

CHAPTER 3 – THRESHOLD

From an architectonic perspective, a *threshold* facilitates an important transition. Norberg-Schulz (2000:144) defines a threshold as “that which we cross”, and as “a separatory transition”. The *threshold*, as a metaphor of liminality – denoting “a highly creative phase or space, where the combination of new forms and relations is possible” (Cilliers 2009b:169) – comprises part of the development of the space for the interdisciplinary dialogue, and is located at the *centre* thereof. This facilitation entails the differentiation and acknowledgement of different spaces, in which the crossing over and entry into a new dimension also takes place. The underlying premise and meaning of all this, for the purposes of this design, is that, on the one hand, traditional boundaries have become blurred as a result of, *inter alia*, the influence of postmodernity and globalisation; and on the other, that the entry into the new space can be linked to the construction of a relevant and meaningful identity (Reader 2008:24). In the construction of this space, the continual circular movement between the personal and the general is discovered, in which, through the meaning and significance of liminality, arising from “newly fused horizons of understanding” (Gerkin 1986:101), a domain of experience is created, which “bridges the internal, subjective world of an individual with reality as it is experienced by the external, objective community” (Griffith & Griffith 2002:25).

Hames (2007:303) points out, however, that

for this to be a realistic proposition, new mental models must be created to enable the possibility of transformation. This requires processes that are able to challenge the status quo, transform current thinking and practices, and legitimise new paradigms.

In the concerned chapter, this action takes shape on the basis of three movements comprising, firstly, *contrast*; secondly, *connection*; and thirdly, *transition*. In view of the fact that the meaning of the central two chapters is intrinsic to the core of meaning of the research, the chapters in question resort under the *centre*, and serve the purpose of the further development of the proposed interdisciplinary model.

3.1 CONTRAST

Even in the art of architecture, there are two extreme ways in which encounter takes place: through dialogue or through confrontation (Day 2004:83). The design that is embodied in the research comprises an argument in favour of

the creation of spaces for dialogue, even although the liminality that is created by the “threshold” metaphor reflects experiences of emptiness and fullness; of absence and presence (Cilliers 2009b:169). However, this embracing of the complexity of paradox comprises, precisely, a part of the delineation of the research design. In the positive negotiated discourse that is conducted in this regard – which also includes an embracing of the complexity of the future (Hames 2007) – space is left open for the “power of positive uncertainty” (Gelatt 1993), which is indeed also mapped out as a characteristic of the future workplace (Davis & Blass 2007:39). The character of both practical theology and futures studies offers space for the accommodation of this perspective, thereby affirming a disposition that “seeks critically to complexify and explore situations” (Swinton & Mowat 2006:13).

It is, ironically enough, in the embracing of seemingly paradoxical contrasts with an attitude of “positive uncertainty”, that new potential spaces can be entered. It is a given that new and deeper meaning can often be found in contrast. Therefore, spatiality is distinguished on the basis of, *inter alia*, borders and boundaries that presuppose a specific contrast. On the basis of the respective categories of *darkness* and *light*, I will now proceed to contrast specific accents, in order to further increase the spatiality of the interdisciplinary design. Regarding the choice and pointing out of particular contrasts, I have recourse to the designated domain of work, as well as dialogue partners in the research; and I will therefore follow the funnel-like motion of a general orientation in practical theology and futures studies, in the quest for meaning in terms of what is most personal.

3.1.i Darkness

Thus far, the lines of the design that have been mapped out in the research, in the description of the individual *and* the world, have been inspired by the dominant influence of the workplace. Not only does this testify to an economic dispensation, but the world of work also proportionally represents the largest component of the average person’s day and life. The fact that work exercises a totalitarian power over multitudes of individuals is confirmed by Reader (2008:13), who points out that large numbers of people are trapped in a system of work in which increasing pressure is placed on them to meet all the demands made on them, often at the expense of their families – not to mention the cost in terms of a possible decreased involvement in church activities. Reader (2008:14) rightfully observes that:

Even the lives of the relatively affluent are determined by the requirements of the market: there are mortgages to be paid and children to be sent to the best schools so that they have a competitive edge in a hostile employment market determined by global economics.

In my view, therefore, the pressing need for an inquiry into the relationship between work, the economy and human well-being is self-evident. However, it is important to point out, at this juncture, that – in contrast to the customary focus of a practical theological involvement (Ganzevoort 2009b:9) – the domain of the study does not lie in obvious negative symptoms of economic systems such as, for example, child labour, unemployment and other such factors (in respect of which practical theology does, indeed, also have a contribution to make). Rather, the focus falls more particularly on investigating the link between the possible positive value of the world of work within a particular economic system, and the way in which it could contribute to the general well-being of humanity.

For some time now, research has indicated that the economy – which is defined in broad terms as the system(s) according to which production, trade and business are operated and controlled, *inter alia* (Odendaal et al. 1994:189) – has a direct influence on the well-being of the human psyche (Cushman 1990; Koslowski 2006). However, it is striking – and also enlightening – that research also indicates that, although “[o]ur economic welfare is forever rising ... we are not happier as a result”; and that “there is no relationship between personal wealth and happiness” (Furnham 2003:259). It is indeed disturbing that research results quoted by Seligman (2002:117) confirm that although a rise in material prosperity has occurred during the past 40 years, “in every wealthy country on the globe, there has been a startling increase in depression” (Seligman 2002:117).

It is thus clear, on the basis of recognised research, that despite a forward-moving, progressive and energetic economy, personal happiness and welfare are not guaranteed. A significant factor in the description of an economy of unhappiness is the syndrome of the so-called “empty self” – a term coined by Cushman (1990:604). According to Cushman, possible different “packagings” or “wrappers” encasing the “empty self” are manifested in various ways. Of these,

chronic consumerism (the compulsion to fill the emptiness with consumer items and the experience of ‘receiving’ something from the world)”, and “an absence of personal meaning, [which] can manifest as a hunger for spiritual guidance, which sometimes takes the form of a wish to be filled up by the spirit of God” (Cushman 1990:604),

comprise the most important markers for the purposes of the design.

Research suggests that the “empty self”, as a product of the present-day economy, which is “rapidly changing from a money economy to a satisfaction economy ... in favour of personal satisfaction” (Seligman 2002:165), has traditionally been approached and handled in different ways. It is clear that the

by-products that have developed from the construing of the “empty self” have led to a relatively negative description of human behaviour, which is embodied, *inter alia*, in the distinction between that which is normal and that which is abnormal. Typical of the use of such negative language and descriptions, is the traditional DSM model (Sadock & Sadock 2003), which “shaped psychiatry, clinical psychology and social work by providing a way to speak about the negative” (Peterson & Seligman 2004:5), in the standardisation of a number of “operational definitions of a handful of psychiatric disorders like schizophrenia and manic depression” (Peterson & Seligman 2004:8).

Even in the pastoral context, it is notable that the way in which pastoral care is designed is closely linked to three problematic areas of human existence, which presuppose a specific anthropology with distinctly negative accents, namely (i) human anxiety relating to isolation, rejection and death; (ii) the struggle involved in dealing with guilt and guilt feelings; and (iii) the experience of despair and meaninglessness (Louw 1999a:2). As already confirmed – *inter alia*, by research – it is indeed of vital importance that these perspectives should still be accommodated, on a constant basis, within specific spaces. However, the research also aims to put forward the perspective that, on the one hand, other accents can indeed also be formulated, which were not so clearly emphasised in the past; and that in the further development of these perspectives, new spaces for meaning can be created, on the other hand. In the articulation hereof, and in contrast to the perspective of *darkness*, I make use of the metaphor of *light*.

If it is argued that both practical theology and futures studies are aimed at the salvation and well-being of humankind, in the broadest terms, then it is a given that, in order to engage in a well-founded negotiated discourse in respect of the foregoing factors, further research is necessary.

In the search for alternatives during the research, the focus subsequently fell on the traditional way in which the so-called “empty self” was handled, followed by – as an alternative – a focus on the discovery of the so-called 65% barrier, and the exploration of possible ways to break this barrier. Despite the valid and generally acceptable “lenses” that have been applied in the endeavour to address the problem of the “empty self”, research has shown that psychotherapy and biological psychiatry – despite the administration of medication – only display a success rate of 65% (Seligman 2006:231). In addition to this, if it is taken into consideration that the focus often falls on the minimisation technique, namely “to dispense drugs or psychological interventions which make people *less* anxious, *less* angry, or *less* depressed” (Seligman 2006:231), it becomes clear that the cost of the traditional methods of offering assistance in this regard is calculated in terms of a relatively negative view of human nature, with a strong focus on pathology. If it is further taken into account that the most important research findings of the last quarter

of the 20th century confirm that most personality traits are highly genetic and hereditary, it is obvious why the “65% barrier” is a reality. Seligman rightly asks, in this regard:

So what posture follows from this, which is one of the causes of the 65% barrier, from the likelihood that depression, anxiety, and anger stem from heritable personality traits that can only be ameliorated but not wholly eliminated? (Seligman 2006:231).

Indeed, to sum up, it can thus be said that although certain mechanisms exist within the economy of human action, such as, *inter alia*, specific scientifically motivated criteria and language, which are aimed at answering the question as to what is wrong with people, the success rate displays only a 65% barrier in the handling and treatment of the problems that are identified by means of these mechanisms. The challenge pertaining to the development of a so-called economy of happiness thus lies in the pursuit of empirical research in order to arrive at a possible description of what is *right* with people, with a view to the possible breaking of the 65% barrier. Therefore, the focus shifts from the description and measurement of what is wrong with people, to a scientific inquiry aimed at establishing “what is right with people”. The benefit of the research in the domain of practical theology and futures studies would then lie, *inter alia*, in overcoming the problem of the so-called “zombie categories”. This term is used “as a way of pointing to the continued employment of concepts that no longer do justice to the world we experience” (Reader 2008:1). Overcoming this problem would help to facilitate new vistas of meaning for, *inter alia*, spirituality and its relevance for the workplace and the individual. It is precisely in the facilitation thereof that the possibility arises for the construction of new relevant spaces for the expression of a “lived religion”.

3.1.ii Light

During the course of the research, I realised that the dialogical group that I had identified at the beginning of the research, which was comprised respectively of Group 1 (professionally qualified theologians who are currently serving in managerial posts in a business environment), and Group 2 (believers occupying executive posts in the business world), could be further augmented by a third group of voices. In the period during which I was engaged in the research, I came into contact with a so-called “life coach”. This person had a professional theological qualification, but no longer operated within the traditional work domain that is usually associated with a minister of religion. His work domain had been mapped out within the Monday-to-Friday work environment, in which he offered guidance for everyday living to executive officials of different companies, in a professional environment. After several discussions with

this person, during which he explained his work to me, and I, in turn, told him about my own research, he assisted me in the compilation of a number of questions, and also furnished me with the names of other life coaches who, like himself, had formerly been full-time ministers, but were currently serving as life coaches in various parts of South Africa. On the grounds of the evolutionary and open-ended character of the design, as explained earlier on in the research, I resolved to once again make use of the work method involving the sending out of e-mail communications, with a view to the further consolidation of the method. Accordingly, specific questions arising from the original personal dialogues, along with the usual covering letter, were sent out to the identified participants. For the sake of the completeness of the process, the questions that were sent to these new participants are listed below:

Questions to Group 3

1. *What made you decide to become a life coach? What kind of life coaching are you currently involved in?*
2. *What aspects of the model of coaching initially made an impression on you?*
3. *How does coaching differ from the traditional pastoral model in terms of which you received your training?*
4. *What contribution does positive psychology make to life coaching, in your opinion?*
5. *What role do you think life coaches could play in respect of the facilitation of spirituality in the workplace?*
6. *Do you have any suggestions, based on your current practice, for the training of theological students?*
7. *Do you think that the foregoing questions are the relevant ones that need to be asked at this point in time? Are there any questions which, in your opinion, should be asked as part of the dialogue, and if so, what would you say the answers to those questions would be, and/or what perspective(s) would you like to put forward in respect thereof?*

As in the case of the earlier administration of the questions to the other participants, the completed answers that were received back from the participants, on or before the deadline, were anonymously processed and compiled by myself into composite answers, which were then sent back to the participants for any changes or additions. As in the case of the other two participating groups, the answer confirming that these questions, as originally

construed during a personal dialogue, are indeed the relevant ones, is presented first, as follows:

- **Do you think that these are the relevant questions that currently need to be asked, at this point in time, in respect of the theme? Are there any questions which, in your opinion, should be asked as part of the dialogue, and if so, what would you say the answers to these questions would be, and/or what perspectives would you like to put forward in respect thereof?**

From their perspective, participants agreed that the questions are indeed relevant. One participant posed the following question: How can the church, at the forefront of recent developments such as life coaching, make a contribution to the dialogue, and derive value from new developments? The concerned participant formulated a perspective on this question, as follows: New developments usually address neglected needs. The question as to what these needs are, could culminate in answers that might enable the community of believers to address the needs of members in a unique manner.

- **Reflection**

*There is a strong accent pertaining to the need for new, relevant and positive development. This perspective articulates well with the theoretical perspectives from the interdisciplinary dialogue between practical theology and futures studies that have been put forward, up to this point. To sum up, the following question posed by a participant can be considered: **How can the church, at the forefront of recent developments such as life coaching, make a contribution to the dialogue and derive benefit from new developments?** There is an inbuilt sensitivity in this question, which can be neatly aligned with a particular perspective from the field of futures studies, namely that an ever-present danger indeed lies in the fact that **new developments usually address (neglected) needs**. In order to avoid this identified danger, it is essential, in my opinion, to enter into dialogue with precisely such a discussion group as that of the life coaches, in order to take cognisance of possible alternative perspectives.*

Indeed, from the comments made by the co-researchers from Group 3, it appeared that the inquiry was highly appropriate within the spaces of the design, in which the focus falls on meaningful new developments that facilitate sustainability, from the respective perspectives of practical theology and futures studies. As indicated earlier on, the addition of voices has not been incorporated chronologically into the documentation of the research. Rather, these voices are included, in an interwoven form, as part of the narrative

genre of presentation. On the basis of the search for future(s) perspectives, I will now once again call upon Group 3 (the life coaches) to speak:

- **How does life coaching differ from the traditional pastoral model in terms of which you received your training?**

Participants indicated that during their professional training, their exposure to pastoral models was based on so-called kerygmatic perspectives with a strongly confrontational character, on the one hand, and therapeutic perspectives, on the other. In contrast, the life coaching model is facilitative in nature, and the focus thus falls on developmental aspects, as well as on the realisation of potential.

- **Reflection**

Although I myself received my own undergraduate, as well as postgraduate pastoral theological training within the hermeneutical model, with a strong emphasis on the narrative approach, and although I currently also teach students within the framework of this model, I still find it problematical when I see how difficult it is for students and colleagues to move away from the kerygmatic model towards the hermeneutic model, and how this often leads to distinctly confrontational accents with little or no meaning for the workplace. Van Huyssteen (2009:54) rightly points out that

all our radically contextual experiences have a deep hermeneutical dimension precisely because we relate cognitively to the world, and to one another, in terms of interpreted experience.

*Indeed, the essential issue and challenge in this regard are reflected in the question as to how the development of this “deep hermeneutical dimension” should be facilitated, in order to avoid falling into so-called “zombie categories”, and to **focus**, instead, on **development and the realisation of potential**.*

During the twentieth century, pastoral care displayed certain evolutionary developments. A kerygmatic phase, a therapeutic phase and – as from the seventies – a new, hermeneutical phase, with theology and therapy exhibiting a bipolar relationship to one another, can be distinguished (Foskett & Lyall 1988:49-50; Scholtz 2005:141). In this development in the formulation of pastoral theory, various paradigmatic movements can be discerned (Müller 1996:7-17; Louw 1999a:23-29; Louw 2005b:7-9). Firstly, there was a movement away from a one-sided model focusing on the proclamation of the gospel, towards a participatory pastoral model in terms of which the pastor is instrumental in guiding people towards the discovery of God’s involvement in their lives. The consideration of context, and a shifting away from the one-

sided professional approach, towards the mutual endeavour of caring for believers, were reflected in this movement. A subsequent movement entailed a shift from a therapeutic to a hermeneutically oriented pastoral model, with the emphasis on

the endeavour to read, understand and interpret texts within contexts. Hermeneutics underlined anew the importance of our human quest for meaning ... (and) the importance of compassion: the dimension of pathos in theology (Louw 2003:54).

In the therapeutic approach to pastoral care, a great deal of emphasis was placed on insights from psychology, whereas the hermeneutical pastoral approach focuses less on finding explanations for problems, and more on understanding and elucidating these problems. For example, the narrative pastoral approach seeks for signs of God's presence in the narratives of human beings.

However, further to the theme of the spiritual, and on the basis of an ongoing literature study during which it became clear, *inter alia*, that "more work is needed to develop the parameters for inclusion of spirituality and religion in the workplace" (Hicks 2003:62), it would appear that apart from a few theological inquiries, not very much research has been conducted in respect of the negotiated discourse concerning pastoral care, in terms of the meaning of spirituality for a positive orientation to the workplace.

It has been pointed out that the quest for financial success as an outcome of economic activity does not comprise a guarantee of happiness. On the contrary, and in the light of the unfavourable economic climate in which the world currently finds itself, as well as the concomitant high incidence of economic crime, amongst other factors, it often leads to a problem-driven description of the individual and the company. In emphasising the fact that futures studies are aimed at rendering an innovative and new contribution to the positive development of the world, it has been pointed out how the so-called transcendent or spiritual aspects of human existence within the study domain can make a contribution in this regard. Proceeding from the given factor that the scientific domain of futures studies takes account of the fact that

[t]ransformation and evolution efforts can contribute to the challenge of developing new economic practices that will make living possible for all – including future generations (Prinsloo 2002:118),

the challenge for a relevant practical theology indeed lies in arriving at a description and definition of this (future) "lived religion".

3.2 CONNECTION

The architectonic accent of *connection* suggests that a *threshold* not only implies a distinction and contrast, but that it also facilitates connection. I will now illustrate this connection by referring, precisely, to the concept of transversality as a proposed interdisciplinary space within which the construction of the dialogue between practical theology and futures studies, *inter alia*, takes shape. It is also in this very search for *connection* that – in the discovery of the architectonic principle that “[t]he simplest conversation between windows and ceiling shape is when they reflect each other’s shape” (Day 2004:100) – the construction of a possible *theologia habitus* proceeds.

3.2.i Models for interdisciplinary dialogue in practical theology ... *with futures studies*?

In the shift towards a more localised and concrete description of possible ways in which this work method, involving transversal rationality, can be embodied, with particular significance for the concerned research design, various possible models for the facilitation of the interdisciplinary dialogue in practical theology are taken into account.

In the mapping out and discussion of possible models – or, in terms of the pivotal metaphor of architecture, possible *styles* – for interdisciplinary dialogue, I will now refer to Osmer’s (2006:339-342) exposition of this subject, according to which three possible models for interdisciplinary dialogue in practical theology are distinguished, namely the correlational approach, the transformational approach and the transversal approach.

In the correlational approach, which features in the work of Browning, Van der Ven and Fowler, amongst others, theology is viewed as “standing in a mutually influential relationship to the intellectual resources and/or emancipatory praxis of culture” (Osmer 2006:339). One example of this can be seen when practical theologians make use of the insights and methodologies of the human sciences.

According to the so-called transformation model, of which Hunsinger and Loder, amongst others, are exponents, the practical theologian

must thus become bilingual (or perhaps multilingual if engaging psychology, social science, biology, neuroscience, physics, and so forth), allowing the social sciences to have their say about social reality while retaining the distinctive language and disciplinary perspective of theology (Osmer 2006:340).

The person and capacity of the practical theologian play an important role in the accommodation and facilitation of the relevant perspectives.

The third possible model for the accommodation of the interdisciplinary dialogue is found within the transversal approach, in which generalised statements regarding the relationship between theology and science, *inter alia*, are avoided. In their place is

a more local or concrete account of the ways particular perspectives and persons intersect one another, overlapping in some ways and diverging in others (Osmer 2006:341).

It is clear that, measured against the contents of this design, the third possibility of interdisciplinary dialogue would be likely to accommodate the discourse between practical theology and futures studies in the best possible manner. In order to provide an indication of how the model of transversal rationality accommodates the perspectives of the design, a more detailed description of this model will now be provided.

3.2.ii Transversal rationality

In the research, I subscribe to “a postfoundational practical theological” interpretation, as described by Müller (2005:72-88), following the example of Wentzel J van Huyssteen (1998; 1999; 2006) and Calvin O Schrag (1992; 1997). A “postfoundational” practical theological interpretation is characterised by a movement away from either a rigid “foundationalist” stance, or a relative, “anti-foundationalist” stance, towards a “post-foundationalist” standpoint, with the focus on, *inter alia*, “plausible forms of interdisciplinary dialogue” (Demasure & Müller 2006:418). One of the advantages of this approach is the respect that it displays for the essential relationship between science and theology. It is important to point out that this dialogue, which has been presented in an expanded form in the design, through the particular emphasis on the dialogue between practical theology and the scientific field of futures studies, is conducted between equal partners on a dialogical basis. Naturally, this calls for reflection on the work method in terms of which the perspectives will come into their own.

With regard to a possible methodology for such a study, so-called “transversal rationality” – as described by Schrag (1997:134) and Van Huyssteen (1999:135-136), amongst others – indeed offers possibilities relating to the construing of such a dialogue. In fact, this methodology can be described as an epistemological adventure. Stone (2006:1146) explains the meaning of “transversal rationality” as follows:

Transversality is a mathematical metaphor. A transverse line cuts across two or more geometric figures. It is to be thought of as between the universality of an infinite line and the specific location of a line segment. The metaphor refers to a specific conversation between disciplines, in between universal rationality and incommensurability. It is a reaction against both methodological imperialism and isolated language games and does this by resting on overlapping concerns.

In the first movement of “transversal rationality”, namely “*evaluative critique*”, the importance of exercising “critical discernment” is emphasised, and the activity of “separating, sorting out, distinguishing, contrasting, weighing, and assessing ... our different options” (Van Huyssteen 1999:137) is conducted. Up to this point in the research, an accent has been articulated in order to point out the danger that a dominant emphasis may be placed on the pathological aspect within isolated contexts, with a consequent underestimation of possible positive semantic accents – not only in respect of the personal, but also of the general aspect, as embodied in the workplace, *inter alia*.

In the visiting of the respective scientific fields of practical theology and futures studies, together with accents from the (auto)biographical domain that are reflected in the design, spaces were mapped out in order to accommodate various possibilities.

In the second movement of “transversal rationality”, the emphasis falls on “*engaged articulation*”, in which rationality is directly linked to the act of listening to various discourses, “rendering an account, giving the best possible reasons and ... articulating sense [and] meaning” (Van Huyssteen 1999:137). Up to this point, the sketching of the interdisciplinary dialogue has developed on the basis of the evolutionary meaning and significance of the metaphor of architecture, with the four postulated movements that are respectively referred to as the *terrain*, *path*, *threshold* and *arrival*.

The third movement of “*transversal rationality*” is found in the moment of “(incurive) disclosure”, which can be explained as “a postulate of reference, a claim for reality that brings us out of the ‘closure’ of the isolated subject” (Van Huyssteen 1999:138). The research that is constructed in the design is aimed, precisely, at crossing existing thresholds of meaning and, consequently, at construing new spaces and dimensions of meaning. The new meaning is demonstrated, for example, in the accentuation of a more positive emphasis, which is further developed in chapter 4 in the discussion of the movement of *destination*, in which the concept of a *memory for the future* is mapped out, *inter alia*.

This epistemological and methodological emphasis of “transversal rationality”, as described above, is embodied in an ongoing process, in which a movement of action and reflection on action takes place (Foskett & Lyall

1988:8; Ward 2005:3), in order to facilitate a “thick description ... when various perspectives are entertained” (Demasure & Müller 2006:418). The movement of practice-theory-practice, as an illustration of this process, is not strange or unusual in the context of, *inter alia*, accents in hermeneutical development in practical theology (Browning 1991:34; Gerkin 1986:54; Müller 1996:4-5; Viau 1999:86-89). It is within this movement that “transversal/postfoundationalist rationality” thus

enables us to shuttle in the space between modernity and postmodernity: the space of interpreted experience and communicative praxis which enables praxial critique, articulation, and disclosure (Van Huyssteen 1999:139).

This proposed construction offers vistas within which it becomes possible, “[r]ather than talk about ‘theology and science’ in a generic, abstract sense”, to “focus on the merits of a concrete interdisciplinary problem in terms of specific sciences and specific theological writers and issues” (Stone 2006:1146).

It is thus clear that, on the basis of this work method, an expectation indeed arises that a specific matter or topic may be identified within a particular contextual indication, with which it will be possible to enter into a dialogue arising from the interdisciplinary discourse.

In the last chapter of the research design, the focus will fall, *inter alia*, on how a movement can be effectuated from the proposed interdisciplinary dialogue towards a space offering

a more local or concrete account of the ways particular perspectives and persons intersect one another, overlapping in some ways and diverging in others (Osmer 2006:341).

In order to facilitate a *transition*, it is necessary to reflect on the possible development of a *theologia habitus*, in terms of the central significance of the concept of a “lived religion” for the meaning of religious faith/spirituality in the workplace. In the development of a *theologia habitus*, the ongoing search is embodied in such a way that the design will not merely remain an academic exercise, but will contribute to the establishment of positive and accountable practices relating to one’s faith.

3.3 TRANSITION

The construing and description of the discourse between practical theology and futures studies in search of a visionary social embodiment will subsequently be described, as a *theologia habitus* for the future workplace. The perspectives that have thus far been mapped out in the research design are, in many

respects – both implicitly and explicitly – fundamental to the proposal of a *theologia habitus*.

3.3.i *A theologia habitus?*

In the development of a theology that takes the Scriptures and the tradition seriously, but which is also sensitive to the meaning of the context, it is important to remember that “[t]heology is not a noun; it is a verb” (Hendriks 2004:24). This interpretation of theology does not imply, in the first instance, something that requires theorisation, but rather something that calls for embodiment. The application of such a theology requires a praxis that is actually put into practice or exercised, and which does not simply remain in suspension as a mere theory, but which is embodied in the lives of people (Kellerman 2000:27). In this regard, Groome (1994:224) writes:

A praxis epistemology and approach to doing theology is emerging as what may prove to be a new paradigm in theological method ... The key point here is that theology is primarily something that is done. It is Christian praxis first and then the articulation of the consciousness that arises from this praxis is theology.

In the development of a “*doing theology*”, the changing postmodern situation calls for, on the one hand, a reduced emphasis on the importance of methodology, and on the other, the formulation of guidelines for the accountable and meaningful use of the concerned methodology (Striver 2003:171). The concept of involvement plays an important role in the development of this theology.

The emphasis on involvement not only reflects a theological truth, but also paves the way for a methodological development of a so-called “*doing theology*”. The concept of participation adds a methodological emphasis in terms of which “depth through togetherness” (Pembroke 2002:14) is postulated. Decades ago already, the philosopher Gabriel Marcel helped to explore the richness of the concept, “involvement”, by contrasting it with the notion of an “onlooker” or “spectator” (Marcel 1963:23). In terms of Marcel’s philosophy, the discovery is made that:

What one brings to a genuine encounter is not first and foremost an ensemble of communication techniques but one’s self and, to be more precise, the depth one has to share. The depth in oneself develops through a whole-hearted engagement with others, with life, with God (Pembroke 2002:13).

In the articulation of the meaning of participation or involvement for Christian theology, what is implied, *inter alia*, is that the cross is the image

and visible manifestation of God in the world; but it also comprises a concrete symbolisation of the believer in the world (Verster 2004:220). It is through this participation in the cross in the world that the believer indicates that he/she belongs to Christ; but it also constitutes the foundation of the Christian's involvement with human beings in distress. The challenge thus lies in manifesting this new relationship that has been created through the cross of Christ, in the exercising and actualisation of one's own theological practice. Thus, the realisation of this objective in the methodology and outcomes of theological training is evidently important.

In his article, "Waarheen met de praktische theologie?", Ganzevoort (2007:20) inquires into the nature and future of the subject as a "theory born of crisis", or "crisis discipline", as it is referred to by Heitink and others. Ganzevoort uses this term to highlight the nature of the subject, which reflects on the crisis of the church in modern times, while also confirming the fact that the subject itself plays an important role in the crisis. The designation, "practical theology", indeed contributes to the reflection on the character, nature and meaning of this subject. Thus, for example, Pattison and Woodward (2000:1) point out that "[p]astoral theology is an older term than practical theology".

Further to the above, and in the South African contextual framework, Dreyer (2010:1) recently conducted an inquiry focusing on the destination of practical theologians in South Africa, not only in terms of their own identity, but also with specific reference to the question as to whether practical theologians fulfil a meaningful role in society.

In respect of the crisis, Osmer (2006:327) points out (and I agree, on the basis of the design) that this crisis has arisen from the context of the modern research university which, in terms of the encyclopaedic model of theology, has allocated to practical theology the specific task of

forming 'theories of practice' which [include] 'rules of art' (open-ended guidelines about how to carry out some form of teaching, preaching, or care).

Gradually, however – as already indicated in this design – the paradigm of interpretation began to display particular developments, with the result that accents other than those relating to the praxis of the clergy (clerical paradigm) or the congregational praxis (ecclesiological paradigm) are now included, such as the study of religious praxis in the community, resulting in the establishment of a social paradigm (Dreyer 2007:45). As pointed out, it is precisely with a view to mapping out the domain of the social manifestation of faith in the workplace, that the meaning of practical theology carries special significance. This orientation ties in well with Dreyer's reference to the development of a so-called "public practical theology" which postulates, *inter alia*,

that practical theologians engage with other academic disciplines in order to understand the psychological, social, cultural, economic, legal and political factors at work in religious praxis (Dreyer 2007:46-47).

The concept of *that which is public* is further developed through a reference to the meaning of the concept, “*habitus*”, as the way of life of a human being, as well as the contents of that life. In order to meet the challenge, and on the grounds of the meaning and importance of a more comprehensive and integrated transversal rationality, as already explained above, an architectonic balance may possibly be found in the indicated fact that research in this context, as a form of practical wisdom in which the stories of people and communities are cherished, is doing away with clinical hypotheses, in favour of an approach that is more interested in “firstly understand[ing] the *habitus*, which refers to a kind of practical knowledge within which human social action ... constructs culture – a synthesis of structure and agency” (Müller, Van Deventer & Human 2001:76-96). It is under these conditions that, in collaboration with co-researchers, it becomes possible – within the existing workplace, as well as the future workplace – to proceed with the construction of a new *habitus* which is theologically interpreted in order to

transform a homogeneous interpretation of common humanity and fellow-feeling (in a globalised world) ... into a redistribution of the unique otherness and potential of human beings. This redistribution of the uniqueness of humankind, focusing particularly on issues such as human dignity, identity and the experience of meaning, is then viewed as a new form of spirituality which poses a challenge to practical theology (cf. Louw 1998:19-20).

Further to the above, Astley (2002:54) refers to the meaning of *theologia* as a form of theology which is

not abstracted from its concrete setting, but understood as personal knowledge of God’s ‘direct cognitive vision’. It was a theology concerned with and developing within the believer’s ways of existing in the world before God.

Thus, if the concept of a *theologia habitus* is understood as a unit, it is indeed indicative of

an orientation towards God that involves, and is an expression of, learning how to live before God – and, in this sense, to live theologically (Astley 2002:55).

The emphasis in this particular viewpoint naturally links up with Ganzevoort’s (2006; 2007; 2009b) conception of the phenomenon for which he coined the term “lived religion”, along with a further elaboration and

alternative proposal, namely that of a *theologia habitus*. The assumption that priority should be accorded to the praxis and “de kennis over God die daar ontwikkeld, gevonden, en geleefd wordt” (Ganzevoort 2006:161), however, constantly remains the same. A certain personal and contextual orientation is also articulated in this context, with the emphasis on the meaning of the praxis and the detection of signs of God’s presence, which can be found therein.

Indeed, bearing the focus of the design in mind, the effectiveness of the construction of practical theology can be queried. Could one not ask the critical question as to whether the designation, *practical theology*, does not perhaps contribute, precisely, towards maintaining the distinction that is present in the dated encyclopaedic interpretation of theology? Osmer (2006:328) rightfully points out that

the encyclopedic paradigma of theology has been called into question on many fronts in our postmodern intellectual context. One of the most important questions raised of this paradigma is the way it divides theology into relatively autonomous, specialized disciplines which work in relative isolation from one another and from other fields.

This warning regarding the fragmentation that has resulted from the traditional encyclopaedic model of the practice of theology, was later reiterated by Osmer (2008:234) in more comprehensive terms. In this instance, he elucidated the above-mentioned outdated interpretation on the basis of the architectonic design and functionality of silos:

... each theological discipline is specialized and relatively autonomous, uses the methods of cognate fields, focuses on the production of new knowledge, and relates to ecclesial practice indirectly, leaving this to practical theology. Over time this paradigma gave rise to a “silomentaliteit” in schools of theology. Just as farmers store grain and corn in independent silos, so too each field and department maintained the harvest of its specialized research in its own disciplinary research. The interconnection of the fields of theology and of subdisciplines within these fields became more and more tenuous. While this pattern was an important way of coping with the challenges of the modern research university, it is questionable whether it is adequate to the challenges of our postmodern context (Osmer 2008:234).

This is precisely the type of design that an interdisciplinary dialogue aims to avoid. Cilliers (2009a:629) therefore rightly points out that in the practical theological paradigma of society (*societas*) – which could serve as an integration of the other mentioned practical theological paradigms, and which is directed outward, towards society – there is thus no longer such a marked distinction between practical theology and theology, since both should be aimed at society in a transformative way, providing direction and guidance with regard

to the attribution of meaning. In this regard, Moldenhauer (2002:electronic source) rightfully points out that the phrase, “*Theologia est habitus practicus*”, serves to remind us that theology and life cannot be separated from one another, but that theology indeed also manifests an interest in people’s faith and the actions that arise from it. Precisely for this reason, the character and purpose of theology are practical in nature; and I have proposed, in this design, that the designation “*theologia habitus*” should be used – with a view to, *inter alia*, overcoming the impasse created by the old encyclopaedic theological paradigm. A further embodiment of the meaning of futures studies is also found herein, owing to the fact that new meaning is ascribed to existing contexts.

In the embodiment of the *theologia habitus* for the purposes of the design, a search is implied, *inter alia*, as well as a broadening of pastoral care, moving away from the individual private “counselling model” towards a public systems model (Louw 1998:23). For this very reason, it can be said that a *theologia habitus* that is embodied in the future workplace

should move from the more individualistic and often privatized so-called ‘client-professional’ paradigm towards a more cultured and so-called ‘systems-paradigm’. The human person is embedded within a global network which is determining our understanding of the ‘human soul’ anew (Louw 2000:33).

This presents the opportunity, *inter alia*, to begin mapping out an answer which could serve as a response to Louw’s (2002:339) question:

How should pastoral ministry understand the care of human souls within the demands set by the main role-players in postmodernity – economy, technology and telecommunications?

This answer will be developed more fully in due course, in chapter 4.

This interdisciplinary dialogue in pursuit of relevant meaning is facilitated, in this design, through the continuing and circular movement between practice and theory, in which the voices of co-participants, in particular, play an important role. In this regard, I found it striking that – without being directly questioned on this topic – those groups of participants in this design who had formal qualifications in theology, displayed an intuitive sensitivity to, and an aspiration towards, a relevant spirituality. Ironically enough, in the formulation of both of the relevant questions, a strong future dimension is present, which indeed construes a quest for a so-called “preferred reality”, and which, in itself, in turn presupposes the dialogue between practical theology and futures studies. I will now present the two questions that were posed respectively to Group 1 (persons with a formal academic background in theology who are currently serving in senior management posts in various business organisations) and

Group 3 (former ministers who are currently involved as life coaches within a business environment), followed by a short reflective rubric compiled by myself:

- **Group 1: Does the Church (understood in the broadest sense, and including its Academic component, as represented by Theological Faculties, *inter alia*) have a contribution to make in this regard and, if so, in what way?**

According to all the participants, academic theology – provided that it is dynamic enough – has a contribution to make in the development of perspectives for the workplace, with the focus on the meaning and significance of spirituality. With regard to the Church, some participants expressed their awareness of the fact that the focus would not fall on the minor devotional particularities of separate, individual churches; and some even felt that the Church could not, and should not, direct this process, as postulated in the questions. Participants pointed out that although the institutional church and academic institutions (with provision being made for reflections on a theology of work, as well as programmes in which students of theology are present in the workplace in a practical context) can and should play an important role in equipping and supporting those concerned, the Church is currently not properly geared towards conducting this facilitation itself, in practice, within the precincts of a business organisation. For this reason, there is a need for active reflection, within the current emphasis on missionary theology and ministry, and also for the development of programmes relating to a public theology for church members. One participant pointed out that the two elements that need to be reconciled are that of “believing” (what – and how – do I believe?) and that of “beliving” (how do I live according to what I believe?).

- **Group 3: Are there any suggestions, on the basis of your current practice, which – measured against the accents contained in the foregoing questions – can be regarded as important in the training of theological students?**

The participants pointed out that theology and the institutional church often create taboos through black-and-white thinking, with baneful consequences for the functioning of individuals. This brings about a false dualism between faith and the working world in the mind of the individual. A process-related approach, during which various facets of the truth could work together synergically, should be facilitated by means of training. A lack of emphasis on development causes the church to be perceived, in a one-sided manner, as a hospital, with

the result that the equipment aspect (“gymnasium”) is neglected. For this reason, participants proposed that students should be introduced to different therapeutic models, and that they could then exercise a choice to specialise in life coaching, should they wish to do so. Some of the participants even expressed their willingness to become involved in such a process!

- **Reflection**

*It is clear from the respective perspectives of both Group 1 (professionally qualified theologians who currently occupy senior business management posts) and Group 3 (the so-called life coaching group) that **there is currently a strong aspiration towards the embodiment of “believing” (what – and how – do I believe?) and “beliving” (how do I live according to what I believe?).** There appears to be an intuitive perception that “zombie” structures often do not have the capacity to facilitate the fulfilment of this aspiration, **and that a false dualism has arisen between religious faith and the working world, in the life of the individual.** Accents arising from the foregoing, which warrant attention, include the fact that, in the facilitation of this aspiration, perspectives relating to the distinctive nature of the workplace should be taken into account in a dynamic way; and also the fact that training models should be presented, on the basis of which this facilitation can take place.*

3.3.ii Step 3

It is within the functional context of systemic ways of thinking, with the emphasis on the functioning of narrative epistemology, that the *threshold* of a *theologia habitus* for the future workplace is crossed, at the *centre* of the design. This entry, in turn, offers a transition to the *foreground* of the design, in which a space is mapped out for a particular destination. In order to give expression to the accents of the interdisciplinary dialogue, I will thus proceed, at this point, to place myself within the design of a *theologia habitus*. This orientation is indeed also highlighted in the title of the research design, as the expression of an attempt at creative, but also – in particular – relevant thinking. It is, precisely, in the context of this search that expression is given to the spiritual quest and comments of one of the co-researchers, who pointed out that in order to embody spirituality in the future workplace, “*believing*” (*what – and how – do I believe?*) and “*beliving*” (*how do I live according to what I believe?*) should be clearly defined and delineated, and brought into alignment.