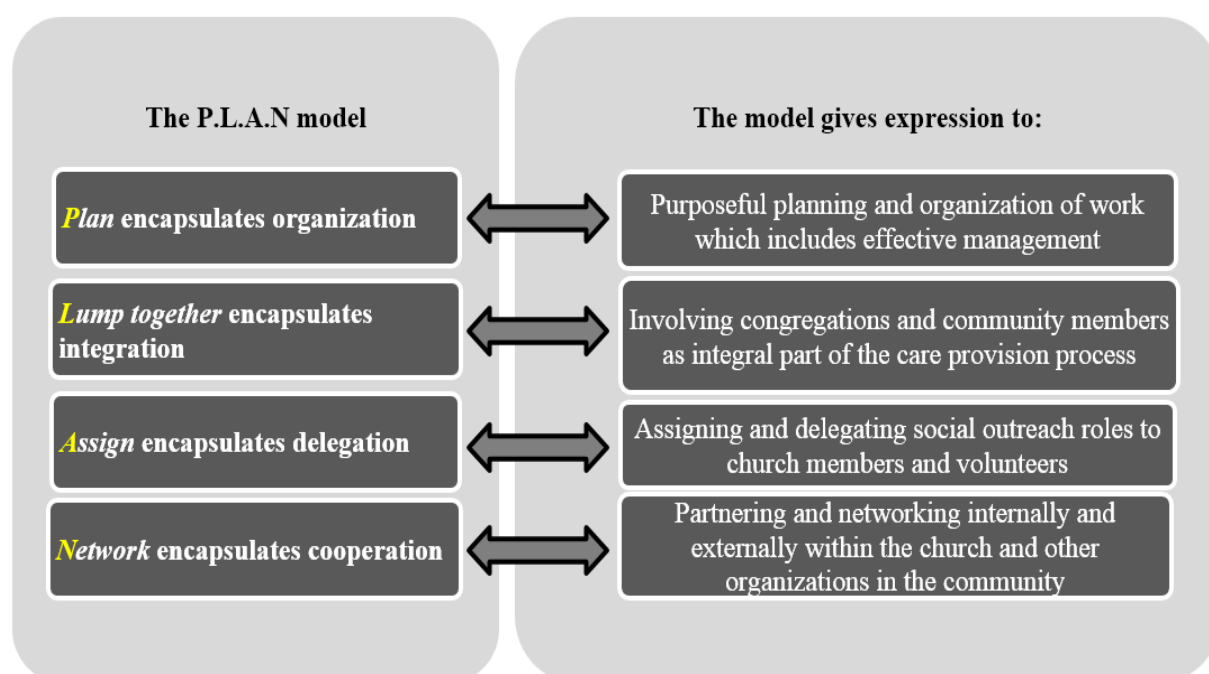


Figure 5-2: Finding a balance between pastoral care and social outreach: P.L.A.N

5.3.1 P - Plan

As noted in the above explanation of the model P.L.A.N, ‘P’ stands for Plan and represents and encapsulates participants’ perspective expressed in the theme ‘organization’ as identified in the descriptive-empirical data. The issue of and need for planning is emphasized in the light of the general awareness that the church has several roles to play in a rural setting which extends beyond just pastoral care to realms of social outreaches in the community. As Francis *et al.* (2011:9) have noted, the tendency is for some churches to concentrate on pastoral care at the expense of social

outreach and vice versa thus robbing the congregation and community of the benefit of these two aspects of ministry. As they have found, a very important component of the fulfilment of the mandate and mission of the church, no matter their size, location or denomination, is the designing of an effective and viable strategy that tackles the issue of pastoral care and social outreach. Effective churches are compelled to seek innovative ways to find a balance between pastoral care and social outreach especially in the rural settings where the church may provide the majority of community support (Francis *et al.*, 2011:9). This is reinforced by the realization that through both pastoral care and social outreach, the church can improve people's lives.

Purposeful planning and organization of work which includes effective management of time and setting of boundaries would no doubt be invaluable in ensuring that pastors in rural settings are able to distinguish where pastoral care stops and social outreach begins and vice versa. This is useful in not only enhancing productivity but also in averting burnout and stress associated with crossing of boundaries and lack of self-care. This is mostly observed to present and manifest in instances where proper care and attention is not accorded this important demarcation (White, 2004:2). It is instructive to note that planning has a dual reference in this regard.

- First, it relates to the organization of work and activities and management of time on the part of the pastor/social outreach worker and second, the development of guidelines and policy regarding the church's statement and position in respect of social outreach. On the part of the pastor/social outreach worker, this model proposes purposeful planning for pastors in the form of a work and activity structure and monitoring. This plan is put in place so that it would estimate the response that is anticipated in advance well before intervention and which would guide intervention when required. This means that a schedule is drawn detailing what to do, when to do it and how to do it. This would be utilized in dealing in an orderly manner with pastoral care duties and social outreach projects that the pastor engages in on a daily, weekly or monthly basis depending on the nature and circumstances of events. This may require in practice that the pastor/social outreach worker set a schedule with deadlines on a calendar or personal planner. This will be done by first ensuring that he lives a Christ-centered life where his plans essentially come from God

and revolve around divine plan and purpose. In this regard, he depends on God's wisdom for direction regarding who, how and when to minister while he principally desires to maximize the available time and resources to fulfill His revealed will (Matt 6:33; Eccl 3: 1; Prov 4:7; Eph 2:10; Eph 5: 15-17). Beginning the day in prayer and study and meditation in the word are essential and crucial in this regard. It could also be practically achieved by ensuring that he works by priorities and not by activities. This means that he identifies and distinguishes between what is important and what is urgent and act accordingly. Important component in this area also include tracking the progress of work and apportioning time for evaluation of tasks at the end of the day, week or month as deemed necessary, relevant and applicable to compare what is done as compared to what was intended to be done. This would enable him figure out why completing the intended task was not achieved so that a strategy could be developed and put in place to forestall and avert future occurrence. Evaluative and reflective component of time management and planning in this regard while helping the pastor/ social outreach worker to identify time wasters and unplanned activities to eliminate and avoid, it guarantees a place for everything and everything in its place.

Proper planning of work and effective time management while instilling order and fostering organization will inevitably increase and enhance pastoral efficiency and congregational satisfaction. It will also promote professionalism and boost the congregations' confidence in the pastor in addition to increasing visibility and impact in the community. This is so due to the fact that immense time and energy that would otherwise be wasted in situations of ad hoc, haphazard, crisis-oriented, reactive approach to pastoral care and social outreach is saved by a proactive, carefully planned, systematic and holistic approach. There is also the greater advantage of the creation of the enabling environment that allows the pastor to do more things and the right things at that.

- The second reference to planning in this model is in regard to the development of guidelines and policy regarding the church's statement and position in respect of pastoral care and social outreach. This requires that there should be a written policy statement indicating the church's views about social outreach in terms of what constitutes it, what kind of projects to be embarked upon, the

financial, material and human cost of the project, how to execute it, where it would be executed, target beneficiaries, qualifications and conditions for benefiting from the projects and duration of the help and assistance. Some aspects of these details may not apply to all rural churches or constitute core issues for consideration or pass as criteria for assessment. However, all churches do necessarily need to have a well-developed plan of action for members and communities where these important decisions are resolved and determined well ahead of time. Action in this regard helps to promote organization and the elimination of confusion and ambiguities surrounding pastoral care and social outreach ministries capable of triggering strife, bitterness, discrimination, favoritism and nepotism (Acts 6:1).

5.3.2 L- Lump together

In this proposed model P.L.A.N, “L” stands for “Lump together” and represents and encapsulates participants’ perspective expressed in the theme “integration” as identified in the descriptive-empirical data. Participants’ narratives and perspective suggesting this dimension of strategy for finding a balance between pastoral care and social outreach could be captured succinctly in the proverbial saying, “using one stone to kill two birds”. Integration or lumping together happens both in regard to clustering and grouping congregations and community members together in provision of pastoral care and social outreach and in involving congregations and community members as integral parts of the care provision process.

- In the first conception of integration and lumping together, this aspect of the model would practically require that the pastor maximizes time and resources in the most effective and efficient way. This would be done by identifying congregants and community members with similar pastoral and social care needs and characteristics and targeting them through group intervention. For illustration, church members and those from the community in need of pastoral counselling speaking to the same aspect of spiritual life and social relationship for example could be lumped together in a group for the provision of service in this regard. The group’s life and experience could be explored and utilized by the pastor to help members understand their challenges and issues from divergent perspectives as members share experiences with one another. This

could facilitate and promote bonding, attachment and solidarity resulting in group members inevitably rallying round each other as a support network. This could prove valuable in resolving congregants' and community members' problems and challenges. Furthermore, a system of cell groups or meetings held in church member's homes in the communities could serve to create a platform for the convergence of beneficiaries from the church and community. This would assist in making possible the simultaneous meeting of the pastoral and psychosocial care needs of both constituencies as these meetings could be exploited to address this goal. This no doubt could further assist the pastor in ensuring that scarce physical, financial and spiritual resources are maximized to target and address problems of the dual beneficiaries – church congregations and communities – which are two equally essential constituents of the church mission and clergy mandate. By simultaneously channeling resources and attention through this innovative and creative model in this regard, the church and clergy is able to guarantee that no aspect of its vital constituency is glossed over, ignored or neglected. Through this model they are able to maintain a balance between their pastoral care and social outreach roles and obligations to better serve rural communities.

- There is a second conception of “integration” or “lumping together” that speaks to involving congregations and community members as integral parts of the care provision process. In this regard, the pastor would strive to ensure that church members benefit from pastoral care and social outreach by facilitating and promoting the involvement and support of church members for one another as a family. This would be done by encouraging and supporting the opportunity for Christian and godly familial ties and relationship to be developed by members within the church and in the communities. This could become an avenue for strong support and social networking as they use their spiritual and material gifts and endowments to bless one another thereby meeting congregational and community members' needs. Towards this end, the pastor could encourage and facilitate the collection and distribution of social relief and welfare materials from within the church from those who are rich and well to do to be used in helping the needy in the church and in the community. Since the congregation and community members are directly involved in the collection

and distribution of the welfare materials, a sense of solidarity, ownership, partnership and responsibility could be engendered. This could be capable of sustaining the initiative while proving to be invaluable in simultaneously meeting the presenting pastoral care and social outreach needs in the two vital constituencies of the church and clergy – the congregation and communities - thus eradicating challenges and problems in this regard (Scott & Lovell, 2014:71).

5.3.3 A – Assign

In this proposed model, P.L.A.N, “A” stands for “Assign” and represents and encapsulates participants’ perspectives as expressed in the theme “Delegation” identified in the descriptive-empirical data. This area of the model is relevant and necessary for many reasons. This includes principally the fact that most rural churches are characterized by their small size where the pastor typically takes responsibility for multiple roles as the lone steward because of a lack of support staff which they cannot afford for a lack of funds (Scott & Lovell, 2014:71-72). This scenario compels the lone rural pastor to share his or her time and other resources between or among multiple congregations combining pastoral care and social outreach roles and duties. This inevitably results in him or her thus having to manage all aspects of the organization alone attending to matters involving preparing and delivery of sermons, fiscal planning, managing the church office and attending to the congregants’ personal needs and problems. While the extent and degree to which pastors are involved with these issues and their ability to handle it may differ between rural churches due to some factors such as availability of funds and support staff, it is, however, worthy of note that it impedes effectiveness and depletes time and resources (Beaumont, 2011:117).

This area of the model is an attempt to address the ineffectiveness and other associated challenges revolving round inappropriate crossing of boundaries and concomitant burnout and stress observed in respect of this behaviour. As the pastoral role is still viewed as a central focus of a church ministry, it is essential that rural pastors focus on this task. They should, therefore, assign and delegate social outreach roles to church members and volunteers while taking a supervisory or advisory role over these ministries. This would be achieved by the creation of structures and the development of gifts and talents within the local church/congregation. It would mean the training and

appointing of other people who would be entrusted with the responsibility of executing social outreach projects which might be regarded as the mundane aspect of the pastoral care ministry. The assignment of duties and delegation of issues pertaining to social outreach projects to special committees could happen in two ways. First, it could take the form of church members who are either elected or appointed to take such roles or second, it could involve recruiting volunteers from within the communities who out of personal conviction offer their services in this role. This area of the model would practically mean that pastors encourage and train members in the word and in the art of social outreach to unite on the ground of their new found faith in Christ to serve one another. While volunteers from the communities would be equally trained and motivated to engage in the art of social outreach with regards to the mundane dimension of ministry such as church discipline and physical/social care needs, church congregations more specifically could be empowered and facilitated to use their spiritual and material gifts and endowments to support and assist the pastoral office in the sacred areas. This would require the pastor to understand that his primary role is not only to do the work of the ministry but also to raise and train men to do the work of the ministry (Eph 4:11-14). This would be done by training and equipping members and delegating and assigning duties and roles to them which would involve restoring each other (Gal 6:1), carrying each other's burdens (Gal 6:2), praying for the pastor and for each other (Rom 15:30), teaching and admonishing each other (Col 3:16) and giving to each other (Phil 4: 14-15).

As with the apostles in Acts 6: 1-4, this would create an enabling environment for the pastoral office to focus more on the sacred aspects of the ministry which is underpinned by and entails their spiritual service. While this would undoubtedly result in increased efficiency and a positive outcome for the church congregation and the community, it would ensure and guarantee that church spiritual and numerical growth and development is achieved and sustained (Hughes, 2015:V). The added obvious advantage of long-term personal well-being and satisfaction in rural ministry resulting in the promotion of increased professional and personal productivity of the pastor/social outreach worker cannot be overemphasized. This is because it could eradicate and avert burnout and the stress associated with crossing boundaries and deployment in avoidable multiple excruciating roles of 'clergy' and "helping profession" (Scott & Lovell, 2014:72-73).

5.3.4 N - Network

In this proposed model, P.L.A.N, “N” stands for “Network” and represents and encapsulates participants’ perspectives as expressed in the theme “Cooperation” identified in the descriptive-empirical data. This area of the model addresses the reality of the multidimensional nature of the pastoral and social care needs of local congregations and communities. It presents a view that essentially recognizes the indispensability of an approach that takes this factor into consideration allowing for the development, formation and building of active, collaborative partnership and networking amongst churches and clergy involved in pastoral care and social outreaches in rural communities. Cooperation between clergy and churches manifesting in building active professional relationships and collaborative networks and partnership would happen in two major ways. This is in regards to pulling manpower and material resources together and in regards to sharing knowledge, information and experiences and skills that could foster excellence and ‘professionalism’ leading to increased effectiveness and efficiency.

There are three levels or abstractions of thought with regards to the reason for the advocacy and recommendation of this area of the model in this regard.

- First is the fact that the spiritual and psychosocial welfare needs of rural congregants and communities are not only numerous but multifarious requiring multidisciplinary skills and a multidimensional response to resolve them which one single church and individual clergy may not possess. For example, a pastor may have to refer a member for professional bereavement counselling or substance abuse or alcohol counselling and therapy requiring specialized and professional skill in order to adequately and completely address the problem of the client. Partnering and networking internally and externally within the church and with other organizations in the community would provide an opportunity for exposure to a variety of skills and personnel. This could be utilized in meeting the needs of the people and resolving the identified problem area in this regard thus restoring normal spiritual and psychosocial functioning.
- Second, it would be useful in addressing the problem of scarcity and shortage of resources as organizations combine efforts and resources together and form

a common pool from which to draw to assist local congregants and communities.

- Thirdly, while serving as a panacea to the phenomenon of multiple beneficiaries as it fosters organization and accountability, it is valuable in ensuring that a wider range of services are offered and that a greater scope and number of beneficiaries are targeted and serviced.

It is no doubt pertinent to retain and strive to maintain and defend ones denominational creeds, values and beliefs expressed in the church's overarching vision and mission while entering partnership and networking with other organizations. However, it would require innovative and wise planning and spiritual insight and thinking on the part of churches and clergy to remember that the common good of congregants and communities and best interest of the beneficiaries at all times and in all places are paramount to the relationship of service provision. This should be prioritized and considered duly and adequately.

5.4 LINK BETWEEN THE DESCRIPTIVE-EMPIRICAL DATA AND NORMATIVE THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES REGARDING FINDING A BALANCE BETWEEN PASTORAL CARE AND SOCIAL OUTREACH.

The perspectives and practices of the study participants regarding finding a balance between pastoral care and social outreach no doubt drew heavily from and hinged on theological normative expectations and prescriptions. As the exegetical exercise of Exodus 18: 13-25; Acts 6: 1-7; and 1 Corinthians 16:1-4 showed in respect of practical theological and normative expectations, the core and central purpose in this regard is the adoption of an innovative and constructive strategy. This would be to prevent personal and corporate damage while at the same time increasing the efficiency and effectiveness on both sides. As seen in the study, the participants were largely guided and influenced by theological perspectives expressed in scriptural passages such as Exodus 18: 13-25 where Moses' father-in-law admonishing him to focus on the sacred aspects of ministries while raising and integrating members of the congregation in the leading and administration process. In Acts 6: 1-7 the Apostles emphasizing the sacred aspects of pastoral care and the need to delegate mundane aspects to members of the congregation who would be involved in a participatory way in the care and leadership provision. The need for order, time management and organization in pastoral and social

outreach are gleaned from scriptural normative provision such as in I Corinthians 16: 1-4 which reflected in the practices and perspectives of the study participants and guided their behaviour and actions in this area. Expectedly, participants' perspectives of finding a balance between pastoral care and social outreach expressed in organization, integration, delegation and cooperation which emanated from the descriptive-empirical data, significantly aligned with and derived from these theological viewpoints. These perspectives eventually influenced and formed the basis of the P.L.A.N model proposed for the church to find a balance between pastoral care and social outreach to better serve rural communities.

5.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter dealt with the pragmatic task of finding a balance between pastoral care and social outreach which Osmer (2008:7) posited is concerned with the question: "How might we respond/how should we act?" The chapter provided an answer by formulating a model and strategy called P.L.A.N for finding a balance between pastoral care and social outreach to best serve rural communities. This was done in the light of a hermeneutical synergy between the study results obtained from the normative, interpretive, and descriptive-empirical tasks. The model, P.L.A.N was encapsulated in participants' narratives identified in the themes of organization, integration, delegation and cooperation.

The next chapter which is the last chapter deals with the keys findings and conclusions drawn from the data emanating from the empirical data.

CHAPTER 6:

KEY FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the key findings of the study and the conclusions drawn from the data. The key findings emanate from emerging themes derived from the analysis of the empirical data and are presented here in terms of how they relate to the study objectives. The conclusions that are made are in terms of the findings from the study.

6.2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The overall aim of this study was to determine how the church can find a balance between pastoral care and social outreach in the church to best serve rural communities

The researcher used Osmer's (2008) research methodology of practical theological interpretation for Practical Theology which comprises of four questions to guide the researcher to focus on the four tasks of practical theological research (Osmer 2008:4). These four core tasks of practical theological research, guided by the four questions, were explored in this research:

- The *descriptive-empirical task* examines the current situation ("What is going on? / What happened?").
- The *interpretative task* tries to understand from a literature study of various related sciences what causes gave rise to the current situation ("Why is it going on? / Why is this happening?").
- The *normative task* consists of normative and ethical perspectives Scripture provides to describe the desired situation ("What ought to be going on? / What should happen?").
- The *pragmatic task* entails the formulation and implementation of a strategy or action plan for the solution of the problem formulated in the empirical-descriptive task ("How might we respond? / How should we act?").

The four tasks of practical theological research (Osmer, 2008:4) were used to title the various chapters of this study and the objectives which the study specifically sought to achieve were as follows:

- 1) The descriptive-empirical task: To determine a clear depiction of the current situation of the balance between pastoral care and social outreach in the church to serve rural communities.
- 2) The interpretative task: To conduct a literature study of other related sciences in order to provide understanding and explanation of the current situation of social outreach to serve rural communities.
- 3) The normative task: To determine the normative and ethical perspectives that scriptures provides for the balance between pastoral care and social outreach in the church to serve rural communities.
- 4) The pragmatic task: To propose practical-theological guidelines for a model to the church to find a balance between pastoral care and social outreach to best serve rural communities.

6.3 FINDINGS OF THE STUDY AS PER THE AIM OF THE STUDY

As indicated above, the overall aim of the study was to determine the ideal balance between pastoral care and social outreach in the church to best serve rural communities. The aim was achieved through the appropriate use of the qualitative research methodology. As seen in chapter two, section 2.2 and 2.3, a qualitative phenomenological approach was applied using the explorative, descriptive and contextual research design to engage with the participants who had first-hand experiences of pastoral care and social outreach in the rural setting. This was in order to obtain rich information about their experiences and challenges based on their perspectives and interpretation of the phenomenon. The application of the qualitative approach was appropriate and adequate. It provided ample and succinct opportunities for the researcher to be able to explore and obtain an in-depth understanding and insights about the phenomenon of study.

Findings revealed that the pastors were actively engaged and involved with pastoral care and social outreach as heads of the church missions often operating with little or no assistance. The pastors as expected made a distinction between the sacred and mundane aspects of their pastoral office giving priority attention to the sacred duties. The sacred duties included spiritual nourishment/watch over the congregation, counselling, prayer and training/developing ministers/workers. The mundane aspect of their pastoral duties included church discipline and attending to the physical and social needs of the congregations. This ranged from assistance with the provision of basic needs such as food and clothing to the poor members of the church to visiting sick members at home and hospital and organizing and attending funerals and weddings.

Findings further revealed that the pastors/social outreach workers as commanded by and expected from the scriptures were passionately involved in social outreach projects in the communities. Social outreach addressed the basic survival needs of the congregants and community members, evangelism/spiritual drive, community development, health promotion and educational assistance. Findings suggest that they encountered tremendous challenges while doing so. Fundamental challenges included insufficient and inadequate training, burnout and stress, lack of funds, poverty and sickness in rural settings and dishonesty of rural beneficiaries. While these experiences no doubt proved excruciating and impacted negatively on the health and resources of the pastors/social outreach workers thus hindering the quality and scope of their outreach, they however continued to be passionate and determined in their quest to obey and fulfill the scriptural prescription and injunction in this regard. Findings indicated that this determined posture led them to continue to find innovative ways to overcome the challenges which ultimately gave birth to and promoted the proposal of an innovative model and strategy. This was proposed for the church to find a balance between pastoral care and social outreach to best serve rural communities. The model, P.L.A.N with the acronym P standing for Plan, L for Lump together, A for Assign and N for Network emanated from themes identified in the descriptive-empirical data. It represented the participants' perspective expressed in the themes, organization, integration, delegation and cooperation. This model contained elements which considered the importance of giving attention to the pastoral care and social needs of both congregants and communities without having to cross the boundaries and thus incurring its attendant challenges. In this regard, the study aim of determining the ideal

balance between pastoral care and social outreach in the church to best serve rural communities was accomplished. This is because there was an exposition of the unfolding of pastoral care and social outreach as experienced and interpreted by the participants in the study context and as a model was advanced to find a balance between pastoral care and social outreach in the church to best serve rural communities.

6.4 THE FINDINGS OF THE STUDY AS PER THE OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The findings of the study in terms of the specific objectives which the study concerned itself with are presented in the following discussion.

6.4.1 The descriptive-empirical task: To determine a clear depiction of the current situation of the balance between pastoral care and social outreach in the church to serve rural communities.

Findings were generated from the data emanating from the individual interviews in chapter two with the pastors/social outreach workers and focus group discussion with church members from the descriptive-empirical research. The data derived from the empirical research provided useful information and insights describing the phenomenon of pastoral care and social outreach thus answering the question: to which perspectives does a descriptive-empirical study contribute towards a comprehensive description of the current situation of the balance between pastoral care and social outreach in the church to serve rural communities? The data generated fully answered the study objective in this regard

- Findings indicated that pastors were actively involved in pastoral care and social outreach and that the church and the clergy continued to be active drivers and providers of spiritual and social services in the rural communities where they operated and existed.
- There was a high dependence on the church and the clergy by rural congregations and community dwellers for spiritual and social assistance that were essential for daily social functioning and survival.
- Rural pastors as evidenced in the context of this study were saddled with immense pastoral and social outreach responsibilities to their congregations

and communities and enjoyed little or no assistance due to lack of financial and human resources.

- Pastors expectedly made a distinction between their sacred and mundane aspects of ministry and gave priority attention and consideration to the sacred duties regarding it as their core duties. The sacred duties of pastoral care roles found in the study included spiritual nourishment/watch, counselling, prayer and training/developing of ministers/workers. The mundane duties included church discipline and attending to the physical and social needs/care of the congregation such as assistance with provision of material and welfare goods essential for daily survival and functioning.
- Findings showed that rural churches and clergy, at least in the context of the study, targeted remedial and developmental goals in their social outreach interventions. They offered temporary relief measures such as assistance with food and clothing and long term interventions such as developing the communities and equipping rural congregations and community members with skills and aptitude. This was in order to enable them to be economically productive thereby improving their living circumstances and conditions.
- Rural pastors/outreach workers experienced and encountered tremendous financial, physical, psychosocial and structural problems while executing their projects. They however remained resilient and passionate due to the perceived obvious needs of the congregations and communities and divine injunction and prescription in this regard.
- Rural pastors/social outreach workers were able to manage to navigate between their pastoral care roles and social outreach by endeavouring to heed to and apply practical-theological prescription and wisdom in this regard to find a balance as evidenced in their proposed model.

6.4.2 The interpretative task: To conduct a literature study of the other related sciences in order to provide understanding and explanation of the current situation of social outreach to serve rural communities.

The findings that are presented here emanate from the review of literature from practical-theological studies and from the social work and nursing professions who are

also deeply involved with the physical and social care of people and communities as presented in chapter three. The literature review revealed sage wisdom which provided understanding and explanation of the phenomenon of study thus adequately answering the question: what interpretation do other related sciences provide in the understanding and explanation of the current situation of social outreach to serve rural communities? In this regard it fulfilled the study objective in this area.

- Findings from the reviewed literature suggested that churches and the clergy have had a long history of being at the forefront of the provision of social and welfare aid in society especially in rural communities where they are compelled to intervene by intention or default.
- Literature reviewed indicated that pastoral care duties and social outreach to the congregation and communities constituted the two major aspects of a pastor's assignment deserving serious attention. Emphasis is however placed on the sacred aspects of pastoral care duties which exclusively pertained and devolved to the pastor as was seen in this present study while the mundane aspect is viewed as an area that could be delegated to members of the laity.
- The reviewed literature revealed that rural congregants and communities have great spiritual and psychosocial needs peculiar to their context of existence. That they depended on the churches and clergy and expected them to assist them with meeting these needs which promoted and enhanced their welfare and development.
- The literature reviewed suggested that rural churches and clergy share the same goal and views with other helping professions like social work and nursing regarding the origin, nature and mode of intervention to individual and rural communities' problem of poverty, sickness and abuse for example. While there is a convergence of interest and thought regarding poverty, sickness and abuse as emanating from and having their solution in spiritual, physical and social forces, the three professions agree that the phenomena demand urgent concerted attention and a developmental and holistic approach to address and eradicate.
- Findings from the reviewed literature showed that rural pastors operated in dire conditions marked by shortage of financial and human capital necessitating and

compelling the pastor to assume multiple roles requiring innovative thinking and strategizing like delegation and networking to overcome and manage.

6.4.3 The normative task: To determine the normative and ethical perspectives that scripture provides for the balance between pastoral care and social outreach in the church to serve rural communities.

The findings in this section were derived from an exegesis of selected scriptures in chapter four to establish the theological perspective relating to pastoral care, social outreach and ways of finding a balance between them. The exegesis of the selected scriptures fully provided tremendous insight with respect to the theological stand regarding this phenomenon thus answering the question: what are the normative and ethical perspectives that scriptures provide for the balance between pastoral care and social outreach in the church to serve rural communities? The findings from the scriptures selected for exegesis in this regard fully accomplished the study objective in this area.

- Findings indicated that spiritual and psychosocial and physical care of congregants and community members are intricately associated with the role and duty of the pastor who is the head of the local church assembly.
- A distinction exists between the sacred and mundane aspects of pastoral roles delineating sacred pastoral roles as priority and the exclusive enterprise of the pastor and clergy as also found in this present study.
- While there is emphasis placed on the fulfillment of both pastoral care and social outreach roles to the congregation and community, admonitions are provided that encourages the pastor to seek for the general wellbeing and interest of the flock at all times.
- Pastoral care and social outreach are established theologically as a divine expectation and prescription. They validate and give evidence to the claim of the knowledge of God and emulation of His nature and confirm followership and discipleship.

- Admonition to find a balance between pastoral care and social outreach stems from the need to ensure needs are met in these two areas and for personal and organizational efficiency and effectiveness.
- Balance is possible by the pastor ensuring personal spiritual and psychosocial self –care and professionalism. This is achieved by striving to maintain proper planning of work and management of time, organization of work, delegation of duties, integration of congregants and communities in the process of providing help and forming partnerships and active collaborations within and outside the church and clergy.

6.4.4 The pragmatic task: To propose a practical-theological perspective and guidelines for a model to the church to find a balance between pastoral care and social outreach.

The findings were derived from the themes which emerged from the analysis of data from the descriptive-empirical study. The data emerged from the questions which were asked the participants to elicit their perspectives regarding finding a balance between pastoral care and social outreach in order to answer the question: which practical-theological perspective and guidelines for a model can be given to the church to find a balance between pastoral care and social outreach to best serve rural communities?. The findings reveal a proposal in chapter five for a model known as P.L.A.N (P = Plan; L=Lump together; A= Assign; N= Network) representing themes from the empirical research identified in Organization, Integration, Delegation and Cooperation. The model advanced in this regard thus accomplished the study objective in this area.

- Balance is possible by the pastor striving to ensure proper planning and organization of work as this would prevent waste of time and resources and avert crossing of boundaries that could result in stress and burnout.
- Innovative way of providing simultaneous services to congregants and community members could be devised by integrating and grouping recipients in pastoral care and social outreach and involving them in the care provision process
- Findings suggest that balance is possible and achievable by delegating and assigning the mundane aspects of the pastoral and ministry outreach to trained

and skilled members of the church laity or volunteers from the community while focus is placed on the sacred aspect. This enables the pastor to have more time to devote his attention to more spiritual aspect of the ministry while at the same time having the opportunity to recuperate and refresh.

- Building active partnership and collaborative network and cooperation within and outside the church and communities in providing pastoral care and social outreach is essential in ensuring proper organization of efforts, broader and wider reach of potential beneficiaries and effective deployment of limited and scarce resources.

6.5 CONCLUSIONS DRAWN BASED ON STUDY FINDINGS.

The researcher's final inference after completion of this study is that – as the central theoretical argument of the (chapter 1) states clearly - that with the help of the necessary practical-theological perspectives and guidelines, the church will be able to find a balance between pastoral care and social outreach to best serve rural communities.

- The study found that pastors were the head of the local rural church assemblies and were actively involved in pastoral care and social outreach. These pastoral care duties and social outreaches sought to meet the spiritual and psychosocial and physical needs of their congregants and communities where they were located and situated. The theological perspective regarding the role of the pastor establishes the responsibility of the leadership of the local church in the domain of the pastoral office who is the bishop and shepherd as seen from the scriptural exegesis. It can be safely concluded that the rural pastor will continue to be saddled with the responsibility of caring for the spiritual and physical and psychosocial care of the congregation and communities in the light of this consideration.
- It was found that the pastoral office distinguished between the sacred and mundane aspects of their pastoral care roles and duties while giving priority focus and attention to the sacred aspects such as sermonizing, counselling, prayer and training and development of ministers. They however delegated the mundane aspects such as church discipline and attending to the physical and

social needs of the congregants and communities to the laity and volunteers as much as human and material resources could allow and permit. It is safely concluded here in view of the findings of the study in this regard that this represented a practical-theological prescription and expectation which the participants endeavoured to comply with and adhered to thus unveiling a situation and example of informing a practical pastoral role by a theological perspective. In this wise, it will no doubt continue to be an innovative way to respond to the peculiar setting and context of rural pastoring marked by complex scenarios where too many needs and demands exist with little or no assistance as the rural pastor is often a lone practitioner.

- The study found that rural congregants and communities had immense needs and depended heavily on the church and clergy for support and assistance. Assistance was needed in the area of provision and supply of survival needs like food and clothing, health care promotion, welfare and educational care and community and skills development. The rural churches and clergy were found to play fundamental roles in the delivery of these services to the congregants and rural community members. It can be safely concluded that in the face of the reality of rural life and existence, coupled with increasing demand, rural churches are likely to continue to be major sources of support and providers of rural congregations' and communities' psychosocial and welfare needs. This is in the light of the fact that rural life and existence continue to be underlined by economic depression and greater disease burden that is disproportionately greater with limited healthcare access and disproportionate population comprised of lower class families and fixed –income elderly people.
- The study found that rural pastors encountered tremendous physical, financial, social and structural challenges while executing their pastoral and social outreach duties. These challenges impacted negatively on them even though they were resilient and resolved to continue to passionately do all in their power to assist and help rural congregants and community dwellers. In the light of the unique presenting features of rural pastoring, it is concluded that rural pastors are likely to continue to face increased pressure and challenges unless practical efforts are invested in devising innovative and creative ways of managing and averting them as epitomized by the proposed P.L.A.N model in this study. This

conclusion is made against the backdrop of the understanding that pastors of small rural churches face a dual challenge by virtue of their work context. This refers to being involved in a 'helping profession' and also being located in geographically remote areas where they discharge their numerous and diverse responsibilities as highlighted in the study and literature review amidst a shortage of staff and personnel and financial constraints.

- The study found that the current depiction of pastoral care and social outreach reflected a balance between the two aspects of pastoral responsibilities in the study context at least. This was as pastors endeavoured to heed and inform practice with established theological perspectives encouraging and admonishing a distinction between the sacred and mundane aspects of pastoral care roles and between pastoral care and social outreach. This enabled them to give attention to both the pastoral care duties to congregants and social outreach to community members ensuring that identified and surfacing needs of congregants and communities in both areas were met even though at great spiritual, personal, financial and social cost. It can be concluded that meaningful and substantial success and positive outcomes in this dimension will continue to be recorded and made as long as pastors and other social outreach workers commit to continuously guiding and informing practical pastoral practice by established theological perspectives.

6.6 CONCLUSION.

This chapter presented the key findings of the study and the conclusions drawn from the data. The researcher believes all objectives to have been met. The key findings emanated from the themes derived from the analysis of the empirical data and were presented along the lines of the study objectives. The researcher views this study as relevant, valid and significant. The conclusions that were made were in terms of the findings from the study.

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ANNEXURE A:

INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENTATION

TITLE OF THE RESEARCH STUDY:

Balancing Pastoral Care and Social Outreach in the Best Interest of Rural Communities: A Practical Theological Study.

ETHICS REFERENCE NUMBERS:

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Brian Talbot

POST GRADUATE STUDENT: Jude Osarogiagbon Edomwonyi

ADDRESS:

CONTACT NUMBER: judeedo@hotmail.com

*You are being invited to take part in a **research study** that forms part of my MTh dissertation regarding **Pastoral care and social outreach: A balancing act to best serve rural communities**. Please take some time to read the information presented here, which will explain the details of this study. Please ask the researcher or person explaining the research to you any questions about any part of this study that you do not fully understand. It is very important that you are fully satisfied that you clearly understand what this research is about and how you might be involved. Also, your participation is **entirely voluntary** and you are free to say no to participate. If you say no, this will not affect you negatively in any way whatsoever. You are also free to withdraw from the study at any point, even if you do agree to take part now.*

This study has been approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Theology of the North-West University (NWU.....) and will be conducted according to the ethical guidelines and principles of Ethics in Health Research: Principles, Processes and Structures (DoH, 2015) and other international ethical guidelines applicable to this study. It might be necessary for the research ethics committee members or other relevant people to inspect the research records.

What is this research study all about?

- *In order to be effective in their work in a rural setting, churches should provide both pastoral care and social outreach to the surrounding community, even though many of them may be far-spread across miles of farmland. Apart from providing counseling services and visiting the sick or those in prisons, religious leaders who perform these services should also address some of the physical needs of individuals in rural areas (Meyerstein & Ruskin, 2007: 113). This can be done by providing food and medicine to the rural inhabitants. However, today it is not uncommon to find a church emphasizing pastoral care at the expense of social outreach. Conversely, some churches tend to overemphasize social outreach at the expense of pastoral care. However, both are important if a church is to make a real and lasting impact on the lives of its rural congregants (Morse, 2011:1).*
- *Without balancing social outreach and pastoral care, rural dwellers will continue missing an important component of the missional outreach that should be provided by the church. Doing this will mean that the church has failed in one of its core roles, either in providing pastoral care or social outreach. In this study, the researcher will examine how the church can find a balance between pastoral care and social outreach to best serve rural communities. This will be done by seeking the perspectives of local church-goers and the church itself on how they think one can balance between pastoral care and social outreach.*
- *The aim of this study is to determine the ideal balance between pastoral care and social outreach in the church to best serve rural communities*
- *Objectives*
 1. *To determine a clear depiction of the current situation of the balance between pastoral care and social outreach in the church to serve rural communities.*
 2. *To conduct a literature study of other related sciences in order to provide understanding and explanation of the current situation of social outreach to serve rural communities.*
 3. *To determine the normative and ethical perspectives that Scripture provides for the balance between pastoral care and social outreach in the church to serve rural communities.*

4. *To propose practical-theological perspectives and guidelines for a model to the church to find a balance between pastoral care and social outreach to best serve rural communities.*

Why have you been invited to participate?

- *You have been invited to participate in this study because you are a pastor and engaged in pastoral care and social outreach or you are a member of a church congregation and beneficiary of pastoral care and social outreach and so have rich, first-hand information and experience of the subject under investigation. You are included to participate in the study because you are willing and able to express your feelings meaningfully during the interview and focus group discussion as a result of good cognitive capability.*

What will be expected of you during data gathering?

- *You will be expected to participate in individual interviews with pastors of maximum one hour and a focus group discussion with church members of one-hour duration at your office and premises of the Good Shepherd Church, Grand Bahamas respectively as mutually agreed. You will be asked to fill in a checklist whereby background questions, like when/where/how questions, are asked regarding pastoral care and social outreach. The ethical significance of confidentiality, as well as informed consent, shall be clarified to respondents at this point. Steps considered to guarantee that a breach of privacy will not occur will be explained to the participants, such as how the information they provide will be used. Detailed information in writing concerning the research and a letter of informed consent shall be given to each respondent. The above checklist will be followed by semi-structured interviews where the ideas of social outreach and pastoral roles will be expounded to respondents to ensure that they fully comprehend the concepts. The questions presented to church members will be as follows:*
- *Describe in which ways the social outreach practiced by your church has played a role in overcoming your personal challenges?*
 - *Describe how pastoral roles have been beneficial to you in times of difficulty?*

The questions posed to the social outreach workers will be phrased as follows:

- *What is your experience with working with members of the rural communities?*
- *What do you think are needs and challenges of persons in the rural setting?*

- *What do you think is the responsibility of the church in assisting its members to overcome their challenges?*

The data obtained from the semi- structured interviews will later be analyzed by reviewing the raw information, then identifying the relevance of separate data sections to specific codes so as to ultimately identify and display the results of correlations between the various themes (Neuman, 2002: 15).

Risks and precaution

- *There are identifiable risks involved in your taking part in this research study. However, in the unlikely event of some form of psychological harm occurring as a direct result of your taking part in this research study, you will be offered counselling and debriefing.*

Benefits of participating in the study

- This study will benefit you directly because it will offer the opportunity for you to understand the challenges associated with your pastoral and outreach work and practical strategies to overcome them and become more productive.
- It will benefit the society at large indirectly as it will offer the opportunity for your church outreach work and contribution to be seen and better engineered so that it could better meet community and society's needs.
- Overall, the benefits (risks/benefit analysis) outweigh the risks of your participation in the study.

Facility where the study will be implemented

- Individual interviews with pastors/social outreach workers will be conducted at your respective churches by mutual agreement while the focus group discussion will be conducted at Church of the Good Shepherd, Grand Bahama premises by mutual agreement.

Goodwill permission/consent

- You are participating as a pastor and church member because your consent was sought and voluntarily obtained before commencement of the study. Appropriate forms are

attached. You were selected as a pastor and church member to participate in the study because of your experience in pastoral care and social outreach.

Criteria for participant selection

- You are selected to participate in this study because you are a pastor and engaged in pastoral care and social outreach
- Because you are a member of a church congregation and beneficiary of pastoral care and social outreach
- Because you have rich, first-hand information and experience about the subject under investigation
- Because you are willing and able to express your feelings meaningfully during the interview and focus group discussion due to good cognitive capability.

Participant recruitment

- You were identified as a pastor involved in pastoral care and social outreach and church member who benefits from pastoral care and social outreach in local participating assemblies. You were thereafter contacted through phone and personal contact and invited to participate in the study. The study aims and objectives are explained to you and the relevant ethical issues relevant to the study is explained to you. You voluntary participation is solicited and your consent and willingness to participate obtained before the commencement of the study.

How will we protect your confidentiality and who will see your findings?

- *During the research process, the identity and privacy of participants will be kept confidential.*
- *Anonymity of your findings will be protected by the use of pseudonyms (aliases) for individual, to protect their identities.*
- *Confidentiality will also be ensured by changing identifying data during transcription and deleting the digital recording once it was transcribed, so that no information can be traced to a specific participant. Any possible deductive disclosure will also be prevented during analysis and reporting of data because only the*

researcher, the study leader and the person making the transcription will be able to look at your findings.

What will happen with the findings or samples?

- *The results of this research will be formulated and presented clearly, unambiguously to participants.*
- *All data generated during the course of the research, in their various forms; (recorded interviews) will be compiled and stored surely, as a file protected by a secret password in my computer. Only the researcher and the manager of data storage will have access to this data.*
- *The data (both electronic and hard copies) will be stored for five (5) years in a locked premise. The data will be destroyed after five (5) years and the researcher is responsible for the storage and destroying of the data (electronic and hard copies).*
- *Findings will be kept safe by locking hard copies in locked cupboards in the researcher's office and for electronic data it will be password protected. Data will be stored for 5 years.*

How will you know about the results of this research?

- *We will give you the results of this research when this study has finally been approved by the Examination Committee of the Theological Faculty of the North-West University. I will then personally give you a call and inform you that the final results of this study are available and will then briefly discuss it with you.*
- *You will also be informed of all the relevant findings by means of an e-mail through which a summary of the final results of this study will be sent to you.*

Will you be paid to take part in this study and are there any costs for you?

- *This study is not funded by any person or institution.*
- *The researcher will ensure that the participants does not incur any cost in the course of the study.*

Is there anything else that you should know or do?

- *You can contact Jude Edomwonyi at judeedo@hotmail.com or Brian Talbot at briantalbot2008@gmail.com if you have any further questions or have any problems.*
- *You can also contact the Theology Research Ethics Committee via Dr Rudy Denton at 082 459 9710 or Rudy.Denton@nwu.ac.za if you have any concerns that were not answered about the research or if you have complaints about the research.*
- *You will receive a copy of this information and consent form for your own purposes.*

DECLARATION BY PARTICIPANT

*By signing below, I agree to take part in the research study titled: **Pastoral care and social outreach: A balancing act to best serve rural communities***

I declare that:

- *I have read this information/it was explained to me by a trusted person in a language with which I am fluent and comfortable.*
- *The research was clearly explained to me.*
- *I have had a chance to ask questions to both the person getting the consent from me, as well as the researcher and all my questions have been answered.*
- *I understand that taking part in this study is **voluntary** and I have not been pressurized to take part.*
- *I may choose to leave the study at any time and will not be handled in a negative way if I do so.*
- *I may be asked to leave the study before it has finished, if the researcher feels it is in the best interest, or if I do not follow the study plan, as agreed to.*

Signed at (place) on (date).....

.....

Signature of participant

.....

Signature of witness

DECLARATION BY PERSON OBTAINING CONSENT

I (*name*) declare that:

- I clearly and in detail explained the information in this document to
-
- I did/did not use an interpreter.
- I encouraged him/her to ask questions and took adequate time to answer them.
- I am satisfied that he/she adequately understands all aspects of the research, as discussed above
- I gave him/her time to discuss it with others if he/she wished to do so.

Signed at (*place*) on (*date*).....

.....

Signature of participant

.....

Signature of witness

DECLARATION BY RESEARCHER

I (name) declare that:

- *I explained the information in this document to*
- *I did/did not use an interpreter*
- *I encouraged him/her to ask questions and took adequate time to answer them*
- *The informed consent was obtained by an independent person.*
- *I am satisfied that he/she adequately understands all aspects of the research, as described above.*
- *I am satisfied that he/she had time to discuss it with others if he/she wished to do so.*

Signed at (place) on (date) 20....

.....

Signature of researcher

.....

Signature of witness

ANNEXTURE B:

IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW QUESTIONS/GUIDE

BALANCING PASTORAL CARE AND SOCIAL OUTREACH IN THE BEST INTEREST OF RURAL COMMUNITIES: A PRACTICAL THEOLOGICAL STUDY.

Thank you for taking time to meet with me for this interview. My name is Rev. Jude Osarogiagbon Edomwonyi. I am a Masters of Theology in Pastoral Study student in the North West University. The study is conducted with a view to determining the theological perspectives and guidelines that could be proposed to help the church to find a balance between pastoral care and social outreach to best serve rural communities

As the consent form you signed indicated, this interview and any information you provide is confidential and will be kept anonymous. I will report on this interview and the research findings but your identity and views will not be identified because it will be concealed through the use of pseudonyms.

Today, I will be asking you some questions about you and your pastoral care and social outreach roles and duties and would appreciate your kind and honest response.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Name:

Age:

Marital status:

Gender:

Pastor/Outreach worker:

Religious denomination:

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR PASTORS/OUTREACH WORKERS

- 1 Do you engage in any pastoral care and outreach program?
- 2 What types of pastoral care and outreach programs do you engage in?
- 3 What is your experience with working with members of the rural communities?
- 4 What do you think are the needs and challenges of persons in the rural setting?
- 5 What do you think is the responsibility of the church in assisting its members to overcome their challenges?
- 6 How do you think the church can find a balance between pastoral care and social outreach?

ANNEXURE C:

FOCUS GROUP WITH CHURCH MEMBERS DISCUSSION GUIDE

Thank you very much for showing up to participate in this focus group discussion. I am a Masters of Theology in Pastoral Study student in the North West University, South Africa. The study is conducted with a view to determining the theological perspectives and guidelines that could be proposed to help the church to find a balance between pastoral care and social outreach to best serve rural communities.

As the consent form you signed indicated, this focus group discussion and any information you provide is confidential and will be kept anonymous. I will report on this focus group discussion and the research findings but your identity and views will not be identified because it will be concealed through the use of pseudonyms.

Today, I will be asking you some questions about your church membership and as a beneficiary of pastoral care and social outreach and would appreciate your kind and honest response.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Name:

Age:

Marital status:

Gender:

Membership status:

Religious denomination:

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS/GUIDE

- 1 Does your church engage in social outreach programs? What types of programs do they execute?
- 2 Do you benefit from the social outreach program of your church or that of any other church in your community?
- 3 Describe in which ways the social outreach programs of your church have played a role in helping you to overcome your personal challenges?
- 4 Describe how pastoral care roles have been beneficial to you in times of difficulties?