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Mentorship narratives in a local congregation:

a postfoundational practical theological study

by

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submitted in the fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

PHILOSOPHIAE DOCTOR
in
PRACTICAL THEOLOGY
in the
FACULTY OF THEOLOGY
at the
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

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August 2008



DECLARATION

I, Zander van der Westhuizen, declare that MENTORSHIP NARRATIVES IN A LOCAL CONGREGATION – A POSTFOUNDATIONAL PRACTICAL THEOLOGICAL STUDY, is my own work and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

Signature

August 2008



SUMMARY

In this study narratives of mentorship are listened to and described from the local context of the Dutch Reformed Church Lynnwood. These narratives originate from the mentorship programme in the youth ministry of the congregation.

The research approach in this study flows from an epistemology based on narrative theory, social constructionism and a postfoundational approach. It is a practical theological study that aims to come to a greater understanding of these narratives. Based on the epistemology discussed here, I position myself within the framework of a postfoundational practical theology. Within this framework the praxis is the starting point of this research. This is local knowledge, interpreted and described by a community of co-researchers as informed by traditions of interpretation. The in-context experiences are interpreted and thickened through interdisciplinary investigation. This is done through a study of relevant literature as well as interdisciplinary discussion based on the theory of transversal rationality. At the end of this research process, alternative interpretations and suggestions are made that point beyond this local context and contribute to the larger field of mentorship.

The research process in this study is developed from the postfoundational practical theological positioning. Seven movements are used to listen to the narratives of the eight co-researchers participating in this study.

The narratives of the co-researchers lead to the identification of certain themes from their experiences that resonate with themes available to us in literature. The same themes also emerge from the interdisciplinary conversation in this study. These themes are critically discussed and certain questions are raised with regards to mentorship and the way mentorship is understood in different contexts.

The issue of language and how the various fields concerned with mentorship use language is discussed. It is clear from this study that the local context of mentorship in this study differs in certain aspects from other contexts where mentorship is practiced. The difference between coaching and mentorship is investigated and reflected upon.

I argue in the concluding chapter that from this context three basic foundation blocks for mentorship emerge. Firstly, the relationship forms the first basic building block of mentorship. Secondly, growth is the second basic building block and also the aim of mentorship. Although the way growth is understood may vary from context to context, it still forms one of the basic building blocks of mentoring relationships. The third basic building block is the fact that the mentorship relationship is reciprocal.

I suggest an approach to mentorship that emerged from the narratives of the local praxis studied. This approach is based on values. The following values are suggested as necessary in a meaningful mentorship programme or relationship: clarity, context, the ordinary, relationship, listening, adding value, reflection and ethics.

I conclude that mentorship is a landscape with many voices. The values suggested in this study can be used to construct the understanding of mentorship in a specific, local context. This is done with the aim to facilitate a meaningful mentorship programme or relationship.



KEYWORDS

- Mentorship
- Narrative
- Postfoundationalism
- Practical Theology
- Interdisciplinarity
- Spirituality
- Social Constructionism
- Postmodernism
- Co-researchers
- Narrative research
- Value based approach to mentorship
- Coaching
- Youth ministry
- Local congregation

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I hereby thank and acknowledge the following people and organizations for their support and help during this research study:

- Julian Müller for his friendship, wisdom and supervision on this journey.
- The DRC Congregation Lynnwood for allowing me to do this study in their context.
- The co-researchers of the study whom without there would not have been a research story:
 - Hanlie Bezuidenhout
 - Coenraad Bekker
 - Carina Bekker
 - Christa Smit
 - Barry Steenkamp
 - Roeleen Lemmer
 - Jeané Lemmer
 - Valize Scholtz
- All the mentees and mentors in the mentorship program over the past 5 years who indirectly also contributed to this study.
- All the friends and colleagues in the PhD group who contributed to a meaningful learning experience.
- The various scholars who took part in the interdisciplinary conversation and reflection in this study.
- My wife, Maartje who supported me in this research.

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Chapter 1: POSITIONING

1. INTRODUCTION

The landscape of mentorship expands over various fields and contexts. This study focuses on the narratives about mentorship in a local congregation. These narratives will be listened to and described. Other voices will be added to the greater research narrative in this study. In the process we will try to come to a better understanding of mentorship in this particular context.

The focus of this study can be summarised as follows:

- Describing and listening to narratives of mentorship
- from a local and specific context
- through the use of a narrative research approach
- within a postfoundational practical theological positioning

During the next few chapters I will position myself, listen to the narratives, try and come to a better understanding about mentorship and develop suggestions that can make a contribution to other contexts beyond this particular context.

The process of this research expands over almost five years. All of the research wasn't written down or documented. All of it wasn't formal. It wasn't even always meant to be research, but somehow it is all part of the written and unwritten research story that is told in this thesis. As the research story unfolds through the following chapters you will meet the co-researchers and participants in the narratives of mentorship over these years – to them my acknowledgement and thanks. They will be introduced along the way.

Within the positioning that will be described in this chapter it is important to acknowledge my own participation and contribution to this research. For this reason I give a brief personal background in this introduction. I also share how this research came about. More details of my own narrative will be discussed in a later section.

I am a 32-year-old man, living and working in South Africa. I have been a youth minister in the Dutch Reformed Church Lynnwood for the past seven years. I am married. I have a few mentors in my life. I am a practical theologian that works and thinks within a postmodern context.

The story of mentorship in my ministry emerged in 2004 when I developed a training programme for young leaders in Lynnwood's youth ministry. These leaders were involved in teaching Sunday school classes for High School youths and helping in and around the youth ministry. We decided to assign mentors to each leader to assist them and help them with the various tasks they had to perform. This became the basis for a mentorship programme that grew in the various contexts of the youth ministry and the congregation as a whole.

My involvement with the programme as minister and co-developer opened up my interest in this field, which led to the research about the narratives of mentorship, described in this thesis.

Since my involvement in the development of the mentorship programme at Lynnwood I have been on the lookout for similar programmes and narratives of mentorship in a local congregation. I have not found many. The interest in our story has been growing in the last year and many people ask about it. All of this interest and narratives experienced in this programme made me decide to enter into this process of researching some of the narratives in this programme.

In this first chapter I will spend some time positioning myself within three broad headings:

- Epistemology
- Theology
- Research

In the second and third chapter of this document, narratives of mentorship in this local context are listened to and described. Various co-researchers that have volunteered to be part of this research will reflect on their own narratives individually and collectively. Other voices will be added and the process of interpretation and reflection will be described in chapter four. In the final chapters the voice of literature will be listened to and final suggestions and concluding remarks will be made.

I start by positioning myself in terms of epistemology.

2. EPISTEMOLOGY

How do we acquire knowledge? How do we understand knowledge? What is our knowledge about knowledge? How do we interpret knowledge? Who can claim knowledge? These questions all relate to epistemology. In a thesis like this it is very important to be clear on epistemology from the start. Epistemology prefigures methodology and the way claims on knowledge are made.

Understanding how systems work, how various fields, interests and institutions fit together is the aim in the efforts of the epistemological endeavour. This is a dynamic and ongoing process. It is comprehension that keeps us motivated in our search for better and more understanding and knowledge.

Catherine Elgin (1998:26) says the following about epistemology:

Epistemological theories typically share an abstract characterization of their enterprise. They agree, for example, that epistemology is the study of the nature, scope and utility of knowledge.

They (the theories) differ however in what the questions are and in procedures by which knowledge is justified and ascertained. They differ in what is seen as conclusive and they differ in the procedures necessary to reach an outcome.

There are three classifications according to Elgin (1998:27) for epistemological theories:

- Perfect procedural theories want their reasons to be conclusive. These reasons need to be permanently accepted. The procedures in which the knowledge is reached need therefore to be perfect.
- Imperfect procedural theories seek conclusive reason, but acknowledge that these might not be permanently accepted or conclusive.
- Pure procedural theories see reasons as constitutive. The outcome from pure procedural theory is simply the truth within that community because it was the product of a pure procedure.

The epistemology that I position myself in is within this particular classification of theory a pure procedural theory of epistemology. The knowledge is the consensus of a particular community. “When consensus is achieved – when, that is, the community agrees that its objectives have been realized – a result becomes part of the corpus of knowledge” (Elgin 1998:38).

In this section we will focus on certain basic epistemological starting points that will form the basis of the research and methodology in this thesis. We will

discuss four topics here: narrative, social constructionism, context and the move beyond foundationalism.

2.1 Narrative

2.1.1 Narrative, Ricoeur and hermeneutics

It has always been known and often repeated that life has something to do with narrative; we speak of a life story to characterize the interval between birth and death.

Stories are recounted and not lived; life is lived and not recounted.

(Ricoeur 1991:20)

Ricoeur is a world-known scholar and philosopher. He is famous for the three part work *Temps et récit* (Time and narrative). This is been known as one of the most impressive works on the paradoxical nature of time. He grapples with the difficult subject and works through the theories and paradigms of many philosophers on the subject. This work and its relation to narrative are at the basis of the above quotation.

He discusses narrative theory in depth. He started his work firstly on symbols and metaphors: “From the beginning, Ricoeur has been fascinated by the power of words and symbols and by the creative capacity of human beings to make sense of their world” (Joy 1997:xxv) He then moves on to narrative. Ricoeur focuses on two important aspects in his theory: the text and the reader (each in their own world and time). To understand the narrative theory of the text or story, he develops a term called *emplotment* from the theories of Aristotle. He defines the operation of *emplotment* (that which a story consists of) as “a synthesis of heterogeneous elements” (Ricoeur 1991:21).

This synthesis happens between various elements. There are events or incidents that happen and are unified to make one plot in the story. So the plot is a synthesis. Then the plot is also a synthesis from the point of view that it organises heterogeneous components like people, circumstances, encounters, different characters, and so on. When all of these different elements are combined into one story it becomes complete. Ricoeur calls the plot in totality at once concordant and discordant. It is a synthesis of heterogeneous elements but it is at the same time one plot or one story – thus his term *discordant concordance*.

Schrag (1992:94) also speaks about narrative and knowledge. He says: “The multiple and changing discourses, text, beliefs, desires, and institutions that make up the panoply of human experience comprise an interwoven web of interdependencies.”

The story is put together by the synthesis of events and elements that happen as a series of incidents. When Ricoeur is busy explaining and talking about time and the different issues surrounding time in philosophy and knowledge, he refers to it as paradoxical. In a narrative this is also true. The series of events happen one after another in time and are combined in a story. But this story receives, what he calls a certain *configuration*, in a specific temporal aspect. “In this sense, composing a story is, from the temporal point of view, drawing a configuration out of a succession” (Ricoeur 1991:22).

Aristotle said that in every well-told story something is taught. And in any story there are certain universal aspects of the human condition.

A story is a combination of various different elements that happened in a series of events over time, combined in a configuration that is temporal and therefore *discordant concordance*. In this story there is meaning, knowledge and something universal.

Ricoeur would now ask, if stories are recounted and life is lived, how would you bridge this paradoxical gap?

The process of understanding the narrative (hermeneutics) and bringing it “to life” (the process he calls *reconfiguration*) happens when the “world of the text and the world of the reader” intersects (Ricoeur 1991:26). This is one of the most important aspects to understand in hermeneutics. There is a world behind the text and there is a world behind the reader. These worlds are important to understand in order to make the process of reconfiguration possible. Ricoeur borrows the concept of “the fusion of horizons” from Gadamer. He uses this language to describe what happens in the process. The reader is pulled into the horizon of knowledge of the text and the expectations and knowledge of the reader. These horizons are in constant interaction with each other.

Ricoeur argues that a life is nothing more than a biological phenomenon till it is interpreted. Thus stories, when they are interpreted, come to life. Gadamer (1998:193) says that the fundamental dimension of hermeneutics is the dialogue between two people. Words and narratives try to reach another human being. Hermeneutics try to understand and interpret this dialogue.

In the hermeneutic process or spiral (as he sees it), there is one other important concept: the pre-narrative capacity of life (or pre-figuration).

All the different actions in our lives constitute what he calls the semantics of actions. There are various actions such as suffering, behaviour, meaning, et cetera that act pre-narrative. There are also symbols in our lives that form resources of our own interpretations. These symbols inform our narratives. Lastly he calls the last pre-narrative element the pre-narrative quality of human experience. (Ricoeur 1991:29). This is the action in which life itself is always

passionately in search of a narrative. We want to tell stories. We find our lives caught up in stories.

Ricoeur sees the hermeneutical process as a spiral in which there are three basic, re-occurring processes: pre-(con)figuration, configuration and re(con)figuration.

After ending the process of explanation, we again arrive at the – now new – prefiguration. With a new configuration, with a new text, a new refiguration can take place. That is why Ricoeur does not speak of a hermeneutic circle, which would imply that the prefiguration has remained the same after the refiguration has taken place, but of a hermeneutic spiral (Demasure & Müller 2008:4).

This gives us a narrative identity. The fact that we passionately live our lives and recount the narratives of our lives. The narratives, when they are interpreted, bring life. It brings meaning. In the process of hermeneutics we find a way of interpreting the stories that are recounted.

If we apply this approach to this research study it can be seen as follows: The discourses, ideas about mentorship, narratives, my own story, emotions and expectations all form part of the pre-figuration. The narratives of the co-researchers in this context are the configuration. Through the interpretations and development of this configuration they are refigured. We then arrive at a new prefiguration.

2.1.2 Narrative theory from the world of therapy

If you ask anyone how they are and they care to elaborate more than just a simple “good thanks”, they will start telling you a story – a story that may describe their day or their week. This story will contain things that happened, events, time and characters. If they bring all of these elements in their story in

relation to each other, they will attach meaning to it. And this meaning will give you your answer.

This small example from everyday life serves as a metaphor for understanding the basics of narrative epistemology, the understanding that narratives form the basis of human experience and knowledge.

Research is not therapy. We do not aim to do therapy in this study. The narrative approach in the work of some of the narrative therapists helps us to add another voice to the understanding of a narrative epistemology. The work of Freedman and Combs, Epston and White play a part in the development of narrative thought, not only in terms of therapy but also in terms of narrative theory. Before these scholars move to therapy, they discuss narrative theory. This discussion helps us in our narrative positioning in this chapter.

Freedman and Combs (1996) tell their story as therapists and how they came about to understand narratives as the basis of human experience. In their story Michael White played a big role in their understanding of using narratives as metaphor in therapy.

White and Epston (1990) start to explain the birth of narrative theory in the social sciences with the start of the text analogy. The social scientists' observation led to the understanding that people's behaviour is set in a certain time. Meaning is attributed to behaviour but meaning (unlike behaviour) survives across time. The text analogy was applied to this insight. "This enabled the interaction of persons to be considered as the interaction of readers around particular texts." (White & Epston 1990:9).

People came to knowledge through lived experiences. The question remained then how this knowledge was organised and stored. From the text analogy, the social scientists argued that this happened through the process of storying.

People organise meaning through the narratives or stories that are linked to experiences and meaning.

In Freedman and Combs's further studies of the narrative metaphor they were introduced to social constructionism. We will look at social constructionism in depth in a later section, but let us say here that social constructionism is the belief that knowledge, beliefs, truth, values, customs, labels, narratives, et cetera are socially constructed between people or members of a culture or community.

These two metaphors (narrative and social constructionism) are the guiding metaphors for the work of Freedman and Combs.

They discuss the worldviews of Paré (Freedman & Combs 1996:20) as a basis for understanding their own positioning in a narrative/social constructionist worldview. Paré basically says there are three beliefs:

(1) Reality is knowable – its elements and workings can be accurately and replicably discovered, described, and used by human beings; (2) we are prisoners of our perceptions – attempts to describe reality tell us a lot about the person doing the describing, but not much about external reality; and (3) knowledge arises within communities of knowers – the realities we inhabit are those we negotiate with one another.

Freedman and Combs position themselves as narrative/social constructionists in the third worldview where knowledge is constructed/formed/created within a community, culture or society. This is of course a post-modern worldview that we will discuss in a later section. It is however important to understand that for Freedman and Combs (1996:22) there are four ideas associated with a postmodern view of reality or if you want, a postmodern epistemology:

1. Realities are socially constructed.
2. Realities are constituted through language.
3. Realities are organised and maintained through narrative.
4. There are no essential truths.

This is a brief summary of very important concepts within the epistemology that is the basis of my own. We will look at them in more detail in later sections, but the third one is important to us in this section.

Experiences are described through language. This language carries the metaphors, symbols and meaning of our lives and is organised, maintained and formed in the stories we tell and re-tell. We make sense of our lives through stories. The way we find meaning in them and the way they carry knowledge is what makes us human.

At the basis of our epistemology are narratives. Knowledge is carried in stories and knowledge is socially constructed. For this reason we listen to narratives when we do research. The ways in which we listen to narratives and the way in which they are interpreted makes this research process an empirical one. Ricoeur's understanding of narratives and hermeneutics will help us further along on this road of doing narrative research.

I choose to position myself within the narrative metaphor epistemologically, because narratives carry knowledge, meaning, synthesis, elements and pre-narrative configurations. And when they are interpreted (and told), we unlock knowledge and lessons that lie within them. This knowledge is socially constructed and as we will see (in the same way Aristotle said), points beyond the horizons of themselves.

2.2 Social constructionism

In this section I want to examine the important subject of social constructionism. In the previous section I started by looking at narrative epistemology. Within the narrative epistemology it is clear that the way knowledge is understood plays an important role. I started my discussion of this subject by referring to the social construction of knowledge. As this particular understanding of how knowledge is acquired forms the basis of our epistemology in this study, I discuss it here.

Social constructionism is part of the development on various levels in thought within the postmodern context. I choose to discuss social constructionism here, although it strongly relates to the section on postmodernism in terms of the epistemological backdrop it originates from. I start by looking at deconstruction.

2.2.1 Deconstruction

It is difficult to box concepts like social constructionism, language, discourse and deconstruction. They are all related to one another and important for my epistemology and positioning in this chapter.

The very meaning and mission of deconstruction is to show that things – texts, institutions, traditions, societies, beliefs, and practices of whatever size and sort you need – do not have definable meanings and determinable missions, that they are always more than any mission would impose, that they exceed the boundaries they currently occupy. (Caputo 1997:31)

Caputo passionately describes the ideas of Derrida, who is one of the most acclaimed French philosophers writing and thinking about deconstruction. One cannot help but appreciate the way he speaks about deconstructionism and

plays around with it in his book, *Deconstruction in a nutshell*. He personifies it, ironically, telling tales of how Derrida has been misunderstood and how institutions and academics have criticised deconstruction.

The title of the book immediately draws attention. The idea of describing deconstruction in a nutshell is in itself a sign of misunderstanding it. In my own thought deconstruction has always been associated with breaking down ideas and narratives – breaking down the power relations within them and exploiting it. It has always been somehow associated in my thought as a negative process.

When you read Caputo on Derrida it helps you to understand that deconstruction is a positive process in which you open up things. You open up the nutshell. You make it more. You make more nutshells and more nuts. You grow a forest. You crack them open: “One might even say that cracking nutshells is what deconstruction is. In a nutshell” (Caputo 1997:32).

The very idea is to create new possibilities; question; discuss; see what happens. That is why Derrida himself would speak about the “experience of the impossible”. He says if you have to define it – this would be the least bad of all the nutshell definitions.

Within our guide of research and within the context of the previous sections, deconstruction opens up possibilities. It always questions the dominant knowledge. It wants to help you think about the narratives, ideas and discourses hidden in the research. It helps people to open up to different possibilities. It helps you to grow a forest of ideas and new trees.

Although it criticises institutions and established ideas, it is not the sole enemy of tradition or a conservative idea. It is not “anything goes” or relativistic. Caputo makes the gesture that it serves up samplers to be tasted, tried and inviting you

to new possibilities. Thus “keeping on drinking more deeply of the deconstruction well ” (Caputo 1997:35).

Deconstruction is of course a complex theory and not easy to understand. Understanding Derrida himself is a complex journey in itself, not undertaken here. The question is what we learn from the world of social constructionism, deconstruction and the epistemology presented here. Does it help us in our journey towards good research? Does it help us to listen to the narratives about mentorship in a local congregation better?

In dealing with deconstruction I have mentioned the idea that in every discourse or institution there are power relations. Actually, where there are humans there are always power relations at play. The study of power and the critique of institutions come from the works of another French philosopher, Foucault. He is known for his work on power that relates to all spheres of life, sexuality and the normalisation of power.

Power is the thin, inescapable film that covers all human interactions, whether inside institutions or out... Power relations are embedded in the very heart of human relationships, springing into being as soon as there are human beings (Caputo & Yount 1993:4-5).

For Foucault institutions have many forms. There are all sorts of institutions in society and the ‘self’ is itself an institution. Power is in any relationship, any form of interaction and mostly visible when it becomes institutionalised.

Power according to Foucault is intricate (Foucault 1998:388):

It seems to me that power must be understood in the first instance as the multiplicity of force relations immanent in the sphere in which they operate and which constitute their own organization.

Power is inherently connected to knowledge. And for Foucault power is applied knowledge in society, in personal relationships, in economics, in politics and in religion. Power is something we cannot do without. Without power no “truth” would present itself.

Foucault is known especially then for the critique on institutions – questioning and critiquing the institutions. He aims at bringing the conflict to the surface. Where there is power there is always conflict. The critique helps to uncover the power relations in the institutions. It is a form of care.

Learning from Derrida and Foucault we understand that any discourse needs to be deconstructed. “A discourse is a system of statements, practices, and institutional structures that share common knowledge.” (Rachel Hare-Mustin as quoted in Freedman & Combs 1996:42). Knowledge, especially the so-called common knowledge should be deconstructed; the power relations examined, new possibilities explored and narratives ‘opened up’. Foucault is known for his deconstruction of discourses on sex (Foucault 1998). He illustrates how discourses change and is influenced by institutions through the ages. He asks questions about power and power relations in this process. This process seeks to ask questions about those on the wrong end of the inequalities in power. It asks questions about who is in power, who is not in power, who benefits from this discourse, who does not, et cetera. It seeks to care for the marginalised voices, those who have no power and have no voice.

2.2.2 Language

There is no world independent of language. Everything that is can be described differently. There is nothing about “what there is” that demands these particular accounts; we could use our language to construct

alternative worlds in which there is no gravity or cancer, or in which persons and birds are equivalent, and punishment adored. From a constructionist perspective our understanding of the world is a linguistic convention. And this convention is not self-evident (Hermans 2002:xv).

Hermans comments in the extreme on language, but language creates the world we describe in our constructs or narratives. Language is the carrier of metaphor and symbol that constructs the world for us. That is why in narrative therapy we know that changing the way people talk (the language they use), changes their world (or narratives, or even 'selves'). Language is powerful in this way. It constructs. It not only communicates – it carries meaning.

Jean-Francois Lyotard (1998:396) follows Wittgenstein by explaining the complexity of language. Language is like a game that has its own rules and language has various ways of utterances. Language is especially important in a postmodern context because it becomes a sword.

Derrida (1998:356) says that language has always been problematic “but never as much as at present has it invaded, as such, the global horizon of the most diverse researches and the most heterogeneous discourses, divers and heterogeneous in their intention, method and ideology.”

Burr (1995) explains how language was always seen as a tool to express your own experience. In this way language is like a set of useful symbols or expressions that you choose out of to express your experience. You have the experience and then pick from your vocabulary of language to put the experience into words.

In the poststructuralist view the complete opposite is true. In this view a person is constructed through her/his language. The language is there and the person uses it to construct an experience. If there is no language to describe the

experience, in a sense the experience cannot be constructed. “The alternative is that language itself provides us with a way of structuring our experiences of ourselves and the world, and that the concepts we use do not pre-date language but are made possible by it” (Burr 1995:33).

If a word in the language used does not exist, it is not a construct that can be expressed through language. Therefore language and the expression of human experience work together in creating expression.

According to Burr there are two implications of this. Being a person or human being and having certain experiences is not something we are by nature, “but becomes available to us, through language” (Burr 1995:34). And secondly it means that there is a diversity of possibilities of different constructions available to us, as far as language allows it. Thus there is no one ‘self’, because the ‘self’ is expressed through the limitations or the possibilities of language.

This is fundamental to the constructionist view. Language carries the construction of knowledge. And if knowledge is socially constructed, it is done through language.

Ricoeur (1998) says that language provides the key to understanding text or narrative. Language is the medium through which we come to new understandings. Without language, new understandings are not possible.

Language changes, it is temporal and it grows. New language is created in its various diverse forms. And it carries within it meaning that changes.

Another important aspect of language is understanding that it finds its meaning within a relation. It is *per se* a social activity. Language happens between people. And people attach different meanings to words and symbols based on context and culture. To understand language it is important to understand the

world and the culture it comes from, and even to understand what a particular language means to a particular person.

If I use the word 'pain' in a conversation it might refer to a very deep emotional pain. But if someone, who is three years old, uses the word 'pain' it might mean something completely different.

In doing research, the understanding of language and the meaning that language carries is extremely important in the hermeneutical process of describing the narratives. In any methodology within narrative research, the researcher should be clear on questions like: Whose language is used? Do I understand language correctly? What language do I use in the telling of the research story?

2.2.3 What is social constructionism?

Social constructionism has its origin in various approaches and subjects. It has influenced architecture, social sciences and theology. It is of course influenced by philosophy and names like Foucault and Derrida from French philosophy.

Gergen is one of the well-known thinkers on social constructionism. He writes the following about social constructionism:

It is not that social constructionist ideas annihilate self, truth, objectivity, science, and morality. Rather, it is the way in which we have understood and practiced them that is thrown into question. In the end, social constructionism allows us to reconstitute the past in far more promising ways (Gergen 1999:33).

Social constructionism adds a dimension to our epistemology that is not added from other sources. The way or method in which knowledge is created happens in a constructionist way. This happens socially, between communities and cultures. This understanding reminds us of a pure procedural epistemology.

This way of acquiring knowledge cannot be separated then from the world of language. Language and the “game of language” (Wittgenstein’s term) is central to social construction.

When you start reading about social constructionism what would you find? There would be a few basic understandings about social constructionism that social constructionists would agree upon.

1. *Knowledge is socially constructed*

Burr (1995) explains that knowledge is embedded in a specific timeframe, culture and worldview. Knowledge is culturally relative. For ages the world was flat, now the world is round. This knowledge is dependant on the specific understanding of each time. We see the world in a certain way within a certain time, with certain limitations and arrangements of knowledge interpretations.

If our knowledge of the world, our common ways of understanding it, is not derived from the nature of the world as it really is, where does it come from? The social constructionist answer is that people construct it between them. It is through the daily interactions between people in the course of social life that our versions of knowledge become fabricated (Burr 1995:4).

Knowledge is constructed within different cultures, communities and conversations. Knowledge is not validated in terms of data or

predictability based on a certain idea of empirical studies and the validation of it. Which brings us to the next basic understanding of social constructionism.

2. *A critical view on absolute knowledge*

Within social constructionism there would always be a critical view on what is claimed as absolute or universal knowledge. Burr calls this knowledge the “taken-for-granted” knowledge – knowledge that is just accepted without being critiqued or questioned. The knowledge we sometime just accept as being absolute needs to be grappled with, that is the so-called conventional knowledge that is based on objectives studies of nature, the world and people.

“Social constructionism cautions us to be ever suspicious of our assumptions about how the world appears to be” (Burr 1995:3).

3. *Social constructionism opens up the path for the deconstruction of power within discourses*

As we will see in the next section, power relations always lie at the basis of discourses. Burr (1995:48) refers to a discourse as “a set of meanings, metaphors, representations, images, narratives, statements and so on that in some way together produce a particular version of events”. There is a certain discourse about marriage for instance in a particular culture. Marriage is seen as a formal relationship between one man and one woman. In this discourse there are certain power relations. By asking questions about this discourse and deconstructing it, it will reveal to us what the power relations do to certain people.

The understanding of knowledge being socially constructed and not absolute opens up the possibility of deconstruction and the questioning discourses. We will spend more time on deconstruction and discourses later. For now it important to understand this point because it leads to action.

4. *Social constructionism goes together with social action*

Burr opens up this essential element of social constructionism for me. To illustrate I refer to a recent process in the Dutch Reformed Church concerning the dominant discourse on homosexuality. The deconstruction of this discourse started within the ranks of psychology, when homosexuality was removed from the DSM IV classification. This would not have happened if social action did not follow the deconstruction of the discourse and the questioning of the power relations within it. The same started to happen in the Dutch Reformed Church when the discussion on homosexuality was opened by a report to the general synod. When knowledge is questioned, especially that knowledge that within theology is seen as absolute (because it has been interpreted from the Biblical text), it led to a discussion that led to social action being taken within the church.

Discourses always exclude when there is power within them. Some are marginalised through these discourses. This always prompts social action.

To clarify our understanding further about social constructionism, I briefly list four assumptions on which Gergen's work is based (Gergen 1999:47-50):

1. The terms by which we understand our world and our self are neither required not demanded by "what there is".

2. Our modes of description, explanation and/or representation are derived from relationships.
3. As we describe, explain or otherwise represent, so do we fashion our future.
4. Reflection on our forms of understanding is vital to our future well-being.

Social constructionism is the basis of my positioning on epistemology. In this research process we will work from the understanding that knowledge is socially constructed. This means that I don't construct knowledge on my own or validate it within a certain empirical way, but work with co-researchers who tell their narratives. These narratives are interpreted not through a process of an individual, but through a process of social constructionism. We construct our knowledge about the narratives of mentorship in a very specific context.

2.3 Context

I title this section context because the two topics discussed here, presents itself in relation to context. The first in terms of the narratives and the research (as we are guided by describing its relation to research) and the second with regards to being the backdrop of most of the above mentioned subjects and concepts. The discussion will serve as a type of summary for us before we move on to theology.

2.3.1 Discourse

Discourses (in narrative language) are in the terms of Ricoeur pre-configurations. They are 'behind' many of our ideas and thoughts about life, concepts and 'truth'. They are pre-narrative to our experiences and actions. They provide the context, if you will, of the narratives that are told in research. There are discourses about mentorship, religion, mentors, meaning, people,

power and research. There are discourses about anything in life. They are powerful.

We have looked at the definition by Rachel Hare-Mustin in the previous section on social constructionism. Burr (1995:48) also refers to Parker's definition as "a system of statements which constructs an object".

He continues to say:

Each discourse brings different aspects into focus, raises different issues for consideration, and has different implications for what we should do. So discourses, through what is said, written or otherwise represented, serve to construct the phenomena of our world for us, and different discourses construct their things in different ways, each discourse portraying the object as having a very different 'nature' from the next (Burr 1995:49).

Listening to discourses while listening to narratives is an important part of understanding the narratives told in research. Deconstructing and opening up discourses within the social constructionist view helps to interpret narratives and see how power in discourses plays a role. People often speak from these discourses as if the knowledge received from them are absolute and often these 'absolute' discourses imprison their capabilities of opening up new horizons. Discourses are often institutionalised and therefore Foucault examines the power relations within these institutions.

Gergen speaks of discourse as our grand language. This language (or discourse) relates to the understanding of our self, truth and morality. The way it is spoken also relates to our future, our families, friendships and stories.

Informed by a constructionist sensitivity, we are challenged to step out of the realities we have created, and to ask significant questions – what are the repercussions of these ways of talking, who gains, who is hurt, who is silenced, what traditions are sustained, which are undermined. And how do I judge the future we are creating? (Gergen 1999:62).

This links with the questions we discussed under deconstruction and the power relations of Foucault. Being busy with discourses can be emancipative. It can open up and set people free. It can balance power and it can give marginalised voices a chance to be heard.

2.3.2 Postmodernism

Fifteen years ago, when I started off my studies, postmodernism wasn't as well known as it is today. When people speak about postmodernism they will do so in various different contexts and with very different meanings attached to the concept. (This is a good example of how language constructs meaning in various contexts with the same word.) Postmodernism finds itself in a multidisciplinary expanse of a terrain.

In a sense it is also a reflection on postmodernism itself. Postmodernism cannot be defined, because not defining is what postmodernism is about. We can try to describe it or we can list all the different descriptions various authors and scholars from various contexts have said about it. But that would be a thesis on its own. "Anyone attempting to provide a sketch of postmodernism has to contend with a somewhat curious diversity of portraits on display both in the academy and on the wider cultural scene" (Schrag 1992:13). Postmodernism is known in philosophy, art, architecture, sociology, the new epochs of thinking in various disciplines and in a sense develops from modernism. Even the media has caught on to the term and for this reason it is used in many ways.

“Perhaps the most repeated definition of postmodernity is the ‘end of all grand narratives” (Hemming 2005:15). Some speak of the postmodern condition (Lyotard 1998), or the space we find ourselves in. Others see postmodernism as relativism in its extreme form. Some understand postmodernism as anti-modernism but Van Huyssteen (2000a:416) says that “it is not the antithesis of modernism, but rather a continuation of the critical aspect of modernism turned against its own basic assumptions”.

Van Huyssteen (1997a:569-570) explains how postmodernism is understood in the world of science. In modernity empirical facts were grounded in objectivity that was seen as fixed. Postmodern science “finds its best expression in postpositivist, historicist, and even post-Kuhnian philosophy of sciences”. (1997a:570). Postmodernism helps us to be occupied with the hermeneutics of science and to be truly cultural.

In the postmodern condition metanarratives are challenged. The way knowledge is seen is altered and the understanding of modern epistemology changed. (Lyotard 1998).

I will highlight a few important aspects of postmodernism:

1. *There are no absolute truth or knowledge*

In terms of epistemology, modernity is known for its foundational view on truth or knowledge. Knowledge or truth is universal, objective, absolute and can be scientifically verified and validated.

Modernity dawned with the Enlightenment. At the centre of the Enlightenment is the philosopher, René Descartes who laid the foundation of the modern era with his principles formulated on the saying *Cognito ergo sum*. This is the basic understanding that humans can think and are rational by nature. Therefore

knowledge is obtained rationally. By studying the world and nature scientifically we can find this universal knowledge and discern it with the human mind.

Grenz (1996) would summarise the modern mind and the epistemology of modernity as:

- Knowledge is certain
- Knowledge is objective
- Knowledge is inherently good
- Knowledge is accessible to the human mind

“Postmodernism represents a rejection of the Enlightenment project and the foundational assumptions upon which it was built” (Grenz 1996:5).

Out of the age of modernity rose deconstruction and post-structuralism. As discussed language is seen in the opposite way in the postmodern mind where language constructs experience. In the dialogue between text and reader, meaning is interpreted.

Postmodern philosophers applied the theories of the literary deconstructionists to the world as a whole. Just as a text will be read differently by each reader, they said, so reality will be “read” differently by each knowing self that encounters it. This means that there is no one meaning of the world, no transcendent center to reality as a whole (Grenz 1996:6).

Knowledge is not seen as absolute, but as diverse from various understandings and viewpoints.

2. *Knowledge is socially constructed*

The work of Derrida and Foucault helps us then in understanding the postmodern mind and epistemology in which knowledge is socially constructed. This makes knowledge local and also contextual (an important aspect with regards to the research in this thesis).

Knowledge isn't objective, because in a postmodern mind, objectivity does not exist. Subjects engage in dialogue with each other, communities are creating knowledge, interpreting knowledge and constructing truth. There is no objective, universal viewpoint or mindset on knowledge in postmodernism.

“The postmodern worldview operates with a community-based understanding of truth. It affirms that whatever we accept as truth and even the way we envision truth are dependant on the community in which we participate” (Grenz 1996:8).

3. *Knowledge is holistic*

In modernity knowledge is obtained rationally. The ideal man in modernity is a man who has no emotions, but is rationally clear and stable. The way knowledge is understood and obtained is through rational processes and the rationality of the human mind.

In the postmodern mind knowledge is obtained holistically. It doesn't mean that knowledge is always constructed rationally. A person as a whole is involved in the constructing of knowledge in dialogue. Communities and cultures as a whole are involved and participates.

This is the reason why we use narrative as metaphor for the research in this thesis. Narrative as explained is a synthesis of various different elements that come together. It is holistic by nature. Humans are holistic by nature. So is knowledge and truth.

4. *The dangers in postmodernism*

Postmodernism poses lots of questions to a modern mind. It can be dangerous in its extreme forms. It has the potential to be misused or misclassified as being relativistic; a total abandonment of all that modernity has taught us. It can be this in its extreme form.

Postmodernism also poses a threat to theology in various ways – especially a theology that is foundational or structuralist, based on an absolute view of truth and knowledge; a theology that does not allow questions or critique of its texts.

Van Huyssteen states this challenge to theology in the following way as put by Berger: “Do we still have good enough reasons to stay convinced that the Christian message does indeed provide the most adequate interpretation and explanation of our experiences of God and of our world as understood by contemporary science?” (Van Huyssteen 1997a:574).

How do we position ourselves as theologians in terms of this particular scientific context in a way that does not end up being total relativism? Moving beyond foundationalism will assist in answering this question.

2.4 Beyond foundationalism

2.4.1 Postfoundationalism

The Enlightenment gave birth to the epistemology already described under the heading of postmodernism. To understand this more fully we turn to the term “foundationalism”.

Foundationalism is the understanding that all our knowledge and beliefs are built on some basic foundation that is certain. These certainties hold the foundation

for all the other knowledge and beliefs that are built upon them. It is like a brick wall. The basis or foundation needs to be firm, then all the other bricks cemented on top of the foundation will be strong and stable as well.

The foundationalist's initial task, then, becomes that of establishing an epistemological foundation for the construction of the human knowing project by determining, and perhaps even demonstrating, the foundational beliefs or principles on which knowledge rests. Viewed under the foundationalist rubric, therefore, reasoning moves in only one direction – from the bottom up, that is, from basic beliefs or first principles to resultant conclusions (Grenz & Franke 2001:30).

Foundationalism also spilled over into various sciences, also theology. In theology there were debates on what to use as foundation for theological reasoning. There can be two different foundations: human religious experience (liberalism) and the Bible (conservatists).

Today, foundationalism is in retreat. Within the postmodern epistemology the mere concept of foundations and certain knowledge is under constant critique. The ideal of certain basic knowledge in postmodernism is an impossible one.

This has led to the search for a new epistemology and a new way of thinking beyond foundationalism.

Within the search for a nonfoundationalist approach there have been various thinkers who either based their thinking on coherence (where knowledge is related to other knowledge) or pragmatism. Some theologians have followed in the way of the nonfoundationalist philosophers, but the question would remain in "... what sense, or to what extent, can the theological task incorporate a nonfoundationalist epistemology?" (Grenz & Franke 2001:46).

In the extreme form of nonfoundationalism there is a total relativism where there is no room for any further conversation within this thinking. Van Huyssteen (1997b:3) says that "... at the heart of this epistemological brand of nonfoundationalism we often find fideism: and uncritical, almost blind commitment to a basic set of beliefs. In this sense fideism can in some cases ironically turn out to be a foundationalism-in-disguise".

In the midst of this debate Van Huyssteen proposes a "third way". An approach that is beyond foundationalism, but not non-foundational. This approach is called postfoundationalism.

A postfoundational approach wants to make two moves according to Van Huyssteen (1997b). It is contextual by nature and acknowledges the empirical crucial role of interpreted experience. At the same time it wants to point beyond the local community towards an interdisciplinary conversation. Therefore it is called the "third way" beyond the extremes of foundationalism and nonfoundationalism.

By positioning this study in the postfoundational approach, I open up the space for narratives that come from a local context. Unlike foundational notions of universality and ideas about general knowledge, a postfoundational approach listens to interpreted experience from a local situation. It values the local experiences about praxis, God and traditions. It does not stay confined to the local but wants to move beyond the local into the public multidisciplinary realm.

To do this, Van Huyssteen, Schrag and others speak about the development of a rationality that can be shared.

In a response to Jeremy Stone, Van Huyssteen further explains postfoundationalism and an interdisciplinary notion of rationality along the following lines (Van Huyssteen 2000:428-429):

- It acknowledges contextuality and the embeddedness of all our reflection in human culture.
- It is serious about interpreted experience or experiential understanding and the way that tradition shapes this.
- It opens the possibility to explore freely the patterns that might be consonant with the Biblical paradigm.
- It can be seen as a skill that enables us to gather and bind together patterns of our interpreted experience.

The concept of transversality replaces the modern understanding of universality and rationality. I discuss this as part of postfoundationalism in the next section.

2.4.2 Transversal rationality

Due to the emphasis on interdisciplinarity and the dialogue between various disciplines in a postfoundational approach, time has to be spent on the understanding of rationality. Rationality is the basis on which interdisciplinary conversation is made possible.

“Interdisciplinary discourse, then, is the attempt to bring together disciplines or reasoning strategies that may have widely different points of reference, different epistemological foci, and different experiential resources” (Van Huyssteen 2006:9).

Transversality has become known through the thoughts of various other disciplines. In mathematics for instance the concept of transversality is described as “enabling a line to intersect two or more lines or surfaces without achieving coincidence” (Schrag 1992:148). In other sciences similar metaphors are used to describe the idea that there are ways in which various disciplines

(that seem unable to share in conversation) can coincide from their various perspectives.

The use of the concept/metaphor of transversality in all of these approaches exhibits interrelated senses of lying across, extending over, intersecting, meeting and converging without achieving coincidence. By way of complex maneuvers of borrowing and conjugation, metaphorical play and refiguration, the various disciplines make use of these interrelated senses ensconced within transversality (Schrag 1992:149).

Van Huyssteen also uses the concept of transversality to open up the possibility of a shared rationality. Müller (2008) argues that although Van Huyssteen does not specifically use the term social constructionism, the postfoundational approach places itself within the same epistemology. The interdisciplinary conversation made possible by transversal rationality implies the social construction of knowledge.

The key to “transversality” and a “wide reflective equilibrium between science and theology is the shared rationality between us all” (Van Huyssteen 2000b:236). In this approach the way we conduct conversations and engage in mutual interpretations we, as practical theologians, are able to participate on a democratic basis in the conversation about mentorship.

Transversality, therefore, justifies and urges an acknowledgement of multiple patterns of interpretation as one moves across the borders and boundaries of different disciplines (Van Huyssteen 2000b:430).

Transversality provides us with different ways to look at issues or disciplines that is legitimate and is a process that has integrity. It is due to this understanding of shared rationality that a discipline like theology can be public and contribute in a meaningful way to the interdisciplinary discussion.

Transversality and the notion of interdisciplinary conversation will be further explored during this research. The paper of Müller (2008) forms the starting point and foundation for the interdisciplinary discussion that is conducted in this research. This will be discussed in more detail during that part of the research.

In the next section we will turn to discussing theology within this context, within this epistemology and come to a point where I position myself theologically within this study.

3. THEOLOGY

I often find myself thinking about theology in the world of today. If I drive around, I ask myself: “What do people want from theology?” I wonder what people understand theology to be, if theology even has an impact on postmodern people’s lives?

I had an interesting conversation with a woman at a cocktail party a few months ago. She is a marketer for a private marketing firm. She had just finished with a project for a church that had hired her to help them with their branding and corporate identity. For this project she did a bit of research on what people want from the church, how people see the church, et cetera. She said that most people come to church for the purpose of finding some sort of meaning there. They want to grow and expand, be challenged for the week ahead – maybe to do something for others or to be involved in charity. They want to connect and want to add meaning to their lives.

This made me think about the place of theology today. What would the questions be that these people would ask about theology? Maybe they would ask: Are we doing theology in such a way that it contributes meaning? Is the

way we are busy with the *logos* and *theos* bringing meaning to people's lives living in a postmodern context? We do have to inherently believe that what we describe and study is meaningful enough to change, inspire and bring forth love. It has to re-author stories, make the process of re-telling stories differently possible; to open up meaning in stories; to open up living.

3.1 Theology today

Theology is in a time of transition and ferment, partly as a result of the collapse of the categories and paradigms of the modern world as spawned by the Enlightenment (Grenz & Franke 2001:3).

Talking about theology and explaining it is a well-nigh impossible task, As an introduction to this section, discussing practical theology and post-foundationalism (because they are important to my positioning in this study), I would like to make a few remarks on theology in general. As discussed in the previous section we are in the context of a postmodern world. Theology is facing various challenges for this reason. Grenz and Franke comment on this. They argue that theology today is in fragmented state, more so than it ever was. Although theology has always been faced with living up to the challenges of the day and theology has always been "remarkably adaptable in its task of assisting the church in extending and establishing the message of the gospel in a wide variety of contexts" (Grenz & Franke 2001:3), it faces a particular phase in human history at the moment.

In the past it has always been easy to divide theology in two categories: liberal and conservative. But even in theology it is not so easy to do it today, because within each category there is fragmentation. Different scholars would group and describe these two categories differently. Some might say there are two or even three subgroups within the liberal and conservative camps.

Grenz and Franke (2001) divide the liberal camp into two main groups. The so-called “revisionist” thinkers, of which David Tracy is a well-known scholar, and the “post-liberal” designation, associated with George Lindbeck. On the side of the conservative coalition Phillips and Okholm describe three divisions in evangelical theology: on the right are those that follow Carl Henry, in the middle the moderates with which Phillips and Okholm are themselves associated and on the left the “postconservatives”. On the other side in the conservative camp there are the “reformists”.

I am not going into the descriptions of each theological paradigm here, but it is notable that even in theology there is fragmentation, diversity and definitely not one exclusive way of doing theology.

The spectrum of theology according to Grenz and Franke is still busy with the agenda of modernity. They continue to pursue the modernist theological agenda. The question remains how we see and understand theology with a postmodern agenda, helping Christian communities living the gospel in a postmodern context without being alienated from the world we live in?

Grenz and Franke proposes a working definition for theology that resonates with my positioning on many points:

Christian theology is an ongoing, second-order, contextual discipline that engages in critical and constructive reflection on the faith, life, and practices of the Christian community. Its task is the articulation of biblically normed, historically informed, and culturally relevant models of the Christian belief-mosaic for the purpose of assisting the community of Christ’s followers in their vocation to live as the people of God in the particular social-historical context in which they are situated (Grenz & Franke 2001:16).

There are two important aspects to reflect upon: this definition of theology makes it a contextual theology that changes and grows. It doesn't stay the same, it has to evolve and interpret its context. Secondly it is a theology that serves. It serves communities and helps the narratives of the communities to find, explore and facilitate meaning within the context and world that we find ourselves in within a specific time.

I agree with Van Huyssteen that theology needs to be able to participate in interdisciplinary discourse. Theology shouldn't only be contextual in terms of its application, but must also engage the context of our world. This includes engaging other sciences. This is not easy. "Trying to find some kind of meaningful epistemological link between theology and science not only confronts us with problems of interdisciplinary reflection... but also presents us with another acute new problems:...the startling fragmentation effected by what is often called the 'postmodern challenge' " (Van Huyssteen 1998:4).

Theology needs to take up the challenges of the postmodern context. This is a dynamic theology – a theology that is in constant conversation with context and text.

3.2 Practical theology

Because this is a practical theological study it would be of interest to look at practical theology in this context and place this study within a practical theological framework.

The definition and understanding of practical theology has been a highly debated and dynamic subject in the last century. Browning (1991:3) points out that "practical theology has been throughout history one of the most beleaguered and despised of the theological disciplines. With the rebirth of practical philosophies, practical theology was reborn. Every theological discipline seems now to be asking if they are not practical by nature." Heitink

(1993) also explains that the encyclopedia approach to theology brought the differentiation in the subjects since the beginning of the 19th century. This has since then been highly debated. Practical theology had to “find its feet” as an empirical subject.

“Within this ‘encyclopedic’ paradigm of theology, practical theology had the particular task of forming ‘theories of practice’ (Osmer 2006:325). This was related to the idea that practical theology had to provide the ‘encyclopedia’ of theology with theories on how to do preaching, serving, care, et cetera. Some call this the kerugmatik approach to practical theology.

As the definition of practical theology grew, “the primary subject matter of practical theology is some form of Christian praxis in the contemporary world.” (Osmer 2006: 328). This distinguished practical theology from the Biblical sciences in terms of the starting point. In practical theology the starting point is the praxis, in the Biblical sciences it is the text.

This approach was further developed and new understanding helped to open up definitions of practical theology to understand itself as hermeneutical. The work and influence of the social sciences had an impact on the field.

This approach is broad and has up to today developed in many ways. It is not discussed in detail here. We are still, in terms of our positioning of practical theology in this study, a product and development of the hermeneutical approach.

Heitink, Browning, Pieterse and other practical theologians described the field of practical theology as a hermeneutical approach. In order to do this, the object of study needed to be defined. Heitink (1993) understood the direct object of study as faith as it manifested itself through the practices of people. In theology it is then about understanding, explaining and interpreting the acts of faith in the

context of our time. Pieterse (1993:52) understood practical theology as a communicative theory of practice (“*handelinge*”). The communicative acts of the church must be understood within the context it brings the gospel in.

For Heitink, Pieterse and others, the praxis has always been the starting point of practical theology. There is a meaningful interaction between praxis and theory. The views on the way that this interaction works have been understood differently in the past and practical theologians do not all agree on how this interaction works.

Browning (1991:38-42) doesn’t give a specific definition but in his writings on understanding and practical wisdom he argues that we cannot work with only the Barthian understanding that the theory is just applied to the practice, but the hermeneutics of practical wisdom and thinking (and thus practical theology) imply that we move from practice to theory to practice (Gadamer’s theology).

This simply means that in practical theology we are in a constant conversation with the narratives of the Christian faith community and the practical situations in everyday life. We try to understand and bring meaning into the context of our present situation, without forgetting the past narratives, and by creating future narratives.

Elaine Graham (2000:104-117) also refers to practical wisdom in her article and comes to the conclusion that practical theology should be a transforming practice. She writes:

A vision of God embedded in human encounter and renewal animates genuinely disclosive practical wisdom: words made flesh in a community which fosters a generosity to others. Such transformative practice facilitates and encourages the exercise of the qualities of solidarity,

wholeness and reconciliation, practices by which divine disclosure can be effected (Graham 2000:112).

Gerkin (1991:13), writing in the context of pastoral care for individuals and groups concerning addressing the fluid norms and boundaries in society, makes the paradigm shift that practical theology is not only aimed at the ministry practice of the church but also at the presence of the church in society. This idea is further developed into the idea that theology is public and needs to be an interdisciplinary conversational partner.

Alastair Campbell (2000:84) makes a few conclusive points as to the nature of practical theology that I find satisfactory. In summary five important aspects are mentioned:

1. Practical theology is concerned with the study of specific social structures and individual initiatives within which God's continuing work of renewal and restitution becomes manifest. These may be found either inside or outside the life of the church.
2. Practical theology can no longer take the functions of the ordained ministry as normative for its divisions of subject matter and delineation of scope.
3. The relationship between practical theology and other theological disciplines is neither inductive, nor deductive. The relationship is to be seen as a 'lateral' rather than a 'linear' one.
4. Because of the 'situation based' method it employs, practical theology can be expected to be fragmentary and poorly systemised.
5. The findings of practical theology can be expected to be mostly in the form of concrete proposals.

Woodward and Pattison (2000:13–14) says that practical theology is:

- A transformational activity
- Not just concerned with the propositional, the rational, and the logical
- Confessional and honest
- Unsystematic
- Truthful and committed
- Contextual and situationally related
- Socio-politically aware and committed
- Experiential
- Reflectively based
- Interrogative
- Interdisciplinary
- Analytical and constructive
- Dialectical and disciplined
- Skilful and demanding

It is clear that practical theology has developed over many years in various ways. It is also clear that although it stays concerned with the praxis and the hermeneutics it grows in its resources and understandings. It positions itself in the postmodern challenge and context. Recently the emphasis on interdisciplinary and public engagement, also in terms of other sciences have been prevalent. Therefore I turn to a postfoundational approach to practical theology that includes the epistemology outlined in this study so far.

The thinking of Wentzel van Huyssteen and my introduction to postfoundationalism has been a rewarding one. Müller developed a postfoundational approach to practical theology. In the next section I will position myself within this approach.

3.3 Postfoundational practical theology

The work of Wentzel van Huyssteen, as discussed earlier, came to our attention as an academic group through the introduction of postfoundational practical theology by Julian Müller. I think that postfoundational practical theology provides a firm theological background and basis for doing narrative therapy and doing narrative research.

Meeting Van Huyssteen in person and attending discussions led by him has been a high point of my studies. If you have met him and listened to his story and the context he currently works in, you start to understand postfoundationalism and his approach to it better.

These essays in philosophical theology were produced in the context of my own journey, which was also geographical: my family and I, after several increasingly frequent and extensive visits to the United States of America during the eighties, finally made the difficult and challenging move literally halfway around the world from the University of Port Elizabeth in South Africa to Princeton Theological Seminary in Princeton, New Jersey, in January 1992. Evolving out of my commitment to and involvement with Christian theology's precarious interdisciplinary status as it faces the diversity and inevitable pluralism of contemporary postmodern thought in our times, these essays also reflect my deep conviction that only a truly accessible and philosophically credible notion of interdisciplinarity will be able to pave the way for a plausible public theology that wishes to play an important intellectual role in our fragmented culture today (Van Huyssteen 1997b:1).

It is important to understand that the heart and context of Van Huyssteen's approach lies within the belief that all theology should be public theology. His work originates from the context of a fragmented, pluralist postmodern society. Van Huyssteen's work comes from the dialogue between science and theology

and the philosophical epistemology that makes it possible for theology to make a meaningful contribution to the interdisciplinary conversation of our time.

Due to the nature of the action field of this research, in which there is a lot of overlapping with other sciences, the work of Van Huyssteen and the approach of a postfoundational practical theology will help a great deal to position this process and the final research story within the conversation with other sciences.

We have looked at theology, practical theology and postfoundationalism. In this last section I would like to position myself within a postfoundational practical theology approach in this thesis. This approach will also form the basis of my research methodology that will be discussed in the next section.

Müller (2005:2) argues that “practical theology happens whenever and wherever there is a reflection on practise, from the perspective of the experience of the presence of God. This kind of practical theology is sometimes formal and sometimes informal and spontaneous. In the struggle for practical theology to re-position itself within the academic landscape it lost some of its basic forms. The discovery and development of a postfoundational approach to practical theology helps to get back to the original basics of the field,” says Müller.

Müller sums up postfoundational practical theology effectively by saying (Müller 2005:6):

For Practical Theology, in order to reflect in a meaningful way on the experiences of the presence of God, it needs to be...

- Locally contextual
- Socially constructed
- Directed by tradition
- Exploring interdisciplinary meaning
- Pointing beyond the local

This epistemic positioning of a postfoundational practical theology also has methodological implications for the way in which this study is conducted. The seven movements developed by Müller as an approach to do practical theology and research will serve as an approach to methodology in this study. This will be discussed in the next section.

Van Huyssteen (2000:428) argues that all theology should start from the context. Müller (2005:2) says that all practical theology emerges from a space where there is reflection on a specific moment of praxis. Browning (1991) works with practise – theory – practise. This all points to the understanding that practical theology can only be developed from a specific context and a moment of praxis.

A postfoundational practical theology about mentorship in a local congregation can therefore only emerge from the moment of praxis – the mentorship programme in DRC Lynnwood. Within the postfoundational framework the co-researchers and myself will socially construct this theology and research story that develops with subjective integrity. The “received experiences” and “interpreted experiences” (Müller 2005:8) will be interpreted and developed into a final research story. This story will point beyond the local context of DRC Lynnwood’s programme. This will not be claimed in universal or absolute terms, but in terms of meaning and conversation.

4. RESEARCH

I came across one of those books that is short, classical and will remain part of you for a longer period of time than other books do – *Tuesdays with Morrie* (Albom 1997). This book, written by Mitch Albom tells the story of his visits to his old professor, Morrie, at the end of his life while he is terminal with ALS (Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis, or Motor Neuron Disease).

Morrie meant a lot to Mitch while he was still a student. They wanted to keep up contact after Mitch started working but it never happened. Mitch was consumed by his career and before he knew it, it was almost two decades later. Morrie was diagnosed with the disease and decided to use the last period of his life to make a difference. He attracted so much attention in this process that he was featured on a television talk show. Mitch saw this and decided to visit his old professor. This visit led to a number of visits (on a Tuesday) where Mitch ‘studied’ and documented the conversations they had till Morrie’s death. This way his wisdom, the experience of dying and whatever they spoke about could be recorded and used to the benefit of others. It led to this book and it led to what Mitch called his final classes with Morrie, writing his final thesis.

Instead, he would make death his final project, the center point of his days. Since everyone was going to die, he could be of great value, right? He could be research. *A human textbook. Study me in my slow and patient demise. Watch what happen to me. Learn with me* (Albom 1997:10).

This story intrigued me on more than one level as regards my own thesis. On one level the relationship between Morrie and Mitch was a kind of an informal mentorship relationship. I think it serves as a good example of what mentorship means and therefore it can be relevant to our own narratives of mentorship. On another level the process Mitch followed in writing his “thesis” or doing his “research” can serve as a very good metaphor for the kind of research process that I want to use in my own research.

In the next section I will have a look at the theoretical grounding for narrative research. In the following section I will design my own research process based on all the positioning we have done in this first chapter.

4.1 Narrative research

Within the framework of research there are different models of research. These models can basically be divided into qualitative and quantitative research (Neuman 1997:14). There are many methods used to do research within these approaches. These methods depend on the purpose and nature of the research as well as various other considerations.

The basic model of the modernistic approach to research is based on objectivity, universal validity, scientific and statistical verifiability and generalisations. The researcher would research an object or objects. The researcher will not get involved in the research and will only come to factual conclusions that can be used universally or in general. This research has been seen as objective and useful. Neuman (1997:4) explains that “Unfortunately, personal experience can lead you astray... Sometimes people believe what they see or experience rather than what is revealed by careful research designed to avoid such errors.” Being part of the research process as a researcher is seen as unscientific by the modernistic framework of doing research.

What is seen as truly scientific and professional can be described with the following norms of the scientific community (Neuman 1997:8):

1. *Universalism*. Irrespective of who conducts research and regardless of where it was conducted, the research is to be judged only on the basis of scientific merit.
2. *Organised scepticism*. Scientists should not accept new ideas or evidence in a carefree, uncritical manner. Instead, all evidence should be challenged and questioned.
3. *Disinterestedness*. Scientists must be neutral, impartial, receptive, and open to unexpected observations or new ideas.
4. *Communalism*. Scientific knowledge must be shared with others.

5. *Honesty*: This is a general cultural norm, but it is especially strong in scientific research.

Most of the above basic premises can be challenged. The question would be if it were at all possible for a researcher to be truly objective, unbiased and uninvolved with the research that is conducted? Is all research universally applicable? Can you truly stay neutral and impartial?

Müller and Schoeman (2004:3) suggest narrative research as a “respectful and fragile intervention”. Any research is seen as a form of intervention, a way of engaging a certain context and somehow being involved with that context. There are various approaches to how the researcher becomes involved in the context. Müller and Schoeman (2004:7) explain it briefly:

- In quantitative research quantities and numbers are the focus. Human behaviour is described from a perspective that humans are objects (outsider perspective).
- In qualitative research the starting point is the insider perspective. The goal is to describe and understand. Here is a level of involvement.
- In participatory research the involvement level is higher. The researched becomes part of the research process. There is a collaborative approach that aims at social change. The participants do not only participate but are also changed in the process.
- Narrative research identifies in various ways with this approach, but needs to be understood from a social constructionist viewpoint.

This research aims not to abuse (Müller, Van Deventer & Human 2001:77). This means that the researchers do not see the people as merely scientific “objects” that some abuse and misuse only for research purposes. These people become part of the research study and contribute their stories.

In the story of Mitch and Morrie there is a scene where Morrie had agreed to the interview with the television network. Morrie said that before he agreed to the interview he wanted to talk to the talk show host (Koppel) in private:

Inside the office, Morrie motioned for Koppel to sit down. He crossed his hands in his lap and smiled. "Tell me something close to your heart," Morrie began. "My heart?" Koppel studied the old man. "All right," he said cautiously, and he spoke about his children. They were close to his heart, weren't they? "Good," Morrie said. Now tell me something about your faith." Koppel was uncomfortable. "I usually don't talk about such things with people I've only known for a few minutes." "Ted, I'm dying," Morrie said, peering over his glasses. "I don't have a lot of time here." Koppel laughed. All right. Faith. He quoted a passage from Marcus Aurelius, something he felt strongly about. Morrie nodded (Albom 1997:20).

It is not possible to do research within the narrative approach and not get involved. It is not possible to treat people as mere objects of the research without getting to know them, hearing their stories, knowing their names. Morrie only agreed to share his story of dying to the presenter, after he felt comfortable with knowing a bit about who the presenter was. It is the same with research. A researcher cannot be objective in doing narrative research. A researcher will get involved. The integrity of the research lies in this and within the process in which the story is told.

The narrative researcher works within the paradigm of the social-constructionist approach. Therefore this research aims to also ask deconstructive questions about the discourses.

In the social constructionist approach (Freedman & Combs 1996:1–41) it is believed that knowledge is constructed within the small narratives of a group or

community. The research in this study is the knowledge for the DRC Lynnwood Mentorship Programme. The meaning of it lies there. This is what constructs their world and experience. It can be similar to other situations and contexts, but it is not universally applicable in a forced manner. We can learn from their experience.

The researcher works with stories. He/she is part of the research story. Within this approach, objectivity is not acknowledged as the ideal but rather the concept of *subjective integrity*. This means a researcher must have the integrity to be honest about his/her own story and feelings towards the research he/she is doing. In this sense one will always be subjective, but it is important to be open about this.

The research aims to open up space for stories. The focus is not a questionnaire or an individual interview. We want to unpack stories and voice them.

The researcher does not work with objects but with co-researchers who form part of the process to write a research story. This story is the research findings of this group of researchers in their specific situation. Others can learn from this new story, but it is not necessarily applicable to their own situation.

Morrie is not an object being studied by Mitch. Mitch listens and records the conversations they have. Together they are doing research on the experience of a person dying with ALS. Together they conclude their research. They are co-researchers.

The research is not hastily done. It formulates questions rather than giving answers too quickly. Sometimes there won't even be answers. It waits for the story to develop within the process of constructing it socially (Muller, Van Deventer & Human 2001). The research is done from a not-knowing position

(Müller 2003:2). This means that the researcher asks questions that is not forced by the science of research but formed due to the story and the context of the everyday life of the co-researcher.

Narratively speaking, life consists of many stories. Narratives construct each person's life. Each story has a beginning and an ending. Sometimes narratives take a long time to reach the end. A narrative researcher believes in the process of listening and telling narratives. This happens in individual lives, groups and communities. New narratives develop and are constructed in a social environment. We all form part of these processes.

I position myself in this paradigm of research.

As researcher, I want to open up space for stories and facilitate a process of story telling and story developing. In this process we will create new narratives and rewrite past narratives in order to move towards the future. I am not a researcher who will come and record clear facts and scientifically verify their validity and outcome.

I will achieve subjective integrity by using reflection and being honest about my own premises. The co-writers in this collective story will be active in my research and make sure that their stories are written justly and as they have told it. Together we will reflect on the final narrative of this research.

4.2 Design of my research

To assist me in the design of my research, I choose to make use of the process Müller developed from Van Huyssteen's postfoundational theology. He translated these concepts into a research process for practical theology, which has seven movements (Müller 2005:8–9). I will explain my research process within these seven movements in this section.

I have formulated the aim of my research as follows:

1. To listen to the unheard narratives about mentorship in a local congregation.
2. To come to a greater understanding of mentorship in the context of a local congregation.
3. To develop these narratives and to develop a research narrative that points beyond the local congregation.
4. To see how theology is developed from this moment of praxis.
5. To make a meaningful contribution to the field of mentorship as theologian.

4.2.1 A specific context is described

The context/action field/habitus that I will be doing research on

I will be doing research on the narratives arising from the mentorship programme in the Dutch Reformed Congregation Lynnwood. This programme has two legs.

The one leg of the programme is for the guidance of grade 11 students in their confirmation year. It involves all the young people who are in the final phase of the catechism programme and wants to do their public confirmation of faith within the reformed tradition. The almost 80 young people are divided into four confirmation classes that are facilitated by the pastors of the congregation. These grade 11s are between the ages of 17 and 18 and each of them has to select a mentor for themselves, for the period of one year (the terms of their confirmation class in the church).

The other leg of the programme is for young leaders in the youth ministry. This group consists of almost 25 leaders. These leaders have different responsibilities in the youth ministry and they vary in age, starting from 18 years.

The leaders are asked to be part of mentorship programme for the duration of their one year leadership term. Some of the leaders stay leaders in the youth ministry for more than one term. They also select a mentor for themselves.

All mentors are screened and trained. The mentors are a heterogeneous group. They vary in age, background, relationship with the grade 11 young person or leader and come from various congregations.

During the course of the year there are various feedback sessions and time for the mentors and mentees to reflect on the story of their mentoring relationship. I will be focusing on these narratives.

The DRC Lynnwood is a suburban congregation in the eastern part of Pretoria. The congregation consists of almost 4 000 members in total, divided into an Afrikaans and English ministry. The mentorship programme runs in the Afrikaans ministry, within the context of a youth ministry with almost 500 teenagers and students.

My own personal story and knowledge of this context

I am the person who developed this programme over the past four years. In these years I came into contact with various aspects of mentorship through reading and training. The programme itself has also played a role in the knowledge and interest I have for this action field. I have gained knowledge from various sources, which is mostly focused on the business world. Although the age-old tradition of spiritual direction also links with this topic, I have had more experience with coaching and mentoring.

My own personal story with mentorship started with being confronted by the situation of developing leaders in the youth ministry. I did not know how to really do this without spending enough time in personal relationships. Just training

young people in an educational sense was not enough. The need for something more personal arose from the story of working with these young leaders. My interest in this subject grew during this time. We started the mentoring programme with only the leaders. This worked well and we further developed the programme to also include the young people in their confirmation year.

I reflected on my own story with mentoring as the programme grew. This made me aware of the lack of such mentoring relationships in my own life. In a sense there were informal relationships in my life that functioned, but no structured mentoring relationships. Since the programme started, I also started to have a formal relationship with one or two persons who I see as my mentors. This has made me even more positive about the experience.

The relationship between the context and me

I am the full-time minister responsible for youth ministry in the congregation. I have four colleagues in the Afrikaans ministry and one in the English ministry. I have had the responsibility to do youth ministry for more than seven years now and firmly believe that mentorship programmes are the key to building relationships with young people in a big congregation where you cannot know every teenager and student personally.

Due to my position as minister and programme facilitator I am very much involved in the context. I am also involved in mentorship programmes that go beyond this particular action field that I would be doing research on. I also mentor a number of young leaders myself.

It will be important for me to be aware of this relationship to the context as researcher. In the research approach that I have chosen this is possible, but the importance of my own role and subjective integrity (as it was explained in the previous section) cannot be stressed enough.

In the design of the research process I thought a lot about my own role in the programme. During the past few years that the programme has been running, the groups have been aware of my role as a researcher and my field of study. Although I am the programme leader, my role leans more towards the training of mentors. The programme has a ministry leader that has been involved with the programme since the beginning. In my role as researcher, I have decided that I will focus on the ministry leader as an important co-researcher with regards to the story of the programme and the annual groups.

The influence of my positioning on my relationship with the context

The work of Van Huyssteen originates within the USA context of public theology. The emerging of postfoundational practical theology takes place within a world where theology needs to bring a significant contribution to the public realm of science and social issues. If theology is not practical in this sense it has no ground to stand on as being a dynamic and contributing science and art.

This is important for me working within the context/action field of mentorship. Mentorship is an umbrella term that is widely used and defined in various contexts of interpretation at the moment. This immediately implies that this context/action field is very public. The content of this context ranges from coaching (in all its forms) to spiritual direction (within all its traditions).

It has been my experience that most of the content of the mentorship practices in our local environments are mostly influenced by the disciplines emerging from psychology, business sciences, social work and other human sciences. Theology is a very “thin” contributor to this public debate. The contribution I want to make is then important as described in the previous section.

A second argument can be made that the philosophy behind most mentorship programmes is in my opinion mostly modernistic in approach. The positioning of a theological approach that opens up a “third way” as opposed to the dual philosophy of either modernism or post-modernism helps to bring new light to the action field.

Postfoundational practical theology also provides the basis for my research approach and the way that I will be interacting with the context.

My theological paradigm leaves space for mentorship and narratives of mentorship within this context of study to also influence me. It makes me a part of the story and opens up my horizons for the unexpected.

The methodological implications of my positioning

Positioning myself within this paradigm immediately helps me with how I will not be conducting my research. I will not

- approach the mentors and mentees as objects
- make universal derivations from “data”
- be able to leave out my own story out of the research
- be working with a literary study on mentorship and copy this as a starting point
- hand out questionnaires with questions that are not open and do not create space for stories

Methodologically it will therefore be important to keep certain basic values in mind:

I will

- do my research with integrity and always reflect on my own story
- involve my co-researchers as participants

- always be reflective in the whole research process with the co-researchers
- involve other reflection and feedback groups
- always conduct myself in an ethical way with regards to research
- stick to the moment of praxis
- develop the theology and research from the local context

4.2.2 In-context experiences are listened to and described

The co-researchers

I will primarily be listening to the narratives of the mentors and mentees involved in the programme who volunteer to take part in the research project. “Qualitative interviewers listen to people as they describe how they understand the worlds in which they live and work” (Rubin & Rubin 1995:3).

On a secondary level I will also listen to the different stories of the groups of the programme in a less formal way. Every year’s group meets during the course of that year in different ways and reflects on the process of mentoring thus far. The group also shares narratives of the mentoring experiences with each other. Besides the meetings that they have, they also give feedback through different means during the year. This story of the programme over the past few years will help to make a thick description. I will do so with the ministry leader as my co-researcher.

Rubin and Rubin (1995:8) explains this by saying:

To get beyond ordinary listening and hear meanings, you have to focus the discussion to obtain more depth and detail on a narrower range of topics than you would in ordinary conversations. You encourage people to elaborate, provide incidents and clarifications, and discuss events at length. The depth, detail, and richness we seek in interviews is what

Clifford Geertz (1973) has called *thick descriptions*. Thick description, rooted in the interviewees' firsthand experience, forms the material that researchers gather up, synthesize, and analyze as part of hearing the meaning of data.

The primary group (my co-researchers) will be selected on the basis of mentors and mentees (a couple) that volunteer to be part of the research. I have extended an invitation to the whole group in this regard.

I initially thought that I should select these co-researchers within various categories that have surfaced within the programme: categories based on the type of mentor-mentee relationships, like parent-child, friends, different generations, et cetera. But I decided to stick to the volunteers. I did not want to pre-figure certain categories on my own, but wanted to see how the narratives of mentorship developed by themselves. The research design is flexible enough that we can invite new narratives to the research group if necessary.

I did however invite the story of one leader to the programme who had a negative experience with the programme. I thought this is important for the research and within this approach I wanted to make sure that unheard narratives are also told.

I will rather aim to make thick descriptions of fewer narratives. Therefore I will try to limit the narratives to between the narratives of three to five couples.

The methods used to listen to the co-researcher's narratives

To keep record of interviews I will be using audio recordings and verbatim accounts of conversations. In my MA research I used my process notes and gave them back to the co-researchers – this also worked quite well.

I know it won't always be practical to have lengthy interviews that are recorded. For this reason I will also make use of feedback and questions by means of email. I think this will be practical for the co-researcher and will give me a chance to keep them part of the research story development.

Other forms of methods will be the feedback and reflections that the pairs hand in during the year of the programme. These include email reports but sometimes also letters, picture collages or any other form that they choose to describe or tell the story of their relationship.

Concerning the interviews themselves, I turn to the work of Rubin and Rubin (1995). They explain that there are two approaches that a researcher can balance in the process of interviewing. On the one hand there is an unstructured format, where the researcher merely suggests the topic and lets the co-researcher talk about it while asking conversational questions. On the other hand there is the semi-structured (or focused) approach where specific, open questions are formulated about more specific information needed.

I will use both of these approaches. I will start off with the unstructured interviews and move to the more semi-structured interviews (especially when it happens by way of email).

While reading Mishler (1996) and his critique on other interviewing methods, I found resonance in his suggestion that co-researchers can even contribute to the process by formulating their own questions for interviews. He criticises an approach where all the questions have been pre-formulated and there is no room for unstructured conversations.

Ethics and my research

“Research ethics are about how to acquire and disseminate trustworthy information in ways that cause no harm to those being studied” (Rubin & Rubin 1995:93). They continue by pointing out the ethical obligations in research:

- Avoiding deception
- Asking permission
- Being honest about the intended use of the research
- Making sure not to hurt co-researchers in any way
- Warning co-researchers that if something they say might get them in trouble
- Not using any material to your own benefit

I will ask permission from the church council to conduct the research in the congregation. I will follow the ethical guidelines of the university, in which it is stated that permission should be granted by the co-researchers that they want to partake in the research. In this regard I will design an ethical consent form that the co-researchers can sign after I have discussed the contents with them (Appendix A).

I will also establish whether the co-researchers would want to be connected to the research in their own names or if they would prefer to use a pseudonym or stay anonymous.

In the methodology of this research the co-researchers are constantly part of the process. In this way, they will know what I have written and they will know how the research story develops and unfolds. By doing this, they will be able to convey their feelings about information or the way that it is written.

These efforts and processes will also apply to the participation of the ministry leader, who tells the story of the programme. I have made an effort to get the

permission of the groups over the past three years to use the programme for research and to inform them of the research process. They are too many to contact individually, seeing that some of the mentors in the programme have moved away or have moved on. Therefore I cannot give feedback to everyone involved in the programme over the past few years.

I will however keep to the story of the ministry leader on the programme and where I do want to make use of a specific person's story or written feedback, I will get their permission personally.

Methods to remain true to my positioning

The PhD group is a good way to keep me constantly reminded and confronted with the paradigm of theology. The fact that we meet regularly helps to have an opportunity to discuss the process regularly as it progresses and it also helps to have colleagues asking critical questions about the work. All this is a way in which I can reflect on my own theological position.

I also think it is good discipline to constantly refer back to my chapter on positioning and make sure that I am doing what I set out to do. If this has changed during the course of the time, I will at least be reminded to explain why this has changed and how. This will then also help me to show progress and development on the growth and better understanding of my theological positioning.

Moving effectively from “listening to experiences” to “describing the experiences”

In the ABDCE approach of doing research the movement is described as moving from the action and the background to the development (Müller et al 2001). This is almost a movement that happens on various levels during the

whole process. In my previous experiences with this kind of research, the co-researchers helped a lot with “reading” this process. One can easily take too long to get to development and describing, but it can also happen that you move too quickly and miss out on listening properly.

The key is making thick descriptions in the listening part, so that the description and development of the research story comes naturally from these listening experiences.

4.2.3 Interpretations of experiences are made, described and developed in collaboration with “co-researchers”

The balance between my interpretations and those of the co-researchers

It will be possible to communicate effectively with the co-researchers in various ways. I see them often and am in contact with them through electronic correspondence. This means that I will be able to involve them in my interpretations by sending them some of my work and letting them comment or add to it.

In the group sessions each co-researcher will have the opportunity to participate in the interpretations and development of the research story.

Involving my PhD group in the interpretations will also help to balance the interpretations. I will present these from time to time within the group and reflect on that.

Methods to facilitate my co-researchers’ own interpretations of their experiences

In the programme there is a set of questions that each mentor has to answer each quarter and send to the programme leader. These questions are open process questions. These questions will help them with basic feedback.

During the course of the year the mentors and the mentees have to prepare a report on their experiences of the year's programme. These reports are encouraged to be creative. In the past the pairs have reported on their experience by using pictures, letters, collages, et cetera. There are various ways for them to report on their experiences.

The co-researchers that volunteered for this research in the primary group have however finished the formal programme at Lynnwood. Therefore the main method in assisting them with their own interpretations is through a reflective process in conversation with each other.

4.2.4 A description of experiences as it is continually informed by traditions of interpretation

Making decisions on which “traditions of interpretation” need to be studied

It is important to understand firstly what is meant by traditions of interpretations. When Van Huyssteen speaks about traditions of interpretation, he does so within the context of the interdisciplinary conversation. “Given the embeddedness of all our knowledge in tradition(s), it seems clear that if we want to reflect critically on the nature of a specific interdisciplinary problem like human uniqueness in science and theology, we will have to be ready and willing to reflect critically on exactly those traditions that underlie our knowledge” (Van Huyssteen 2006:26).

When we walk into an interdisciplinary situation we have to acknowledge that our own knowledge (for instance as practical theologians) have been influenced by history. In this history there have been understandings of previously

interpreted experiences, theories, contexts, patterns, et cetera. These form the traditions of interpretation.

Together with Müller this understanding of the traditions of interpretation need to be 'translated' into this application of it in narrative research. We have discussed discourses in narratives as systems of various elements that make up our common knowledge.

Both these terms relate to systems and patterns that form our knowledge. This is common knowledge within a specific context. These terms are used in different contexts and differ slightly in scope and other elements, but are not mutually exclusive. In terms of this research traditions of interpretations and discourses will be understood as two terms that essentially mean the same thing in this study.

In this approach the starting point of studying traditions of interpretations are the discourses that come from the narratives and conversations with the co-researchers. This will form the basis of the further study and the co-researchers will in the first instance lead me in our discussions.

The amount of these discourses in this particular topic will be a difficult task to conduct with integrity. The obvious traditions of interpretation in this context are vast in comparison to other topics in the light of the explanation of mentorship as action field in the first section. To list a few:

- Mentorship in the context of the various areas it is used and informed in – each has a different tradition of interpretation. Each of these contexts has its own discourses about mentorship. These range from coaching, therapy, facilitation, learning and spiritual direction.
- Within the influence of modern and postmodern approaches to mentorship there are various traditions of interpretations.

- Within the local church context there are various influences and discourses surrounding mentorship. These include generational issues, male/female discourses, et cetera.
- There is also always a great emphasis on the power play between various discourses as well as the marginalised in narrative practical theology and postfoundational practical theology.

The guiding factor will still have to be the context and moment of praxis.

The influence of the scientific community in my decisions about literature to study

In the PhD group the reflection on the different experiences as they are told and interpreted will possibly bring forth questions and discourses that could become part of the research interpretation and development story. In this way the group can suggest literature or at least literature on the basis of these discourses as they arise.

I will also spend time with persons from other sciences on this topic on individual basis as well as in a group discussion. They might also suggest literature that is related to this topic and can become useful.

Methods I am going to use in order to make an assessment of how the in-context experiences are informed by tradition

Through listening to the in-context experiences and asking questions from a not-knowing position (Müller 2000), I will let the discussion lead us to the traditions or discourses that emerge from the narratives. Reflecting on these with the co-researchers will help to identify these traditions.

Within the various groups where these narratives will be reflected on, the traditions will also come to the foreground.

4.2.5 A reflection on the religious and spiritual aspects, especially on God's presence, as it is understood and experienced in a specific situation

Language and the co-researcher's talk about experiences of God's presence

Language and "linguaging" in narrative theology are very important. They do not always come in the form of words but also in the form of metaphors and imagery. I think any of these types of language that communicate a sense of meaning to persons that is described in such a way that it points to an understanding of God's presence in their lives or in the mentorship experience are "clues" in this regard.

It would also be important to clarify this language in the way that the co-researchers interpret the language themselves. They might even use language that is interpreted by me, as reflections on God's presence while it might not even be.

Facilitating "God-talk" in my interviews

In narrative theology we are taught not to impose "God-talk" in any conversation, but only discuss what is being "put on the table" by the co-researchers themselves. I want to try and stay as close as possible to this value in narrative research. I think the basic approach is to stick to the story, the character and the language that the co-researchers use.

When it comes to the stage where reflection becomes the main focus of the co-researchers' and group's activity, I think I can also reflect on my interpretations and questions about the research story. If there were meaningful themes and narratives of the co-researchers speaking about the presence of God in their experiences, this would be the place where I would speak about it. It might also be appropriate to speak about the lack of such stories. The relationship with the co-researchers will be the guiding factor.

My feelings in regard to my own positive or negative experiences of God's presence

Working within the context of being a researcher in this approach, honestly also reflecting on my own thoughts and feelings to any aspect of the research story, I will have to be honest about my own story and discourses in this regard.

Reflecting on the influence of my own feelings in this regard will be part of the process. If I understand Van Huyssteen correctly, he would also acknowledge that theologians would have to be honest that all rationality and ideas are influenced by our own interpreted experiences. We stand within our own theology and interpretations. He would argue that the key to our own integrity in this regard would be a critical stance on our own position, being able to also rethink our own positioning (Van Huyssteen 2000:419).

To answer the question I can only at this point say that I don't know yet. I will have to take a critical stance on my own feelings and develop and reflect on them as the research process continues.

4.2.6 A description of experience thickened through interdisciplinary investigation

Deciding about which themes to investigate further on an interdisciplinary level

As I have pointed out in the section where I discussed my theological positioning, I think this theme leans towards a wide variety of interdisciplinary investigations. I will not be able to investigate the whole landscape of mentorship within the different fields. The themes that present themselves within the research story will therefore have to be the focus of the investigations.

As part of the reflection process I will establish a reflection team that consists of scholars from different disciplines. I will also have to rely on this group that reflect with me on this to help me with these decisions.

Using relevant material from other disciplines correctly

I will try and have discussions with people within other fields to clarify my understanding of their material as far as possible. This is not always possible – so making sure that you don't only use one source or piece of information from a field will also help to gain a better understanding of the context in which it is used. The reflection group can assist me in this regard.

Balancing non-theological evidence with theology

As I have explained in the positioning, postfoundational practical theology is developed from the context of public theology, engaging with other sciences with integrity.

I think the focus of my research theme will be to develop a theology from the stories and moment of praxis and engage with this theology in discussion with other sciences. Making use of non-theological evidence will be secondary and put within context if I do make use of it.

4.2.7 The development of alternative interpretations that point beyond the local community

Allowing all the interpretations (empirical stories; theological and interdisciplinary literature; my understandings; the interpretations of co-researchers) to develop into alternative understandings

In the narrative approach to research the process of story telling and story development is closely linked. Muller, Van Deventer and Human (2001) use fiction writing by Anne Lamott (1995) as a metaphor for understanding the process of narrative research. In this metaphor stories are told about a specific action, but the process of research also develops stories and reaches an ending in a specific process. In the process of listening to the stories, reflecting on literature and co-reflecting on the process, the new research story is formed. This is done through conversations with co-researchers, the reflection team, the researcher's own reflection and bringing the stories into conversation with each other during the whole process.

This is a process that cannot be forced, but it's almost a natural event when doing narrative research if the researcher stays open to the process and adheres to his/her own subjective integrity throughout the research and the writing down of the research story.

Involving my co-researchers in this stage

The co-researchers are vital in the interpretation of their own narratives. After listening to their narratives, I will be reflecting on them. The one possibility is to send this reflection to the co-researchers and have them comment on it. Another possibility would be to involve them in a conversation about the narratives and

reflect on the narratives with them. There is also the possibility of reflecting on the narratives in the group of co-researchers if they would like to.

It all depends on the practicalities and if it would be possible to do the reflection in this way.

In narrative research it is extremely important to include the co-researchers in as much of the interpreting of the narratives as possible. The idea of the researcher analysing the narratives somewhere on his/her own is foreign in this approach, because it does not comply with the value of subjective integrity and working with the co-researchers, otherwise they won't be co-researchers but merely objects of study.

Reaching conclusions that point beyond the local community, or the specific context

I think that if you always use the stories and your own research story as the starting point of your conclusions in the research you can stay clear of generalisations. Narrative research is never presented as the universal general findings on any topic. It cannot be presented without its context and not be embedded within the local arena of its action.

Good research done in a good narrative way, would for this reason always point beyond the local, because it will tell an authentic research story that will resonate and be meaningful beyond the local.

The research group and the rest of the community involved in my research will also help me in this aspect.

The outline of the rest of this thesis

I have decided to present the research story in this thesis within the following chapters.

Chapters

1. Introduction, theological positioning, epistemological positioning, research positioning and explanation of the topic and research process
2. The story of the mentorship programme
3. The narratives of the co-researchers
4. The research story and conversation between the different narratives, thickened through interdisciplinary consultation
5. The brief overview of mentorship literature
6. Conclusions, pointing beyond the local
7. Reflection on my research

Bibliography

Appendixes

Chapter 2: THE NARRATIVE OF THE MENTORSHIP PROGRAMME

In this chapter we will start by looking at the context and the story of the mentorship programme in the Dutch Reformed Church Lynnwood. This will form the background for listening to the story of the ministry leader of the programme. In this chapter we will aim to tell the story of the programme and listen to it. In the next chapter we will listen to the narratives of the co-researchers.

1. DESCRIBING THE CONTEXT OF THE MENTORSHIP PROGRAMME

1.1 The Dutch Reformed Church Lynnwood

The Dutch Reformed Church Lynnwood is a congregation in the eastern suburb of Lynnwood, Pretoria, South Africa. The congregation has about 3 200 members. The members are mainly people staying in the local community of Lynnwood, but there are also people that attend this congregation that comes from other areas in the city.

The congregation describes itself as follows on its website (www.lynnwoodng.org.za):

Die een, Lynnwood bestaan sedert 1961 en sluit die woongebiede Lynnwood, Lynnwood Glen en Manor in en ongeveer 180 besoekpunte wat buite ons tradisionele grense woon, maar verkies om hier in te skakel. Dit is die Afrikaanse been van die gemeente met 'n goeie getalleverspreiding tussen oud en jonk en verskillende beroepsgroepe. Die gebouekompleks is geleë in Sussexlaan.

Andrew Murray, vroeër die anderstalige gemeente in Pretoria, behartig nou ons multikulturele bediening en die voertaal is Engels. Die gemeente groei wonderlik en dis 'n belewenis om Sondag lidmate uit verskillende kulturele agtergronde saam in die kerk te sien. Die kerkgebou en pastorie is in Whitestraat, Baileys Mucleneuk

As stated, the congregation has an Afrikaans ministry in Sussex Avenue in Lynnwood and an English ministry (called Andrew Murray) in White Street. We will focus in this study on the Afrikaans ministry.

The congregation has various services on a Sunday at the different buildings. Besides two small churches utilising the facilities and the English services at Andrew Murray, the following services are held at the Sussex building:

- Morning service (a more traditional service)
- Family service (in the morning)
- Children's service
- Evening service (aimed more at younger people)

The congregation is quite large and therefore some of the ministers focus on specific groups. The various groups and ministries are mostly linked with the services. The older congregation would be inclined to attend the morning services more than say the evening services. The families would be more inclined to attend the family service than the morning service.

There are three ministers that attend to the congregation based on a geographical approach and grouping. There is a minister for the English ministry and the family ministry. I am currently the minister for the youth ministry and focus most of my time and effort on the young people in high school and students in the congregation. I preach in the evening service most of the time.

The congregation makes an effort to combine various groups in the congregation by holding special worship services aimed at the whole congregation with certain occasions. There is still the element of separation between various groups, ministries and services attended by specific groups of people. This is important for our study of the mentorship programme.

1.2 The youth ministry in DRC Lynnwood

The mentorship programme is specifically initiated from within the youth ministry in the congregation. Therefore I focus on it separately here.

The youth ministry has developed a lot in the congregation since the 1990s. A position was created for a full-time youth minister after a succession of part-time positions in 2001. I was called into this position.

The youth ministry has an office, which is utilised by a part-time youth worker. Other part-time staff includes a worship leader and someone helping with multi-media and marketing.

The youth ministry has a lot of volunteers and leaders that make up the core of the youth ministry and its various ministries. These include Sunday school teachers, outreach, camps, music, mentorship, funds, events, worship services, et cetera. The ministry has an executive committee that forms part of the church council.

It is difficult to pinpoint the exact number of young people in the congregation, because some only attend the services without being registered members. The estimated number of young people up to the age of 19 is 700. About half of that are in the high school section of the ministry and a growing number of students and young adults also form part of the young people in the congregation.

1.3 The young people in the congregation

The young people in the congregation that undergo secondary education attend various high schools. Most of the attend Menlopark High School – a block away from the church building. Others attend public schools, some private schools and some do home schooling.

They are 90% upper class, young white people that live in the eastern parts of the city. These are mostly high-income areas where parents have white-collar jobs. The most of the young people will finish grade 12 and will either go overseas or obtain a tertiary education.

The young people in the congregation that finished their secondary education are mostly students at the University of Pretoria or other tertiary training institutions. They study full-time or part-time. These young people have the same profile and economic background than the high school learners and many have been in the congregation since school and are still involved in the ministry.

We will focus on various discourses about the context in a later chapter, but it is useful to say here that people would generally describe their lives in this context as busy, stressful and on the go. The young people generally would describe their context as one that puts a lot of pressure on them to perform academically and in other areas. They don't have a lot time to themselves, their families or extra activities.

This is a short preliminary description of the context of young people in the congregation.

2. THE BACKGROUND OF THE MENTORSHIP PROGRAMME AND ITS DEVELOPMENT

2.1 The start of the programme

The mentorship programme started on a formal basis in the youth ministry in 2005. This arose from the experience of training the youth ministry's leaders in the previous year. There were a lot of leaders and the ministry needed to find a way of maintaining a close relationship with the leaders during their year of being leaders in the youth ministry.

The first experiment in 2004 was to divide leaders into groups that each had one mentor. There was no formal training for the mentors and no structure as to how to maintain this relationship. The result was that the mentorship relationships gradually faded during the course of the year. There were too many leaders assigned to one mentor and the programme was not structured enough.

After this year we (myself and the leadership executive) decided to formalise the programme and appointed a ministry leader to run this ministry. My role changed and I became involved in the training side of the programme.

2.2 The development of the programme

The programme started by focussing on the leaders in the youth ministry. These leaders were mostly Sunday school teachers and volunteers who organised the various aspects for the ministry like outreach or worship events.

The programme was made compulsory for each leader (there were about 25 leaders). Each leader had to choose his/her own mentor for the duration of their one-year period of leadership in the ministry. These mentors were trained and

guided during the course of the year. There were also meetings for feedback on the process during the year.

After the first year of mentorship in 2005, the programme had generated positive feedback from those involved. This feedback led to the expansion of the programme to include the grade 11 learners that were in their confirmation year at church. This year required from them that the grade 11s attended a weekly group or class with a minister, participated in a camp at the beginning of the year and eventually to meet all the requirements to participate in the confirmation ceremony, where young people could confess their faith at a service of the congregation.

In the past the requirements for confirmation included a conversation with a church council member at the end of the year. This church council member would then recommend to the church that this young person is ready to be confirmed.

The general feeling grew that this process was inadequate. In the first instance a stranger (in most of the cases) who had no prior relationship with this young person, had to conduct one conversation with the grade 11 learner. This was difficult for both parties. In the second place we sensed the need for a young person to also have a relationship with an individual during the course of the confirmation year. The classes they attended (of which the congregation has five, are attended by an average of 70 young people per annum) were in a group form. This was a positive experience for most of the young people, but it still left the gap of individual relationships.

The positive feedback of the mentorship programme, arising from the leadership group, led to the expansion of the programme to include the confirmees. The programme has basically been implemented in the same way since 2006.

The mentorship programme thus developed into having two legs: the leaders of the youth ministry and the confirmees in grade 11.

The programme initially included about 100 young people per annum, together with their respective mentors.

The programme has developed in various ways since 2005. There was growth in the way the mentors were trained, chosen, et cetera. There were also valuable lessons learned through the years that helped to improve the contents of the programme.

2.3 The contents of the programme

My involvement with the programme had more to do with the contents and training of the mentors. The ministry leader focussed on the narratives, feedback and support of the mentors themselves.

The contents of the programme have always been set within an open, narrative approach to mentorship as opposed to the more modernistic “10 steps” of mentorship approaches. This is due to my own academic positioning on the one hand, but also due to the way mentors would comment on their experiences and what worked well for them through the various years.

The contents of the programme in 2005 also differ from the programme presented in 2008. The contents will also not be same in the future, as it develops with the programme and is constantly informed by the narratives of the mentors and mentees. The context also changes and therefore we adapt the training and the contents to correspond with it.

We will discuss mentorship and the way mentorship is understood extensively in later chapters. We will also look at relevant literature and the various ways that

mentorship is understood in various contexts. I do however deem it necessary to make a few comments on mentorship here as it is understood within the programme. This will help the reader to understand the way mentorship is locally interpreted in the narratives from the programme.

The programme defines mentorship as follows:

Mentorship in DRC Lynnwood is a year long, semi-structured process in which a mentor provides conversation along the journey of a mentee. The mentor was chosen by the mentee on the grounds of a potential trust relationship wherein reciprocal learning, guiding, the forming of meaning and the sharing of stories can take place. The mentorship takes place within the different contexts and guidelines of the program of the congregation. (DRC Lynnwood, Course material 2007) (Translated, Appendix C)

The following is clear from this definition:

- The mentorship takes place over the period of a year.
- It is not fully structured.
- The mentees choose their own mentors.
- The aim is guidance, mutual learning and the sharing of stories.
- There are more than one leg or context in the programme.

Mentorship in this context is mostly focused on young people who have the experience of mentorship for the first time. Some of the mentors also volunteer to participate in the programme without any previous experience. This context differs from other contexts, like for instance a company or a training institution.

We are not focussing in this study on the contents of the programme or training methods. As part of the background and to better describe the context of the

programme, I do however include excerpts of two documents here. The complete documents are included as appendixes.

The first document that helps to sketch the background of the programme in its 2008 form is the letter that explains the programme to the potential mentees and mentors. There are variations of this document (for the leadership group and the confirmation group), but it basically has the same contents. This is an excerpt of the letter for the confirmation group. The complete letter is inserted as Appendix B.

Ons het in Lynnwood nou al 'n hele paar tree gevorder in ons prosesse om jong leiers op te lei en te bemagtig as dissipel-makers in die Here se gemeente, Lynnwood. In ons eie ondervinding die afgelope paar jaar, asook die tendense in die ontwikkeling rondom jeugleierskap in die wêreld, is die waarde van mentorskap as 'n sleutel proses in hierdie ontwikkeling geïdentifiseer.

Die proses vanaf 2005 het in 2007 op die punt gekom dat ons die mentorskap program verbreed het om ook die graad 11's wat belydenis wil aflê in te sluit. Dit beteken dat elke jongmens wat belydenis wil aflê in 2009 nou reeds by hierdie program sal moet inskakel. In ons ondervinding is so 'n mentorskap verhouding net sinvol indien dit oor die minimum van 'n jaar loop. Die klem in hierdie mentorskap periode van 'n graad 11 sal veral lê by geestelike leiding en ondersteuning op die pad na sy/haar belydenis van geloof.

Daarom verwag ons dat elke graad 11 wat in 2009 wil belydenis aflê 'n mentor sal identifiseer wat saam met hom/haar vir 'n jaar lank 'n pad kan stap van begeleiding.

Die inhoud van Mentorskap

“Mentorskap” is natuurlik vandag ‘n redelik gelaaide term. Die konsep word soms vertaal met “coaching” en in die kerk funksioneer dit dikwels ook in die tradisie van “spiritual guidance”. Die inhoud wat hieraan verleen word kom dikwels uit die besigheidswêreld waar mentorskap ook al hoe meer gebruik word om individuele persone op te lei en te begelei om hulle bepaalde werk/taak/vaardigheid beter te verrig. Hierdie insette is belangrik, maar ons moet in die kerk waak daarteen om sommer net hierdie verstaan te kopiëer in ons denkwyses oor die onderwerp.

Daar is ook in die kerk konteks baie programme rondom mentorskap. Baie Amerikaanse skrywers publiseer boeke oor die onderwerp. Ek heg ook van hierdie inligting aan as agtergrond oor die onderwerp. Die probleem is dat hierdie programme dikwels werk met die “10 goue stappe” of die “19 wette” van mentorskap. Persoonlik hou ek nie van hierdie benadering nie, aangesien ons in ‘n nuwe, post-moderne konteks al baie lesse geleer het rondom regiede programme in die kerk. Maar die inligting is goeie agtergrond en help ‘n mens om jou eie verstaan van mentorskap te vorm.

Mentorskap in Lynnwood

Die benadering wat ek dus graag wil volg in Lynnwood is ‘n meer oop en ongeforsende benadering, maar nie een wat ongestruktureerd funksioneer nie. Dit beteken prakties dat ons nie gesprekke so struktureer dat daar ‘n spesifieke agenda en program vir elke gesprek tussen ‘n mentor en ‘n leier is nie. Dit beteken ook nie dat daar geen kontrole of struktuur is waarbinne hierdie begeleiding plaasvind nie. Ons het in die program al geleer dat as ons nie bietjie rigting gee aan hierdie proses nie, dat dit na ‘n ruk wegraak in ons besige skedules.



Ek dink graag verhalend en metafories. So as ons sou saamdink oor hoe mentorskap neerslag vind in Lynnwood dan sal die volgende paar metafore dalk die proses beskryf:

- John Maxwell praat van 'n mentor as 'n **“enlarger”**. Dit is iemand wat met ander woorde 'n persoon help om sy/haar volle potensiaal te bereik as mens.
- John Maxwell praat ook van 'n mentor as iemand wat optree soos 'n **navigator**. 'n Navigator is dus iemand wat nie self bestuur nie, maar die een wat bestuur by staan en help. Dit veronderstel dus dat 'n mentor kan navigeer.
- Die ander mooi beeld is dié van 'n **reisgenoot**. Die graad 11 stap sy/haar eie pad. Maar om hierdie pad te stap het sy/hy iemand nodig wat vir 'n tyd lank geselskap verleen langs hierdie pad. Iemand wat die pad ken en miskien kan dien as 'n gids, 'n vriend of net iemand wat ondersteun en luister.

Binne hierdie paar metafore word die rol van 'n mentor goed beskryf. Weet ook dat die graad 11 nie noodwendig die enigste een is wat uit hierdie verhouding kan groei en leer nie – waarskynlik sal die mentor ook baie leer by die graad 11.

Wie kan 'n mentor wees?

Verskieslik moet 'n mentor iemand wees wat kan optree as 'n “enlarger”, navigator en 'n reisgenoot. Die persoon moet dus iemand wees wat al 'n entjie pad gestap het, volwasse is in sy/haar verhouding met die Here en voel hy/sy kan die graad 11 bystaan. Die mentor moet ook iemand wees wat 'n verhouding met die Here **uitleef** en bereid is om 'n graad 11 te ondersteun nie net deur gesprekke nie, maar ook deur gebed.



Ons sou dus aanbeveel dat veral die graad 11's iemand moet vra wat ouer is om hulle mentor te wees. Die belangrike is wel dat die graad 11 gemaklik moet wees met die persoon en bereid sal wees om saam met die persoon 'n pad te stap. In ons leer uit die program die afgelope paar jaar beveel ons aan dat jongmense wat nog in die huis bly, twee keer dink voor hulle 'n ouer vra as mentor. Ouers tree reeds op as mentors en ouers vertel dat dit moeilik vir hulle is om rolle te onderskei by die huis.

Dit gebeur ook dat jongmense nie betyds by die mentorskap program inskakel nie, en dan ma of pa vra as 'n vinnige uitweg twv belydenisaflegging. Maar daar is verhale waar ouer/kinder mentor verhoudings positief gewerk het.

'n Paar gedagtes dan oor wie kan mentors wees:

- Baie jongmense kies 'n ander familielid soos 'n ouer broer of suster, tannie of oom.
- Party jongmense kies onderwysers, predikante of ander persone wat 'n rol in hulle lewe speel.
- Jongmense kan selfs studente of vriende kies, maar nie van die teenoorgestelde geslag nie. Ons vind dit help in die geval van jonger persone om eerder iemand van dieselfde geslag te kies.

Hoe kies 'n graad 11 'n mentor?

Elke graad 11 kan dus self hulle eie mentor kies. Ons het gevoel dat as ons sekere persone af forseer op jongmense om hulle mentors te wees, dan moedig dit nie noodwendig 'n oop verhouding aan nie.

In die volgende paar weke tot die **2de Maart 2008** het graad 11's dus kans om mooi te dink en te gesels oor wie hulle mentor kan wees. Die betrokke predikant

in wie se groep die graad 11, moet die mentor-keuse goedkeur. As die predikant gelukkig is oor die jongmens se keuse word die mentor deel van ons program.

Indien 'n graad 11 wel sukkel hiermee en nie weet wie hy/sy graag sou wou vra nie, dan kan hulle kom gesels en ek sal help om 'n geskikte persoon te kies.

The second document excerpt that I include here is the table of contents from the training manual of the programme. The whole manual is included as Appendix C.

INHOUDSOPGAWE

DEEL 1	AGTERGOND
DEEL 2	WAT IS MENTORSKAP?
DEEL 3	ONS BASIESE VERTREKPUNTE
DEEL 4	JY IS GEKIES!
DEEL 5	EIENSKAPPE VAN 'N GOEIE MENTOR
DEEL 6	MULTIMODEL MENTORSKAP
DEEL 7	HOE HANTEER EK 'N GESPREK?
DEEL 8	INHOUD VAN GESPREKKE?
DEEL 9	WAT HET ONS GELEER IN DIE VERLEDE?
DEEL 10	WAT VERWAG LYNNWOOD VAN DIE MENTORS?

The contents has also been informed by the narratives of the programme during the few years that it has been implemented. In listening to the narratives of the ministry leader and the co-researchers we will also hear the reflections on the contents of the programme and the various ways the programme has developed

up to the present. We will also be critical of the programme and try and come to a better understanding of the unheard narratives.

2.4 The context of confirmation in the Dutch Reformed Church

Although the programme has more than one leg, the strongest leg of the programme with the most participants, is the confirmation year leg. Most of the co-researchers come from this leg of the programme and many of the narratives referred to within Hanlie's narrative relate to this part of the programme. Therefore I choose to make a few background comments on the practice of confirmation in the Dutch Reformed Church to assist the reader in understanding the context better.

Within reformed theology a child is taken to be baptised by the parents of the child when he or she is small. During the baptism the parents promise to teach and model the love of God to this child as he or she grows up. During this time each young person can come to their own understanding of God's love and redemption for them and choose to publically declare their faith and their wish to become part of a congregation of their own accord. Within the reformed tradition and the South African context this is done at a confirmation ceremony in a church service, usually at the end of grade eleven (or at seventeen years of age).

During childhood, children attend Sunday school at church. Here they learn more about faith and the Bible. In the final year of Sunday school (during grade eleven) young people usually attend confirmation classes before the confirmation ceremony. A minister usually conducts these classes. The classes aim at helping young people in this final year to become confirmed members of a congregation.

At the end of such a year, the church council conducts interviews with the confirmees to determine if they are ready to be confirmed.

The mentorship programme of Lynnwood takes place partly within this period in which the young people attend confirmation class. The mentors replace the interviews of the church council with the development of a year long relationship.

3. THE NARRATIVE OF HANLIE BEZUIDENHOUT

Hanlie Bezuidenhout is a mother of two sons and is married to Andre. She is currently in her fifties and lives in Lynnwood, Pretoria. Hanlie has been involved in the congregation for many years and has specifically been involved in the youth ministry. Since 2005, Hanlie has been the ministry leader of the mentorship programme. She has a background in psychology and education, but is currently working as a personal assistant to the owner of a project management company working in construction.

3.1 Deciding to listen to the narrative of the ministry leader

I was very aware of the fact that I have been part of the programme and its history from the beginning. I had to be very clear on my position as the pastor of the programme on the one hand and a researcher on the other. Within the research approach that I chose it is possible to do research with integrity by describing one's own position as researcher clearly and making decisions that would enhance the integrity of the research and my own position.

For this reason I chose to listen specifically to Hanlie's narrative as the narrative of the programme. The programme has been running for a few years and Hanlie

has been closely involved with the programme and specifically with the narratives from the mentors and mentees from the start. I focus on the training.

The programme has had many participants since its inception and it is an impossible task to include all of these narratives. The groups of the past three years have been aware of the research and have given permission for me to use the group discussions of the past three years in the research. They understand that Hanlie plays an integral part in the process and we agreed that specific narratives (where necessary) would require individual consent if used.

We do not claim however that Hanlie's narrative is the narrative of the programme or the group in a universal sense. Within our positioning in this study, Hanlie's narrative is her own. It is told with subjective integrity, in the same way as my own research narrative. But it doesn't claim to be universal in the sense that it includes the universal or common narrative of the group. It will however be naïve not to acknowledge the group as the informants of Hanlie's narrative over the past years.

Hanlie is therefore seen as one of the co-researchers in this study. We will listen to her story as the first step in hearing the narratives of mentorship from this context.

3.2 Deciding to listen to the narrative of the programme

I deem it necessary to make a few comments on the decision to tell the narrative of the programme by means of listening to Hanlie.

As I explained in the first chapter, Ricoeur speaks about narratives as *discordant concordance*. There are various elements that form the synthesis of the narrative or the plot. They are all related and at once separate.

The narrative of the programme is in “*discordant concordance*” with the narratives of the co-researchers. In the third chapter I will tell the narratives of the four pairs of co-researchers. These are very specific narratives. I thought it important in some way to also tell the narratives arising from the programme over the past few years. The aim is to make a thick description of the narratives of mentorship in Lynnwood. I think the narrative of the programme would help to reach this aim.

The narratives come to the reader in two circles: the broader circle of the programme, through the narrative of Hanlie; and the narrower circle with the narratives of the co-researchers in the third chapter.

3.3 How did I listen to Hanlie’s narrative?

There were three ways in which I listened to the narrative of Hanlie. The first was informal conversations where we discussed the narratives and themes from the programme. There were numerous of these throughout the period of the research. I made use of my own notes in this regard.

The second way was in the form of two formal interviews, which I conducted with Hanlie. One of these interviews was audio recorded and transcribed. For the other I used process notes.

Thirdly, I sent the transcribed interview back to Hanlie and asked her to comment on it herself. I also sent some of my reflections on her narrative back to her as a way of including her in the interpretation of the narrative and keeping her informed as my co-researcher.

Hanlie also took part in the group reflection on the narratives of all the co-researchers and was part of the conclusions as a whole. This is described in chapter 4.

3.4 Excerpts from an interview with Hanlie

I decided to insert excerpts from the transcribed interview with Hanlie here as a starting point. This way we can listen to her narrative in her own words. It is clear that there have been conversations prior to this interview and themes that have come out of the programme, is referred to again.

17	Z ¹	Do you think the program, has generated more stories since the beginning? When parents phone, are there more or different stories as opposed to three years ago? Are there more stories or less?
18	H ²	It is the same stories, but there are more. There is more involvement, maybe because we are better organized. Or we approach it differently. Initially we started and let go. Now we know that we have learned a lot of things in the process and therefore we also send out different information. In other words, questions come back. There always have been questions and involvement, but I think at this stage the people realize the seriousness of the subject and they have more info to work with.
23	Z	If you can say from your side – one of the themes from the program is a lot of structure vs. no structure in terms of the program. What is your experience with this?
24	H	I am more from the old school. You think more - no structure. I don't think it works. I think the people want a bit of structure. So I think there needs to be structure, but not too rigid. And then every person can adjust it, so that it fits his/her personality, circumstances and situation. They need the structure to fall back on. From the feedback I see they ask for more structure.
25	Z	What do they mean with structure?

¹ Z - Zander

² H - Hanlie

26	H	They want more themes for conversations. They ask for example at least six. There was one guy who asked for six. I feel that some of the mentors are not creative enough to take a book or a theme or story. It must just be something that gets them going. It doesn't have to be the whole thing photocopied. It can be a magazine article. It's almost enough. It gives an idea. Then they can find a magazine article themselves. They want ideas. So maybe we must give them more ideas and photocopy a few things. Simple things like watching a movie, or any other ideas. That is the one thing. The other thing is, they struggle to give the feedback, but they say if they had to give more feedback, they will be forced to see the child more. So if they almost had to give feedback every month or two months, then you must see the child. Two months cannot pass without seeing the child. So it's the ideas, the feedback and the meetings.
27	Z	What do you think are the things that make the mentorship relationship work or not?
28	H	I think personally if you make time, it will work. If there are problems or issues you will be able to sort them out with time.
29	Z	Do you hear the "time thing" a lot?
30	H	Yes, you will be able to build the relationship within time. In other words, if the relationship is right time-wise, all the other stuff will be easy. But if you only see the child once every three months, then it's almost again a church council situation. Here you see the uncle, and then you have to pour out your heart with stories of the past three months. It's better than nothing, but on the one hand (we are sometimes negative about the children choosing parents) this is why they choose parents, because they see each other a lot more informally. It is not planned.
31	Z	What do you think is the common idea about time in our context, with children?
32	H	There is little time, and the children are very busy, but I think the

		<p>children...I don't know. I always feel you can make time for something that is important, but I don't know if the children always realize how important it is. If they wanted to make time for it, they will fit it in at weird times. And I think that most of the mentors are available to adjust to the the children. A child lives a bit in compartments. You are now at school and now you are too busy to think about anything else. Its holiday and it is rugby tour...now it's just the tour. While there are opportunities in between. But the children must somehow be led to understand this. One thing, I think we can change, is we leave the children alone too much. We must have feedback from the children. At least twice a year they must give feedback to someone, so that the whole responsibility is not only with the mentor. The children must realize that they must make it easier for the mentor. They must understand the value of it.</p>
33	Z	There are stories of mentors that did create time in creative ways?
34	H	<p>It is stuff like when they do not get around to see the children; they are forced to think of alternative means to get to the children. They sms. There is for example a mentor who sends an sms to the child every morning. This meant a lot to the child. Because in that sms the mentor sometimes only says how it goes with him as the mentor and the child knows at least this. I know of one time the mentor was overseas, and he did not send an sms while he was on the plane. And the child worried about it the whole day. Because it was something he was used to. It was something nice they told us about in the feedback. It was an easy thing for the mentor to do. And then there is stuff like the mentor who went running with the child, because the child was an athlete. And the mentor decided to go running with the mentee. I think initially the child probably didn't like it, but with time it worked. Mentors also realized that you don't always have to speak, you can just do something. You can also go to the movies. One mentor wrote that he couldn't see the child much, and he had to go somewhere for the day</p>

		and asked the child to drive with him . And the child did. This was a precious day. It wasn't a 'mentor appointment', it was just a drive together, and they chatted along the way.
35	Z	What did you learn about stuff like roles: parents/no parents, brothers/sisters, all the choices the children make about who are their mentors? Some are family, some not etc.
36	H	It depends from person to person. Something that is interesting to me is, and we don't say much about it during training, is brothers and sisters. I think some of the children choose brothers and sisters because it is the easiest. There are brothers and sisters that do absolutely nothing. I don't think they understand the seriousness of the subject. Or they think they are there in any case . I don't know if it is maybe because they are a bit young and do not really understand what it is about, and do not realize I can actually make a big difference in my brother's life. But then there are brothers and sisters, which work fantastically. Where the brother or sister realizes, I've got a job and I am going to do it well. It is not a general thing. The parents work because we tell them it is not going to work. Then they are motivated to show that it will work. Some of the parents are different. There was one dad who came to the first session of the training and decided, no. And in the next session he brought his replacement. He said he realized that there could be more value added to his child's life with someone else as a mentor. This is a father who thinks, he realized (not that he was going to be a bad mentor for the child) but that he will be a mentor in any case to the child. But he wants to add another dimension for the child, and therefore he brought a replacement
37	Z	So what will be the stories behind the program's opinion that says: "be careful for parents"?
38	H	Mainly, because the children are the age that they are and the children don't make decision on their own, but with the parents. So the parents have too much of an input in the child's life. So maybe when they are

		older and the parent gives advice it will be different. But because they are at school, the parents are too involved and involved with the everyday emotions.
39	Z	Does it work differently with the students in the program?
40	H	I think so. The parents have the benefit of time. They are with the children more. With the students they aren't always in the home anymore. So there is a bit of distance. The parents know the children better, but maybe too well. There are some things the child doesn't want to tell the parents. Otherwise it stays an issue in the house. If I told my mom everything that happened at school, the mom won't listen and leave it. It will become a bigger issue. Or the mom will take action. So some things you just leave.
41	Z	Are there any marginalized stories in the program? Stories we don't hear?
42	H	There are obviously stories we don't hear. And in a way I think the mentors write what we want to hear. But the feedback is there and they are checked up, so if I don't hear anything from them I contact them. But obviously the mentor doesn't tell me everything, so things happen that we don't hear. But does it matter?
43	Z	Do you think we hear more stories of the relationships where it works than stories where relationships don't work?
44	H	Not necessarily. There are many mentors that phone and say they are worried, or it doesn't work. I think the mentors are honest. Like the one saying it doesn't work with her grandchild. I think it was difficult for her to admit. I think it was difficult to admit it to herself. But she did. Then there are mentors that have issues in their own lives, and they are honest about it. They would say they are now worried that, "I don't do enough or do it like I should, because at the moment it is going very bad in my own life". "It doesn't have anything to do with the child, but I don't want to do something wrong towards her, because I am very busy with this". Or, "I am busy with a divorce" or so on. They will say it.

		Because they want it to work for the child. But I think if a mentor is prepared to admit that, they will go to a lot of trouble for the child's sake.
45	Z	You hear more the story of the mentor than the story of the child?
46	H	I never speak to the children. That is why I feel it is a gap. But maybe the pastors do it? You say to the children how they must select etc. I think the pastors must attend the training, so that they can know what it is all about. Because if they ask us about choosing a mentor, they will get a different answer to when they ask one of the pastors. Because they are not so involved.
47	Z	There are two stories we don't hear directly: that of the pastors taking the classes and the stories of the children?
48	H	We hear their stories via the mentors. But I think we can do more about it. We have in the past had a feedback session with the mentors and the children. That was good. The practical thing is that there are too many and that is why I think we should involve the pastors. They must take their group's feedback. Then the pastors can give feedback to us.
49	Z	What do you think is people's general idea about mentorship?
50	H	I think, different to what we want it to be. I think they think it is a 60 years old man that guides and gives advice to a young person. And very specific advice. That is why some of our mentors are worried, because they feel they don't know enough or they need to be trained specifically to do it. They don't realize that the journey of their life is enough. They think you must be Einstein.
51	Z	Where does this idea come from?
52	H	I don't know.
53	Z	Is it a general idea in society that the older you are the more you know?
54	H	Maybe it is so from history. And because in the past it wasn't part of a spiritual guidance, it was always more about learning something,

		maybe like in a business environment or life advice. In the church context, people are anxious to be chosen, because they think they must know everything about the Bible. They must be pastors. They don't feel comfortable with that. Because there is always someone else who knows more or better. They are afraid they must know the catechisms or something.
55	Z	What do you think you yourself have learned about mentorship?
56	H	(Laugh) I think I have learned everything together with everyone else and that things don't always go as you think it will. There are a lot of surprises. If you see two together, then you think – this is not going to work. And then they surprise you and it works fantastically. Others you think will work together because everything is right, don't. So I think it has to do with personalities. I think it is important how you choose. Those who thought about it, they work. Those who grab someone just before the deadline, works sometimes and sometimes not. I have learned that, as with anything in life, what you put into it, is what you get out, from both sides. If you put effort into it, it will work. And if you don't, it won't work.

3.5 Hanlie's reflection on her narrative

I asked Hanlie to reflect with me on her narrative and look at the interview again. This is her reflection in her own words.

The process

The road travelled, the process, was very interesting. It kept us on our toes. We adapted, changed certain things, tried new things and learned a lot in the process. We will however probably never sit back and say: "This is the way it should be done." It remains a dynamic process, mainly because people and personalities are involved and new ideas and individual stories are constantly added.

Expectations and surprises

All the role-players enter into this relationship with certain expectations. It was interesting to see how most of them were pleasantly surprised at the way in which the relationship developed. The Grade 11s mostly entered the relationship without much expectation – it was just another thing that they had to do. Along the way, they realised the value of ‘someone who cares’ in their lives and blossomed in the process. The mentors entered with specific ideas and often realised that these pre-conceived ideas are not what it is all about. They often think they have to teach the child something and that they know all the answers. It was always good to hear from mentors how they learned a lot from the children and realised that it was all about a two-way relationship. The ministry leaders also had expectations of how certain relationships would work, but were often surprised when things proceeded differently. It made us realise that everyone would write their own narrative. Other people cannot write it for you! The narrative will then be true and better than expected.

Another thing that could not be predicted was which mentor would work best in the relationship: a parent, sibling, family member, friend, teacher or neighbour. Once again we were surprised by the combinations that worked but we could never identify specific guidelines. The combinations that worked were those that the participants decided to make it work. They tried harder, worked harder at the relationship and realised the value of growing and learning together. The combinations that didn’t work well were where one or both of the parties didn’t go to enough trouble to make it work.

Time and creativity

As with most things in life we realised that if you make time for something, you will reap the benefits. Grade 11s are exceptionally busy and mentors often struggle to make appointments. When they do however persevere and manage

to see the mentees, it invariably works! Quantity is also just as important as quality. You cannot see someone every three months and expect a relationship to grow. Mentees should experience that the mentor is always available and 'present', whether you see each other often or not.

As mentioned in the interview, creativity is important because of the time factor and because of the stage of their lives the mentees are at. They like change, unpredictability, surprises, et cetera. They are also technically oriented, so mentors should use all the technical aids such as sms, email, facebook, et cetera to build the relationship.

In summary

I realised that human nature and a mix of personalities in the mentoring process will guarantee:

- unexpected surprises
- a host of heart-warming stories
- that it will work if you are serious about making it work
- that every effort you put into a relationship, will be rewarded
- that you will be surprised from whom you can learn something in life
- that mentors who believe in the potential of their mentees, will help them to realise it!

3.6 My notes from conversations with Hanlie

During various informal conversations with Hanlie there were a few things that I made notes of concerning her narrative with the mentorship programme.

Hanlie has a lot of contact with the mentors. They phone her, discuss things with her and always ask for advice. I picked this up from the mentors as well as from the examples she uses in training. This is not the case with me. I stand in front

of the group and give training, but in terms of feedback and narratives, Hanlie is the one that in the front seat. This is important for me as researcher, because it strengthens her narrative as the one person involved in the programme that would help us to listen to the narratives of mentorship coming from the programme.

Another important fact about Hanlie is that she knows the community well and also knows a lot of people in the community. In many cases Hanlie and the mentors know one another or at least have a nodding acquaintance.

Many of our conversations were about the contents of the training and how the programme worked. We had a lot of conversations on how the contents could be structured better, what we should do differently in the next year, what some mentors and children said and how feedback would work. This meant that naturally a lot of the contents of Hanlie's narrative had to do with the mechanics of the programme as well.

Hanlie made a lot of reference to the feedback she got per email. In the programme there is feedback required from the mentors on set times during the course of the year. This is done on paper, either by email or on hard copy. The mentors don't always give feedback in the same way. Some of the mentors would only write a short sentence that says something like "it is going well, thank you" with their name. Others would write pages and pages of feedback, or include drawings or other creative ways to give feedback.

Hanlie noted that she was always worried about some of the feedback. The short feedbacks could be an indication that not much was going on within the mentorship relationship, hence the short feedback. Others that gave long feedback often wrote more about themselves than about the mentorship relationship. Little was said about their meetings. The programme doesn't ask for feedback on the contents of discussions between mentors and mentees. This is specifically the case so that the mentees do not get the impression

that their conversations are not confidential. The programme asks only for feedback on the process. Hanlie says that often in the feedback this kind of specific feedback lacks. She says that she would get the impression in some cases that the mentors deal more with their own issues during the programme and write about it in the feedback or say something about their own issues over the phone, than actually listening to the mentee and his or her problems.

I got the impression in my conversations with Hanlie that she has the ability to take the feedback of all the different years and group it together in her mind to identify general themes from the narratives. She would often use examples from conversations and feedback specifically, but more often I would hear her speak in general terms.

3.7 Reflection on Hanlie's narrative

I decided to have a preliminary reflection after each narrative to help us along the road of describing and developing the overall research narrative. The aim of this research is to come to a greater understanding about mentorship in the context of the Lynnwood congregation. Keeping this in mind, I will reflect on the narratives by looking at certain themes and aspects of Hanlie's narrative that became evident for both of us from the conversations and written collaboration. I will also try and formulate good questions that arise from Hanlie's narrative that might help us later in the research process. This reflection is not only based on the excerpt that is given in this section from interviews, but on all the material that I have available.

I list various themes and give a short reflection about each of them.

The aim of the programme

While listening to Hanlie's story on the start of the programme, I deduced that she said that the aim of the mentorship programme was to "guide and help" the leaders at first and later the confirmees. This is an important aspect of the meaning attached to the programme in the congregation. The question could be asked if this is really where the meaning of the programme lies? Is there other meanings within the narratives from the mentors and mentees that surprise us? And if this is the aim of the programme, has it been reached?

Discourses

I went through a lot of my notes and conversations and as I was going through them, I circled discourses that Hanlie mentioned or touched on. I found that there were quite a few. I list them here with a short description of each:

Confirmation

There are certain ideas about confirmation in the Dutch Reformed Church that comes to light from the narratives. We picked this up initially when the programme started. The idea that a young person had to go to a church council member for an interview in order to obtain a blessing to take part in confirmation was challenged and replaced by the programme. There is still the idea of evaluation that is a part of the confirmation leg of the mentorship programme, although it has now been significantly downplayed.

Within the deconstruction approach there is a lot to deconstruct here. Who decides if a young person is fit to be confirmed? Who is in power in this relationship and who is not? Why do young people still do confirmation? What role does the programme play in changing the general ideas about confirmation?

Who qualifies to be a good mentor?

Hanlie tells about the one mentor who asked in her feedback that the mentors be screened before they were chosen to be a mentor. She felt that Hanlie didn't know her at all and trusted her with a mentee. She felt there were other mentors who were not fit to be mentors because they had too many problems themselves.

This poses the question of who is fit to be a mentor. Who has bigger or smaller problems? How do you decide on who were fit to be mentors? Who decides? What are the general ideas about mentors and what makes them fit to be mentors?

Ideas about structure

Hanlie says in her one interview that she prefers more structure because she is a bit more "old school" than me (who prefers less structure). The whole theme about a lot of structure (which refers to prescribed contents for mentorship conversations in the programme) against having very little or no structure is a prominent theme in the programme. This poses questions like – What is meant by structure? How do you balance structure in a programme? Is structure 'old-school' and no structure 'new-school'? What are the ideas people have about structure and how does it influence the concept of how a mentorship relationship should work?

The availability of time

It seems that from own experience and Hanlie's narrative that the general idea in this community is that young people (and adults) are very busy people. Time is of the essence and only important things are given time in their lives. People are too busy for certain things, and school and related activities take up a lot of time. The question remains where the religious or church should fit in? Are

church and the programmes of the church seen as just another thing that needs to be fitted in? Are the young people really so busy or is it a certain cultural paradigm of the community?

Living compartmental lives

Another interesting comment from Hanlie that I want to pick up on is her comment that she thinks young people live in compartments. School, family and church are all compartmented into their lives. This also brings questions to the fore. How do the young people in this community think about their lives? Where do church and religion fit in? What about a holistic paradigm where everything in life is integrated? What meaning lies in a compartmental approach to life? Is this true of all young people in this community? What is the influence of this on the mentorship programme?

Mentorship

This is one of the most important discourses we want to look at during this study – how people think about mentorship. Hanlie says that she thinks the people’s ideas regarding the programme differ. Many people live with the idea that mentorship is about an older person (who is wise and have all the answers) who gives a younger person guidance and advice. The whole idea of mentorship then centres around advice and input from the mentor to the mentee. The programme uses the metaphor of partners or people together on a journey. In this approach the mentor is not the “expert” and the mentee the “one who needs guidance”. Both influence one another. Both have a life’s journey behind them.

But it seems from Hanlie’s narrative that some people do have the idea that mentorship is only about giving advice to a young person.

The question then arises whose idea about mentorship is correct – the programme or the general idea of the people in the programme? Does everybody think the same way? Are there more than two ideas about mentorship? What do we learn from these ideas?

Church

Another interesting theme or discourse that we pick up from Hanlie's narrative, is the ideas people have about church, namely how church is perceived, what church is about. This links with the ideas about confirmation and the way the church council plays a role.

The other aspect about church that we hear from the narratives of the programme is that the mentorship programme is a church programme, and needs to be fitted in according to their priorities and time. This links with the comments on the compartmental lives some of the children live. The programme is compulsory for the confirmees especially. This can also bring about a certain association with the church.

Choosing a mentor

A lot of the conversations and contact Hanlie has with the mentors and the children focus on the start of the programme each year. The process of choosing a mentor is very important. This sparks a lot of conversation in some houses as some of the stories proved. It also seems to determine a lot of the success of the relationship. Again here are also some general ideas on various relationships. There are comments on brothers and sisters, parents being mentors and other relatives. There are some relationships that work and others that don't. We hear the narrative about the granny who struggled to connect to her granddaughter since she started to talk about spiritual topics.

In any mentorship programme it seems that the choosing of a mentor is a central process that needs a lot of attention and guidance. This programme in Lynnwood started out by assigning a mentor to a leader. This proved unsuccessful in this context and it seemed that switching to having the children and leaders choose their own mentor made a difference in how the programme was experienced.

We will have to listen some more to the co-researchers' narratives concerning this topic.

Growth

One thing that I hear a lot while listening to Hanlie's narrative is that there has been a lot of growth and development in the programme up to now. The programme is not the same in terms of contents and structure as it started out. Hanlie says that they have learned a lot in the few years that programme has been running and changes have been made from lessons learned. It seems that the programme draws a lot on its own experiences, more than just merely copying from another mentorship programme or just simply taking a prescribed course and implementing it. I see the growth in Hanlie's own narrative as well and in the way she handles herself in the programme.

In my involvement with the programme, my own experiences (that are linked to this research) also grew. I wanted to make sure that the programme and its contents are contextual and local to Lynnwood. The programme evolves from the narratives and input of each mentor and group every year. In a sense the programme learns from itself.

This is important also for my own understanding of the research. I want to listen to the narrative of this local and contextual programme. This is the moment of praxis. And this would hopefully point beyond the local.

Feedback

Feedback seems to play an important role in the narrative of Hanlie. Feedback helps the mentors to work towards some kind of a deadline. It also gives them the opportunity at these feedback sessions to get some input from some of the other mentors. These sessions have meant a lot to them in the past and they always ask for more of these sessions.

Most of the information Hanlie bases her ideas and experience on either come from the written feedback or the feedback in groups or sessions. There is also the feedback she gets over the phone from a mentor or an informal conversation after a church service. The feedback is crucial in this sense for the programme and also for getting a general idea about the narratives and relationships in the programme.

To me it seems clear that feedback is also something a programme can't do without. It informs the narratives and it informs the programme in the future. This feedback needs to be process orientated and not contents orientated. This way the mentees can feel safe and know that the things they discuss with their mentors are confidential.

Time

Another theme that arises a lot from Hanlie's narrative and that we will be on the lookout for during the discussion of the other narratives, are the role that time plays in building a mentorship relationship. It seems that time is more of a determining factor for a meaningful mentorship relationship than for instance the relation to the mentor (like parents or relatives, different generations, et cetera) or training. The more time is spent together in building the relationship, the more it builds the relationship, which leads to a more meaningful experience.

The narratives we don't listen to enough

Hanlie mentioned that she didn't listen enough to the stories of the children. She asked if the pastors who had weekly meetings with the confirmees couldn't listen to the stories of the children themselves about the mentorship. She didn't mention listening to the leaders in the programme. This might be a marginalised narrative.

I initially thought that maybe she did not hear a lot of stories of where the mentorship did not work. But it seems that she does. The programme has ways of telling the narrative of the mentorship relationships where there is not much happening. Mentors who don't give feedback or do not show up for any of the meetings also tell a narrative by their absence. The reasons for their absence are sometimes unknown, but most phone or make excuses. Some even say directly that they are struggling and are not getting around to it.

In the narrative approach we are always sensitive to also listen to the untold stories or ask questions about the marginalised stories. Why are they marginalised? Who gains by keeping them marginalised?

This is why it is important to me to ask these questions about the untold stories and keep on reflecting on them. This is a specific question I will ask the co-researchers as well.

Meaning within the narratives of the programme

In narrative therapy one listens to narratives with the quest to find meaning in them. As a researcher I think my process is similar. The purpose is different. In research we are trying to come to a greater understanding about certain stories

or subjects. But in the process of listening to stories there will always be meaning in the stories.

In listening to Hanlie's narrative this has grown in my mind. I want to reflect on this specifically. Wherein lies the meaning – the meaning in the narratives arising from the programme? What kind of meaning do mentors and mentees find in their relationships? What meaning do they ascribe to the programme? What have they experienced? What do these narratives tell us?

These are the kind of questions that I take further in this study.

4. IN CLOSING

In my research design and proposal I wasn't sure what would be the best way to approach the narrative of the programme and the narrative of the co-researchers. In a sense they are linked and in a sense not. This made it difficult for me to decide if I should put these narratives all in the same chapter or not.

I think a lot has opened up for me in this chapter by looking at the narrative of the programme separately. It has also helped me to listen and reflect on the narrative of Hanlie as a researcher and not as someone in the programme leadership. This was a good decision because it helped me to listen to the narrative of the programme from a different perspective. It also helped to truly listen to Hanlie as a co-researcher in the whole process of this research.

I wish that it could have been possible to somehow listen to more of the programme's narratives by means of the many people in the programme's narratives. This was not possible due to the practicalities. I do however think that for the purpose of this research, Hanlie's narrative helped me a lot with it.

In the next chapter we are narrowing the circle by listening to the co-researchers' narratives.

Chapter 3: THE NARRATIVES OF THE CO-RESEARCHERS

In this chapter we narrow the circle by listening to the specific narratives of the co-researchers. The aim of this chapter is to listen to the narratives and try and come to a greater understanding of these unheard narratives. We will aim at making thick descriptions of the narratives and invite the co-researchers to participate in the reflections on the narratives.

1. THE SELECTION OF THE CO-RESEARCHERS AND LISTENING TO THEIR NARRATIVES

1.1 Deciding on the selection process of the co-researchers

I have explained the context of the programme in the previous chapter where it is apparent that the programme has had a large amount of mentors and mentees in the past few years. This made it difficult to decide on how to choose co-researchers. The second challenge was the fact that the group was only consistent for the period of a year. Then the whole group changed. Many of the mentors moved, or the mentees went on to study at other places and so forth.

Initially I also thought of selecting the co-researchers by using different categories. One category in which mentees and mentors presented themselves was according to generations and relational categories. This included mother-daughter, brother-sister, old-young, peer group mentors and other categories. I wanted to select co-researchers from each category.

I decided to focus only on three to five narratives, the reason for this being that in a narrative approach we would rather listen to fewer narratives and make

thicker descriptions of them, as opposed to working with a lot of narratives and compiling a vast amount of statistical data from the larger group.

I also decided that I didn't want to make the selection myself. This could compromise the selection from the start.

In the end, I decided not to force categories on the selection. These categories could be preliminary ideas in my own mind and would not allow for the research to develop on its own. This would also not exemplify a not-knowing position for me as researcher.

I also decided that it would always be possible to ask for more volunteers or conduct interviews with specific mentors if the narratives led me to that point.

I asked for volunteers to participate in the research in 2007. Many of these narratives started within the 2006 group. This way the co-researchers could reflect on the narratives with a bit of experience and time for the narratives to develop.

The only specific narrative that I asked a volunteer for was for a narrative where the mentorship relationship did not work out. I thought this would be an important narrative in the research. In the narrative research approach we are always on the lookout for the marginalised narratives.

In the end three mentors and mentees volunteered to take part in the research as co-researchers. A fourth mentee volunteered to take part that had an experience where the relationship did not develop as expected.

1.2 How did I listen to the narratives of the co-researchers?

I basically used the same methods of listening to the narratives of the co-researchers than listening to Hanlie's narrative. I did not however have so many informal discussions with the co-researchers.

There were two ways in which I listened to their narratives. The first was to have formal interviews in which I used audio recordings and transcriptions in at least one. When I didn't use recordings, I made my own process notes.

I had two formal interviews with most of the co-researchers. Where it wasn't possible for them to have two, I had a longer session with them. These sessions took place at my home.

It was difficult for the co-researchers to always find time for the formal interviews. I was uncertain at first if this would be a problem, but it turned out that between the correspondence (which was much easier for them), the interviews and the group discussions, this would be enough for them.

The interviews that were conducted were completely unstructured. I did not use any specific questions during these interviews. It is important to note that the excerpts from interviews in this chapter are mostly not first interviews or discussions. Therefore some of the content of previous interviews will be implied in the questions.

The second method was reflecting on their own narratives and my own reflections on their narratives. I wanted to make sure that they truly were the co-researchers in the project and that what was written had their consent and input. This was achieved mostly by email.

I asked the co-researchers to reflect on one of their interviews. To help them with this I proposed a few questions for them to look at. These questions were formulated after the interviews that follow. I list them here as background to all

the narratives that are discussed, not because they were formulated prior to the interviews.

Some answered all the questions, others answered some of the questions and others wrote in general. In these sections you will find a compilation of their own feedback on their narrative. I suspect that in most cases only the mentor did this feedback. Some of them probably discussed it with the mentee.

Questions to facilitate the feedback of each of the co-researchers on their narrative:

1. What does your narrative tell us about mentorship? What do you hear about mentorship from this narrative?
2. What themes, narratives or elements from your own narrative captured your attention during the reading of the interview?
3. Is there something that surprises you? Is there something that you see now that you did not see before?
4. What do you think someone else would learn about mentorship from your narrative?
5. What do we learn together from your narrative?
6. What informs your narrative? What had an influence on your narrative?
7. Any general comments you would like to make about your narrative?

The final way in which I listened to the narratives of the co-researchers, was during the group discussion. The whole group came together for a reflection on of all the narratives. This was a positive experience for the group. I reflect on this in chapter 4.

1.3 The issue of language and confidentiality

It is important to report here on the use of language and the issues surrounding confidentiality. I have stuck to the ethical guidelines of our PhD group and the university as discussed in the first chapter.

As regards the language (which we looked at extensively in the first chapter) I decided to do this thesis in English. The reasoning behind this is simply accessibility. This could have been a potential hindrance in the research process due to the fact that the co-researchers speak Afrikaans as a first language. They are however bilingual and did not have a problem with the English thesis. This helped me a great deal in the sense that I could send the translated transcripts to them and that they would be able to read it themselves. We did conduct the interviews and discussions in Afrikaans to enable them to do this in their first language, but for the purposes of the thesis it was translated and they could check it. Where there were certain words or expressions that expressed their thoughts and feelings better in the original language, I left it in Afrikaans.

Due to the nature of the topic and the fact that it not as sensitive as a topic like HIV/AIDS or related topics, the co-researchers decided that they wouldn't use pseudonyms or participate anonymously. They did however have the chance to edit or change any parts of their narratives or reflections.

2. THE NARRATIVE OF COENRAAD AND CARINA BEKKER

Coenraad is 21 years old and lived with his sister Carina (19) during the period of the research project and parts of the mentor relationship. Both of them are currently studying and were part of the mentorship programme. Carina asked Coenraad to be her mentor during her confirmation year. Since then their relationship developed further after the formal programme. Their father lives in

KwaZulu-Natal and had remarried. Their mother passed away in the period of the research. She lived on her own in Pretoria. Coenraad took care of Carina during her secondary education.

2.1 Excerpts from an interview with Coenraad and Carina

I will also start by inserting excerpts of one of their interviews here, as a starting point to listen to their narrative.

5	Z ³	And how did you decide to choose someone?
6	Ca ⁴	I chose Coenraad, because I heard you could choose a brother. And I decided Coenraad was the best choice. Because I didn't know anyone else that could be a mentor for me.
15	Z	How long was it before you moved in together?
16	Ca	Half a year.
17	Z	Was the moving in together one of the biggest factors?
18	Ca	Yes, because we only saw each other on Sundays when it was at church. That was all.
19	Z	So the more contact, the better for the mentorship?
20	Ca	Yes, for sure.
21	Z	What can you remember specifically from that time?
22	C ⁵	One thing that came up, and still does, is when me and my sister moved in together, my dad said I am now responsible for my sister. So I was sort of the father figure. And that was weird in the beginning. And I didn't really want to do that. Because I didn't want to say to Carina, you are not allowed to do this or that. That also played a big role. That I was this father figure, I was her mentor and her brother. And the brother part sort of faded away. And then

³ Z - Zander

⁴ Ca - Carina

⁵ C - Coenraad

		recently my dad, Cariena and I had a conversation about it, and we decided the father figure thing didn't work in the house. The fact that I am only two years older than her, doesn't give me the right to make decisions for her. And with the mentorship it was very much amplified. The fact that I wasn't taking the head role. And when I got back to the role of just being her brother, it was a more difficult adjustment to go back to being her brother, because I am still her mentor and then it came back that I feel like a father figure again.
23	Z	So is the mentor role and the father role closer to each other for you than the brother mentor role?
24	C	Hmmm... yes in a way. Because the mentor role makes me feel that I have to be an example, like a father needs to be an example. And that is why.
25	Z	How do you connect the roles?
26	Ca	I don't like it really. Hmmm.....the father and mentor is probably close to each other in terms of example. But a mentor must be someone that you can share everything with. And with for whom you can share anything, any time.
27	Z	So is that closer for you to the brother role than the father role?
28	Ca	Yes, I think it must be like that. And it was difficult in the beginning, both, because he was now the father and I wanted to say something to my brother, but I can't, because I don't really have a brother, my brother is my dad. That was difficult in the beginning.
31	Z	Did you specifically make time for the mentorship?
32	C	Not at all.
33	Z	So what of the confirmation year experience did you connect to the mentorship?
34	Ca	Very little, I must say. Because it was very difficult for me in the beginning, because we never saw each other. I think it was just another thing we had to do, and I told him he must sign the forms for

		me. The mentorship thing only started to come through later. After the confirmation year. Because that is only when we started to get to know each other again. And when we lived in the same house again after three years. So the mentorship year was actually a year too early. Because we didn't live together.
41	Z	Did the mentorship thing at the church help you at all?
42	C	Yes, a lot. Because I started to be on the lookout more for my sister's opinion about things. And I must listen to what she thinks, because I must actually give her advice about it and tell her what I think. So I think this is where our bond grew stronger, because I showed more interest in how she feels about things, and not how I did.
43	Z	What do you think is the general idea of mentorship?
44	Ca	That it helps you grow.
45	C	Hmmmm.... the mentorship thing, I think also it helps you grow, and you also learn a lot about other people's choices. The mentor doesn't have to be perfect. The mentor can also make mistakes. You also learn a lot from the mistakes the mentor make.
52	Z	What type of things did you talk speakabout?
53	Ca	Anything. Whatever is important. Like if I have a problem with a friend. I would talk to Coenraad about it, and tell him, "this is the problem, what do you think?"
54	Z	Advice?
55	Ca	Yes. We ask each other a lot of advice.
56	Z	In what sense do you think the mentorship program has spiritual content?
57	C	I think it is connected to the advice. What is right and wrong. Then I am in this position, where Cariena tells me what happened, and then asks if this is right or wrong if I do this. And then it is not necessarily right, but it is the easiest option. And then we would talk speakabout

		those differences. What is the easiest, and what is right or wrong. UnconsciencelyUnconsciously you make the spiritual connectionof it is spiritual. It is from a Christian point of view.
58	Ca	(Agrees)
77	C	Yes. If I think about it. If she chose my dad, if he was living in the same house as us...
78	Ca	It wouldn't have been the same. I can't talk to my dad about the same things as with Coenraad. Where there are isother things I can talk to my dad about, but not with my brother.
79	C	I also think, it is about he age gap.
80	Z	Is it better that there is a smaller age gap?
81	C	It is a lot better. There must be a difference, but not to big.
82	Ca	For me, I feel that person must be on the same level as you and shouldmustn't have beenbe at school 20 years backago.. That when you talkspk about school, he understands and doesn't gives advicse of 20 years agoback.

2.2 Coenraad and Carina's notes on their interview

I list some of Coenraad and Carina's own notes on their interview in bulleted form. This was done according to the questions listed in section 1.2.

- We realised that mentorship is a process that cannot be forced or hastened. It needs commitment from the mentor and the mentee. You have to let it run its own course from then on.
- The one theme that stood out for us was that our mentorship relationship began and grew when we lived together because we saw each other a lot.
- The mentorship programme made us more at ease with each other and we spoke more easily and openly with each other. There were times that we had arguments and a difference of opinion, but it taught us to be

aware of the fact that we do differ and that we should listen to and respect each other.

- You must choose someone that knows you well and understand you. Then you are already at ease and you don't have to spend time getting to know each other. We also learned that the mentorship relationship needs a lot of time and commitment to be successful.
- We also learned that the mentee can also give advice and that the mentor didn't have to be the advice giver all the time.
- The fact that we are brother and sister and that we stayed together was one of the big reasons the mentorship relationship worked for us.

2.3 My notes from conversations with Coenraad and Carina

In the conversations I had with them and sometimes with Coenraad on his own, I made a few notes on certain themes that emerged from their narrative.

The relationship they have as brother and sister was frequently discussed. They would always give it a name, describe it in some way, or talk about their roles in the situation.

They never focussed on making specific appointments to have a mentorship discussion as many in the programme do. The fact that they stayed together helped them to see each other a lot. They would tell me how they would have discussions in the car when Coenraad picked Carina up after school or during dinnertime, et cetera. So they experienced different ways to get together and talk. There was no set way of having conversations.

They made a lot of the fact that they had an equal part to play in the mentorship relationship. Both had to listen to each other and both had to respect each other. I did not experience evidence of the expert-child relationship in any of our conversations.

I see a lot of them at church and at the back of my mind I always wondered what the difference between their relationship as brother and sister and their mentorship relationship was. Is it the same thing? Does it need to be? How does it link in their minds? When we discussed their relationship they would call it a mentorship relationship and simultaneously a brother-sister relationship. They regarded both relationships as something that developed naturally.

2.4 Reflection on their narrative

I will try and reflect on their narrative by again looking at various themes arising from our conversations.

Background

I think it is important to take the background of their narrative into account. Coenraad and Carina lived on their own after their parents' divorce. Carina stayed in the school residence and Coenraad in a flat. In Carina's final year at school it made more sense for them to live together. This had an influence on their relationship in a very significant way. They had experienced a lot in the last few years with regards to family and circumstances that changed. This was absorbed by this relationship that they would easily refer to as a mentorship relationship.

The one question I reflected on during the conversations with them has been the relation between their relationship as brother and sister and the mentorship relationship. Would their relationship be any different if there had been no mention of the mentorship programme? Was this not the narrative of any brother and sister living together? Is it even a good question to ask? The research I am busy with focuses on narratives of mentorship in the congregation. Does it matter if the programme specifically initiates it or not? This might not be a question for me as researcher but rather a question for me as the pastor of the programme.

What is important is the language they use in their conversations. On the one hand the relationship was never formed or significant at all in the formal year of Carina's confirmation. They didn't really speak about the programme at all during this time. When they spoke about the relationship it began having real meaning only after the confirmation year when they moved into the same flat. When asked if the programme had helped them, they said that it had. Coenraad was still part of the programme as a leader, but did not attend any training sessions.

They would refer to the relationship as a "mentorship" relationship and definitely from the context of the programme at church. This led me to conclude that we should not think about the mentorship programme in a confined or limited way. The narratives of mentorship do not necessarily develop within the confines or period of the programme, but also at later stages.

Choosing a mentor, relations and roles

Carina was very clear that she chose Coenraad for the reason that he is her brother, he is involved at church and that she feels comfortable with him. She also mentioned later that he understands her world and issues, because he is only a few years older than she is. If she had chosen her dad it would have been different. She also said that she couldn't think about anyone else who could be a mentor for her other than Coenraad. Again the theme of who is chosen as a mentor presents itself as an important aspect. One reason why their relationship worked was because she chose her brother.

In the programme there is a lot of discussion on whether it is a good or a bad thing to ask a relative to be you mentor. In this case it almost seemed that for Carina it was the obvious choice, because of the fact that Coenraad was close to her. I am sure if she had other relatives that she wasn't as close to as

Coenraad, she would most probably still have chosen Coenraad, not because of the fact that they are related, but because of the trust and the relationship they share. To them it was important.

The significant theme from their narrative is the intense discussion on roles. Coenraad tells their narrative and refers a lot to his role as mentor, brother and at one stage, father. At the beginning he felt the responsibility to be the father figure in the relationship. He wasn't comfortable with this and it was difficult to understand his relationship with Carina in this way. They decided that they would rather stick to the brother-sister role, but this made it difficult again for him to see himself as a mentor. He says that in a way the mentor role was closer to the father role, because a father (like a mentor) has to set a good example. But they identified the brother role as the role played by someone who you can share a lot with, and that is how a mentor should be. It seems that from Carina's side it was easier to talk to her brother as a mentor, rather than talking to the father figure as the mentor. The association with the father figure was always about asking permission and submitting under his authority. She didn't want this association with her mentor.

Time and living together and commitment

If you would ask them what the main thing was that made their relationship work, they would answer that you needed to spend time in the relationship and commit to it. For them this went hand in hand with the fact that they lived together. When they started in the mentorship programme, Carina did not live with Coenraad and this meant that they did not spend a lot of time together. This was why the relationship didn't work at first. Once they moved in with each other, they spent more time together and this led to a growing and successful mentorship relationship for them.

The main ingredient to make the relationship grow for them was time. When they spoke about the experiences their friends had, they would say that it did not work for them, because they only saw each other twice in the year. That would be the reason why it didn't work for their friends.

The connection to spirituality and experiences of God

It is interesting that in their narrative spirituality is connected to advice. In this sense they mean it ethically. There are choices that need to be made in everyday situations and as a Christian you need advice from your mentor on how you could distinguish between right or wrong in a situation. Coenraad felt that he gave this advice from a Christian point of view. These ethical values are linked to the church and to being involved in the church. The church is also the place where you can learn to distinguish between wrong and right.

It seems that there was no connection between confirmation, the programme and spiritual contents for them. This only came later when the relationship developed. There was also no mention of other spiritual experiences in their narrative. I specifically did not ask them a lot about this, because in our narrative approach we don't want to force a topic or theme on the narrative.

I would like to reflect further on the connection between spirituality and experiences of God, and ethics. It would seem that the idea of Christianity and religious conversation is centred around what is right and wrong.

How they understand mentorship

In terms of discourses, you could hear something about their general ideas about mentorship. There is a strong emphasis on responsibility. Coenraad saw a mentor as someone who needed to set an example and who had to take

responsibility for someone. That is why the decision about mentorship is a serious decision to make.

A mentor must be someone you can talk to and share. They have a beautiful narrative in terms of emphasising the openness and trust between them. That was why Carina chose Coenraad in the first place. The relationship needs to be comfortable and open. The mentor must also understand something of the mentee's world.

Mentorship must also help you to grow as a person and a mentor must give advice. This advice does not necessarily have to be taken. It is seen as an important opinion in your life. The mentor can also make mistakes and you can learn from those mistakes as well. For them there is a focus on learning in mentorship. That is why they would talk a lot about things that were problems or situations that arose where Carina would need Coenraad's opinion. That was also why her mentor needed to know about her world and context. Otherwise someone (like her father) who does not know her world, would not be able to give the correct advice.

Meaning

I asked myself what the meaning in this narrative of mentorship was. I listened to the narrative and read their own reflections on their narrative and came to the conclusion that the meaning is to be found in the growth in their relationship as brother and sister.

It is almost as if the mentorship process which started at the church developed and grew so much between them in various stages, that this enhanced their relationship as brother and sister. It helped them to come to terms with each other, also to come to terms with the way Carina went from being a high school

child to a student and the influence of this on their relationship, and many other things.

Carina accepted Coenraad as a mentor and this was a good metaphor for their relationship as brother and sister, in their specific context. They attached a positive meaning to their mentorship experience for this reason.

3. THE NARRATIVE OF CHRISTA SMIT AND BARRY STEENKAMP

Christa Smit is in her fifties and is married to Quintus. She has two daughters and works at the University of Pretoria in the administration section of the Faculty of Engineering. Christa was trained as a social worker and practised before she started working at the university. Barry Steenkamp is currently a student. He attended Menlopark High before he started studying. It was during this period that Barry chose Christa as his mentor in the mentorship programme for the confirmation year. There is no relationship between them.

3.1 Excerpts from an interview with Christa and Barry

I will start by inserting excerpts of one of their interviews here, as a starting point to listen to their narrative.

6	Z ⁶	The interesting part for me from your story (cause we are deciding together what we learn from your story) is that one of the big themes from all the stories, is how you chose someone to be your mentor. What would you (Barry) say to other people about how to choose a mentor?
7	B ⁷	(Laugh) You can't ask someone who just made a random decision

⁶ Z-Zander

		about who to choose! I don't know. Choose someone who you feel comfortable with.
8	Z	OK. Christa, you said there was this "connection"?
9	C ⁸	Yes, for me. I don't know if he experienced it as a connection, but I was comfortable. I don't know if he would have come to me if it was different. When we met, we couldn't say, "today we talk about this". It wouldn't have worked. We don't have such a relationship.
18	Z	Last time we also discussed that you saw each other more during the duration of that year of the program and less after the program.
19	C	Yes.
39	Z	How do the others in the class think about the mentorship program?
40	B	I don't really know. I didn't really talk to them about it. They weren't really my friends. We were together in the class and saw each at school.
41	Z	And from your other friends that you know better?
42	B	Lots chose older brothers and sisters. But we didn't really talk about such things. We just sort of heard who is each other's mentor and that was that.
43	Z	Do you think it is a meaningful thing?
44	B	I think it was interesting and it helped me with the whole thing of going to stand in front of the pastors. I would have felt uncomfortable I think.
45	Z	So it was easier with the...
46	B	Yes. It was comfortable.
51	Z	The one thing I heard from you is that you wanted it to be comfortable. You used the word a few times. Are there other things that you would say is important?
52	C	It was never forced.

⁷ B - Barry

⁸ C - Christa

53	Z	So comfortable, unforced...?
54	C	Spontaneous. These are all things that fit together. I cannot think that you can be in a relationship where you think: "Oh! Here is the aunt!" or "Here he is again!" I think there needs to be respect and trust!
55	Z	What about practical things?
56	C	Yes, I had to phone and say: "Let's get together". We didn't go out for coffee. We saw each other at our house. And then of course we live close to each other, so it was easy.
57	Z	So it was easy for you too?
58	B	Yes, it wasn't like we planned it every time. She would phone me and ask about a time and I would say yes.
59	Z	So how important was it for you guys so see each other regularly?
60	C	Well, we were fortunate to see each other about every Sunday. And if I didn't see him, I saw his parents and spoke to them. I still have this feeling that it was nice to visit with him
61	Z	You never felt that there is a shortage of an agenda?
62	C	No. Were we quiet? (to Barry)
63	B	No. We didn't really speak about the mentorship stuff. We spoke about whatever.
64	Z	Do you think there needs to be more of an agenda? Many people ask that in the program.
65	C	Given my background and the whole...it was important for me to communicate with him and pick-up what it is that bugs him. And I was on the lookout for that. I didn't say to him "Barry, tell me what is troubling you..." I mean which child is going to respond to that? It was more important for me to keep it at a conversation and then catch whatever I wanted to know. I don't know if all the mentors have the ability to do this. To take a cue from a hook he throws out and then talk about it. To me it comes unconsciously. I think it is a skill.
68	C	You know, and also faith stuff (this is what it is about). To try and talk

		about it, without saying “What do you say about the Dutch Reformed church’s...understanding of baptism...” If there were things that bugged him about this, I think I would have picked it up out of our conversations. And I did test him about it.
73	C	In a few year’s time, I would like to talk to him again about church. Because he was in Grade 11, when we spoke about it. I would like to ask how he experiences church. Is he closer? Is he further? What did he search and didn’t get? I don’t think he could say that to me in Grade 11 already.
87	Z	In general, do you think there are any other stories that are not told or marginalized stories? I ask everyone if they think there are unheard stories? Or stories of people who feel left out?
88	C	Not me. I think there are a lot of things between us that haven’t been discussed. But it is not a relationship that has ended. So it’s maybe for later. So it won’t be “come sit now and talk to me about faith and your student years”. It won’t be like that.
89	Z	What do you think is the general idea about generations and mentorship? If you think about your friends, and they choose brothers or sisters, do you think there is a general idea? Maybe a gap?
90	B	Maybe people go for younger people as mentors, because the older people have more of a formal approach. While having a young mentor it can be a casual type of thinking. But for me it didn’t work out that way.
96	C	To me it was important to be the one who came into his life. As I said in the video. It was an important learning experience to me. Because he is young and his head is open. I don’t know if the roles weren’t maybe the other way around, that I actually learned more from him, than he from me. But, I never saw him as a child. I felt we were on an equal footing and that I had just as much to hear from him and pick-up. And that connectedness...to understand it’s test, it’s choosing a career.

97	B	Yes. To me it wasn't an older aunt. You get those aunts who are "ou-tannierig" (old maidish) But it is like a friend, not....
98	C	Respect.
99	Z	Do you think you learned something from Christa's life?
100	B	Lots! (Laugh).

3.2 Christa and Barry's notes on their interview

I list some of Christa's own notes on their interview in bulleted form.

- I heard something of an informal relationship with value added to my own involvement in the process.
- I'm surprised at the way he conducts himself – he is so much at ease in the relationship with someone much older and actually a stranger.
- I think people would learn that – if not forced – it will be a medium of growing in yourself.
- For me the most important lesson is – be relaxed, do not force a mentor/mentee relationship.
- Our personalities played a major role in our narrative. Barry is at ease with himself and that reflects in his manner with people.

3.3 My notes from conversations with Christa and Barry

In my notes I focussed a lot on describing and listening to the narrative on how they met. During our first interview we spoke a lot about this part of their narrative. I was interested in the fact that they met and chose each other randomly and how good it turned out for them. I explored this during our discussion.

It was also interesting to me to observe how Barry and Christa interacted. In their own feedback they refer to their own personalities and how that played a

part in their relationship. This was indeed the case. For me they were comfortable and at ease. They made a lot of jokes with each other that is always a good sign of a healthy relationship to me.

Christa didn't worry too much about the input from the programme. She felt that she had enough to work with within the programme's guidelines and did not need more structure. She said that it was easier for her to do it unforced or without a specific agenda for conversations. But she did say that she could imagine that for other mentors who are new to this kind of situation, more input and guidance might be necessary.

The one thing that did concern me during the interviews was the fact that Barry did not speak much. This is why I tried to ask him a lot of questions directly to make sure that he had the chance to give his own input. This was the case with some of the other mentees as well. But I did however feel that he said what he wanted to and that he was very much at ease in the conversation.

3.4 Reflection on their narrative

I will try and reflect on their narrative by again looking at various themes arising from our conversations.

Choosing a mentor

The first subject that came up in our conversations was the way in which Barry chose Christa to be his mentor. This was a wonderful narrative and very surprising to me. Barry went to a family camp of the church where Quintus (Christa's husband) was the pastor for the weekend. He saw her there for the first time and felt comfortable with her. Christa described it by saying that she felt a connection with him from the start. He had to choose a mentor during that time and decided that he would ask Christa. She immediately said yes. They

describe this relationship as open and comfortable from the start, without knowing each other at all before that.

This was a wonderful surprise to me. Most of the mentees would say that they preferred to choose someone they knew from the start. Barry chose someone he didn't know at all and had a wonderful relationship with her. Barry is a quiet introvert and in the interviews he wouldn't say a lot, but spoke a lot of sense when he did say something. To me this was a pleasant narrative to hear.

The one word that came up a lot in their narrative was the word "comfortable". It seemed that this was the most important aspect for them when describing their relationship. They could sit and talk (not really sure about what afterwards) and then two hours would have passed. It seemed that they really enjoyed their time together. They share a good sense of humour as well. They joked with each other and kept the interview informal. If you read the interview you see there is a lot of "(laugh)".

Christa and Barry are not related at all, and this seemed to work well for Barry. It didn't really bother him, nor did the fact that Christa was much older than he was. He did not choose a relative or someone he knew, or someone from his generation and it worked well for them.

Roles

The one thing that I noticed here was the different roles that existed between them. In a sense they were only mentor and mentee. They were not related nor did they have a previous relationship. But in listening to them and the way they spoke about each other, I think Christa did fulfil a bit of a mother role – even if it was just in the way that she cared for him, the same as she would have done with her own children. It seemed that she spoiled him and cared for him in a "motherly" sense. Barry might not see it this way. In the Afrikaans culture any

adult woman would be called an aunt (“tannie”) when you address her, even if she wasn’t related to him. This always signified a closeness or family-like tone, as if you really knew someone well. Then she would be the nice “tannie” or the “tannie” that I would feel comfortable with. This was maybe the role that Christa played for Barry, and the reason he could relate so well to her.

How they understand mentorship

Barry did not really discuss the mentorship programme with any of his classmates. He knew who chose who as mentor, that most were brothers and sisters, but that was all.

The mentorship relationship grew spontaneously for them. It was not very structured in terms of their conversations. Christa felt that with her background as social worker it was easier to let the conversation lead her. So she often said that she didn’t need structure in terms of the conversation from the programme. She preferred it more open and she felt comfortable with it. She didn’t want the subject matter or the contents to put Barry on the spot about anything. As things came up they spoke about it.

Christa said that she learned a lot from Barry and that there was reverse mentoring. She didn’t feel that there was a distance between them and that she was the one that always had to speak.

In terms of the practicalities it seemed that Christa had to take the lead and make an appointment or to invite Barry for coffee. They lived close to each other, so this was easy. She also kept track of how it was going with Barry by asking her husband about him. Barry attended his confirmation class.

The connection to spirituality and experiences of God

Christa said that she wanted to talk to Barry about “faith stuff” without forcing certain questions on him or for instance giving him a lesson on baptism, et cetera. If there was something that bothered him they would talk about it. The connection to faith here was within the context of questions that might come up from confirmation class. Topics like prayer, dogma, baptism and the theology of the church was discussed and taught in the class. When they spoke about faith it would be church related.

She also said that she would like to talk to him about church and how he felt about it later on in his life if she got the chance. She would like to ask him where he was going to church then and how it turned out for him.

The fact that many young people go through with confirmation in the reformed tradition and then stop being involved in church is the background to Christa’s wish. She would like Barry to stay involved or at least to think about it.

Barry made a connection between the mentorship experience and how it prepared him better for his confirmation itself. It was better than just going to see a church council member once for an interview. This helped him. He was also positive about the fact that he was aware of Christa’s presence at the confirmation ceremony.

Christa said the ceremony touched her a lot. At the ceremony her mentee, for whom she felt responsible, was confessing his faith. And she felt happy about it, and felt that he really could do it wholeheartedly.

This meant that there was some kind of spiritual journey between them that led to Christa’s comment that she is at peace with his confession. It was not a statement that sounded as if she now “checked up” on him and his faith. It rather was a statement of trust and pride in their mentorship relationship.

4. THE NARRATIVE OF ROELEEN AND JEANÉ LEMMER

Roeleen is in her late forties and is married to Dewald. They have three daughters of which Jeané is the oldest. Roeleen works at a crèche in Pretoria. Jeané is a student at present and chose Roeleen as her mentor when she was in her confirmation year in 2006.

4.1 Excerpts from an interview with Roeleen and Jeané

The following are excerpts from one of their interviews.

1	Z ⁹	The first question I would like to ask, is for Jeane. How did you decide to choose a mentor?
2	J ¹⁰	Because I am a bit shy and I am not so comfortable with other people, I thought I would ask my mom. I thought it will be more comfortable for me.
3	Z	Being comfortable is an important thing?
4	J	Yes
5	Z	And how did it feel for you to be asked?
6	R ¹¹	I wondered if it is a good thing, because you can neglect it. If you have someone from the outside you know you have appointments, where if we have an appointment and something happens in the house, then I can always reschedule. So I was worried about that. On the other hand I felt good that she actually chose me. It was a compliment. And it really worked out well and it was very special to me at the end of the day.
7	Z	Because it was mother and daughter?

⁹ Z - Zander

¹⁰ J - Jeané

¹¹ R - Roeleen

8	R	Yes, and we have had a good relationship but this was...I am with my children all the time...but this was...(and our conversations were never less than 2 hours)...then we sat for two hours and it was just she and I. And it is at this time where they become an adult. So I think we actually got to know each other in a different way. It was focused. And you had a topic. So if I look back, it really worked well.
15	Z	So you spoke about anything really?
16	R	Anything. What made it easier, is that we knew each other. We didn't need to get to know each other. And if there is an issue, Grade 11 is a difficult year, then there might be something with friends or something, and she is the one that always listens to everyone, then we would talk about that. Because we now made time and we have the time to talk. Before we know, two hours have passed.
24	Z	What kind of aims did you set for yourselves?
25	J	The first time after "prayer" we said that everyday this week we would pray for someone in the family. And then at the end of the day we would go to my dad (if we for instance prayed for him that day) and ask him how his day was. Then he would say it was actually a good day.
26	R	We never told whoever we prayed for that we were praying for him. We both prayed for the same person. So the family didn't know whom we were praying for that day. So for example when she got out of the car I would say, "remember its Tasha today" and then Tasha would ask about it and we would say it's between us. Then Tasha would start getting jealous (laugh). And we would talk to her at school and say to her that dad has a tough day. So we have this connection now. We could speak about dad's tough day. It happened a few times that the day would then turn around (after we prayed), which uplifted us again. Because we prayed specifically for something and then afterwards he would say "the meeting went different to what I expected". And then we would just smile at each other and go again.

		We didn't want them to know about it. At the end of the mentorship we told them. And then felt special, but I think it meant more for our spiritual growth, to see there are answers to our prayers. That was very special. And things like service, where we had to do something for someone else, then I would ask her "did you do something for someone today?" At some stage we asked the Lord to send us a person for whom we can pray. And because we did it together, we would say to each other, "nobody came across my path today" and the next day "this stranger came across my path" or "mom, today this friend just opened up her heart to me".
29	Z	You obviously had this sort of spiritual side to your relationship, but do you think the mentorship helped you to grow spiritually?
30	R	Definitely yes. We were connected, but now we are more connected. We had a conversation just now where I asked her, "if we didn't have the mentorship, would it have changed anything. Did it have an influence?" And she said: "spiritual growth". And for me too. (Jeane) You said it made a difference, but on what level did it make a difference?
31	J	My own spiritual growth and the being togetherness.
47	Z	What do you think is the general idea out there about mentorship?
48	R	What did you think when you heard about it the first time? (Jeane)
49	J	We were a bit afraid, our friends. Because we weren't sure who to choose, but later when we started to do it, we thought it is nice. Mentorship is more 'help with problems', 'talk a bit'.
54	Z	How did you experience the age difference?
55	J	I wasn't a problem for me at all. It was nice.
56	Z	You are not in the same context the whole day. Was that good or bad?
57	J	It was good. Because you come together from two different worlds and the you can share from your world and she from hers, and then you can learn from one another. That was good.

73	Z	So what do you think in general are the stories about mentorship? Are there stories where it does not work?
74	J	I don't know stories like that. Except for this one friend for whom it was not so intense. But in the other stories they found it meaningful.
75	R	Maybe that one friend who said that mentorship is okay, but it doesn't feel to her if it was so important. That makes it difficult for you, cause the child chooses the mentor. Maybe the other problem was that the mentor had four students.
83	Z	What do you think is the culture of our society concerning this – going to sit with someone and just to be with them?
84	R	I think, it's bad to say, but if you don't put it into your diary, it isn't there anymore.
85	Z	But do you think people write it down in their diaries?
86	R	No, and you know what. If it was in the diary then it is very easy to cancel your family appointment for a work appointment. It is a choice of will. It is 'we as family made a choice to have one evening a weekend to ourselves'. Things like that.

4.2 Roeleen and Jeané's notes on their interview

I list some of Roeleen and Jeané's own notes on their interview in bulleted form.

- Our narrative says that we both experienced the mentorship programme very positive and that we gained a lot from the process. We both grew spiritually and we have a stronger mother-daughter relationship now.
- It was a new process for us, so we didn't really know what to expect. But if we look back we had a positive spiritual experience. We gained a lot.
- We really thought that we knew each other well, but after this year of intense conversations, we came to know each other even more intimately. We became aware of each other's deepest feelings and experiences.

- We learned that a mother-child mentorship relationship could mean a lot for their relationship. Mentorship is about relationships and it just makes it easier if a mother-child relationship already exists and you can build on it.
- It is not only about what the mentor can teach the mentee, but what you can learn from each other.
- We can really recommend a mother-daughter mentorship, especially if a good relationship already exists. The fact that you are in contact on a daily basis makes it easier and the goals for the month can be reached more effectively. You are more in touch with each other's feelings

4.3 My notes from conversations with Roeleen and Jeané

The longest conversations with the most contents were with Roeleen and Jeané. When you read the interview you will see this. This made it easy to conduct a conversation with them and helped in making a thick description.

The first thing that caught my attention was the way that they spoke easily and freely about the spiritual aspect of their relationship. I know the family and know that they are committed Christians who are involved in many activities at church. They have an outgoing spirituality and therefore it would be natural for them to bring this into their mentorship relationship. They have their stories of praying together and for other family members. They prayed together about issues that came up and shared spiritual experiences with each other. This is one thing that stood out for me during our conversations.

I was worried about the fact that Jeané did not speak a lot in the interviews. She is a bit more of an introvert and but it seems that she speaks to her mom easily. Roeleen communicates well. This can be an obstacle in a research interview. I think I tried to involve her as much as possible by also asking her direct questions.

One thing from their narrative that I noted was that although they are living in the same house, they reserved special times for their conversations. They also made something special of it by sitting in front of the fireplace or next to the dam with a picnic basket. The other family members had to give them their space for this specifically. The family knew when it was mentorship time. This was something that I thought made Jeané's experience of the mentorship programme special.

They also showed commitment to the programme. During the year they tried to stick to the feedback times and also set goals for themselves. In the programme it is suggested that you decide together on certain things that you would like to focus on before the next conversation. The mentor will help the mentee by maybe giving more attention to behaviour, or a personal goal or a spiritual discipline like prayer for instance. Then the mentee would decide what that goal would be and the mentor would discuss this with him or her and follow this up. Roeleen and Jeané did this and experienced it very positively.

4.4 Reflection on their narrative

Choosing a mentor

Jeané said that she was a bit shy and that she would feel more comfortable with her mother as her mentor. She had a good relationship with her mother and therefore she asked her. Roeleen said that she worried at first if it would be a good thing to ask her, because in a household to lose track of the importance of the mentoring process. In that sense you could get into a situation where you did not make special time for it. But she felt that it was a compliment that Jeané asked her.

In chapter four this would turn out to be a topic that will form part of all of the stories. In a sense it seems that each situation is unique and the way that people think about it differs. Jeané took her personality into account and chose her mother with whom she has a good relationship. There was no other option in her mind and it proved to work out well for them.

Roles

In this narrative we hear a lot about the mother-daughter relationship. They felt that this relationship was actually something that they would recommend to others. The mentorship process helped their relationship to become deeper and added value.

The question about the difference between a mother-daughter relationship and a mentor-mentee relationship again comes to the fore in my reflection. Is a mother-daughter relationship similar to a mentor-mentee relationship? Is it a problem if roles overlap? What makes it work as a mentor-mentee relationship at the end?

For the answer to these questions I again tried to turn to Roeleen and Jeané's own interpretation of their roles and relationship. If you listen to their narrative, Roeleen would say that their mother-daughter relationship was in a transitional phase; the phase where any teenage daughter starts to become a young adult. In the process the role of the mother also changes from being a mother to that of a friend, or a mentor. This was a time when Roeleen wanted to get to know her daughter in a different way, and it seemed that this mentorship relationship could facilitate this for them.

Roeleen also said that she distinguished certain actions as mentorship-like and others as mother-like. When she encouraged Jeané in terms of the contents of their mentorship discussions, that would be mentorship. In the general day-to-

day activities in the house, they would fulfil the mother-daughter role. In this way they experienced the two roles together.

In my mind the mentorship programme and the relationship that is “named” in it, seems to enhance or facilitate different roles and different relationships in very unique ways.

Jeané also said that the age difference wasn’t a problem for her, and she experienced the fact that they didn’t share the same worlds as positive.

Time and a busy lifestyle

A lot of the general ideas about people and young people being busy also came out in our conversations. The fear that this relationship would slip away and vanish into the day-to-day household activities, the emphasis on diarising the appointments, setting goals and the comments on the culture of the day, all bear witness to this.

This brought the discourse about time and full programmes to the foreground again, something we heard a lot about in the narrative of Hanlie. Roeleen and Jeané made special time for their conversations. They also needed the feedback dates, so that they could make sure that they keep their appointments before these dates. They said that this was the culture that they lived in.

Commitment

I got the impression that they were committed to this relationship and therefore they did put time aside in their schedules for it. This is consistent with the other narratives as well. Where there is commitment it will manifest in time allocated for it and going to a lot of trouble to make it special.

We see this in their narrative in the way they would set out candles, or sit next to the dam on holiday, or really make time where no one could bother them.

Setting goals

One aspect of their narrative that stood out for me is how they worked through the material of the programme together and set goals for themselves. The programme gave the mentors some reading material on spiritual disciplines that could be used in conversations if they wanted to. Roeleen and Jeané read the chapters and highlighted things they thought was important. Then they would compare these notes with each other and discuss it.

They would set goals for themselves after discussing a topic like prayer. They would pray for someone every day that week and then discuss it again. They also spoke about service. Then would try and do something where they could perform a service for someone and then speak about that again. The fact that they saw each other a lot obviously helped. They could remind each other of a goal or tell each other what happened.

The fact that this was only kept between them, made their relationship special in a way. They shared something that the others in the family did not know about and this made it their secret.

How they understand mentorship

Jeané said that in the beginning when she heard about the mentorship she and her friends were a bit scared of it. They didn't know who to choose and what to expect of it. But once it started she saw it more as "help with problems and talk a bit". Roeleen said she thought about it as a student-mentor type relationship where the mentor answered all the questions.

They started out by not being sure what to expect and with certain general ideas about it. It turned out that they later understood mentorship more as something where they both were in it together, and they spoke to each other about whatever interested them.

The one theme that I discerned from their narrative was that they spoke a lot about the growth in their relationship and growth as a goal of the relationship. The relationship went through phases where they spoke in a more structured way and worked through the reading material to being more open and not so structured. They also became more open to each other. They also described that they experienced spiritual growth.

In terms of the aim of the relationship, it struck me that they made an effort to grow together. Maybe in a sense the focus of this was more on Jeané but this was definitely the motivation for why they were together.

The connection to spirituality and experiences of God

This narrative is filled with spiritual experiences. They had the experiences of praying for the father for instance and then he would say his day had turned out better than expected. They felt that this was then a way in which God answered their prayer, which encouraged them to continue growing spiritually.

When they spoke about their relationship they would also speak about it in spiritual growth terms. Prayer was an important part of it, so were the spiritual disciplines that they read as part of the mentorship programme.

In the interview they said that if they didn't have the mentorship programme, they would have missed out on the spiritual growth they experienced. This is linked to being connected and being together.

I couldn't help but ask myself why they had had such a spiritual experience in the whole process and others didn't speak about it in such a way. They felt that it was caused by the programme, but the programme was exactly the same as for others who didn't speak about spiritual growth at all. So again I think what it did was to enhance the spirituality that was latent in them before the mentorship relationship. They do have a certain narrative as individuals and as family in terms of spirituality. It seemed that the mentorship had emphasised this.

Meaning

What happened in the next year gave me a glimpse of where the meaning of their narrative lies. They said that although the mentorship programme was in the past, the relationship they had built up remained intact. They felt that they were now more open to each other and shared more easily. They also felt that they had grown in all the ways we had discussed.

Roeleen related the instance where something was bothering Jeané and how she would close the door (like with the mentorship sessions) and they could speak about it and sort it out. This way the roles seemed to come together for them.

A lot of the meaning in their narrative lies here – in the growth in their relationship.

5. THE NARRATIVE OF VALIZE SCHOLTZ

Valize is currently a final year student in engineering at the University of Pretoria. She is 22 years old. Valize has been a leader in the youth ministry for a few years and is responsible for communication and marketing. She is part of the mentorship programme because she is in the leadership group. In 2006 she

chose a mentor whose name she prefers not to disclose. The relationship didn't work out as hoped.

5.1 Excerpts from an interview with Valize

The following are excerpts from an interview with Valize.

7	Z ¹²	And you then chose X, which you knew from school.
8	V ¹³	I think that was one of the problems. When I was at school I saw her a lot and talked to her a lot. But in my first year it was difficult. And you sms and phone someone and ask if we can fit something in and then you try to fit it in. And if you have tried a few times or the person doesn't reply for days, then you give up after a while and the whole thing falls through.
9	Z	At what stage did you decide to rather leave it?
10	V	Not too long. Three or four months into the process. I think we actually got to see one another twice maybe.
11	Z	And how was it when you did see each other?
12	V	It wasn't bad. But it felt very forced to me. Yes, I kind of think the idea to say, "you are now my mentor and we now have a mentor conversation" is something that both must be able to do, but to me it was really forced.
19	Z	Have you kept contact since then?
20	V	A few times maybe. It basically died a quiet death. We never spoke about it afterwards. She didn't say sorry or I didn't say, "what happened to you" or anything like that. But I did see her once or twice. I think the conversations were a bit shallow, but it probably is that way with anybody that kind of fades out of your life, no matter how it happened.

¹² Z - Zander

¹³ V - Valize

23	Z	So what was the meaning of this experience for you further on? Because the next year you sort of felt not to do it again due to this experience?
24	V	Because at that stage I definitely did not believe in the idea or the process anymore. And I think it doesn't help to try it, if you don't believe in it. So that definitely. And it didn't feel like there was anyone I could ask.
25	Z	If the scenario was different, if even after this first experience there was someone you thought would make a good mentor, would you have given it a second chance?
26	V	Definitely now. I think differently about it now and I know it is a very popular thing these days. Everyone talks about it. Everyone believes in it. Everyone thinks everybody should have a mentor. And I had a lot of cool conversations about it with people.
27	Z	Here at church?
28	V	In general. On the outreach in December there was this guy, Adriaan, who is actually also a very big fan of mentorship. And somewhere along the line I had a long conversation with him about it, and we had a prayer team as well. And the one girl in the team asked about it, because it was the first time she heard about it. So we talked about it.
35	Z	What is your general idea?
36	V	I first came across the word, while looking on the internet for stuff on hockey and goal keeping etc. And I found this funky site, where there was this idea that every goalkeeper had to have a goalkeeper mentor. This is actually where I came across the idea in the first place. It limits it a lot, because it creates the idea that a mentor actually did what you do now. The mentor walked the same road as you. What it probably is not. But that was my idea about it at that stage.
37	Z	Do you think the general idea about it in our Lynnwood context is positive or negative? What do you think?
38	V	I think it's actually kind of positive. Or it works for a lot of people.

		Maybe they are all lying (laugh) hmmm...I don't know. There are definitely a lot of people it does work for, where there comes a lot of good things out of it. But for many it is forced, and very unnatural and very weird.
41	Z	I think maybe the energy with the leaders group about mentorship has become less. I don't know if it is maybe because they are too busy for it now or if it just isn't a high priority?
42	V	I think one thing is that for many of them it isn't new anymore. They are now the group that has had mentors in their confirmation year. Because the leaders are either people who had mentors in their confirmation year or who have been a leader before. So for many of them it isn't new. So the novelty has worn off. And if it is busy, then one prioritizes.

5.2 Valize's notes on her interview

My narrative seems to emphasise a lot of negatives about mentorship. Firstly, it is important to believe in the process, to be open-minded about it. It says something about not just having a mentor for the sake of having a mentor, but genuinely believing that having a mentor-relationship with that particular person adds value to your life. Although it is not obvious from the interview I have a theory that a mentorship-relationship should almost develop naturally, up to a point where you officially ask that person to fulfil a mentorship role in your life. I think we each have a lot of mentors in our lives without necessarily regarding those people as official mentors. But it is important to choose the right person when you finally do choose someone.

I pick up something about perceptions of mentorship in my narrative. The business world uses the term, the sports world uses the term, and the Bible is littered with mentorship type of relationships. In each context it appears to have a slightly different meaning, although mentorship always seems to involve one person guiding another in some way. Some people have fixed ideas about

mentorship and stick to those ideas even when the context changes, some people just seem to have no clue of it at all. Mentorship has some kind of hype these days and somehow I wonder if the craze will blow over. But it has been around since the days of the Old Testament, so maybe it will not.

I also read something about commitment to the relationship, from the mentor and the mentee's side. I have been on both sides. I've struggled to see my own mentor as often as possible. I have also been mentor to a mentee that didn't buy into the idea and was not very keen to meet too often. People always claim to live busy lives, but if something really matters to you would make time to fit it in.

There are no real surprises. I think I have thought too much about mentorship and my previous mentorship relationships to really be surprised by anything. The only thing that maybe stood out is how much my idea of mentorship was shaped by things I read previously in a sports context and in business books.

Someone can learn not to go into a mentor relationship that they don't believe in when they look at my narrative. People should also learn that mentorship is a process that requires commitment from both sides. Someone looking at my narrative should also see the danger of getting caught up in perceptions about mentorship.

I think when looking at my narrative we can learn that mentorship is actually a more delicate process than we often make of it. It might be that such a fine balance makes the difference between working and not working. And then once again, you need commitment from both parties.

My narrative is probably influenced strongly by my own feelings of not having another shot at it until I'm 100% sure. If I had taken a chance in the past three years on a mentor somewhere along the line, I could have had a great success

narrative to write down today. Maybe my inability to confront my mentor when things started falling apart had the biggest influence of all. Maybe the relationship just needed more time that I didn't give it.

Something struck me while doing this reflection. In the interview you asked me about people being marginalised by the mentorship programme. It has since occurred to me that maybe it's the mentors who feel marginalised. It's frustrating when you get the feeling that you are not meeting your mentee's expectations, maybe not adding value to his or her life. Maybe it's the mentors that start feeling like failures when mentorship relationships don't work.

5.3 My notes from conversations with Valize

When Valize said she would volunteer to become part of the research process I thought that it was a formidable thing to do. It is not always easy to join a group or speak about something that you perceive not to have worked or had failed. I never got the impression that Valize's narrative was about assigning blame to anyone, but rather to reflect on it and learn from it. This was an awarding experience for me to be part of as researcher.

Valize also chose not to include the mentor she chose or to reveal her name. So for the purposes of our discussion we will refer to the mentor as person X.

From the start of the programme I felt that this was an important narrative to have in the research. This was the only specific category that I identified. In hindsight this too might have been forcing a theme on the research in the sense that I labelled narratives that did not work as the marginalised narratives in my research. I am not so sure if this is true. I do however think that Valize's narrative became an integral part of the research for other reasons. The way she reflected on her own experience and wrote about it herself was a huge

contribution. Valize also has the ability to reflect very soberly on her own narrative and contributed to the research in a special way.

The process of having conversations and asking her to reflect on it, seemed also to give her a chance to reflect about the experience herself in her own way. This is also therapeutic in a way.

5.4 Reflection on her narrative

Choosing a mentor

Valize chose a teacher at school to be her mentor when she was finishing grade 12. This was part of the leaders' programme at the church. The relationship never really got off the ground and one would easily think that if you could repeat this choice you would choose someone different. But Valize said that she probably would make the same choice again if she had the opportunity to do it over, because she made the choice based on the relationship she shared with the teacher at that stage of her life. She enjoyed talking to her and had a good relationship with her.

It almost seemed that when they actually moved into a mentor-mentee relationship this changed. They didn't know how to handle it differently and it felt forced.

One can almost draw the conclusion that not all relationships are meant to be "turned" into a mentorship relationship. If the roles change, then it is difficult to adapt or move into this new way of looking at each other?

In Valize's own reflection she says that at the end it is very important to choose the right person to be your mentor – someone with whom you actually have grown into a mentorship relationship naturally.

Commitment and time

The one thing that did seem to play a role is the fact that they were in a situation where they would see each other on a regular basis at school, and this changed when Valize left school. To see each other now took more effort and commitment. It also seemed that the effort to try and make this work did not come from both sides in this narrative. So when the relationship did not continue in this fashion they decided to terminate it.

They also never spoke about the mentorship relationship again or didn't try to make it work somehow. The mentor also never complied with the programme's feedback requests in that year.

Without the commitment from both parties and the time set aside that follows this commitment there cannot be a relationship that works.

How she understands mentorship or discourses on mentorship

This theme is very strong in Valize's narrative. There is a lot of reflection on mentorship in her narrative.

She speaks a lot about first believing in mentorship and that it can add value to your life before trying to commit to it. She emphasises that it is important for her that you believe in something. In this way you will be open to it and put effort into it. Otherwise you are uncommitted and unmotivated about it from the start.

In terms of the discourses surrounding mentorship she tells about her association with it, coming from the sport environment. The mentor did what the mentee wanted to learn. For instance, a goalkeeper in hockey would get a mentor who is a good goalkeeper herself. In this way the mentor must coach you how to become a better goalkeeper.

The other comment Valize makes is that mentorship is a bit of a buzzword at the moment in this context. There is a lot of focus on mentorship in various contexts. It seems that the programme also contributed to this in the context of the congregation. She speaks about members of another church that she met on an outreach who also spoke about it. There are also slightly different ideas about what it means, but the most general seems to be that a mentor is someone who guides someone else.

I think Valize is not negative about mentorship after her experience. She has herself been a mentor to someone else that also seemed to be difficult. But when I asked her if she would go into a mentorship relationship again, she said she definitely would now.

One thing that we can learn from her narrative is that it is not only important to choose the right mentor but also to believe in it and understand it beforehand.

Marginalised narratives

In reflecting a bit more on her narrative and the question about marginalised narratives, I realised again that there were more narratives in this research that came from the confirmation year, than from the leaders' group. Valize formed part of the leadership leg of the programme, but she was the only volunteer from this leg of the programme.

The leadership leg started out well, but it seems that the enthusiasm about the programme grew less as time went by and the church is not so strict about making the programme a prerequisite for the leaders. They are asked to do so, but many don't get to it where they formally take part in the programme as was the case in the past.

In the interview with Valize she said that maybe the leaders that were now part of the group have all had the experience of having a mentor, coming through the confirmation year leg of the programme. So it wasn't new to them. The question then arises if it wasn't so meaningful to them in their confirmation year why they do not participate in it anymore? This is maybe a topic on its own and falls outside the narratives we are listening to, but I also experienced myself that many of them actually do have someone in their lives who is a mentor to them but that they do not formally take part in the programme.

The second marginalised narrative that she refers to in her own reflection is that of the mentors themselves. Maybe they feel marginalised and frustrated when they are not meeting the mentee's expectations or the mentee is not committed to the relationship in the same way as they are. Many mentors in the programme do feel that they are not good enough or maybe don't have all the answers. Then it feels like they have failed themselves.

What is success in this context?

I think that this is one question that needs to be asked. There are general ideas of what success constitutes. Is it a successful relationship when you spend a lot of time together? Is it successful when it achieved certain goals? Whose goals? What are the criteria for success?

These questions came to mind while reflecting on Valize's narrative. Is it correct to say that this was a narrative of an unsuccessful narrative? That is something that probably only Valize can determine. In one sense it was unsuccessful. In other ways she learned a lot from it and in that sense it was successful.

I think we mustn't jump to certain universal conclusions about success in any way. This would be untrue to my positioning and to me. The one thing that did

strike me from Valize's narrative is her description of mentorship as a delicate process that needs to be balanced.

Balance seems to be the key.

6. IN CLOSING

When I started out with the research and had to decide on my research design, I was worried that choosing only three to five narratives would not be enough to make a thick description. Even when I was busy with the research interviews this worried me at times.

Writing this chapter proved me wrong. The process of reflection and actually writing down all of the information helped me immensely with my research. The unique outcome from this chapter was the way that certain themes almost formulated themselves. It might seem if you read this chapter that some of the themes were standard headings I used, but it wasn't. All the themes were taken from the narratives as they presented themselves. I just tried to group them together by using the same heading.

This process already points to our next chapter where we can bring the various narratives in conversation with each other.

Chapter 4: INTERPRETING EXPERIENCES AND HAVING THE DIFFERENT NARRATIVES CONVERSE WITH EACH OTHER

We have described a specific context and we have listened to the narratives and experiences of various co-researchers. In the previous two chapters we have already started to interpret the experiences. All the co-researchers had the opportunity to reflect on their narratives and to give some input on my reflection. This is a good illustration of how research processes work. They don't always follow the steps that are set out in the design directly. The processes overlap, and listening to narratives often opens up the phase where they are developed further and are reflected upon.

In this chapter we are continuing the research process by moving to the next stage of my research design. We will interpret the experiences and narratives with the co-researchers. This will be done in a group discussion and I will also reflect on this discussion. We will bring our different reflections in conversation with each other. We will thicken our interpretation through interdisciplinary investigation. The interdisciplinary investigation will not be discussed as a separate stage but will overlap with the interpretation process. It will be integrated into our reflection.

The experiences and how they are informed by various traditions of interpretations will be discussed. These discourses have already been identified in the previous chapters, but I am going to group them together and describe them in general for this specific context. Then we will reflect on the religious and spiritual aspects, as it is understood in this context. We will ask how God is present and how it is understood.

In this chapter we are focussing on getting to a point of the research where we could easily move to the last stage of this process. This is an important chapter to open new interpretations and bring us to conclusions that can take us beyond the local.

1. INTERPRETATIONS THICKENED THROUGH INTERDISCIPLINARY INVESTIGATION

At the beginning of this section it is important to give some background on the interdisciplinary investigation that forms part of our reflection process. Within our positioning and research design it is of cardinal importance that other disciplines are consulted and that their contributions form part of the interpretation process. I discuss this here because the contribution of the interdisciplinary conversation is integrated in the next sections without dedicating a specific section to the contents of the conversation.

1.1 An interdisciplinary conversation

Mentorship is a theme that involves a number of other disciplines. I decided the best way to integrate interdisciplinary contributions to this research was not only to have a look at literature but also to have a conversation about mentorship with scholars from other disciplines. For this conversation I invited the following scholars from different fields:

Dr H Steyn	Life coach, mentorship in the business context
Prof H de Beer	Human Resource Management/Industrial Psychology
Dr C Human	Psychologist
Mrs P Barnard	Social Work
Prof J Müller	Practical Theology

In order to have a meaningful discussion we made use of a process developed by Müller (2008). In this process general conversation and theorising is avoided

by focussing on a specific moment of praxis or narrative. This narrative is used as a basis for discussing four questions formulated by Müller:

1. When reading the narrative, what are your **concerns**?
2. What do you think is your discipline's **unique perspective** on this narrative?
3. Why do you think your perspective will be **understood and appreciated** by people from other disciplines?
4. What would your major concern be if the perspective of your discipline **might not be taken seriously**?

The narrative of Coenraad and Carina (in interview form) was sent to each participant together with the questions. They had time before the discussion to read through the interview and think about the questions. We worked through the questions and had a good discussion on mentorship.

The various aspects of the conversation will be used during my interpretation process and the contribution and views of each of the disciplines integrated where applicable. In summary of our conversation there were a few aspects that all of the disciplines agreed upon as well as aspects that we differed about or would approach differently. I list them here:

Mutual agreement

- From the viewpoint of all the disciplines, everyone was concerned about Coenraad as the mentor in this particular narrative. They were concerned about his struggle in defining his various roles in the relationship.
- All the disciplines feel strongly about the relationship as the central focal point in mentorship.
- Growth is the basic aim of mentorship.

- There should be a very clear definition about mentorship and how it is understood.
- The aims of the programme should be clear.
- Most of the disciplines emphasises knowledge, abilities, life experience and wisdom as prerequisites in becoming a mentor.
- Expectations should be clear in terms of aims and definitions in the programme. The gap in expectations creates anxiety and tension.

Differences

- Notions about the aim of the programme and mentorship in general differ between the various disciplines.
- The context of this particular programme and that of most of the disciplines differ substantially.
- The definition of mentorship also differs. In the business world the definition of mentorship can be totally different from that in the church context.
- The way mentorship is approached in each discipline also seems to differ.

1.2 The contribution of interdisciplinary conversation

By positioning oneself postfoundational, the emphasis on interdisciplinary conversation is one of the major contributions to this process. After becoming aware of the confines of any discipline, it now almost seems unethical not to engage in some form of dialogue with other disciplines. To my mind this also entails more than just consulting literature. The experience of being in physical conversation together, with the same narrative or concrete praxis as basis, is much more rewarding than just consulting literature. Conversation is a dynamic process, that in this case made a valuable contribution to the research.

The insight from the conversation helped the process by posing new questions from different perspectives. This helps with the reflection on the narratives in this chapter. The questions that were asked during the conversation might come from a different context but it helps to open up a process of deconstruction in this process and to explore alternative understanding..

It is however a challenging conversation. There are various differences in terms of epistemology. This is apparent even though it was not discussed. This makes it a challenging environment to “stand your ground” without taking a position against the various perspectives. The concept of transversal reality, as discussed earlier in chapter 1 comes into play. The process also proves the lack of universality as seen in Müller’s paper (2008). There is not one universal agreement on knowledge, but a number of contributions to the conversation. This doesn’t mean that the various disciplines have so little in common that conversation is not possible. How this conversation is conducted and integrated seems to be the biggest challenge.

In terms of the research process thus far, it is comforting to see that the same themes that arose from the different narratives we listened to in this process, are the same themes that came to the fore in the conversation. The approaches differ but the same issues arise. This helps to give legitimacy and integrity to the process followed here. It also confirms that local knowledge points beyond the local.

There was a concern about the mentor in the narrative of Coenraad and Carina. This was a significant perspective. One would expect a focus on the mentee, but in this case the concern was for Coenraad.

In the conversation critical questions were raised with regards to the context of the church as institution. Is the aim of the programme to “mentor” young people into the power relations and formalised ideas of the institution? How is it

understood? Is theology offended by such questions? This was to my mind a valuable contribution to the conversation. It helps to keep up a critical reflection on our own discipline and it helps to see how it fits in within the practical work of the church. It reminds one of the work of Foucault and Derrida that was discussed in chapter 1.

The last general remark that I want to make here concerns the similarities of the issues discussed in the interdisciplinary conversation and the themes that are raised through Hanlie's narrative. A lot of the discussion on structure, definitions, aims and general programme and process issues are at the level of the way the programme is structured. This comes into play in Hanlie's narrative about the programme and how it developed. Although the conversation was specifically structured with the focus on a specific narrative, a lot of the conversation became applicable to the issues from the narrative, but also related to the programme as a whole.

This leads to the decision to integrate the contents of the conversation as another voice within the reflection that follows. The aim of the interdisciplinary conversation is to thicken the interpretation.

2. MAKING INTERPRETATIONS ABOUT EXPERIENCES AND THE NARRATIVES TOLD

2.1 Deciding on how to involve the co-researchers in this process

It is very important within my research approach to try and keep the co-researchers part of the reflection and interpretation as much as possible. This was always an ideal for me. Many of the co-researchers are busy people and do this research with me as volunteers, without any remuneration for it. That is why I was sensitive not to ask too much of their time, but rather to find creative ways for them to be part of the process and be informed about my own reflections.

I decided the best way was to communicate with them via email. I sent the interviews to them and they reflected on their own narratives by themselves. After I wrote my reflections I sent it to them to keep them informed. The same will happen with the reflection in this chapter. I will send it to them and if they want to change anything or add to the reflection, they are welcome to do so.

But this process also has limits. In a sense it is easy to just read what I have written and accept it without necessarily thinking a lot about it. On the other hand I trust them enough to know that they will give input where they feel it is important. The interviews, conversations and feedback were done with each co-researcher or couple on their own individual narrative. They never had a chance to hear the other narratives of the whole group.

I decided that it was necessary to do this. This could also be a very interesting and important part of the research to bring the group together as a whole. This way there could be interaction, there could be reflection as a group and they could be part of the process where we try and come to a communal narrative about mentorship in this context.

The group came together and I led the group in an open conversation, in which we identified various aspects and themes that the group felt was a good reflection of all the narratives.

2.2 Notes on the group discussion

During the conversation in the group I helped a bit with some of the general themes and then asked if the group agreed with my compilations and reflections on the narratives and experiences. We talked about it and they added to each theme from their own narratives. This was a memorable experience in my

research and I think it was a positive experience for the group to be in conversation with each other.

I list in bulleted form the themes and aspects the group decided upon, together with the very short notes I made during the discussion about certain of the aspects. In the next section we will look at all of these in depth with regards to the themes we have already focussed upon.

Choosing a mentor

- There are unique things that play a role in each person's choice of a mentor. These differ from person to person.
- Personalities play a role.
- Many of the mentees think about it carefully and many don't think about it at all – some make the easiest choice they can.
- The question remains – how do you choose? Someone said that maybe there is a “psycho-dynamic thing” underlying your choice in all of us. We connect to certain people and then we choose them.
- Hanlie tells the story of someone who couldn't make up his mind and chose two mentors. She also tells about the father who was chosen to be his son's mentor and then came to the training. After the first session he decided that he was not going to be a good mentor for his son, and next time he brought another mentor along with him that would now be the new mentor for his son.

Commitment, time and loyalty to each other

- These are some of the most important factors that make a mentorship relationship work.
- The more time you spend together the better.

- The more time you spend together, the more focussed you are in the relationship.
- It is not a good thing for a mentor to have more than one mentee. Then they don't spend enough time on a mentee and the relationship suffers.
- There needs to be loyalty and commitment to the relationship.

Different relationships and roles

- When you are living in the same house and you are related, then the various roles as parent, child or sibling play a bigger role than in other mentorship relationships.
- It is not really about the different roles, but rather about the relationships.
- When it comes to the relationships between relatives, the phase and emotional situation must be taken into account.

Surprises

- A lot of times the relationships work out differently to what was expected.
- There are a lot of expectations and then when these aren't met as expected people are surprised.
- The grade 11s are more valuable in the process than we thought – they meant a lot to the mentors.
- The mentors as a group also formed closer bonds than expected.

The grade 11s

- In the group and the research there are a lot of emphasis on the grade 11s and the importance of the programme for them.

Busyness

- People are very busy in our context. Young people are even busier at school and it is difficult to get time with them in their busy schedules.

Content and structure

- The need for structure in terms of conversations depends a lot on the mentor and the mentee that you have.
- In general there shouldn't be a rule about structure and how the content should be.
- It is good to have more structure and content prescribed in the beginning of the process, because it is new to some of the mentors and mentees and they need the guidance.
- It also depends on the experience of the mentor and if she or he has been part of the programme.
- It needs to be kept informal.
- Ideas and suggestions are more helpful.
- There needs to be enough guidance in the programme during the year.

More than one mentor in your life

- Many people have more than one mentor in their lives and they are not necessarily within the context of a formal programme like this one.

Ideas and perceptions about mentorship

- These play a very strong part in how people enter into the relationship.
- Some people have a fear that the mentor will be an authority figure who is strong when the mentee is weak.
- Others see it as something that steals your time.
- Not all the mentees are at the right phase in their life to have a mentor when they are part of the programme.
- It is still better that the programme is compulsory.

- Therefore guidance is good for the people who do it for the first time.

Marginalised stories

- When the relationship did not work out a mentor might feel as if he or she had failed the mentee.
- You feel “in” when it worked and “out” when it did not.

Creativity

- There are a lot of stories in which creativity plays a role.

God and religion

- The religious experiences are tied to advice and moral questions. A lot of these experiences have to do with the questions about wrong and right.
- There is a lot of honesty in our experiences about church and our spiritual lives.
- Ethics play an important part in our conversations about our faith.
- Christa tells the story of how spirituality is becoming a part of the workplace and how much people talk about religious matters at work. In the past this seldom happened.
- There is not really a separation between my faith as a Christian and the secular world.

Group discussions

- All the group discussions are positive and help a lot.

Individual worlds and each other

- Each person has his/her own world and in sharing this with each other in the mentorship relationship we learn a lot.
- We also become co-responsible for each other in the process and help each other where we can.
- It is an uplifting experience!

2.3 Bringing all our reflections and notes together

In this section we will only focus on the themes that came from the narratives. In the next sections we will look at the spirituality and religious aspects separately, as well as at the traditions of interpretation or discourses.

2.3.1 Listing the themes

I decided to list all the different themes that came to the foreground from the narratives and see what patterns emerge. These themes were not necessarily listed under headings in my reflections after each narrative, but if marked here, they were part of the contents of that particular narrative. I also added the themes that came out in the group's reflection to give us a complete picture. I list them here in the following table:

(H = Hanlie; CC = Coenraad and Carina; CB = Christa and Barry; RJ = Roeleen and Jeané; V = Valize; G = Group)

Themes	H	CC	CB	RJ	V	G
Process / Growth	✓					
Surprises / Expectations	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Time / Commitment	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Creativity	✓					✓
Aim of the programme	✓				✓	
Structure and content	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓

Choosing a mentor	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Feedback / Group discussions	✓			✓		✓
Marginalised narratives	✓				✓	✓
Meaning	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Background		✓				
Relations / Roles		✓	✓	✓		✓
Spirituality and experiences of God		✓	✓	✓		✓
Setting goals				✓		
Grade 11s						✓
Individual worlds and each other						✓

TABLE 1

2.3.2 Deciding on which themes to discuss here

There are a lot of themes here and I had to make a decision about which of them to discuss. The one line of thinking would be that those who are the most prevalent are the “winners”. But I think that if a theme only emerged out of one of the narratives it doesn’t necessarily mean that it is not important to the research. At the end we are trying to come to conclusions based on all the contents, experiences and narratives. There are obviously narratives that are stronger and that everybody agreed upon as the main narratives or themes from our research. This will be concluded in the final chapter.

I did however decide that my criteria for selecting only certain themes to bring into conversation with the other narratives here, will be the themes that need to be discussed in general. All of the themes have been discussed and reflected on after each narrative. But those who are prevalent in most of the narratives have to be reflected on from the perspective of each individual narrative’s contribution to it. In this manner we can get some general ideas and reflection on these specific themes that are most prevalent. This will be done here.

The interdisciplinary conversation will be another voice during the interpretation process.

Based on these criteria I decided to discuss the themes that are in bold type in Table 1.

2.3.3 Making interpretations

Surprises and expectations

It seems that in all the narratives there are aspects about the expectations people have about the mentorship relationship. Mentors expect certain things, or are chosen and do not know what to expect. The grade 11s and leaders have certain expectations or are not sure what to expect when they are asked to be in the programme. There are expectations about what would work and what not from the programme's perspective. There are certain ideas about particular combinations of mentors and mentees and how they are related to each other. There are certain narratives where there are certain reservations about the potential of a relationship and how it is expected to work out.

The gap between expectations and the actual relationship was discussed in the interdisciplinary conversation. The group felt that this could cause anxiety if the gap exists. People can feel uncertain about what awaits them when entering the mentorship relationship, or mentors can act differently to what is expected from a mentor, which has a negative effect on the mentee.

It seems that these expectations are linked to various other aspects. It is linked to the traditions of interpretation that exist and how mentorship is understood in general. It is linked to their own contact with mentorship or previous experiences or narratives that they have heard. It is linked to the narratives in the programme and that has become well-known in the context of the church.

The question should be asked how expectations are managed and understood. Many other disciplines would try and minimise the gap between expectations and reality.

The co-researchers commented positively on expectations in the sense that it sometimes creates the space to be surprised. This is positive. These surprises come when certain things happen differently than expected. Sometimes there are surprises with regards to relationships that work when they were expected not to. Some are surprised about things that turned out well for them instead of bad. Some are surprised when the whole experience of mentorship turned out more positive than they thought. Some are surprised about what they learned from each other in the process. There are various narratives about surprises.

In working within a postfoundational approach this comes as no surprise. The narratives bear witness to our understanding that we are not working within the framework of seeking some universal truth for mentorship. Within a foundational approach we would seek a universal definition that would cancel out variations on the definition or different perspectives. Will this however minimise the gap between expectations people have about mentorship and the way it plays out in reality? People's definitions and expectations differ in any case – no matter how universally mentorship is defined.

The narratives help us to understanding that every relationship seems to be unique. We do not find any specific rules about how a mentorship relationship may or may not look. This applies to relations, generations, experiences, and so forth.

Does this mean that there is no space for foundation, or a general idea about mentorship (which we will discuss later) or no process of minimising anxiety caused by the gap in expectations?

The interdisciplinary discussion helps to sensitise us to the negative effects of not being clear on issues like definition, aims and expectations within the programme. The more mentors and mentees know what is expected of them and what to expect of the process, the less strenuous the process can become for them. Opening up space for unique understanding and individual expectations, even though they might differ from the rest, opens up the possibility of surprise in the process.

If considered from a social-constructionist perspective, the conclusion I would make is that even though there is (from our epistemology) no universal definition or structured universally accepted programme, the group (or in this case the members of this particular process) should be clear on all the aspects in the programme that creates certain expectations.

Discussing expectations and deciding together on certain issues help to create certainty within individuals and minimise anxiety.

Time and commitment

The one theme that seems to have the most agreement from all the voices is time and commitment. All the co-researchers and the interdisciplinary group agree that the more time and effort is put into the relationship, the better the relationship develops and adds meaning. In all the narratives of the co-researchers, the programme's narrative and the conversation with the other disciplines this theme arises more than once.

The differences will be in actually how much time should be spent. From the narratives of the co-researchers who live together one would hear that a lot of time is necessary. From a narrative like Barry and Christa's it became clear that they felt that their time together (that was less than the others) was adequate.

Although it was less, there was definitely commitment to the relationship and they saw each other often.

The narratives told during the research process where there was little or no contact all concluded that those relationships did not work or grow into something.

This research process will conclude that commitment and time put into a relationship is a prerequisite or non-negotiable value that needs to be present in a relationship without ascribing a specific value to the amount of time spent.

Structure and content

This is a theme from the narratives and the interdisciplinary conversations (and literature) that had various perspectives.

If we revisit the narrative of Hanlie, we see that the programme participants have certain ideas and perceptions about the structure of the programme . This would specifically refer to contents in terms of conversations. What kind of contents should be described? Are there certain topics that should be discussed?

The interdisciplinary group had a lot of concerns about structure. They wanted a very clear definition of what mentorship is, a very clear aim of the programme and a very clear process.

The programme is positioned within a more postmodern or social constructionist approach to content. Content is provided in terms of suggestions and tools that can be utilised. The metaphor of a scaffold is used to describe the process to the mentors. There are guidelines and elements, which the mentors must use

for their conversations (the scaffold) but the content and agenda must be built on their own with the mentee (the building).

In the business world there are vary strict guidelines and aims in coaching or mentoring programmes. From their perspectives this provides a process where outcomes can be measured. Measurable outcomes are important for business to determine success, et cetera.

The issues on the table from the various voices in this section can be summarised as follows:

- Definition
- Aims
- Measurability
- Content structuring (material and process for conversation)

These themes overlap with some of our other themes that are discussed here, as well as some that were discussed in chapter 3.

What did the narratives of mentorship from this local situation tell us about these themes? This is the question that is this study's primary concern. We can summarise the conclusions from the narratives as follows:

- Hanlie's narrative speaks on the one hand about the need for more structural content in the form of suggestions without forcing prescribed agendas or material.
- On the other hand Hanlie's narrative doesn't say anything about clear definitions or aims for the programme, but neither does it say that it is not necessary.

- Coenraad and Carina’s narrative doesn’t comment much on content but there was an uncertainty in terms of clear definitions and expectations about mentorship.
- Christa and Barry did not want more structure and were clear about their relationship.
- Roeleen and Jeané followed the suggested material and participated in a process where they set goals for themselves and kept to it.
- Valize says that she had different ideas about mentorship and that this was not really clear for her in the beginning. She also says that many others have different ideas as well.
- The interdisciplinary conversation pleaded strongly for a lot of structure and content that can correspond with the aim and must be measurable.

It is clear that experience and personalities also play a big part in the need expressed by mentors for more or less content and structure. Mentors at the beginning of the process tend to feel more uncertain and therefore find security in better content and stronger process suggestions.

Mentees that have a better idea of mentorship, know what to expect and will know better how to participate in the process.

The fact that there isn’t a prescribed curriculum that needs to be worked through is received positively. There is no need from the narratives for a church agenda to be discussed and tested, in order to gain “acceptance” for confirmation. This seems to be positive. The remarks from the interdisciplinary conversation about an “agenda of the church” to mentor the young people into an institution (that is forceful and denies them true freedom) emphasise this approach.

In conclusion the narratives tell us the following in terms of structure and content:

- A clear understanding of mentorship, the aims of the programme and other aspects of what is expected is positive.
- Content and suggested structure of the process is positive. There can be more content and structure. The fact that it is not prescribed but suggested as guidelines is positively received. (What this is and how it is interpreted in terms of the process must be discussed.)
- There is no mention of measurable outcomes in terms of the agenda of the organisation. This is a challenge in terms of the interdisciplinary conversation, but the narratives do not reflect on this.

Choosing a mentor

This is a major theme in all of the narratives as well as in the interdisciplinary discussion. The programme started out by assigning mentors to mentees. This did not work. The commitment was low and too many mentees was assigned to a mentor. The programme's narratives have reflected positively on the fact that mentees got the chance to choose their own mentors.

There are certain guidelines given on the choosing of a mentor. A young person may not choose someone from the opposite sex unless that person is at least 10 years older (unless it is a relative). There are guidelines given about why you should choose someone and what you should take into consideration. There are a few more examples. There are also narratives from the programme where some young people just made the easiest and most convenient choice without really thinking about it, others put a lot of effort in the process of choosing a mentor.

The co-researchers who chose a relative felt very positive about their choice. There can be questions about roles in such cases and what the content of the mentorship relationship is. Barry and Christa expressed their positive experience with their relationship. Barry chose Christa almost randomly and it

worked out well. Valize chose someone she thought would be a good mentor and whom she trusted. This relationship did not work out.

It seems that there are no set patterns from the narratives of the co-researchers concerning the type of choices made. Some worked and some didn't.

It was clear from the conversation with the various scholars that most feel strongly that a mentor should be someone who is selected or at least well screened and trained. They felt that a mentor should be someone who has more knowledge, wisdom, life experience and abilities than the mentee. Therefore a mentee cannot choose a mentor at all, or if they choose, the mentor should fit these criteria. For some, age also plays a role. It can be dangerous to have a mentor who does not fit these criteria in such a programme with young people.

This brings various questions to mind, some of which were already asked in the narratives:

- Who can be a mentor?
- What are the criteria for being a mentor?
- Who decides on these criteria?
- Must the mentor be more knowledgeable? Is knowledge the key to being the mentor?
- What metaphor lies behind this thought? Is the mentor the expert with all the knowledge?
- Is a mentor always older than the mentee?
- What would be different in the programme if a mentor were assigned to the mentees? How would it change the dynamics?
- What are the benefits of choosing a mentor yourself?
- What is success in terms of a mentorship relationship and which type of person will be a mentor that achieves this?

These questions can be discussed at length and different answers will be given depending on your epistemology and perspective.

The narratives help us to reach a point where meaning is attributed to the fact that mentees can choose the mentor themselves. The context plays a vital role in the way we look at this issue. This programme doesn't have a set of outcomes that need to be achieved or a certain amount of knowledge that needs to be transferred. It seems that the main aim of the programme for young people who are starting out on this mentorship experiment, is just to have the relationship and experience it. If choosing the mentor yourself is meaningful to most, from the narratives this seems like a positive act.

From the perspective of other disciplines there are certain ethical concerns about the process that are valid and contribute to the thinking process behind the narratives. One has to agree that the definition and aims of the programme have a large influence on the way the choosing process takes place. The processes of matching a mentor and mentee, the aims and the definition have to align.

The question could arise from the perspectives of other disciplines that within their understanding of mentorship, a relationship like that of Coenraad and Carina, or Roeleen and Jeané does not qualify to be called a mentorship relationship. I will have to reflect on this in the final chapter.

What the narratives and the interdisciplinary conversation would agree upon is the importance of matching the correct mentor with the mentee. This process is central in terms of its importance within the whole programme. If the mentor is assigned or a mentor is chosen, or any approach within these options is followed – it is important how this is facilitated and explained. There is a strong case to be made out on ethical grounds that even if the choice is given to young people to choose a mentor, there should be some sort of screening process. By whom and how can be discussed later.

Marginalised narratives

Within a narrative positioning that is informed by deconstruction and social constructionism, the question about unheard narratives is in the centre. The critical question here is – are there any narratives from this context that are not heard or are marginalised? Who are the marginalised in this narrative?

In the discussion with the co-researchers various answers were given to this question:

- Some say they can't think of any marginalised narratives, except the narratives that they are obviously not aware of and are therefore unheard.
- The initial narratives that one would suppose are the unheard or marginalised narratives are those narratives where the relationship did not work. But in the conversation with the co-researchers they felt that people would say if they had a negative experience with the mentorship process (like Valize). These narratives are also told in the programme Hanlie said.
- Valize made the interesting contribution in her own reflection that maybe the mentors are sometime the marginalised ones, or feel marginalised when the relationship do not work out. You feel like a failure and then you are marginalised.
- It also seems that the dominant narrative is the one where people have a positive experience with mentorship and the programme and therefore those who did not have such an experience feel "out". The "in" thing is to enjoy it. This is a marginalised narrative.
- Hanlie felt that the one narrative that she does not hear enough is the narrative of the mentees. They could speak to the pastors or to someone else, but in terms of the programme their voice is less prominent than

those of the mentors. I also experienced their voice as less prominent in the interviews.

- From the interdisciplinary conversation very little was said about this, except the comment mentioned earlier about the church system taking away true religious freedom by mentoring the young people into the system that has the power in this case.

In this research there was no dominant marginalised narrative that strongly came to the fore. In previous research I had done in the context of HIV/AIDS there were strong marginalised narratives and unheard voices. If I compare this study to that context, there is no dominant narrative of marginalisation here.

It is however a question if there is no marginalisation at all. From the narratives it seems that there is marginalisation present in some individual's narratives or at least some co-researchers suspect it.

The voices that need to be stronger and listened to more are those of the mentees, mentors who had a negative experience and those who felt left "out".

Meaning

Meaning lies in any narrative. This can be positive, negative or even just neutral. Meaning can relate to emotion, value, logical outcomes, experiences, previous narratives and growth. From a narrative perspective the person telling the narrative first interprets meaning (usually on his/her own). There can be a process in which meaning is also developed by telling the narrative or by listening to the narrative. There can be more people involved in this narrative and more meaning is added.

In terms of this research process the co-researchers firstly interpret the narratives themselves. Meaning is conveyed and listened to, as they understand

it themselves. This process is seen within the social-constructionist approach to knowledge. The meaning is also socially constructed within the process of which I am a part. In the particular research project most of the co-researchers were working with me in pairs. They could construct the meaning to their narrative together. I listened with integrity and kept on involving them in this process, which could be called narrative development, or describing experiences.

Meaning is an important aspect of this research. Meaning is also linked to language. In the first chapter we visited the whole concept of language. Language constructs an experience. The language available to us constructs the way we describe or name an experience.

In my reflection on the meaning of the relationships I ask a lot of questions on where the meaning lies.

In terms of Coenraad and Carina's relationship it seems that the meaning lies in the growth between them as brother and sister living together and where they are in the specific phase of their relationship. The language they used to describe this process is mentorship (which they mostly learned from within the programme's context).

Roeleen and Jeané commented a lot on their spiritual growth together and the meaning of that in their lives, as well as their relationship as mother and daughter and the phase they went through then.

Christa and Barry's meaning lies in their unforced, spontaneous relationship, which, they felt, added value in general to their lives.

Valize's narrative had meaning on various levels. On one level it was a negative experience, on another level it was positive to reflect on her understanding of mentorship and her believing in it.

The language used consistently through their narratives was mentorship language.

The interdisciplinary conversation had questions on whether this is mentorship within the general understanding of the language of most disciplines? I also reflected on this during the process – what makes a relationship a mentorship relationship? Can mentorship language be used to describe all of these narratives? Who owns the language? If the co-researchers use the language of mentorship to express their experiences, is it wrong? Or should the “correct” language be used to describe the meaning for them? Who can do this?

These are important questions. It seems that your positioning on knowledge would play a vital role in the way you would react to these questions.

The reflection on meaning also led to the conclusion that in most of the co-researcher’s narratives, the mentorship process added meaning or extended existing roles and relationships. The mentorship process “facilitated” growth or transitions in relationship phases. In the case of Barry and Christa there was no previous relationship, so the mentorship opened up a new relationship. In the case of Valize it had a negative effect on an existing relationship.

There were two aspects of mentorship that the interdisciplinary group agreed upon – the focus and importance of relationships and the overall aim of growth.

It seems that this corresponds to the narratives of the co-researchers. All the narratives speak in some way about growth and all the narratives speak about relationships and the importance thereof.

The question remains if this is necessarily the truth only for mentorship, or for any relationship in general. When can such a relationship be described with mentorship language and when not? What determines it?

Relations and roles

Since the beginning of the research the theme of relations or family ties was central to the research. The programme is careful about relatives being asked as mentors. The concern was the phase in which many of the relationships find themselves, especially in the confirmation leg of the programme. Roles might be difficult when parents become mentors in the programme without being in a friendship phase in the relationship, like in the case of a student with his or her parents.

From the narratives of the co-researchers the emphasis was placed more on the issue of roles. Parent-child relationships and brother-sister relationships were mostly seen as positive and even a recommendation to some. There are obviously narratives of relatives in mentorship relationships in the programme that didn't work out, but the co-researchers would conclude that lack of commitment and time would be the reason for the problems, and not the fact that the mentors and mentees were related.

The focus on roles was apparent in most of the narratives:

- Coenraad and Carina had a phase where they had to figure out the various roles between them in their situation: father-child; mentor-mentee; brother-sister. The interdisciplinary group reflected on this and pointed it out as potentially creating anxiety.
- Barry and Christa are not related. There were elements of “tannie”-young man roles, or even mother-child roles in the background. But mostly it seemed that they functioned within the role of mentor-mentee.

- Roeleen and Jeané were in a mother-daughter role. This was also in a transition phase of becoming more like friendship. They made specific time for the mentor-mentee role.
- Valize had a student-teacher role with the mentor she initially chose.

The first thing I noticed about the narratives of the co-researchers was the lack of a particular pattern. From the narratives in this study it doesn't seem that one can draw the conclusion that one particular type of role or relationship (family relationship) is good or bad in general. There are no generalisations in this sense.

The narratives tells us that at least in this particular context roles are a given. Even if mentors are assigned to mentees one will find some elements of roles. It is therefore important to deal with roles and to be clear about roles, how they are managed; when it is good and when it is bad. The misunderstanding or misrepresentation of roles can cause anxiety or even become unethical in certain situations.

The question should be asked if the overlapping of roles is bad or if it should be avoided. Is it possible to avoid it – to jump from one role in one situation to another in another situation? What guidelines can be given about this? From the narratives there seems to be a need for better clarification on how to handle the overlapping of roles. It does not seem possible to truly put yourself in different roles completely. There will always be overlapping roles.

Should this minimised as far as possible by being in a mentorship relationship with a mentor where there is no chance of overlapping roles, because there is no relationship outside of the mentorship relationship? This needs to be discussed in the final chapter.

3. TRADITIONS OF INTERPRETATION

3.1 Deciding on the traditions of interpretation that are most relevant to this research

One of the aspects of my research design that did not turn out as planned was the role my smaller PhD group would play. Initially the PhD group functioned as a reflection group but later ceased to exist. Therefore I needed to find a different means to decide on which traditions of interpretation need to be discussed further.

3.1.1 Listing the discourses

I start by listing the various discourses in the same manner as in the previous section.

(H = Hanlie; CC = Coenraad and Carina; CB = Christa and Barry; RJ = Roeleen and Jeané; V = Valize; G = Group)

Discourses	H	CC	CB	RJ	V	G
Confirmation	✓					
Mentorship	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Who qualifies to be good mentor?	✓			✓	✓	
Structure	✓					
Time and culture of busyness	✓	✓		✓		✓
Compartmentalised lives	✓					
Church	✓		✓			
What is success?					✓	

TABLE 2

3.1.2 Deciding on which discourses to discuss here

If I use the same criteria as in the previous section, the discourses listed in bold would be selected. In our reflection up to now it has become clear that certain of the discourses are related to each other and certain ideas are connected to the context of this particular study. These can be grouped together.

Within the research design the discourses that are discussed primarily come from the narratives of the co-researchers. This has been reflected on together with the co-researchers.

To further aid me in this discussion are the various themes and content from the interdisciplinary discussion and what was discussed there. Although discourses weren't discussed specifically, there were certain discourses present in that discussion as well.

I also discussed this in more detail with one or two scholars and decided that the discourses I want to focus on specifically are:

- Mentorship in all its aspects
- The culture of being busy – linked to time

3.2 Describing and interpreting these traditions of interpretations

3.2.1 Mentorship

It is clear from the narratives that there is not one singular particular view or discourse about mentorship. It is also clear from the narratives that the definitions and tradition of interpretations are fragmented and differ slightly throughout the narratives. Some people aren't really sure how mentorship is

understood. It is a wide term and there are many aspects or variations attached to it that are linked to the context in which it is placed. The word “mentor” is also sometimes replaced with a word like “coach”. It almost reminds one of a landscape of overlapping views of the term.

In general it seems that most people think about a mentor as someone older who transfers knowledge or skills to someone. A mentorship relationship has something to do with advice or growing in some way.

From the narratives certain themes arise that are all connected to this discussion about the discourses about mentorship:

The idea that a mentor needs to be an expert

In many discussions about mentorship one hears an expert-student metaphor for mentorship. The mentor is someone with knowledge and skills and gives advice to the mentee. The mentor or coach (from the interdisciplinary world) is trained and selected on this basis. The whole aim of mentorship is then the transference of this knowledge to the next person. The mentor needs to be able to answer all the questions of the mentee and is an excellent giver of advice.

One hears something here of the tradition that fathers and grandfathers would pass on knowledge to their sons. One also hears something like a master and apprentice relationship or a teacher and disciple metaphor.

Together with this it is expressed more than once in the narratives of the co-researchers that it is a big responsibility to be a mentor.

This idea also links to the notion that a mentor needs to help you grow.

This idea is not so strongly found in the programme. The narratives we have listened to do not explicitly use this metaphor or idea, but many elements of it are found in the narratives of the programme. Various mentors that come to the programme come with this idea. This idea also places pressure on them to be the expert.

The idea that mentor needs to be older

Linked to the previous idea, a mentor should be someone older. The older someone is, the more knowledge and life experience they have. The interdisciplinary conversation felt strongly about the fact that mentors should have some life experience before they can be mentors.

The narratives that we listened to had older and younger people in mentorship relationships, as well as younger people with a mentor from the same generation. The reasons given from each narrative on why they felt this worked well would be different. Jeané enjoyed the fact that her mother was older. It was no problem to her. Carina felt she would rather choose Coenraad as a mentor, as opposed to someone older for the reason that he would be closer to her world, understand it better and therefore give better advice as her mentor.

The idea that a mentor must have experience and skills within the same field that the mentee is trying to grow in

Valize gave the example of where she heard about mentorship the first time. She came into contact with the concept on a website. Here a mentor was explained in the context of sport where a hockey-goalie gets a more experienced hockey-goalie to be her mentor or coach. In the coaching world this is also a common view of mentorship.

This discourse becomes apparent in the programme when mentors feel inadequate to be mentors to the young people within the context of leadership and church. In order to be a mentor in the church one must have had some sort of theological training to be a successful mentor.

The idea that a mentor gives advice

This is a strong idea about mentorship that is prominent in many of the narratives of the co-researchers. A mentor must be someone that gives advice. This is linked to the idea that a mentor has more life experience and knowledge. Receiving advice from your mentor figured dominantly in the relationship between Coenraad and Carina as well as Roeleen and Jeané.

The idea that a mentor can also learn from the mentee (reverse mentoring)

In all of the narratives from the programme it was mentioned that the mentor also learned from the mentee. Most people tend to start out thinking that the mentee will learn from the mentor. Almost all the narratives in the programme as well as the narratives of our co-researchers spoke about reverse mentoring. Some would go as far as to say that they had learned more from the mentee than the mentee had learned from them. In the narratives where different generations were involved, the older person would attribute this learning to the fact that the mentee was younger and listening to a younger person taught them a lot.

In the programme when people are asked to think of a metaphor for mentorship, they would often use metaphors like a journey, partners, different roles but equal responsibilities, et cetera. All of these support the idea that mentoring is not only one-sided.

The idea that a mentor needs to be selected and specifically trained

In Hanlie's narrative we hear about the one mentor who asked her how someone else she knew could become a mentor in the programme, because this person had too many of her own personal problems.

This supports the idea that a mentor should be selected and trained also discussed in the interdisciplinary conversation. The mentor should be the right person. It seems from this conversation that not everyone can be a mentor.

In the programme mentors are selected by the mentees. This has been discussed in our reflection.

There is however an understanding or tradition of interpretation in which a mentor has to qualify in some way to be a good mentor.

The idea that mentorship is a structured process with measurable outcomes

We have discussed the issue about structure in our previous section. The interdisciplinary conversation strongly worked within this idea that the process should be structured and also measurable. This sounds especially familiar from the world of coaching where there is a strong emphasis on a process with outcomes. The business world needs to measure the outcomes of the process to see if it was successful.

From our narratives in this research study there was no mention of measurable outcomes. All the narratives had outcomes, which were described in growth terms.

The idea that a mentor is someone you can trust and be comfortable with

This came out strongly from the reasoning Carina had to choose Coenraad. It is also present in all the narratives. For the co-researchers, in listening to the narratives, the fact that the relationship should be open and comfortable was one of the most important reasons why it worked out well. There was spontaneity and trust in the relationship.

This seems to be agreed upon in all the narratives and the interdisciplinary conversation.

Concluding remarks

In our initial reflection on Hanlie's narrative it was clear that many of the ideas about mentorship that people in general bring to the programme differs from the idea of mentorship in the programme. There are various discourses on mentorship and they affect people differently.

There are many questions that can be asked about these discourses from a deconstructionist point of view. Just by asking who has the power in the mentorship relationship in some of these ideas or discourses, one can have a lengthy discussion about their value and meaning. They can be understood in various ways, which can be interpreted positively as well.

From this discussion I draw the following conclusions:

- The various and fragmented discourses and variations on mentorship cannot be ignored.

- Decisions need to be made where one positions oneself in terms of mentorship and the approach to it.
- These decisions need to be well-founded and explained.
- These ideas are strong and will have an effect on the way the mentorship is experienced and practiced

3.2.2 The culture of being busy

In most of the narratives of the co-researchers there is the idea that people are busy and don't have a lot of time:

- Hanlie says that in the programme everyone doesn't always participate in the feedback or groups because they are too busy. Others say they can't get hold of the mentees because they don't have time for the mentorship relationship.
- Hanlie tells narratives of how some mentors had to be creative enough to do certain out of the ordinary things in order to spend time with the mentees.
- Coenraad and Carina said that if they did not live together they would not have had the time to spend in the mentoring relationship. Some other friends of Carina whose relationships did not work out, said that it was due to the fact that they were too busy and did not spend enough time together.
- Barry and Christa made regular appointments to see each other.
- Roeleen said they had to make special appointments to make sure they saw each other, even though they stay in the same house. They also commented on other stories where participants did not have enough time to see each other. If you don't diarise this you won't have time.
- Valize said that people say they have no time, but if something is important enough you will make time for it.

- Hanlie said that the mentees don't always make time for it because they don't understand the importance of the mentorship.

The reason that I list this as a discourse is due to my listening to the narratives in this programme and in the community over the past few years. It seems that the idea that we are busy and do not have enough time has become a grand narrative or even a culture or idea we believe in, even though some people have physical time open, they will still say “we are busy”.

This discourse leads to the comments about which priorities play a central part in the way that you live your life in this context. Mentorship can either be seen as something that takes up your time or as a priority.

Who gains from a “being busy” discourse? Do people feel more important if they are busy? What does this discourse do to the way our study is conducted?

3.3 Further study into these traditions of interpretations

In conversation with my supervisor and the narratives of the co-researchers, I think it is important to also look at literature on the whole topic of mentorship. This is the main discourse from our narratives as well as the theme of this research. Within the different fields it is clear that various traditions of interpretation exist.

We will look at mentorship literature in the next chapter.

4. REFLECTING ON THE RELIGIOUS AND SPIRITUAL ASPECTS OF OUR NARRATIVES AND EXPERIENCES

In this final section of the chapter we will specifically reflect on the religious and spiritual aspects of the narratives. We do so within the movements of our research design and also because this is a postfoundational practical theological study.

4.1 Describing the spiritual aspects that came from the narratives

We have discussed spirituality after each narrative in chapter 3. In this section we will revisit a summary of these descriptions.

Coenraad and Carina

In their narrative the spirituality was linked to morality. The idea that a mentor gives advice and has to give opinions on what is right and wrong is connected to religion and church. Carina chose Coenraad because he is involved in church activities. She felt, that because he is involved in church activities and he is serious about his faith, he would be able to give good Christian advice.

The need for advice is strongly connected to their idea about mentorship. A mentor must give advice and understand the context it is given for.

Their mentorship relationship only developed the year after Carina was in confirmation class. For them there was no connection really between the church programme and their relationship except for the fact that Coenraad was involved as a leader at the church.

They don't specifically reflect on spirituality or tell narratives of any spiritual experiences.

Christa and Barry

In our reflection process Christa wrote these words herself about her spiritual experiences:

Although I felt an emotional connection with Barry immediately and did not hesitate to accept his mentor request, I felt humbled by this. The presence of spirituality was there. I contemplated and reflected on this new assigned 'role' and prayed for guidance on how to handle this new relationship. I am not used to adolescent boys (I'm the mother of 2 girls) and now I had to deal with the world of a 17-year-old boy. From my side I was very well aware of God's presence in this relationship: the relaxed easiness of the relationship, the peace when I lead in prayer, the comfort to experience his confirmation at the end of the mentor year. Even now, long after the mentoring, I experience this Divine presence in the relationship.

Christa also said in the telling of her narrative that she felt a connection between them. This connection was emotional for her and she links it to a spiritual experience. They had a relaxed and open relationship in which she did not force "faith stuff".

Christa prayed with Barry and prayed about Barry even when she wasn't with him. She spoke to him about church and wondered where he would go to church when he was older and how he would experience it.

Their relationship was initiated within the context of the confirmation year and the mentorship programme. This was their agenda in a sense and without forcing certain issues or prescribed material they did speak about faith and church and discussed questions that arose from it.

Christa and Barry have an active spiritual life that is unforced and forms part of their lives. This would naturally become evident in their relationship. Christa also said that faith and spirituality is becoming something that you don't only speak about at home or in private, but even at work in a secular context spirituality is discussed.

Roeleen and Jeané

The main theme in their narrative was spiritual growth. The language used in their narrative boasts of spiritual terms and religious descriptions. They prayed together, felt that God answered their prayers and shared this with each other. They prayed together for other things they shared, read the material on spiritual disciplines and did Bible study. Their relationship grew from the spiritual experiences that they shared and this was the most important meaning of their time together.

They easily reflected on this in the telling of their narrative and were open about it.

Valize

Due to the fact that Valize did not get into a mentorship relationship she felt that was difficult to reflect on the spiritual experiences in the relationship.

4.2 Reflection

What does the God-talk in these narratives tell us about spirituality and religious experiences from this particular moment of praxis? What kind of language is used to describe these experiences? How is God's presence felt and understood?

In my reflection on these questions during the whole research process a few key concepts or words help me to come to a greater understanding about spirituality here:

Honesty and authenticity

In the group discussion the comment was made that there is a lot of honesty in the narratives about spirituality. In the programme many mentors would comment on the fact that the young people speak much more freely about spirituality than they would have when they (as mentors) were younger. People are not afraid to disagree or to say that they struggle with a certain aspect of religion or do not believe in the same way.

From the narratives this is also clear. Each narrative and experience about spirituality and religion is authentic. There is a movement away from only one view of spiritual experience to space for different experiences and ways to tell these narratives.

Morality and ethics

In Coenraad and Carina's narrative morality and ethics play a particular central role in their understanding of spirituality. This is not only the case in their narrative; there are many narratives in the programme and also from the context that I work in, that links morality with faith and spirituality – especially for younger people.

This is positive in terms of people's lives and living out their religious beliefs. The fact that people are connecting morality to faith is well-known in many circles. It tells the narrative of people who have a need for guidance and this guidance is still connected to faith and the understanding of wrong and right from a certain religious perspective.

From a theological perspective I am concerned about this. In Pauline theology the imperative comes from the indicative. In texts like Romans and other writings Paul explains that we live from our identity as a Christian and that influences our ethics and the way we live our lives. We are no longer under the law (asking questions about right and wrong) but under the Spirit. The Spirit fills us, changes our identity and we live accordingly in each situation.

If our theology is reduced only to asking questions about right and wrong, is this not the same as living from the law? Or when we are busy thinking about ethics and morality should it not come from a pneumatology that is deeply rooted in our identity?

In this particular context the lack of new language to express our connections and understandings of identity and ethics might be the reason why people explain it in this way. I cannot say.

Connection and relationship

It is clear that spirituality is connected to our relationships and the way we connect to each other. The experiences of God and spirituality are all connected to relationships in the narratives. “I felt a connection”, “I am in a relationship with Him” are all examples of language that is connected to spiritual experiences.

Holism and openness

In the narratives there is no mention of a separation between church/spirituality and the secular. The co-researchers did not seem to connect the mentorship programme with the church exclusively. Neither was there any narrative about confirmation and mentorship that was somehow compartmentalised. The

language used was language of integrating spirituality with their lives as a whole.

The co-researchers speak about spirituality and religious experiences, as they understand it from their lives. Some of it is related to church, some to their workplace, some personal, some in conversation, some at home and some in their general day-to-day living.

This is a positive movement from the idea that God is only experienced in church or religion and spirituality has only to do with church.

The lack of dogma and institutionalised language

There is no emphasis in the narratives we have listened to on dogma or the correct understanding of theology. There is no mention of working through an agenda or curriculum in order to gain access to the church or to be confirmed.

The language used is not the institutionalised language of the church or theological terms that are difficult to explain. Various informants, of whom the church is one, influence the language. The language is plain and spirituality is explained and reflected upon in a practical sense and in the ways the co-researchers have integrated it into their lives.

This does not mean that good theology is not necessary or present. A lot of the co-researchers would say that the church plays a vital role in their understanding and questions about faith and spirituality. But in the moment of praxis the language speaks of a more practical and simple way of understanding God's presence.

Spiritual expressions and acts

The way spirituality is expressed in the narratives of the co-researchers also tells us a lot about the way they understand the presence of God in their everyday lives:

- Prayer (individually and together)
- Reading (material, books or the Bible)
- Conversation (face to face and through other means)
- Questions about faith and religion
- Reflection on what happened to them spiritually

These are the ways the co-researchers would express their understanding about God practically.

Imago Dei

Although the question was not raised specifically, one could ask how God is perceived. What is the image of God from this narrative?

In the narratives God is not portrayed as far, but close. God is not judgemental, but compassionate. God is sometimes not even mentioned, but if asked, He is present in some way. There are elements of mystery. He is important enough for the co-researchers that they would try and live ethically sound lives according to their understanding of His will.

Can God be seen as a mentor from these narratives? The idea of mentorship would also influence the way you understand God then – what the Imago Dei is.

5. IN CLOSING

This is an important chapter in our research process. Various voices were listened to in this chapter:

- The interdisciplinary conversation was listened to.
- The group discussion of the co-researchers was listened to.
- The themes from the narratives of the co-researchers' narratives were brought into conversation with each other.
- The traditions of interpretation were described.
- The experiences about spirituality and God were described.

It is clear from this chapter that most of the themes complement each other in the discussion with the scholars as well as the co-researchers. We also see that there are connections between some of the aspects of the research narrative that we are busy writing. Many questions can be formulated and discussed further.

In this chapter we have seen the formation of some of the bigger narratives that helps us to move to our final stage in the research design.

Before we get to this stage, we will first listen to the voices coming from literature on mentorship in the next chapter.

Chapter 5: A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF MENTORSHIP LITERATURE

In the previous chapter I reflected on various aspects of the study. In the reflection on traditions of interpretation I decided that it was necessary to consult literature on the main topic of this research, partly because it is central and important to this research and partly because it is the main theme from the stories. Due to the fact that the world of coaching is interlinked with the world of mentorship, we will also look at literature about coaching.

In many theses, literature studies precede the research process. In our positioning literature follows the stories listened to and described. The reason for this is that within our approach the moment of praxis is the starting point. The narrative of the research process leads us to the literature or text. In practical theological terms, the context leads us to the text and back to the context.

The literature about mentorship and coaching and all its facets is enormously comprehensive. The contexts differ immensely from the context of the programme and to my knowledge there is very little literature available that relates to this particular context of this research.

Therefore this chapter will narrow the literature used to the literature that is somehow related to the programme. There are various books and sources that were mentioned by someone in the programme or brought to the programme by a mentor. There is the literature that I use in the programme for training. There is literature used in other church mentoring programmes that is known and can at least relate to the context of the church. There is also literature on coaching suggested by the scholars from the interdisciplinary conversation.

The aim of this chapter is to give a brief overview of some of the literature available to us on mentorship and coaching. This forms part of describing the context of mentorship and the various traditions of interpretation that exist, without claiming that this is all of it. The literature is a voice or narrative that helps to thicken the description that is made in this study.

All the voices will be weaved together in the final chapter.

1. *Mentoring and coaching: tools and techniques for implementation* - Meyer and Fourie

Meyer and Fourie (2006:1) start their book by explaining that the concept of mentoring comes from the Greek mythology:

In Homer's *Odyssey*, Mentor was the teacher of Telemachus, the son of Odysseus. Mentor was not the average teacher...Mentor was more than a wise teacher – he was half god and half man, believable and yet unreachable. Mentor was the union of both goal and path: wisdom personified.

This introduction helps us to understand that there is a balance between goal (which is emphasised in some of the business contexts of mentorship) and path (which is emphasised in the programme of this study).

They explain further that mentorship is not only about information but also about formation. A mentor according to Meyer and Fourie is someone that has the skill to form someone and guide them for when the mentor is gone.

They make a distinction in their book between mentoring and coaching which might be useful to us. From the reflection and interpretation thus far there are many views of mentorship Even from the context of the business world. Meyer

and Fourie write from the context of a work environment and define mentorship as follows:

Mentoring can be described as a dynamic and reciprocal relationship in a work environment whereby a more advanced and wise career incumbent (mentor) helps a less experienced person who had developed potential (mentee – who is no this direct subordinate) develop in some specified capacity (Meyer & Fourie 2006:2).

In this definition we hear some things that resonate with our reflection thus far:

- It is a dynamic relationship (where a lot of emphasis is placed on the relationship that is reciprocal).
- There is a context defined.
- There is the idea that an expert helps someone who is less experienced.
- There is development or growth.

It is clear from their discussion on the definition that mentoring is about a lot more than just advice.

They define coaching as follows:

Coaching is the systemically planned and direct guidance of an individual or group of individuals by a coach to learn and develop specific skills that are applied and implemented in the workplace, and therefore translates directly to clearly defined performance outcomes that are achieved over a short period of time (Meyer & Fourie 2006:5).

This definition seems to resonate a lot more with the language used during the interdisciplinary discussion we had. Coaching is very specific and for a certain period of time. There are very clear aims and structures that can be measured.

The approach of Meyer and Fourie's book is set within the world of mentoring and coaching in the business world. There are certain aspects to their approach that help to take certain important aspects of mentoring and coaching into account within this context.

Further notes on their approach that are significant for our study:

- They differentiate between coaching and mentoring (p 9).
- They do not understand a mentor to be a "wise old man" but that in the research conducted in the business world, younger people become mentors (p 9).
- In the implementation of a mentoring or coaching programme they place a big emphasis on measurable outcomes (p 170).
- They say that the most important aspect of the process is explaining the crucial understanding of the value of relationships (p 39).
- They say that there will always be various roles mentors and coaches play. These roles are for instance: father, mother, adviser, inspirer, developer, role model, networker, listener, et cetera. These roles seem to overlap and function at the same time (p 41–51).
- In the same way a mentee also plays certain roles like learner, reflector, researcher, et cetera (p 53–60).
- In terms of the mentors/coaches they list certain knowledge, skills and values that a mentor or coach must have or show potential in to become a mentor or a coach (p 84).

In the planning of a mentoring programme they list various obstacles that can be problematic. Lack of commitment is one of them (p 164). The lack of training, measurement and good communication are others. From their approach it is clear that a programme needs to be well-structured and planned in order to work within this context. When one reads through the book you do however see an

inclination towards the view that there are different types of mentorship and different types of programmes. These play into the design of such a programme in that context.

They do however place a great emphasis on the identification and training of mentors (p 173). In this context they encourage managers or existing leaders in the company to be selected and trained as mentors. They want the process of matching to be as natural as possible. Where there are existing relationships this should be used and mentees have the freedom to choose from the pool of mentors that are available. The relationship is the guiding factor in this process.

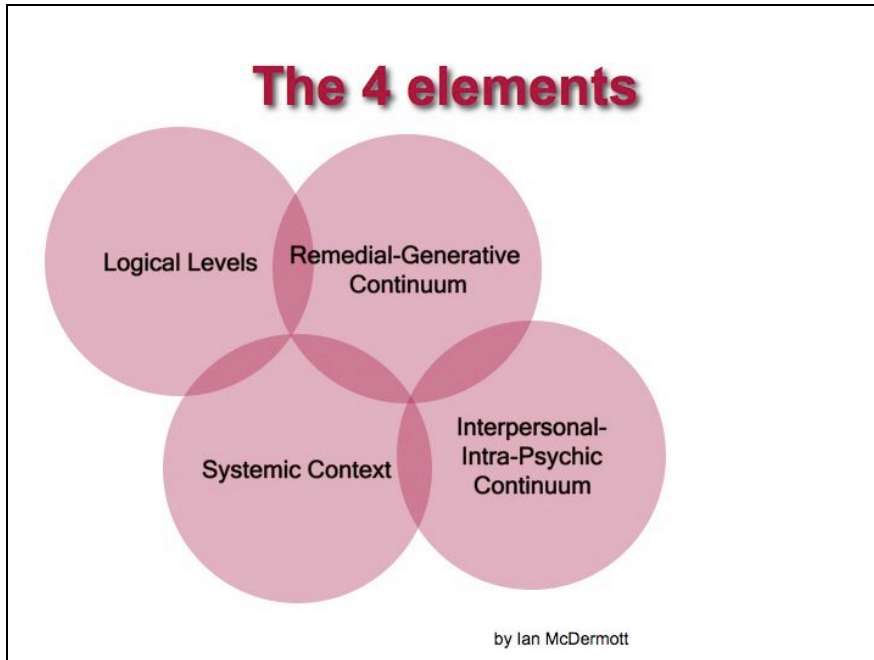
The book gives further suggested ideas towards training and guidelines for mentorship and coaching.

2. *The coaching Bible* – McDermott and Jago

This book is used in the programme as a guideline or a tool to use during conversations. The mentors in the programme that listen to the principles of McDermott and Jago's approach, are always positive about it. It gives them a starting point or an instrument to handle mentorship.

This book also gives definitions and discussions on mentoring and coaching. It is also set in the business environment and focuses on creating skills for coaches. For our purposes here we will look at the approach or model that is proposed in the book with regards to coaching. This model is called Multimodel coaching.

Multimodel coaching works with four elements that aim to help the coach to understand and identify what the focus of the coaching should be (McDermott & Jago 2005: 29).



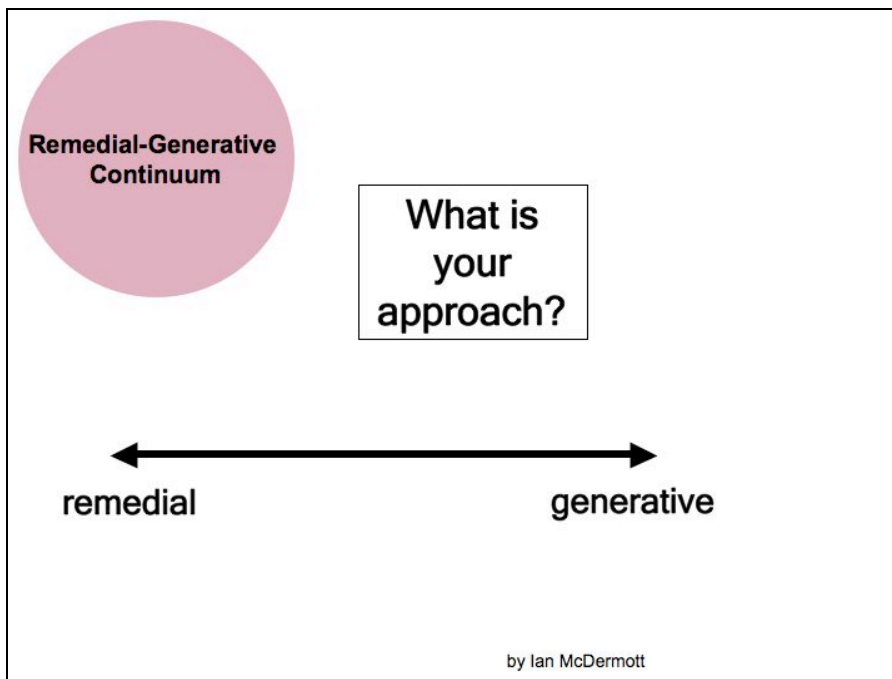
These four elements are explained as follows:

Logical levels



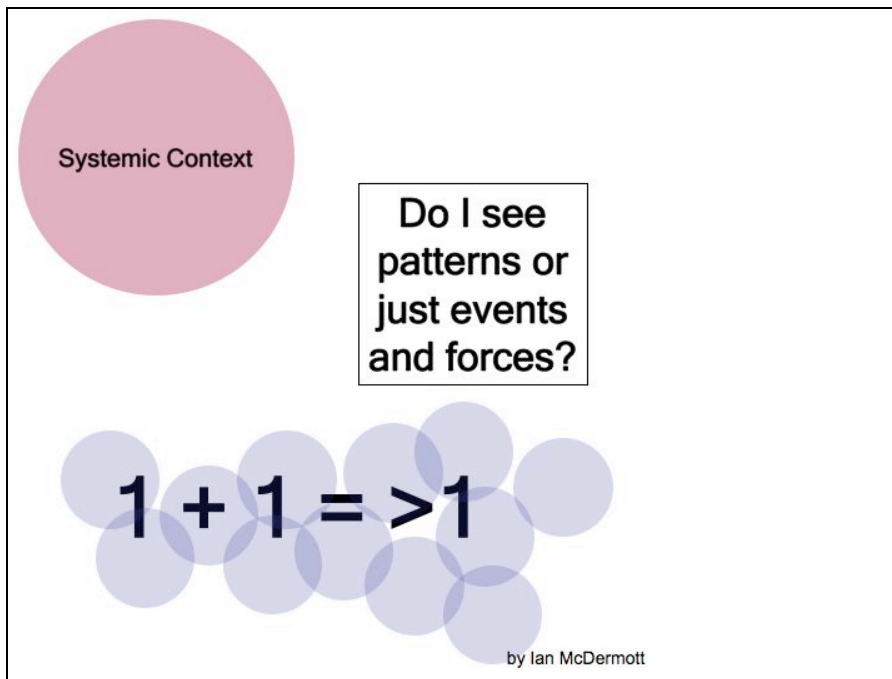
While listening to the person that is being coached it is important to ask on which level the focus of the coaching should be. Is what we are talking about on the level of behaviour? For instance, if a person fails to behave in a certain way at work this needs to be rectified by the coach. The intervention can be on the level of behaviour only, unless the coach finds out that the person does not believe in the values of the company or something else is causing him/her to fail in terms of his or her behaviour. Then the intervention needs to be on a different level.

Remedial-generative continuum



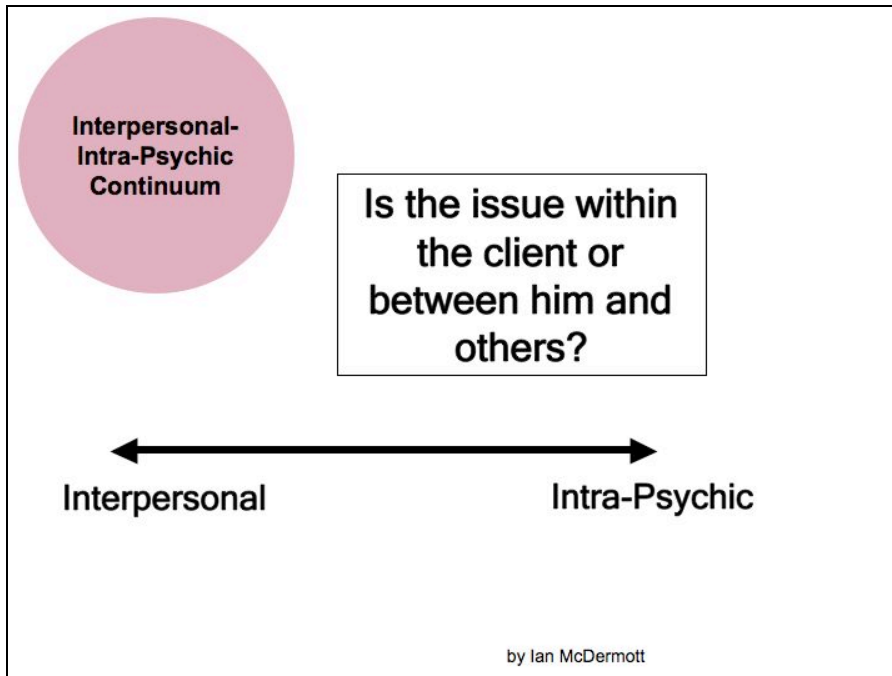
Within this model the approach you take towards the coaching can vary between remedial (to remedy the situation) and generative (to generate new possibilities). This is seen as a continuum on which the coach must decide which approach he/she is taking. In certain situations a coach can just work towards the remedial side, in another towards generating new possibilities and sometimes both.

Systemic context



The third element that is used in this model is to reflect on the systemic context. This context usually includes relationships but also the culture of the company or context that the coaching is taking place in. What is the systemic context? How does it influence the person being coached and what are the effects of this particular systemic context within this situation. Do any patterns emerge in the coaching process that help with focussing the coaching process?

Interpersonal-intra-psychoic continuum



In this final element of the model the question is raised whether the focus of the coaching should be on the client (person being coached) him/herself or should the focus be on the relationships s/he has with others, or both. This should help the coach to know how to approach the coaching process and focus the aims of the conversations.

Notes on this approach

Again the context of this approach is very important to take into account as well as the fact that they are working with coaching per se. This book is focussed on helping with the training of coaches and mentors and is therefore focussed a lot on content.

From this book the following is clear:

- Coaching is a very specific approach that has a specific aim and outcome.
- There is an inclination in this approach not to have a logical few steps to follow when someone is coached, but rather to place an emphasis on the complexity of coaching. There are no “boxes” you can put people in. Various elements work together and a coach needs to develop skills to understand these various elements.
- Coaching is focussed.

3. John Maxwell

John Maxwell is known for his popular works on leadership from a church and Christian perspective. Some of these works include mentorship as a part of the process of developing leaders. His context is American and his books are sold in Christian and non-Christian outlets in South Africa.

There are two books here that touch on the subject of mentoring that will be briefly discussed.

In his book, *Developing the leaders around you* (1995), he speaks about coaching a team of leaders. In this section there are certain aspects of coaching that come to our attention (p 151–179):

- Coaching in the context of a team of leaders is the focus in this section of his book.
- Coaches must develop the right people to become leaders.
- A coach knows people well.
- A coach must be good with problem-solving.
- A coach aims for success and winning.
- The leaders must respect the coach.
- A coach must have certain skills.

In his book, *Becoming a person of influence* (1997), he speaks specifically about mentorship in chapter 6–9 (p 121–197)

Each chapter uses a different focus or metaphor for mentorship:

1. An enlarger of people
2. A navigator
3. Someone who connects with people
4. Someone who empowers people

Maxwell starts off his discussion on mentorship by describing it as an investment in the future of others (Maxwell 1997:124). He uses the metaphor of enlarging people within the context of the book's title: *A person of influence*. A person of influence is someone who enlarges those around you. You look for people who show potential and who you can influence and then you ask them if you can become their mentor. If they allow you to be their mentor you take them through the enlarging process by focussing on certain aspects and experiences as described by Maxwell. In this sense you are busy creating other enlargers who then influence other people again. This approach is the opposite from what we have been discussing. It is also not in the context of a formal programme.

The second metaphor he uses is that of a navigator. A mentor is a person of influence who becomes their enlarger. Then he/she helps the mentee to navigate in his/her life. This process is based on the idea that the mentor helps the mentees to discover where they need to go and help them plot the course to help them get to that point. Along this course you need to keep on re-evaluating where you are and where you are going. A good mentor helps with this process.

The third metaphor he uses is explained as follows:

Connection is a very important part of the process of mentoring others...
When you navigate for others, you come alongside them and travel their

road for a while, helping them handle some of the obstacles and difficulties in their lives. But when you connect with them, you are asking them to come alongside you and travel your road for your and their mutual benefit (Maxwell 1997:165).

He explains what he means by comparing the mentor to the locomotive who connects with other train cars and once they are connected to the locomotive they start moving. Then Maxwell gives nine steps for connecting with people.

The final metaphor deals with empowering others. A person of influence helps others to grow to their full potential and be successful. In order to achieve this there are a few qualifications of an empowerer that need to be present in order to empower. One Maxwell (1997:185) lists is position. Then Maxwell gives steps in the process of achieving this empowering.

Critical notes on Maxwell

To me Maxwell's work lacks depth and is extremely fundamental in its approach and epistemology. It is also modernistic in the way that it gives outlined steps and easy answers that would lead to a certain end result that seems to be same for all: success.

The metaphors used by Maxwell are useful to an extent. They help us to understand certain important roles a mentor can play. They do however give the impression that the mentor is the powerful one and the "locomotive" without which the mentees will not be able to reach their full potential. This seems presumptuous. Maxwell overplays the mentor's abilities more than in the other approaches that we have seen.

4. *Mentoring* – Bob Biehl

Biehl has a very specific understanding to mentoring:

Mentoring is a lifelong relationship, in which a mentor helps a protégé reach her or his God-given potential (Biehl 1996:19).

He says that ideally mentorship is not the same as coaching. It is a lifelong relationship with someone very significant in your life. The person who is your mentor is someone you enjoy, you like and you look up to. It is someone you chose or who chose you and you both decided that you are committed to this relationship. This relationship is foremost an informal relationship that you have formalised by naming it and asking permission to be mentor and protégé. The aim of the mentorship relationship is to help someone reach her or his God given potential. God has created everyone special and with potential. A mentor helps someone to discover this – whether it is something simple or becoming a world leader. It doesn't matter.

Biehl feels that there are certain things mentorship is not and that the term should not be used except for this “pure” understanding of the term. Mentoring is not discipleship. It is something else than discipleship in the Bible he says. It is not a master-apprentice or coaching relationship. It is also not being the big brother of the family. Biehl also feels that mentorship is not the same as modelling (p 35). There are always elements of modelling in which the mentor models certain characteristics or values, but the protégé must not become the mentor but reach his own potential in God.

He says that matching a mentor to a protégé is something that must come naturally and takes time. One cannot force a lifelong relationship but needs it to grow into trust to the point where it is formalised.

He goes on to discuss common questions that arise from mentoring and deals with practicalities.

Notes on Biehl's book

Biehl seems to balance the relationship between mentor and protégé by putting it within the framework of a lifelong relationship that develops naturally. This way the protégé and the mentor are involved in the process and respect each other.

Again the context of his book is from the perspective of mentoring as something important in general Christian living. It is an invitation to anyone to join the programme. He does however say that not all personalities make good mentors due to the fact that some people are too egoistic to focus on someone else.

The positive thing about his approach is the idea that mentor is not in the relationship to force him or herself onto the protégé, but to help the protégé become who they need to be.

The question can be asked if this definition is the only “pure” understanding of mentorship. Anything else must be called something else, because mentorship is life-long. Otherwise it is not truly mentorship.

5. *Mentoring future leaders* – Learning Link International

This course is currently used in the Dutch Reformed Church to train mentors. These mentors are pastors who volunteer to become mentors for other pastors in the church. Pastors who join the programme can select a mentor for a certain period of time (usually one and a half years) from the pool of mentors that has been trained.

The material was bought from a developer company called Learning Link.

In this course a distinction is also made between mentorship and coaching. They use the following definition for mentoring:

Mentoring is a development process where a successful, experienced person shares knowledge, skills and experience with an inexperienced person. The mentor and protégé work together to identify and achieve the protégé's goals (Learning Link International 2005:4).

Here we also see that the idea of the mentor as the experienced and successful person is strong. When you read through the material there is however a strong move from a hierarchical approach as a mentor to a more participatory approach in which the protégé's input is of equal importance. The course also says that a mentor can be a lifelong relationship or a periodical intervention (p 10).

The course starts by clarifying terms, definitions and expectations. Metaphors are used as examples in how mentorship functions from various roles. Various case studies are used to explain key-concepts.

Coaching is explained in the course as a job-specific relationship in which specific skills are transferred. It is not the same as mentorship, although there are sometime elements of coaching in a mentorship relationship.

The material also says that organisations are moving from traditional to mentoring-based organisations (p 17). In the explanation mentoring are more related to words like empowered, collaborative, innovative, learning, development and quality, as opposed to words like hierarchical, top-down, rigid and resistance to change. Mentorship is understood in this context as something that is not traditional.

This is enhanced by the way the course focuses on moving from telling to listening, planning to consulting, directing to guiding, dictating to participating, et cetera (p 19).

In terms of matching mentors to protégés the course teaches that this is usually a spontaneous event (p 29).

A mentor has various roles and, depending on the circumstances, these roles differ. The emphasis is also on relationships that are built on trust and integrity. Some of the qualities attributed to a mentor are listed as follows (p 6, part 2):

- Trustworthy
- Caring
- High expectations
- Prepared
- Transfer knowledge and skills
- Positive
- Reassure people
- Patience
- Sense of humour
- Committed
- Available
- Set challenges

These are almost like values rather than certain criteria that qualify you to become a mentor. In this programme any person can develop into being a mentor by working on these qualities and growing themselves.

The rest of the course also deals with mentorship aspects like communication skills, mentee's expectations and other practical guidelines to help you become a good mentor.

Notes

This material represents a compilation of a lot of various definitions that we have discussed before. It is not so business-orientated in terms of context but leaves room for different contexts in various organisations that include volunteer organisations and churches. A lot of the material is still based on the input from the business world and the definitions from that context. The case studies used are also from this context.

This material is “middle of the road” in the way that mentorship is defined. It is not defined in terms of total expert-protégé hierarchical terms, and also not totally informal or equal partnerships. It places an emphasis on naturally developed relationships that are built on certain values. Mentors must also grow in their own qualities to become better mentors.

6. *Coaching to excellence* – UCT Graduate School

The Centre for Coaching’s material is extremely professional and developed to train coaches for the business world who are of the highest standard. This material has endless references and is used in a two-day course, training with high impact.

The material starts with understanding the human being (Centre for Coaching 2004:4). This forms the basis of the coaching process; being aware of yourself and the people you coach. The way you see a human, impacts on your way of learning, your identity and the way you interact with others.

The course takes the participants through the process of understanding coaching and the whole process that takes place in a coaching relationship.

Coaching is defined as follows:

Coaching is more than being an accountability partner that supports someone in reaching their goals or a disciplinarian who changes

someone's unwanted actions. Coaching is a skilful methodology for developing self and others so the people are more effective and fulfilled. It involves the development of increasing competence in the person being coached. Coaching is about building the client's ability to observe and select appropriate action (Centre for Coaching 2004:7).

In terms of mentoring the course understands the mentor to be the person who has superior knowledge and not the coach. The mentor must fit into the culture of the organisation. Coaches help the person being coached to develop him or herself (Centre for Coaching 2004:9).

The material goes into the detail about how people learn, the way people change, the way coaches need to conduct conversations and the process of developing a person. There is a certain flow in coaching in which the relationship is the foundation.

In this material processes are broken down and explained in diagrams and tables. Various types of coaching conversations are typified and explained.

The skills and qualities of a coach are listed as follows (Centre for Coaching 2004:27-28):

Skills:

- Speaking
- Listening
- Resolving breakdowns
- Assessing
- Designing

Qualities

- Rigor

- Creativity/Flexibility
- Self-consistency
- Patience

The coaching conversation is further explained by understanding the structure of interpretation. A five-element model is proposed in which this is done (Centre for Coaching 2004:40).

The material clearly shows that coaching is a very specific process, for a specific timeframe in which a coaching relationship is used to develop people in very specific ways.

The context here is very different to our context, but it helps to understand this context in order to interpret the voices of the scholars from the coaching world.

7. *Tuesdays with Morrie* - Albom

In the first chapter we used this book and its narrative as a metaphor for research. This narrative also serves as a metaphor for mentorship.

This is the true-life story of a young professional man, Mitch, who later in his life met up with his old college professor, Morrie. Morrie had developed the fatal illness ALS. Mitch heard about his illness when Morrie was interviewed on national television by a talk show host. Morrie spoke about his life and how it felt to be dying.

Mitch decided to visit Morrie and see him after many years of no contact. He was warmly received and these visits were repeated. They agreed that Mitch would come and visit every Tuesday.

The book is written in “lessons”. The idea developed that Mitch would keep track of their conversations and make use of Morrie’s stories and life lessons later on. The result was this book, which became world-famous.

Mitch was discontented with his life. He had all the success that anyone could dream about, but he was unhappy. Morrie was at the end of his life and had never been so happy and influential. The conversations would be Morrie’s stories and lessons on life. He would tell these in such a way that in the conversation this wisdom had a life-changing effect on Mitch. These conversations would include topics like love, family, money, marriage and culture.

The relationship we find in this book reminds of mentoring. It was not formal, nor was it structured (except for seeing each other every Tuesday). It was a man called Morrie, who had life experience and wisdom, and had conversations with another man, called Mitch, who was living his mid-life in a successful way. They learned from each other and together they both gained from the relationship.

We also learn about mentorship from this relationship, although it is not written as a handbook on mentorship but on life.

8. Biblical narratives

In the programme there are references to many of the Biblical narratives that serve as metaphors for mentorship relationships. I discuss the main two narratives here: one from the Old Testament and one from the New Testament.

8.1 Samuel and Eli

In 1 Samuel 3:1–10, we find the following narrative:

¹ The boy Samuel ministered before the LORD under Eli. In those days the word of the LORD was rare; there were not many visions.

² One night Eli, whose eyes were becoming so weak that he could barely see, was lying down in his usual place. ³ The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was. ⁴ Then the LORD called Samuel. Samuel answered, "Here I am." ⁵ And he ran to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called Me." But Eli said, "I did not call; go back and lie down." So he went and lay down.

⁶ Again the LORD called, "Samuel!" And Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me." "My son," Eli said, "I did not call; go back and lie down."

⁷ Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD: The word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him.

⁸ The LORD called Samuel a third time, and Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me." Then Eli realized that the LORD was calling the boy. ⁹ So Eli told Samuel, "Go and lie down, and if he calls you, say, 'Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

¹⁰ The LORD came and stood there, calling as at the other times, "Samuel! Samuel!" Then Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening."

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Samuel was a young boy who worked in the temple under Eli to serve the Lord with his life. This was common practise in the culture of the day. The Lord called Samuel in the night. Samuel did not recognise the Lord's voice and thought it was Eli. He went to Eli, but Eli said that he did not call him. After the third time Eli relised that it was the Lord that called him and instructed him how to reply if it

should happen again. When Samuel did this, the Lord gave him a new message that follows in the next few verses.

There are some themes that come from this narrative that correspond to the idea of mentorship:

- In this text one sees the idea that an older man with wisdom instructs and helps a younger man into the practice of priesthood and the ways of the faith.
- The Lord calls Samuel in the night and not Eli, which represents the dawning of a new generation or time in Israel. The Lord calls a young man into service. For Him it is not about age.
- Eli helps Samuel (who has never had the experience of being called by God, especially in a time where God seemed to be silent) to hear God's voice and how to respond. Without the "mentoring" of Eli, Samuel would not have been able to grow to this new level of hearing's God's voice so quickly.

If one listens to the various voices in this chapter, some might argue that this was coaching; some might argue that this was discipleship or even just spiritual guidance. It will depend on the language you use or the way you understand mentorship.

There is one element in this story that we have not read about: the mentor helping the mentee to discern God's voice in their life. This is a beautiful spiritual act. It is not without brokenness and struggle. One could call it a fragile intervention from Eli's side.

8.2 Paul and Timothy

The narrative of Paul and Timothy is well known in the New Testament. Two letters were written by Paul to Timothy to encourage him. The letter started with the following words in 1 Timothy 1:1-2:

¹Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the command of God our Savior and of Christ Jesus our hope,

²To Timothy my true son in the faith: Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

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One of the well-known instructions of Paul was written in 1 Timothy 4:11–16:

¹¹Command and teach these things. ¹²Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity. ¹³Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching. ¹⁴Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through a prophetic message when the body of elders laid their hands on you.

¹⁵Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress. ¹⁶Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.

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Timothy is a young leader in the church. He is leading a congregation in Ephesus. His father was a Greek and his mother and grandmother were Christians. Paul writes to him from Macedonia and later from prison in Rome. The reason for his letters was in the first place his relationship with Timothy and to encourage him in his leadership position. He had to teach and remind him

about certain aspects of organising the congregation as well as certain theological principles that he had to uphold against false doctrine that was accepted in the congregation.

Paul also encouraged him not to let people look down on him because he was young. He wrote to him to keep pure and live out his calling and be true to God.

Again there are some themes that come from this narrative that resonate with the idea of mentorship:

- In this narrative we see a relationship between an older church leader and a younger church leader. The one is more experienced than the other.
- Paul gives advice, specific instruction and also encourages Timothy in various ways.
- Due to the circumstances this is not a conversation but letters. Timothy just receives them.
- Paul does not encourage Timothy to become like Paul, but to stay true to God and follow Him.

This metaphor can also be labelled within different roles depending again on your understanding of mentorship or coaching or spiritual guidance. We learn something about the way Paul encourages Timothy in this narrative to focus on his own calling, gifts and to be true to God.

9. IN CLOSING

This chapter flows from the interpretations of our stories, the traditions of interpretation and the interdisciplinary voice that was listened to in chapter 4.

In this closing section I want to draw certain lines from the voices in this chapter that can help to summarise this part of the research narrative:

- There are various definitions for mentorship from the different books mentioned.
- Mentorship can be a long-term relationship or a shorter-term relationship.
- There are certain elements of how mentorship is understood that are dominant in most of the literature:
 - The emphasis placed on a mentor being someone who has more life experience or expertise than the mentee.
 - There isn't a prescribed age for a mentor.
 - Mentorship always has a reciprocal aspect to it that is called reverse mentoring by some.
 - Mentorship has to do with growth in various forms
- Mentorship are not the same as coaching (or certain other modalities like therapy or accountability partners).
- Roles overlap in mentorship.
- There is more than one metaphor used to describe mentorship.
- Programmes need to be structured well when formal mentorship is part of the context. In certain contexts (like business) measurability is important.
- Some understandings of mentorship is very set and specific, others are more open and inclusive.
- The context within which the mentorship takes place is intricately linked to the way mentorship is understood and practised.
- Most of the literature discussed in this chapter emphasises a natural approach to matching mentors with mentees, but still they attach significance to who the mentors are. Some programmes let the mentees select from a pre-screened group of mentors.
- The Christian literature adds the dimension of a mentor helping a mentee to reach his/her potential in God and to help them to grow in certain spiritual disciplines and attributes.



- There are various tools and models that can be used to help with understanding and conducting mentoring conversations and processes.
- Mentorship is more than giving advice.
- Having a meaningful and positive effect on the mentee is one of the aims of mentorship.
- The relationship is the basis and foundation of mentorship in most of the literature.

In the next chapter we will aim to make suggestions that point beyond the local by bringing all the voices together from the study.

Chapter 6: DEVELOPING ALTERNATIVE INTERPRETATIONS THAT POINT BEYOND THE LOCAL

In the previous chapters we have described and listened to the narratives of mentorship from a local congregation. The co-researchers have been given the opportunity to reflect on their stories and make interpretations of their own. Various other voices were brought into the research narrative to help thicken the descriptions that were made and developed as the process unfolded.

Developing the interpretations and alternative understandings is not a process that works in a linear form. When narratives are listened to and described, the process of developing alternative interpretations already takes place. In this chapter I will try and formulate them and write them in a form, which could point beyond this local situation. This will be done in the form of suggestions. The aim of these concluding remarks is not to give the impression that all questions that were formulated during the process are answered. Neither is it claimed that these suggestions or this research process is final.

In the beginning I set out to make good and thick descriptions of the narratives in this moment of praxis. In this process I aimed to come to a greater understanding of mentorship in this context. We want to develop this understanding in this chapter into a meaningful contribution that points beyond this local context.

1. MANY VOICES

During the research process we listened to many voices. These voices can be grouped together as follows:

- The programme of mentorship as listened to by means of Hanlie's narrative.
- The co-researchers.
- The scholars listened to in the interdisciplinary conversation.
- Literature.

The moment of praxis in this study is the mentorship programme in the local congregation of Lynnwood. The primary voices that were listened to were the co-researchers who told the narratives of mentorship from this context. From this voice we expanded the research narrative to include the scholars and the literature.

It is important to understand that the narratives from this praxis is the primary voice.

2. CONCLUDING REMARKS

A lot of the themes that came from the narratives have been discussed in each chapter. It is not necessary to repeat those discussions here. I do however deem it appropriate to make a few concluding remarks on the themes that arose from the study. These remarks are not conclusive per se, nor will all the questions about mentorship be answered. The aim is to describe the greater research narrative after finally listening to all the voices mentioned.

2.1. The understanding of mentorship

It is clear from this study that mentorship is a field that extends over a landscape of various contexts, disciplines and applications. Within this landscape there are various views and interpretations of the various aspects of mentorship. From

this study the following aspects became clear as the most general from all the voices. I discuss each of them in summary.

2.1.1 The basic foundation of mentorship

In listening to all the voices one soon realises that there are many differences. There is certainly not a conclusive idea on mentorship from all the voices. Some might claim their views as ultimate and universal, but they are not accepted as such in all contexts.

Within the positioning of the study I have not set out to find such a universal understanding. The postfoundational approach is not anti-foundational or non-foundational. It only steers away from a fundamental approach where there are no room for context, the local and other voices. Within a social constructionist approach knowledge is constructed between various voices in a particular context.

With this in mind, I take the step of suggesting three things as a basic foundation for mentorship as experienced from this context and informed by all the voices in this particular study. These were the most important aspects of mentorship that all of the voices agreed upon. There are variations on their understanding, but they are prevalent in all the narratives:

- Relationship
- Growth
- Mentors and mentees add to each other's lives

The *relationship* forms the most important building block of mentorship. This relationship is different from other types of relationships. It is not the same kind of relationship as in therapy, coaching, family, social engagements or friendship. Although the relationship overlaps with these relationships, there is a certain

content given to it that makes it a mentorship relationship. In most cases this relationship is formalised and named. The content and ideas about mentorship might differ, but the relationship stays the focal point in all the approaches and views. This relationship can be filled with various characteristics like approachability, trust, openness, integrity, and many others.

The aim or value of mentorship lies in *growth*. This growth is seen in various ways and is described from different contexts. The growth is sometimes the aim and sometimes the by-product of the relationship. In all the narratives we find growth. All the different voices also agreed on growth as being the primary foundation and reason for mentorship.

The last element of mentorship that is agreed upon in this study is the fact that this relationship is reciprocal. Even when the mentor is seen as an expert and the one who transfers knowledge and skills to a mentee, all would agree that both participants in the relationship add value to each other's lives.

2.1.2 The definition of mentorship

In this study we are not so concerned about a final definition for mentorship that can be upheld as universal, as is the case in many of the sources that we had consulted. We have learned that being clear about your understanding of mentorship is extremely important. This narrows the gap between expectations and the way mentorship is conducted.

This definition must be decided upon from each context. The programme we have studied defined mentorship as follows:

Mentorship in DRC Lynnwood is a year long, semi-structured process in which a mentor provides conversation along the journey of a mentee. The mentor was chosen by the mentee on the grounds of a potential trust relationship wherein reciprocal learning, guiding, the forming of meaning

and the sharing of stories can take place. The mentorship takes place within the different contexts and guidelines of the programme of the congregation (NG Lynnwood Course material 2007) (Translated. Appendix C)

The question remains if there are cases where people call a relationship a mentorship relationship, but according to a particular definition it is not mentorship. Who decides that this is not mentorship and why would it be a problem if the people call it this way?

From a social-constructionist view, the community in which mentorship has been defined will be the community that needs to help people understand mentorship in a particular manner and if necessary help to find new and better language to describe their particular relationship if it can add value to their relationship.

We conclude that defining mentorship and having a clear understanding about it is important. Various voices and disciplines can be used in the process of defining it in the particular context. If done responsibly the other voices should be listened to.

2.1.3 The process of matching a mentor and a mentee

Various processes are available to us regarding this aspect of mentorship. We have heard viewpoints about all the different ways in which this process can take place:

- A completely natural process where a person chooses his/her own mentor.
- A structured process where mentors are chosen and selected by the organisation and assigned to mentees.

- A combination of the above in which mentors are selected and chosen first. The mentees can then choose their own mentor from the pool of available mentors.

It is important however to note that not all people seem to be good mentors. This is not only because the lack of knowledge, skill or values; but also because they lack time and commitment.

Again the local context of the community's understanding of mentorship, together with the aims of the programme should be the guide in determining and designing a good process that fits their context.

2.1.4 The design of a mentorship programme

This aspect of mentorship is one that took up a lot of space in the study. Various voices and approaches are available to us in terms of designing a mentorship programme. A few important questions must guide someone or an organisation starting on this journey:

- How do I understand mentorship?
- What do we hope to achieve through this programme?
- How does this impact on the way the programme is designed?
- What other voices and literature can help in this process?
- Which voices can be listened to during this process?
- What is our context and how does it make this programme unique?

In the third section of the chapter I suggest an approach to mentorship that can assist further in this discussion.

2.1.5 Characteristics and descriptions of a mentorship relationship

It has come to our attention during this study that there are many characteristics and descriptions of a mentorship relationship. Some lists exist in the literature that helps us to understand this. I will refrain from making lists here.

From our context there were only a few that stood out from the narratives that I name here in summary:

- A relationship must have commitment from both sides in order to work. This implies time to be spent together as well as creative ways of communicating.
- It is clear that there will be various roles in mentorship relationships. For this reason the understanding of mentorship must be clear. Expectations about roles or anything arising from different roles in the relationship that can add anxiety to the relationship must be avoided. Ethics plays an important part in discerning facts about relationships and roles.
- Openness, spontaneity, being comfortable and being surprised were all terms used in the descriptions of relationships from our narratives.

2.1.6 Content and approaches to mentorship conversations

From the various voices it is again clear that many approaches to this subject exist. Good content and helpful guidelines and tools for conversations help people to understand mentorship better and feel secure within the relationship. The same principles mentioned in the design of the research also apply here. These guide the content and the way in which mentors are trained.

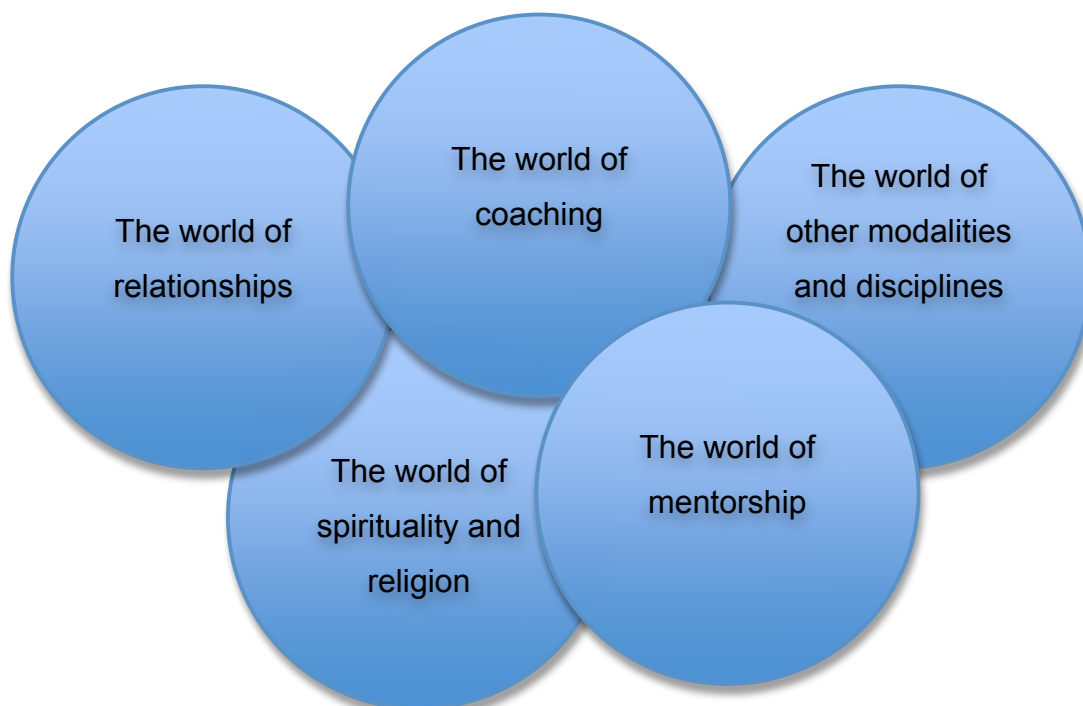
2.2. The importance of language

One aspect of this study that became important during my reflection on the narratives was language. We discussed language in the first chapter and reflected on it through some of the chapters.

I make a few concluding remarks on the importance of language here.

People (including scholars, myself and the authors of literature) use language to describe and explain. As discussed, this language constructs our experiences and the way in which we understand anything in life.

Language originates from certain contexts, especially subject language, like in the case of mentorship. Mentorship language does not come from one discipline but from various disciplines and contexts. People access this language and use it to describe their experiences. In this study language came at least from the following contexts:



Throughout the study language was used with certain meanings attached to the words. Even when the same words are used in language, it doesn't mean the same meanings are attached to these words. The scholars in the interdisciplinary conversation would use the word "mentorship" in a different way than Coenraad and Carina or Hanlie. Any of the co-researchers might learn the word "mentorship" from one context and describe their relational experiences with this word. From another perspective, different words might be used to describe the same relationship – words like "spiritual guide", "spiritual friendship", "brother" and "sister", et cetera.

The question remains: Who owns language? Who is allowed to use it to describe an experience? How can language be validated? Should it be checked or validated as being true to the original context and meaning? Is there an original meaning or can the interpretation of language be a dynamic process; free and open?

This reminds me of Wittgenstein's metaphor of a game as referred to by Gergen (1999:34). If language is not a picture, but a game, each word or "piece" of language acquires its meaning from the game as a whole. Language is thus contextual and therefore language is "owned" by the game in which it is used. The rules of that game "validate" the language.

Within a social constructionist view the language of mentorship is defined and used within a particular context (the relationship of the co-researchers, the programme) and the bigger context of mentorship as informed by various traditions of interpretation.

As with defining mentorship, it is vital to discuss and listen to the meaning of language within a particular field or context. There should be a balance in one's use of language. On the one hand one should respect the use of words of other contexts and field and the way they attribute certain meanings to concepts, and on the other hand one should see the use of language as open and dynamic.

2.3 Spirituality, experiences of God's presence and the contribution of practical theology

The question can be asked what the contribution of practical theology is to the field of mentorship. In other words: What is practical theology's unique contribution in the interdisciplinary discussion about mentorship?

This is an important question. As a practical theologian I am concerned with what these narratives tell us about God's presence in this context. Practical theology is concerned with the transformative practice and continual work of God in creation. It is a hermeneutical process of continuously coming to a new understanding of the narratives of faith in our world.

Within the positioning of postfoundational practical theology, there is a focus on theology being public. Theology needs to be part of the discussion in various fields and contribute on an equal level to the conversation.

In the reflection on spirituality and the experiences of God in this particular context I discussed the following themes:

- Honesty and authenticity
- Morality and ethics
- Connection and relationship
- Holism and openness
- Lack of dogma and institutionalized language

- Spiritual expressions and acts
- Imago Dei

After revisiting these themes the contribution of practical theology to this discussion can be formulated as follows:

- People integrate their spirituality and experiences of God into their everyday lives. It is not segmented or compartmentalised. The language people use to describe these experiences is not only religious language or language used in the institutional church. Words like “connection” and “relationship” is used. Practical theology helps in the process of developing these narratives and reflecting on them to bring them into conversation with other narratives of the greater tradition of theology but also with the public realm.
- People find meaning in their spiritual experiences and express them in acts of worship and disciplines. Practical theology helps with these expressions by developing new transformative practises and meaningful activities. Mentorship can be such a spiritual practice.
- It is clear from the narratives of the co-researchers that in this particular context people do not live confined to the walls of the local church but also experience God outside the walls of the institutional church. Some of the critical questions asked in the interdisciplinary conversation are also based on a particular understanding of church. Practical theology can help to bring new understanding into the conversation as ways that local faith communities continue to play a part in the public theological realm.
- The fact that practical theology is concerned with spirituality and experiences of God in a particular situation contributes on its own. In some of the material discussed in chapter 5, mention is made of spirituality in mentorship as being part of a holistic view of humanity. Practical theology can help to thicken this view and explore ways to help people and programmes to formulate this better.

- The fact that morality and ethics are always linked to faith and religion shows the need for people to have some sort of normative guidance. Primarily theology contributes by interpreting the Bible and helping with a responsible understanding of the primary text of Christian faith. Practical theology brings this text in conversation with other texts. This is an important contribution. In mentorship this is an aspect that will always be needed.

2.4 A tribute to the unheard narratives

This study did not hear all of the narratives in this context directly. Some weren't even heard indirectly. These include narratives about mentorship we do not know about, others that we didn't get the time to listen to and others who might feel marginalised in the programme.

It is suggested on the basis of this study that this programme and future programmes in this kind of context take time to further explore, describe, find and tell the narratives of:

- The group of leaders
- The mentees in general
- Those who did not get the chance to contribute their narrative in this particular study

I do however pay tribute to all the narratives; heard and unheard, marginalised and included, present and past that could also have formed part of this study.

The other day I listened to a story of one of the leaders in the youth ministry that was asked by a final year school graduate to be his mentor. This was not formal or structured. It just had the potential to add meaning to his life through someone he looked up to.

3. A SUGGESTED APPROACH TO MENTORSHIP

Postfoundational practical theology aims to contribute to the field of mentorship not necessarily by formulating new definitions, giving easy answers or developing programmes that work with linear steps to complete, in order to reach a certain kind of success.

I will carefully venture into suggesting an approach to mentorship and mentorship programmes. This approach is formulated from this study's specific context. It hopes to point beyond this context and contribute to the field of mentorship.

This approach suggests that when planning and working within the mentorship field there are certain **values** that need to be present in order to have a meaningful mentorship experience. The content and the way mentorship is formulated will be dependant on the content, the community that is involved in the process and the responsible listening to the wider voices within this field that form part of the tradition of interpretation.

A value-based approach to mentorship and mentorship programmes

In this approach the following values need to be present in mentorship and mentorship programmes. They are discussed briefly.

The value of clarity

It is important to value clarity. Clarity refers to a clear understanding of mentorship. In Homer's terms: be clear about the path as well as the goal. Mentorship should value clarity about ideas, understanding and the meaning of language. What is meant by certain terms? Expectations

should be clear and where content and structure can assist in this, this should be utilised.

The value of context

The context in which mentorship is practised should be valued. Each context is unique and will have an effect on the way mentorship is practised. The local community in which mentorship is constructed should be nurtured and kept part of the dynamic process of mentorship.

The value of the ordinary

There is great value in focussing on the ordinary. In mentorship it might mean doing simple things together like eating or laughing. Value the telling of authentic narratives and describing the simple ways in which God and life is experienced. Understand that people and mentorship are holistic and inclusive. It is not a relationship that is compartmentalised or segmented. This should be valued.

The value of relationship

Relationship is the foundation of a meaningful mentorship process. Valuing relationship implies spending enough time in the relationship and being seriously committed to your mutual understanding of this particular kind of relationship. This relationship is different from other relationships and needs to be named differently. Creativity plays a vital role in the way that this relationship grows. Roles can overlap in this relationship but should not steal meaning from the mentorship relationship. In the process of matching a mentor and mentee, relationship should play an integral part.

The value of listening

In any mentorship relationship or programme the value of listening should be respected. This means to be open to other voices and traditions of interpretation. It also means to be open to listen to the context, other texts and marginalised voices. The value of listening helps us to be conscious of God and help us to listen to God in various ways during a mentorship relationship.

The value of adding value

Although there are no specific stipulations made here with regard to the qualifications for being a good mentor or mentee, the value of adding value is proposed as part of these decisions. A mentor must be someone who can add value to a mentee from the perspective of the mentee and the community in which the relationship is practised. The mentor is not the only one who adds value to the relationship. The relationship is reciprocal. Knowledge, skills and value are some of the ways in which value is added within a mentorship relationship.

The value of reflection

It is of value in a mentorship programme and a mentorship relationship to reflect together. This reflection can be on the process, the relationship, spiritual or other experiences, the presence of God, growth or anything else that is important to the relationship or the programme. This can facilitate growth in the programme or relationship, and suggest that mentorship processes need to be dynamic in nature.

The value of ethics

It is important that the mentorship process and relationship value an ethical awareness. This applies to roles, the presence of anxiety or other fears as well as the possibility for a relationship that has become destructive to be ended. Ethics and morals are informed especially in this context by the normative narratives of the Christian community. It also refers to the way language and mentorship is used within the greater traditions of interpretation that exist in the interdisciplinary conversation about mentorship.

4. IN CLOSING

In this chapter I concluded by bringing the many voices in this study together. From these voices I made a few final remarks and suggested a value-based mentorship approach that points beyond the confines of this particular context.

This research narrative that has been written would not have been possible without the co-researchers who gave time and commitment to this process. I thank them and everyone else who contributed to this study along this journey.

May this study contribute to the public realm of mentorship.

Chapter 7: REFLECTION ON MY RESEARCH

In this short chapter (or epilogue) I reflect on my own experience of the research process in this study. Within the approach to research followed in this study, it is important for me as a researcher to reflect on my own growth and narrative during this time. I will do so under the next few headings.

The approach

During the course of all my studies, working within the narrative approach, this has for me been the most meaningful positioning in research and practical theology up to now. I felt that the postfoundational epistemology provided a sound basis to work from, both in terms of epistemology and theology. The way in which Müller developed this approach into a research design has immensely contributed to the thoughts and theory of practical theological research. The biggest contribution and one of the most positive experiences during my research was the interdisciplinary conversation that the approach leads you to. The idea that our work needs to be public and the encouragement from this approach to contribute beyond the local is an inspiration.

I do however think that the way in which this takes place and the way the conversation is facilitated is far from perfect. The method used in this study is a wonderful starting point, but it was difficult to be part of such a conversation. There are differences in the basic epistemology of our fields at certain points, and the instruments to handle it and ways to discuss this with the other fields need to be developed further. I do think that after this experience it will be difficult not to have interdisciplinary investigation as part of any future practical theological study.

My own position as researcher and programme designer

The fact that I was involved in the design of the programme and the training of the mentors could have been difficult as I was also the researcher. I was sensitive to this from the start. During the course of the study I think I overcame the fear that this might cause a problem by starting to see myself as a participatory researcher. Some researchers go and live for years in the contexts that they study. This was exactly the way that I saw myself as a researcher in the study. The fact that Hanlie played a crucial role as co-researcher by focusing on the narrative of the programme also helped to establish my role as researcher in this study. I was part of the context. And within this research approach this could actually be beneficial and possible. As far as possible I strived for subjective integrity in the process of telling and describing the stories of the co-researchers.

Practicalities

I realised over the five years that I was involved in this study that narrative research is not always easy. I felt that I could have spent more intensive time with my co-researchers. But they just didn't always have the time to do that. I also wanted to hear more of the narratives of the programme, but this was also not possible due to practical constraints. The fact that the research was partly related to my work, helped a lot in terms of spending time in the context and having contact with the co-researchers, but I would have liked to spend more time with the narratives and the co-researchers.

Narrative research is very focused and takes time to develop. It differs from working with data acquired through sampling and questionnaires that can just be analysed with a computer. In narrative research people are directly involved and this makes it difficult and sometimes has the effect that the process takes more time.

The fact that I was acutely aware of the fact that the co-researchers need to be part of the interpretations also sometimes caused delays.

At the end I regretted not starting sooner with writing down the research. I heard this a lot in the PhD group, but it is so true. I would have liked to have started writing earlier in the process.

My own growth

Academically this process helped me to grow regarding my own critical and independent thoughts. I felt that I had learned a lot more from this process academically and in terms of positioning, theory and understanding the approach than in any of my previous studies.

I also acquired knowledge about the programme that I was not aware of and did not expect. Many new insights emerged from this process and totally new interpretations and suggestions emerged that I never thought about in the beginning. I was concerned that because of the fact that I was so involved in this context there wouldn't be that many new insights, but I was wrong. This serves to prove that one must trust the narrative process of development.

The help and insight from the co-researchers also came as a surprise. In a previous research study language and context was a huge barrier between the co-researchers and me. In this study the opposite was true. This made it a meaningful experience and a privilege to share in the lives of the co-researchers. Again I thank them.

Future study

In narrative research the journey is never finished. In this study there are a few areas in which future study can be considered:



- The understanding of how and why young people choose mentors
- The connection between mentorship and confirmation
- The understanding of language and how language is used to construct certain realities within local contexts
- The opportunities for local congregations to utilise mentorship in different contexts in the congregation
- The connection between mentorship and intergenerational theory

In looking back, the overall experience of this study has been rewarding and will hopefully contribute to the understanding of mentorship, not only in the church but also in other contexts.

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APPENDIX A

INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPATION AS CO-RESEARCHER

University of Pretoria
Department of Practical Theology
Promoter: Julian Müller

Researcher: Rev Z vd Westhuizen
Cellphone: 082 883 2302
E-Mail: zvdwesthuizen@gmail.com

Title of the study

Stories of mentorship in a local congregation

Purpose of the study

- I understand that I am invited to take part in a research study on the narratives/stories of mentors and mentees in the DRC Lynnwood mentorship programme.
- I undertake to willingly share my story with the researcher around mentorship, but also as part of the larger research group.

Procedures

- I understand that I will have a number of conversations with the researcher, and furthermore that I will be treated as a co-researcher and not merely be a subject under research.
- I understand that to be a co-researcher means that I will take part in reflective conversations and/or correspond with the researcher on the conversations that have taken place.
- I understand that I will be asked to share my feelings, emotions and beliefs about my story concerning mentorship, as well as possibly giving meaning and interpretations to my story and the research process as a whole.
- I understand that a reflective team, outside the research group, consisting of various persons from different disciplines will read a verbatim report of my conversations with the researcher and give their comments.
- I understand that I will be expected to reflect on their reflections.
- I understand that I will have the opportunity to have continuous input in the research process.

Risks and discomforts

- I understand that there will be no physical risk to me being involved in this study.
- I acknowledge however, that I might feel emotionally uncomfortable at some stages in the research conversations or thereafter, as a result of the conversations.

Benefits

- I understand that there are no financial benefits as a result of taking part in the research.
- However, I hope that in sharing my story about mentorship I will add to the available narrative research on the topic, and enrich my life and the life of the researcher in some ways.

Participants' rights

- I understand that participation is voluntary.
- I understand that, at all times, I have no obligation to continue as co-researcher, and that I can withdraw at any time without negative consequences.

Confidentiality



- The assurance of all information being treated as confidential has been given to me, my anonymity is assured and no information about my story will be used in any way if I don't give my permission for it.
- If I withdraw all data concerning my story will be destroyed.
- I understand that I have the right to the names of all those on the reflective team, although they will not be given my real name.

Statement and permission by co-researcher

Hereby I state that

- I am aware of the purpose of the study.
- I had an opportunity to ask questions about the research, and that I my decision is an informed one.
- I am a voluntary participant, and that I was not forced to take part in it.
- I am fully aware of the fact that the results of this research for the purpose of an academic scientific will be published.

I agree to take part in this research project.

Name of co-researcher

Signature

Place

Date

Witness

Statement by researcher

- I gave verbal information about the research project.
- I undertake to answer all questions about the research to the best of my ability.
- I undertake to keep to the arrangement between me and the co-researcher.

Name of researcher

Signature

Date

Place



APPENDIX B

MENTORSKAP BELYDENIS 2008

Ons het in Lynnwood nou al 'n hele paar tree gevorder in ons prosesse om jong leiers op te lei en te bemagtig as dissipel-makers in die Here se gemeente, Lynnwood. In ons eie ondervinding die afgelope paar jaar, asook die tendense in die ontwikkeling rondom jeugleierskap in die wêreld, is die waarde van mentorskap as 'n sleutel proses in hierdie ontwikkeling geïdentifiseer.

Die proses vanaf 2005 het in 2007 op die punt gekom dat ons die mentorskap program verbreed het om ook die graad 11's wat belydenis wil aflê in te sluit. Dit beteken dat elke jongmens wat belydenis wil aflê in 2009 nou reeds by hierdie program sal moet inskakel. In ons ondervinding is so 'n mentorskap verhouding net sinvol indien dit oor die minimum van 'n jaar loop. Die klem in hierdie mentorskap periode van 'n graad 11 sal veral lê by geestelike leiding en ondersteuning op die pad na sy/haar belydenis van geloof.

Daarom verwag ons dat elke graad 11 wat in 2009 wil belydenis aflê 'n mentor sal identifiseer wat saam met hom/haar vir 'n jaar lank 'n pad kan stap van begeleiding.

Die inhoud van Mentorskap

“Mentorskap” is natuurlik vandag 'n redelik gelaaide term. Die konsep word soms vertaal met “coaching” en in die kerk funksioneer dit dikwels ook in die tradisie van “spiritual guidance”. Die inhoud wat hieraan verleen word kom dikwels uit die besigheidswêreld waar mentorskap ook al hoe meer gebruik word om individuele persone op te lei en te begelei om hulle bepaalde werk/taak/vaardigheid beter te verrig. Hierdie insette is belangrik, maar ons moet in die kerk waak daarteen om sommer net hierdie verstaan te kopiëer in ons denkwyses oor die onderwerp.

Daar is ook in die kerk konteks baie programme rondom mentorskap. Baie Amerikaanse skrywers publiseer boeke oor die onderwerp. Ek heg ook van hierdie inligting aan as agtergrond oor die onderwerp. Die probleem is dat hierdie programme dikwels werk met die “10 goue stappe” of die “19 wette” van mentorskap. Persoonlik hou ek nie van hierdie benadering nie, aangesien ons in 'n nuwe, post-moderne konteks al baie lesse geleer het rondom regiede programme in die kerk. Maar die inligting is goeie agtergrond en help 'n mens om jou eie verstaan van mentorskap te vorm.

Mentorskap in Lynnwood

Die benadering wat ek dus graag wil volg in Lynnwood is 'n meer oop en ongeforserde benadering, maar nie een wat ongestruktureerd funksioneer nie. Dit beteken prakties dat ons nie gesprekke so struktureer dat daar 'n spesifieke agenda en program vir elke gesprek tussen 'n mentor en 'n leier is nie. Dit beteken ook nie dat daar geen kontrole of struktuur is waarbinne hierdie begeleiding plaasvind nie. Ons het in die program al geleer dat as ons nie bietjie rigting gee aan hierdie proses nie, dat dit na 'n ruk wegraak in ons besige skedules.

Ek dink graag verhalend en metafories. So as ons sou saamdink oor hoe mentorskap neerslag vind in Lynnwood dan sal die volgende paar metafore dalk die proses beskryf:

- John Maxwell praat van 'n mentor as 'n “**enlarger**”. Dit is iemand wat met ander woorde 'n persoon help om sy/haar volle potensiaal te bereik as mens.
- John Maxwell praat ook van 'n mentor as iemand wat optree soos 'n **navigator**. 'n Navigator is dus iemand wat nie self bestuur nie, maar die een wat bestuur by staan en help. Dit veronderstel dus dat 'n mentor kan navigeer.
- Die ander mooi beeld is dié van 'n **reisgenoot**. Die graad 11 stap sy/haar eie pad. Maar om hierdie pad te stap het sy/hy iemand nodig wat vir 'n tyd lank geselskap verleen langs hierdie pad. Iemand wat die pad ken en miskien kan dien as 'n gids, 'n vriend of net iemand wat ondersteun en luister.



Binne hierdie paar metafore word die rol van 'n mentor goed beskryf. Weet ook dat die graad 11 nie noodwendig die enigste een is wat uit hierdie verhouding kan groei en leer nie - waarskynlik sal die mentor ook baie leer by die graad 11.

'n Bybelse verstaan van mentorskap

Mentorskap is natuurlik ook nie 'n vreemde konsep in die Bybel nie. Ons kry eintlik in die OT en Joodse tradisie baie sterk die idee dat jong seuns begelei word deur die pa. In die geskiedenis van Israel sien ons hoe jong priesters, rigters en profete deur 'n ouer persoon begelei word. Kyk na 1 Sam 3 waar Eli vir Samuel begelei in sy opgroei tot 'n baie belangrike profeet en rigter in Israel se koninkryktyd.

In die Nuwe Testament sien ons die voorbeeld van Paulus wat jong leiers in die kerk begelei soos Timoteus. Hiervan lees ons in die Timoteus briewe en Hand 16 waar Paulus saam met Timoteus 'n pad stap. Timoteus is natuurlik ons leierskapshandleiding in die kerk en baie temas rondom leierskap word hierin verduidelik. Dit het ook die grondslag gevorm vir die werk en verantwoordelikhede van diakens en ouderlinge.

Wie kan 'n mentor wees?

Verskieslik moet 'n mentor iemand wees wat kan optree as 'n "enlarger", navigator en 'n reisgenoot. Die persoon moet dus iemand wees wat al 'n entjie pad gestap het, volwasse is in sy/haar verhouding met die Here en voel hy/sy kan die graad 11 bystaan. Die mentor moet ook iemand wees wat 'n verhouding met die Here uitleef en bereid is om 'n graad 11 te ondersteun nie net deur gesprekke nie, maar ook deur gebed.

Ons sou dus aanbeveel dat veral die graad 11's iemand moet vra wat ouer is om hulle mentor te wees. Die belangrike is wel dat die graad 11 gemaklik moet wees met die persoon en bereid sal wees om saam met die persoon 'n pad te stap. In ons leer uit die program die afgelope paar jaar beveel ons aan dat jongmense wat nog in die huis bly, twee keer dink voor hulle 'n ouer vra as mentor. Ouers tree reeds op as mentors en ouers vertel dat dit moeilik vir hulle is om rolle te onderskei by die huis.

Dit gebeur ook dat jongmense nie betyds by die mentorskap program inskakel nie, en dan ma of pa vra as 'n vinnige uitweg twv belydenisaflegging. Maar daar is verhale waar ouer/kinder mentor verhoudings positief gewerk het.

'n Paar gedagtes dan oor wie kan mentors wees:

- Baie jongmense kies 'n ander familielid soos 'n ouer broer of suster, tannie of oom.
- Party jongmense kies onderwysers, predikante of ander persone wat 'n rol in hulle lewe speel.
- Jongmense kan selfs studente of vriende kies, maar nie van die teenoorgestelde geslag nie. Ons vind dit help in die geval van jonger persone om eerder iemand van dieselfde geslag te kies.

Hoe kies 'n graad 11 'n mentor?

Elke graad 11 kan dus self hulle eie mentor kies. Ons het gevoel dat as ons sekere persone af forseer op jongmense om hulle mentors te wees, dan moedig dit nie noodwendig 'n oop verhouding aan nie.

In die volgende paar weke tot die **2de Maart 2008** het graad 11's dus kans om mooi te dink en te gesels oor wie hulle mentor kan wees. Die betrokke predikant in wie se groep die graad 11,



moet die mentor-keuse goedkeur. As die predikant gelukkig is oor die jongmens se keuse word die mentor deel van ons program.

Indien 'n graad 11 wel sukkel hiermee en nie weet wie hy/sy graag sou wou vra nie, dan kan hulle kom gesels en ek sal help om 'n geskikte persoon te kies.

Wat verwag ons van 'n mentor?

Ons verwag van 'n mentor om bereid te wees om tot die volgende te verbind:

1. Om vir die tydperk van **Maart 2008 tot Februarie 2009** op te tree as 'n graad 11 se mentor.
2. Om in hierdie tyd ten minste **1 keer per maand** met die graad 11 'n gesprek te voer. Die inhoud van die gesprek sal ons nog bespreek.
3. Om die mentor kursus by te woon. Die graad 11's woon nie hierdie kursus by nie. Die kursus kan bygewoon word op 'n Saterdag oggend of oor twee Donderdae aande. Die datums van hierdie kursus vir 2008 is:

***Saterdag, 8 Maart 8:30 tot 13:00 by NG Lynnwood
Donderdae, 6 & 13 Maart 19:00 tot 21:00 by NG Lynnwood***

4. Om **een maal 'n kwartaal 'n kort terugvoer sessie** by te woon, waarin ons die vordering bespreek van die gesprekke.
5. Om gereeld met ons kontak te hou via e-pos.

Ons vra dus nie te veel nie, maar ook nie te min nie. Op dié wyse is die proses informeel maar ook gestruktureerd. **Die proses is nie opsioneel nie. Daarom moet Gr 11's en mentors hulle self van die begin af volkome hieraan verbind om in 2009 te kan belydenis aflê.**

Verbintenisvorm

Aangeheg is 'n verbintenisvorm wat elke mentor asseblief moet voltooi. Die mentor of graad 11 moet asseblief hierdie vorms terugbesorg aan die jeugkantoor of hulle predikant voor/op **Sondag, 2 Maart 2008**.

Navrae

Hantie Bezuidenhout is die bedieningleier wat by die jeugbediening verantwoordelik is vir mentorskap. Skakel haar gerus indien daar enige verdere inligting nodig is in hierdie verband. Haar kontakbesonderhede:

Hantie Bezuidenhout
bez@iafrica.com
082 255 2849



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

APPENDIX C

NG Lynnwood Mentorskap Kursus

Mentorskap





INHOUDSOPGAWE

DEEL 1 | AGTERGOND

DEEL 2 | WAT IS MENTORSKAP?

DEEL 3 | ONS BASIESE VERTREKPUNTE

DEEL 4 | JY IS GEKIES!

DEEL 5 | EIENSKAPPE VAN 'N GOEIE MENTOR

DEEL 6 | MULTIMODEL MENTORSKAP

DEEL 7 | HOE HANTEER EK 'N GESPREK?

DEEL 8 | INHOUD VAN GESPREKKE?

DEEL 9 | WAT HET ONS GELEER IN DIE VERLEDE?

DEEL 10 | WAT VERWAG LYNNWOOD VAN DIE MENTORS?

DEEL 1 | AGTERGROND

Ons het in Lynnwood nou al 'n hele paar tree gevorder in ons prosesse om jongmense te betrek in die mentorskapprogram in die gemeente. Die program het baie gegroei en uitgebrei. Dit het begin in 2005 as 'n program vir die leiersgroep van die jeugbediening (grotendeels die senior kategese leiers).

Die proses vanaf 2005 het in 2006 op die punt gekom dat ons die mentorskap program verbreed het om ook die graad 11's wat belydenis wil aflê in te sluit. Dit beteken dat elke jongmens wat belydenis wil aflê in 2008 nou reeds by hierdie program sal moet inskakel. In ons ondervinding is so 'n mentorskap verhouding net sinvol indien dit oor die minimum van 'n jaar loop.

Die proses is dus verpligtend vir twee groepe in die gemeente:

- Die senior kategese leiers
- Die graad 11's wat in die belydenisjaar is

Ons het ook besluit om vanaf 2008 die program oop te stel vir enige iemand in die gemeente. Iemand kan dus 'n mentor kies en die mentor kan deel word van die program soos enige ander mentor. Die kursus in hierdie boekie gee dus **RIGLYNE** wat gebruik kan word in al drie hierdie kontekste. Maar daar sal ook verwys word na die spesifieke behoeftes van elke konteks.

Die inhoud van Mentorskap

“Mentorskap” is natuurlik vandag 'n redelik gelaaide term. Die konsep word soms vertaal met “coaching” en in die kerk funksioneer dit dikwels ook in die tradisie van “spiritual guidance”. Die inhoud wat hieraan verleen word kom dikwels uit die besigheidswêreld waar mentorskap ook al hoe meer gebruik word om individuele persone op te lei en te begelei om hulle bepaalde werk/taak/vaardigheid beter te verrig. Hierdie insette is belangrik, maar ons moet in die kerk waak daarteen om sommer net hierdie verstaan te kopiëer in ons denkwyses oor die onderwerp.

Daar is ook in die kerkkonteks baie programme rondom mentorskap. Baie Amerikaanse skrywers publiseer boeke oor die onderwerp. Die probleem is dat

hierdie programme dikwels werk met die “10 goue stappe” of die “19 wette” van mentorskap. Persoonlik hou ons nie van hierdie benadering nie, aangesien ons in ‘n nuwe, post-moderne konteks al baie lesse geleer het rondom rigiede programme in die kerk. Maar die inligting is goeie agtergrond en help ‘n mens om jou eie verstaan van mentorskap te vorm.

Mentorskap in Lynnwood

Die benadering wat ons dus graag wil volg in Lynnwood is ‘n meer oop en ongeforceerde benadering, maar nie een wat ongestruktureerd funksioneer nie. Dit beteken prakties dat ons nie gesprekke so struktureer dat daar ‘n spesifieke agenda en program vir elke gesprek tussen ‘n mentor en ‘n leier is nie. Dit beteken ook nie dat daar geen kontrole of struktuur is waarbinne hierdie begeleiding plaasvind nie. Ons het in die program al geleer dat as ons nie bietjie rigting gee aan hierdie proses nie, dat dit na ‘n ruk wegraak in ons besige skedules.

Ons dink graag verhalend en metafories. So as ons sou saamdink oor hoe mentorskap neerslag vind in Lynnwood dan sal die volgende paar metafore dalk die proses beskryf:

John Maxwell praat van ‘n mentor as ‘n “**enlarger**”. Dit is iemand wat met ander woorde ‘n persoon help om sy/haar volle potensiaal te bereik as mens.

John Maxwell praat ook van ‘n mentor as iemand wat optree soos ‘n **navigator**. ‘n Navigator is dus iemand wat nie self bestuur nie, maar die een wat bestuur bystaan en help. Dit veronderstel dus dat ‘n mentor kan navigeer.

Die ander mooi beeld is dié van ‘n **reisgenoot**. Die persoon wat gementor word (Mentee) stap sy/haar eie pad. Maar om hierdie pad te stap het sy/hy iemand nodig wat vir ‘n tyd lank geselskap verleen langs hierdie pad. Iemand wat die pad ken en miskien kan dien as ‘n gids, ‘n vriend of net iemand wat ondersteun en luister.

Binne hierdie paar metafore word die rol van ‘n mentor goed beskryf. Weet ook dat die mentee nie noodwendig die enigste een is wat uit hierdie verhouding kan groei en leer nie – waarskynlik sal die mentor ook baie leer by die leier.

‘n Bybelse verstaan van mentorskap

Mentorskap is natuurlik ook nie ‘n vreemde konsep in die Bybel nie. Ons kry eintlik in die OT en Joodse tradisie baie sterk die idee dat jong seuns begelei word deur

die pa. In die geskiedenis van Israel sien ons hoe jong priesters, rigters en profete deur 'n ouer persoon begelei word. Kyk na 1 Sam 3 waar Eli vir Samuel begelei in sy opgroei tot 'n baie belangrike profeet en rigter in Israel se koninkryktyd.

In die Nuwe Testament sien ons die voorbeeld van Paulus wat jong leiers in die kerk begelei soos Timoteus. Hiervan lees ons in die Timoteus briewe en Hand 16 waar Paulus saam met Timoteus 'n pad stap. Timoteus is natuurlik ons leierskapshandleiding in die kerk en baie temas rondom leierskap word hierin verduidelik. Dit het ook die grondslag gevorm vir die werk en verantwoordelikhede van diakens en ouderlinge.

Wie kan 'n mentor wees?

Verskieslik moet 'n mentor iemand wees wat kan optree as 'n "enlarger", navigator en 'n reisgenoot. Die persoon moet dus iemand wees wat al 'n entjie pad gestap het, volwasse is in sy/haar verhouding met die Here en voel hy/sy kan die leier bystaan. Die mentor moet ook iemand wees wat 'n verhouding met die Here uitleef en bereid is om 'n leier te ondersteun nie net deur gesprekke nie, maar ook deur gebed.

Die belangrike is wel dat die mentee gemaklik moet wees met die persoon en bereid sal wees om saam met die persoon 'n pad te stap. In ons leer uit die program die afgelope paar jaar beveel ons aan dat jongmense wat nog in die huis bly, twee keer dink voor hulle 'n ouer vra as mentor. Ouers tree reeds op as mentors en ouers vertel dat dit moeilik vir hulle is om rolle te onderskei by die huis.

'n Paar gedagtes dan oor wie kan mentors wees:

- Baie jongmense kies 'n ander familielid soos 'n ouer broer of suster, tannie of oom.
- Party jongmense kies onderwysers, bure, predikante of ander persone wat 'n rol in hulle lewe speel.
- Jongmense kan selfs studente of vriende kies, maar nie van die teenoorgestelde geslag nie. Ons vind dit help in die geval van jonger persone om eerder iemand van dieselfde geslag te kies.

Hoe kies 'n mentee 'n mentor?



Elke mentee kan dus self hulle eie mentor kies. Ons het gevoel dat as ons sekere persone af forseer op mense om hulle mentors te wees, dan moedig dit nie noodwendig 'n oop verhouding aan nie.

Die keuse van 'n mentor is seker een van die belangrikste stappe in die program. Om hierdie proses te begelei vra ons in die verpligte deel van die program dat die mentee sy/haar keuse met die betrokke predikant of bedieningsleier moet bespreek voordat die keuse gefinaliseer word.

Indien 'n mentee wel sukkel hiermee en nie weet wie hy/sy graag sou wou vra nie, dan kan hulle kom gesels en ons sal help om 'n geskikte persoon te kies.



DEEL 2 | WAT IS MENTORSKAP?

As jy dink aan jousef as 'n mentor, jy het die eerste deel van die kursus gelees en jy moet vir jousef dink aan 'n metafoor vir mentorskap – wat sou dit wees? Van die metafore is reeds genoem: Reisgenoot, Navigator en “enlarger”.

Kies vir jousef 'n metafoor vir mentorskap en teken dit in hierdie blokkie:



Paul D. Stanley & J. Robert Clinton expanded definition of mentoring follows:

- a relational process
- in which a mentor, who knows or has experienced something,
- transfers that something
- (resources of wisdom, information, experience,
- confidence, insight, relationships, status, etc.)
- to a mentoree,
- at an appropriate time and manner,
- so that it facilitates development or empowerment.

“Coaching is unlocking a person’s potential to maximize their own performance. It is helping them to learn rather than teaching them.”

- John Whitmore

“Coaching is the facilitation of learning and development with the purpose of improving performance and enhancing effective action, goal achievement and personal satisfaction. It invariably involves growth and change, whether that is in perspective, attitude or behavior.”

- Peter Bluckert

Skryf jou eie definisie vir mentorskap neer soos jy dit verstaan:

Hoe sou ons definisie van Mentorskap lyk in NG Lynnwood?

Mentoring is long-term, less specific and originated in a wider context of relating knowledge and wisdom to a younger person who is maturing in a field similar to the mentor.

Coaching is more specific and originated in a context of teaching and learning in a specific space of time. The coach does not necessarily share the same field of expertise. A one-to-one relationship.

Mentorskap in NG Lynnwood is 'n jaarlange, semi-gestruktureerde proses waarin 'n mentor reisgeselskap verleen aan 'n mentee. Die mentor is gekies deur die mentee op grond van 'n potensiële vertrouensverhouding waarin daar wedersydse leer, begeleiding, betekenisvorming en deel van verhale plaasvind. Die mentorskap vind plaas binne die gemeenteprogram se verskillende kontekste en riglyne.



DEEL 3 | ONS BASIESE VERTREK PUNTE

Dit is belangrik om bewus te wees dat mentorskap opleiding en programme verskil. Dit het te doen met kontekste, aanbieders, omgewing, wetenskap en veral rondom die basiese vertrekpunte van die program. Enige program of kursus word binne 'n bepaalde paradigma ontwikkel. Rondom 'n paar sleutelwoorde word ons basiese vertrekpunte verduidelik:

Post – fundamenteel:

Kompartementele denke vs holistiese denke

Individuele vs Sistemiese

Absolutes vs Sosiale konstruksie



Narratiewe denke

“Expert” vs gelyke vennote

Fokus op prosesse

Fokus op uniekheid

DEEL 4 | JY IS GEKIES!

Meeste mentors wonder: Hoekom is ek gekies?

Elke mentor is waarskynlik vir 'n ander rede gekies.

Die feit dat jy wel gekies is, is al wat saakmaak!

Die vraag is aan 'n groep mentees gevra oor hoekom hulle 'n spesifieke mentor gekies het en die antwoorde was uiteenlopend, maar insiggewend.

My mentor.....

Glo in my

Sien my as 'n persoon van waarde

Luister ... of dit 'n grappie, storie of probleem is

Laat my deel voel van sy lewe

Deel 'n toebroodjie!

Gee perspektief

Aanvaar my al stem ons nie saam nie

Vra vrae wat my aan die dink sit

Hòr wat ek sê...

Maak tyd vir my

Kan ek twee uur in die nag bel

Stretch my....

Most mentoring is informal. It is simply two people who enjoy each other and want to see each other win, helping each other over a period of time. Their relationship involves companionship, camaraderie, correction and simple friendship. It involves the joy of mutual sharing!



DEEL 5 | EIENSKAPPE VAN 'N GOEIE MENTOR

Sedert die begin van die program het ons baie geleer oor mentors. Daar is ook literatuur wat ons help om eienskappe te identifiseer wat baie belangrik is in mentorskap. Elke mentor se eienskappe is nie noodwendig ewe sterk nie, maar dit is belangrik om aan die eienskappe te werk waarin jy voel jy nie so sterk is nie. Jy is dalk baie kreatief maar jy kommunikeer nie so goed nie. Dan is dit nodig om te fokus op kommunikasie en vir jouself bewus te maak om aan daardie eienskap te werk.

Soos wat ons deur die verskillende eienskappe werk, doen die volgende:

1. Skryf vir jouself 'n paar belangrike sleutelbegrippe neer wat jy hoor uit die gesprek oor elke eienskap. Maak op die manier seker dat jy elke eienskap reg verstaan.
2. Merk op die skaal van 1 tot 7 waar jy min of meer voel jy lê in terme van die spesifieke eienskap (omkring die betrokke waarde).

1 = moet ernstig hieraan werk; 7 = hierdie eienskap is volledig deel van my

Kreatiwiteit

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Denker

1 2 3 4 5 6 7



“Presence”

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Goeie kommunikeerder

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Self-reflektief

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Neem maklik ‘n posisie van “Nie-weet” in

1 2 3 4 5 6 7



Positief en inspirerend

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Lys vir jouself die drie eienskappe waarop jy die meeste wil fokus in die volgende tyd om meer van te leer en daarin te groei:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

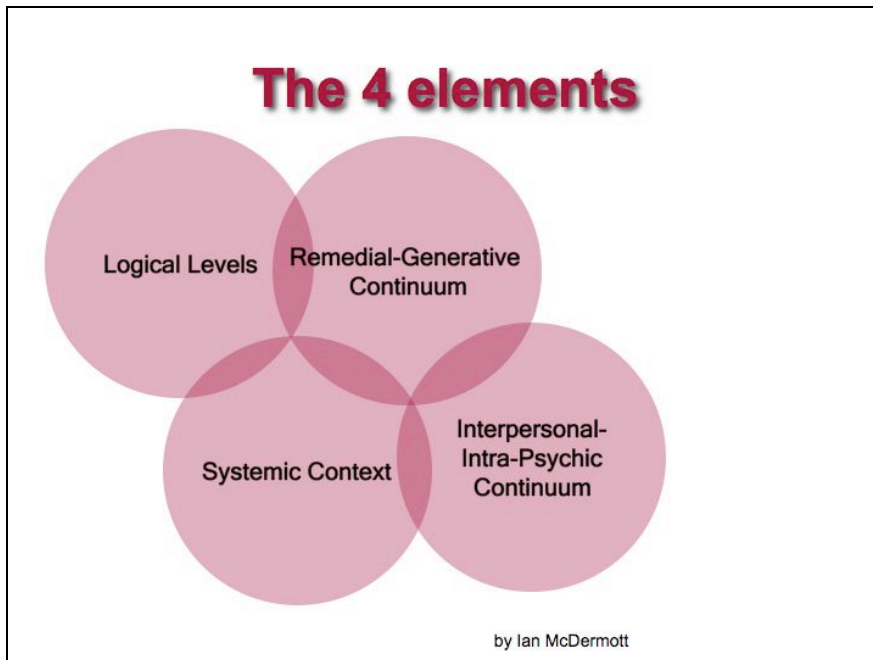
DEEL 6 | MULTI-MODEL MENTORSKAP

In die lees van verskeie literatuur was daar een model wat nogals interessant is en in vorige opleidings as sinvol bestempel is. Die model is ontwikkel deur Ian McDermott en Wendy Jago. Dit word in die boek *The Coaching Bible* beskryf.

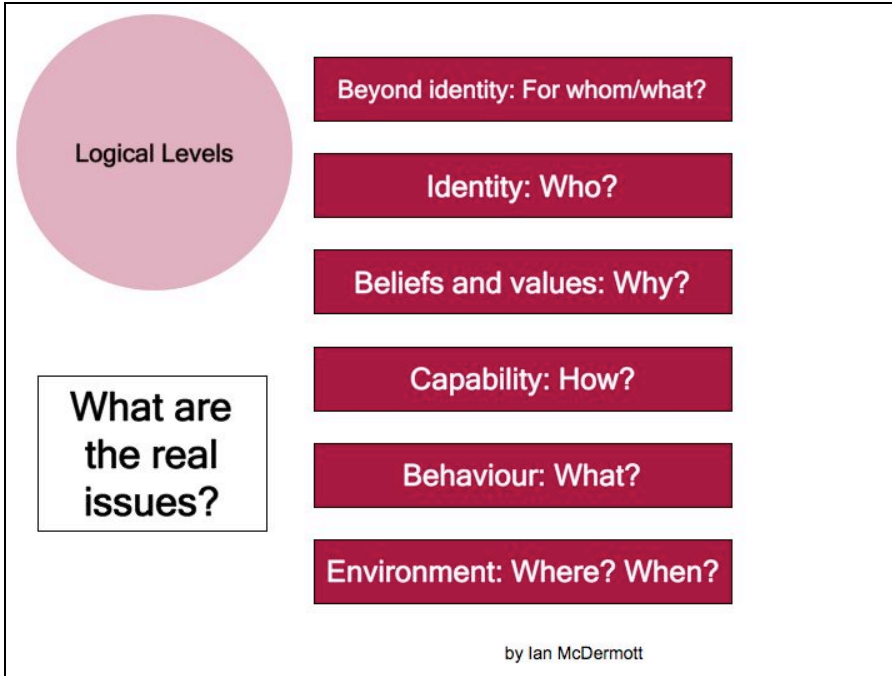
Die model is natuurlik gemik op die besigheidswêreld van 'coaching' en is gemik op 'n gestruktureerde konteks. In die model stel hulle egter 'n stuk gereedskap voor om te gebruik in die bepaling van die inhoud/uitdaging/probleem waarmee 'n mens te doen kry in hierdie konteks.

Ons kan met aanpassings die stukkie gereedskap gebruik binne ons mentorskap konteks as agtergrond in gesprekke. Dit help jou om so bietjie verder te dink oor waarom die inhoud van die gesprek eintlik gaan.

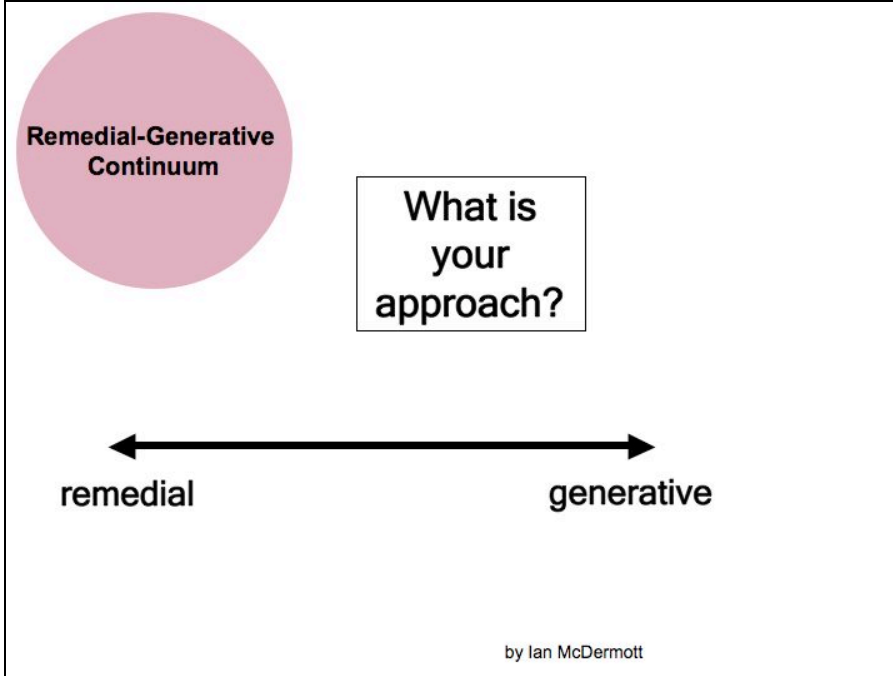
Daar word gefokus op 4 elemente wat jou kan help op hierdie weg:



Ons gaan kyk na elkeen van die vier elemente en probeer om te verstaan wat dit beteken en hoe dit gebruik word. Maak gerus aantekeninge onder elke illustrasie om vir jouself die definisie en sleutelbegrippe neer te pen.



Notas:



Notas:



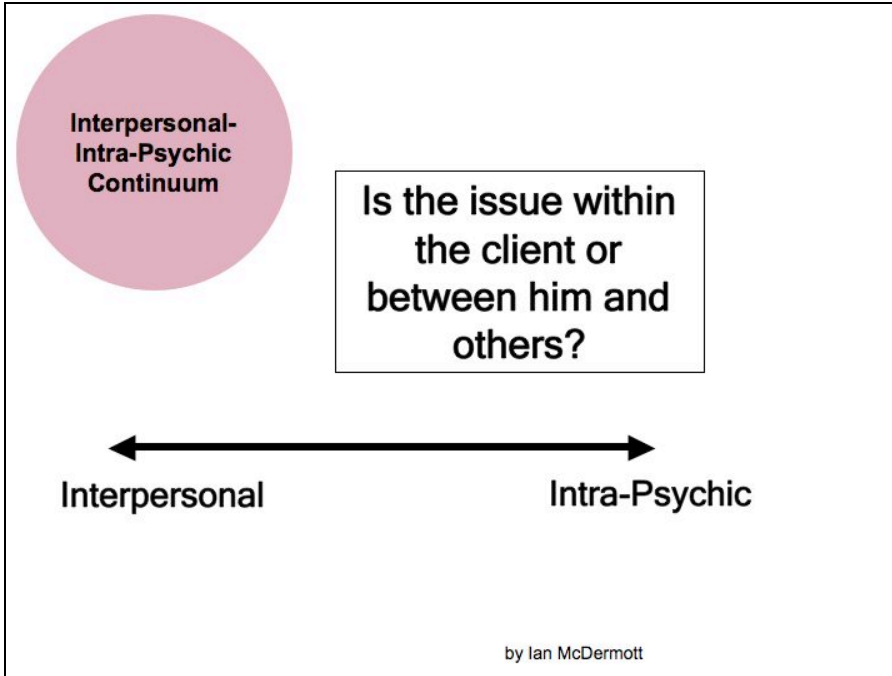
Systemic Context

Do I see patterns or just events and forces?

$1 + 1 = >1$

by Ian McDermott

Notas:



Notas:



'n "Coaching" gevallestudie buite ons konteks

Lees die volgende gevallestudie en beantwoord die vrae:

Cathy works for a cleaning service provider in the Gateway centre. She has been working here for more than 6 years now and there has never been a complaint about her work. Lately the manager has noticed that Cathy is not doing her work as well as before. She does not follow the Protocol and customers have complained that Cathy is impolite towards them.

You are assigned to coach Cathy concerning these problems. Cathy is very shy in the first session and feels shamed by the fact that she needs to be coached after these complaints.

Hoe sal jy die eerste fase van die gesprekke hanteer? Wat sal jy doen en hoe sal jy reageer op haar situasie?

Three weeks later Cathy starts to open up to you about her feelings and experiences at work. Cathy is divorced and carries the burden of caring for her children alone. Her son has been diagnosed with HIV and somehow most of her colleagues at work has found out. Due to the stigmatization surrounding the illness they have started to avoid her.



Hou die vier elemente in gedagte van die Multi-Model. Wat sien jy raak is moontlik die eintlike probleme waarop 'n mens moet fokus?

The coaching has reached its final phase and Cathy is inspired to pursue more possibilities and opportunities.

Wat is die moontlikhede wat Cathy dalk kan opgewonde maak oor die situasie en die toekoms?



DEEL 7 | HOE HANTEER EK 'N GESPREK?

Enkele kort gevalle-studies binne ons konteks vir bespreking: Hoe sal ons dit hanteer?

- 1. 'n Jongmens kies haar ouma as mentor. Hulle het nog altyd goed oor die weg gekom en kuier en gesels spontaan en gemaklik. Elke keer as die ouma egter oor iets geesteliks met haar praat, slaan sy bottoe en word ongemaklik**
- 2. Jongmense wat belydenis van geloof moet aflê, voel soms dat hulle moet “aansoek” doen by die kerk (amper soos vir 'n werk), en dat die aansoek selfs verwerp kan word. Hulle voel ook dat dit amper soos 'n worsmasjien is en dat die ware betekenis verlore gaan**
- 3. Een mentor skryf... X het deur 'n besondere moeilike tyd gegaan met 'n gewapende roof waar sy amper verkrag is. Daar is 'n groot gat in haar siel.....**
- 4. 'n Pa skryf..... Dit is baie moeilik om die rolle te skei van ouer en mentor. Die ouer word die “dissiplineerder”, terwyl die mentor die “koel” volwassene word wat somtyds tevoorskyn kom.**

DEEL 8 | INHOUD VAN GESPREKKE

Aan die begin van die kursus het ons gesels oor die verskillende benaderings tot mentorskap. Daar is aan die een kant meer gestruktureerde programme en aan die ander kant totaal ongestruktureerde programme. In ons program wil ons aan die een kant nie die inhoud van gesprekke en die hele program struktureer op so 'n wyse dat daar einlik nie plek is vir die mentee se eie agenda nie. Aan die ander kant is dit vir mentors moeilik as daar geen inhoud of struktuur is nie, want dit voel vir baie mentors asof hulle nie weet waaroor om te gesels of wat om te doen nie.

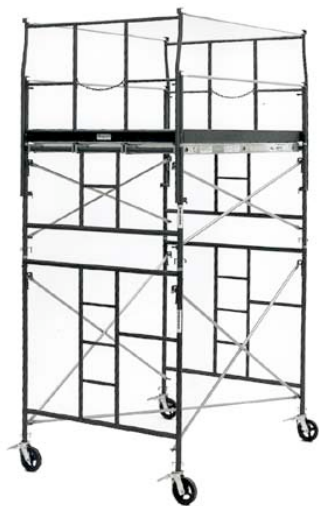
Hoe ons dit moet hanteer in die program om goeie balans tussen hierdie twee pole te kry is altyd moeilik.

Behalwe vir die inhoud is daar ook altyd vrae oor hoeveel kere mentors bymekaar moet kom en hoe gereeld en op watter wyse word daar terugvoer verwag.

Die derde uitdaging is die verskillende kontekste waarbinne die mentorskapprogram funksioneer: Die konteks van graad 11's wat belydenis aflê, die konteks van 'n jong leier wat matriek of student is en die konteks van enige gemeentelid (oud en jonk) wat graag inskakel in die program.

Hoe gaan ons hierdie uitdaging tegemoet in die program?

Ons stel die metafoer van steierwerk voor.



Steierwerk vorm die struktuur waarbinne 'n gebou gebou word. Die steierwerk maak dit moontlik om die gebou hoog en goed te bou en vorm 'n raam om die nuwe konstruksie. Dit verleen dus struktuur maar dit is nie die konstruksie self nie. In ons program wil ons dus steierwerk verskaf vir die konstruksie. Die steierwerk gee net struktuur en riglyne vir die gesprek en inhoud (die konstruksie) tussen 'n mentor en mentee. Die kreatiwiteit van die argitek en die bouers bepaal hoe die gebou lyk, maar die steierwerk verskaf die manier en die nodige ondersteuning om die gebou te bou.

Hoe lyk die steierwerk in die program?

Daar is 'n paar basiese uitgangspunte oor die inhoud en verwagtinge wat ons as waardes van die program met mekaar ooreenkom:

- Ons verwag nie terugvoer van enige aard oor die inhoud van gesprekke nie. Dit bly binne die vertrouensverhouding van die mentee en mentor
- Ons verwag terugvoer soos ooreengekom oor die proses en of mentors gereeld by hul mentees uitkom
- Daar is geen kurikulum of ander vereistes wat moet deurgewerk word met 'n mentee nie ten einde "te slaag" of te "kwalifiseer" vir enige iets soos byvoorbeeld belydenisaflegging nie
- In die geval van die verpligte programme is die enigste vereiste dat die proses (die verhouding en gesprekke) wel gereeld plaasvind.
- Materiaal voorstelle vir inhoud is slegs 'n riglyn vir mentors wat behoefte daaraan het maar hoef nie noodwendig gebruik te word op 'n spesifieke manier nie. Tog moedig ons die gebruik daarvan aan veral aan die begin
- Ons bly by die basiese dele van 'n gesprek wat tydens elke ontmoeting teenwoordig moet wees
- Mentors en mentees moet mekaar gereeld sien. Ten minste een keer per maand. 'n Goeie wenk is om afsprake vooruit te skeduleer en daarby te hou. Almal is besig en dit werk die beste!
- Ons verwag dat mentors vinnig genoeg sal aandui as daar vrae of probleme is in die verhouding

Basiese elemente van enige gesprek

In enige gesprek tussen 'n mentor en mentee behoort die volgende elemente deel te wees van die gesprek:

- **Reisgeselskap** – met ander woorde 'n stukkie deel van verhale oor hoe dit gaan tans, wat gebeur in mekaar se lewens ens
- **Kenmekaar en openheid** – deel iets van jouself as mentor en doen moeite om die mentee te leer ken (al dink jy jy ken hom/haar goed)
- **Refleksie**. Gebruik ook tyd om te hoor wat het gebeur sedert die vorige gesprek. Miskien het julle saam besluit om op iets te fokus en om iets te probeer doen.
- **Spesifieke inhoud**. Indien jy gebruik wil maak van die voorgestelde inhoud kan jy dit gebruik.



- 'n Vaste punt waar julle met mekaar **kontrakteer** waaroor julle gaan gesels by die volgende sessie en of daar iets is wat ons gaan voorberei of saambring met die oog daarop.
- 'n **Konstante bewussyn** van die gesprek deur die mentor en dink daaroor.
- **Refleksie** oor die dag se gesprek. Vra vir die mentee of die gesprek sinvol was en wat van ons saam van die gesprek as ons uitmekaar uit gaan.
- **Gebed**. Maak tyd om vir mekaar te bid

Voorstel vir 'n paar gesprekke

'n Eerste gesprek

- Die doel van die eerste gesprek is om mekaar beter te leer ken
- Vertel vir mekaar al die nodige biografiese inligting
- Deel met mekaar 'n storie uit jou verlede wat baie betekenis het
- Verduidelik die proses van mentorskap vir jou mentee
- Kontrakteer met mekaar waar en hoe gereeld julle mekaar gaan sien. Wat doen ons as ons 'n afspraak nie kan maak nie ens
- Gee vir jou jongmens die eerste materiaal wat jy ontvang het om volgende keer oor te gesels
- Deel met mekaar hoe was hierdie eerste gesprek. Wat sou 'n mens kon anders doen?
- Besluit oor die volgende bymekaarkoms/afspraak
- Bid saam

'n Gesprek oor materiaal wat byvoorbeeld gaan oor geestelike dissiplines

- Voer 'reisgeselskap' oor die afgelope tyd
- Reflekteer oor julle vorige gesprek. Wat het gebeur sedert die vorige gesprek?
- Beweeg na die materiaal oor geestelike dissiplines. (Voor elke gesprek moet die mentor en mentee al die materiaal gelees het)
- Gesels oor die materiaal en praat bietjie oor hoe hierdie geestelike dissipline in elkeen van jul lewens tans funksioneer
- Hanteer vrae oor die onderwerp
- Besluit hoe die mentee die dissipline gaan inoefen voor die volgende gesprek.
- Deel wat het jy in jou eie lewe as mentor al geleer oor die bepaalde dissipline
- Reflekteer oor vandag se gesprek
- Besluit oor die volgende bymekaarkoms/afspraak
- Bid saam

'n Gesprek oor 'n mentee se leiersrol by die gemeente

- Voer 'reisgeselskap' oor die afgelope tyd
- Reflekteer oor julle vorige gesprek. Wat het gebeur sedert die vorige gesprek?
- Vra die mentee om jou te vertel van sy/haar leiersrol by die kerk. Gesels oor wat dit is, wat dit behels en wat sy/haar verantwoordelikhede is
- Gesels oor hoe sy/hy uitdagings hanteer. Wat pla tans? Wat is moeilik en wat is lekker?
- Gesels bietjie oor leierskap in jou as mentor se lewe. Wat se verhale oor leierskap kan jy deel met die mentee?
- Besluit watse aspekte van leierskap die mentee graag aan sal wil werk, besluit saam hoe en maak seker jy volg dit op by 'n volgende gesprek.
- Reflekteer oor vandag se gesprek
- Besluit oor die volgende bymekaarkoms/afspraak
- Bid saam

'n Gesprek oor belydenisaflegging en die betekenis daarvan

- Voer 'reisgeselskap' oor die afgelope tyd
- Reflekteer oor julle vorige gesprek. Wat het gebeur sedert die vorige gesprek?
- Vra vir die mentee hoe beleef sy/hy die belydenisjaar. Wat is lekker? Wat is moeilik? Wat se vrae is daar?
- Gesels bietjie oor vrae daar rondom?
- Gesels oor die mentee se belewenis van die idee van belydenisaflegging. Hoe besluit 'n mens of jy reg is daarvoor ens.
- Verduidelik waarom belydenis gaan (Basies 2 elemente: 'n publieke belydenis dat ek die Here se kind is en vir Hom wil leef en die bevestiging dat ek graag deel wil wees van 'n geloofsgemeenskap waarin ek 'n bydrae lewer en inskakel)
- Deel wat het jou belydenisaflegging vir jou beteken.
- Reflekteer oor vandag se gesprek
- Besluit oor die volgende bymekaarkoms/afspraak
- Bid saam

Agtergrond oor die prosedure van Belydenisaflegging vir 2009 uit die inligtingstuk:

Vanaf hierdie jaar wil ons graag in Lynnwood 'n nuwe kultuur vestig. In die verlede het Lynnwood een geleentheid in Februarie geskep vir jongmense om belydenis af te lê, maar ons ondervind dat daar 'n groeiende behoefte is by jongmense self om nie noodwendig net een geleentheid te hê om belydenis af te lê nie. Ons wil dus die geleentheid skep, dat sou daar jongmense wees wat op 'n ander tyd as die tradisionele Februarie geleentheid wil belydenis af lê, dat dit moontlik sou wees.



In Graad 11 voltooi 'n jongmens die belydenisjaar. Dit sluit in die kamp, klasse en mentorskap program. Wanneer die jongmens gereed voel om die keuse te maak om belydenis af te lê kan hy/sy by een van drie geleenthede dit doen.

Vir elke belydenisaflegging geleentheid is daar 'n sluitingsdatum waarteen 'n jongmens kan aansoek doen om by daardie geleentheid belydenis van geloof af te lê. Vir die aansoek moet die volgende in plek wees:

1. 'n Aansoekvorm met besonderhede
2. 'n Aansoekbrief waarin 'n jongmens motiveer hoekom sy/hy graag belydenis sou wou aflê
3. 'n Kort verslaggie van die mentor oor die jaar se mentor verhouding
4. 'n Doopseël, indien dit nie by NG Lynnwood reeds is nie of die naam van die gemeente waar die jongmens gedoop is.

Belydenisafleggings in 2009

1 Februarie 2009 (Sluitingsdatum: 2 November 2008)
10 Mei 2009 (Sluitingsdatum: 22 Maart 2009)
30 Augustus 2009 (Sluitingsdatum: 2 Augustus 2009)

Alle korrespondensie en aansoeke vir belydenisaflegging word deur die kerkkantoor ontvang en hanteer.

'n Gesprek oor enige iets lekkers en interessant

- Voer 'reisgeselskap' oor die afgelope tyd
- Reflekteer oor julle vorige gesprek. Wat het gebeur sedert die vorige gesprek?
- Besluit in die vorige week om dalk iets interessants te lees soos 'n artikel oor 'n plek om vakansie te gaan hou, iets oor die mentee se stokperdjie of sommer enige iets wat vir julle lekker sal wees om oor te gesels. Julle kan selfs iets gaan doen het saam of 'n plek besoek het. Praat dan bietjie saam daaroor.
- Gesels oor hoekom dit interessant is. Deel wat het jou as mentor opgeval oor die manier waarop hierdie ding vir die mentee iets beteken het.
- Gesels daaroor en antwoord miskien vrae waaruit uit die onderwerp voortspruit
- Reflekteer oor vandag se gesprek
- Besluit oor die volgende bymekaarkoms/afspraak
- Bid saam

DEEL 9 | WAT HET ONS AL GELEER IN DIE VERLEDE?

In die afgelope paar jaar het ons verskeie lesse geleer. Ons pas deurentyd dit wat ons leer by die program aan om die proses meer effektief, sinvol en vaartbelynd te maak. Daarom hoor ons graag op 'n deurlopende basis van die mentors en is oop vir voorstelle en idees

'n Paar "lesse" en wenke:

- Tyd is altyd 'n probleem! Almal is besig en om bymekaar uit te kom gaan bomenslike beplanning verg. Mentors het dikwels die beste bedoelings, maar om 'n afspraak gereël te kry wat albei pas, is bykans onmoontlik. Wees gewaarsku!
- Afsprake hoef nie altyd dieselfde vorm aan te neem nie. **Wees kreatief!** Om rustig te sit en koffie drink is nie altyd moontlik nie. Een jongmens skryf: 'n basiese sms het my dikwels gedra deur 'n dag!"
- Kwantiteit is net so belangrik soos kwaliteit. Omdat 'n **verhouding** gebou word, kan die mentor nie net by geleentheid met die mentee kontak maak en lang periodes laat verbygaan sonder enige kontak nie. Die mentee sal dan nie vrymoedigheid hê om die mentor te kontak met 'n probleem, omdat hy nie deel sal voel van die mentor se lewe nie.
- Mentors het nie al die antwoorde nie! Ontspan, dit maak nie saak nie. Soek saam na antwoorde en oplossings. Die predikante is altyd bereid om raad te gee oor geestelike kwessies.
- Mentors is nie perfek nie!
- Elke verhouding is uniek en anders.
- Mentors leer net so baie soos die jongmense....
- Mentors bly nie by die datums nie en vergeet om te e-pos. Dit vertraag die proses en bring onnodige spanning. **Bly ASB by die datums!!**

DEEL 10 | WAT VERWAG LYNNWOOD VAN DIE MENTORS?

Ons verwag van 'n mentor om bereid te wees om tot die volgende te verbind:

- Om vir die tydperk van Maart 2008 tot November 2008 op te tree as 'n jongmens se mentor.
- Om in hierdie tyd ten minste 1 keer per maand met die jongmens 'n gesprek te voer. Die inhoud van die gesprek sal ons nog bespreek.
- Om die mentor kursus by te woon.
- Om een maal 'n kwartaal 'n kort terugvoer sessie by te woon, waarin ons die vordering bespreek van die gesprekke.
- Om gereeld met ons kontak te hou via e-pos.

Ons vra dus nie te veel nie, maar ook nie te min nie. Op dié wyse is die proses informeel maar ook gestruktureerd. **Die proses is nie opsioneel nie.** Daarom moet jongmense en mentors hulself van die begin af volkome hieraan verbind om deel te bly van die senior kategese leiers groep.

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