



# Expressive therapy in contextual pastoral care and counselling



## Authors:

Amanda L. du Plessis<sup>1</sup>   
Gert Breed<sup>1</sup> 

## Affiliations:

<sup>1</sup>Faculty of Theology, Practical Theology (Pastoral), North-West University, Potchefstroom, South Africa

## Corresponding author:

Amanda du Plessis,  
amanda.duplessis@nwu.ac.za

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From the early 1970s, and especially since South Africa became a democratic state under the governance of the African National Congress in 1994, many voices have called for decolonising the programs presented at universities. With this article, we as the authors of this article have concluded that, although the science of pastoral caregiving in the South African context has developed into a recognised authentic science, the development has followed Western cultural fashion with its emphasis on individualism. This is directly opposed to the more communal focus of African culture. This approach is also only one example of the differences between these two cultural groups. We investigated the possibility that expressive therapy can contribute to assemble a pedagogical design for a South African contextualised pastoral care and counselling model. The results of the investigation into three forms of expressive therapy are described in this article: First, Practical Theology as an academic discipline in South Africa is described; second, we look into contextualisation in pastoral care; and, in the third place, contextual pastoral care and counselling. The article concluded by the description of the three forms of expressive therapy and their possible place in contextual pastoral care. The research was done from a reformed perspective.

**Keywords:** curriculum; *diakonia*; expressive art therapy; pastoral care and counselling model; South Africa.

## Introduction

The International congress on pastoral care and counselling (ICPCC) held a conference in Malaysia in August 2019 with the theme 'Learning to serve people of other cultures'. In preparation for the conference, we used the opportunity to rethink the current pastoral curriculum we present at the North-West University, South Africa. From the early 1970s, and especially since South Africa became a democratic state under the governance of the African National Congress in 1994, many voices have called for decolonising the programs presented at universities. Shortly after democracy, the emeritus archbishop Tutu (1994:2), referred to the South African nation as a rainbow nation due to the various cultures and ethnic groups in South Africa. Like all the different institutions, the higher education system had to change to serve this 'rainbow nation' in the best possible way. As lecturers, we have concluded that, although the science of pastoral caregiving in the South African context has developed into a recognised authentic science, the development has followed Western cultural fashion with its emphasis on individualism. This is directly opposed to the more communal focus of African culture. This approach is also only one example of the differences between these two cultural groups. We investigated the possibility that expressive therapy can contribute to assemble a pedagogical design for a South African contextualised pastoral care and counselling model. The results of the investigation into three forms of expressive therapy are described in this article: First, Practical Theology as an academic discipline in South Africa is described; second, we look into contextualisation in pastoral care; and, in the third place, contextual pastoral care and counselling. The article is concluded by the description of the three forms of expressive therapy and their possible place in contextual pastoral care. The research was done from a reformed perspective.

## Practical Theology as an academic discipline in South Africa

Practical Theology as an academic discipline has been part of the higher education system in South Africa since 1899 (Dreyer 2012:505). Much has changed in the system since a democratic government was elected in 1994. The reason can be found in the fact that socio-political, economic and cultural-religious aspects are known to shape Practical Theology as a discipline. According to Statistics South Africa (2019), almost 80% of South Africans indicated Christianity as their religion.

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Prior to democracy, the National Party, which was a Christian party, governed South Africa and the state was seen as an extension of the church. The relationship between state and church changed drastically after adopting the new constitution in 1996. Although South Africa then became a secular democracy, the church-state relationship can be described as constitutional parting and independence, combined with mutual recognition (Dreyer 2012:507). One of the urgent tasks of the democratic government was to transform the highly fragmented, racially divided apartheid education sector in such a way that it would increase accessibility and equity for all citizens (Dreyer 2012:508). The transformation of the higher education system was not the only important challenge; the call for decolonising the curriculum followed soon after with the aim of developing it to reflect an identity that is unique to the South African context.

Sharp (2012:424) states that studies in Practical Theology in post-colonial times and beyond should emphasise 'the authenticity of diverse involvement through unmasking the norms that oppress people by limiting possibilities for their participation'. Post-colonial work has the goal to resist colonial oppression and injustice, and to recognise the full humanity of everyone involved. Unfortunately, in real life, Western and African cultures are now set to oppose each other as the two ends of a continuum where colonisation resembles Western culture and decolonisation resembles Africanisation (Du Plessis 2017:2). Take for instance the book *Post-Colonizing God* by Lartey (2013). The author pleads for the indigenisation of Practical Theology when he describes African indigenisation as a counterbalance to Western biases, which are inherent in the (current) pastoral caregiving process and are the result of colonialism. An approach like this, results again in the exclusion of certain cultural groups in South Africa – just like in the time of the apartheid regime. Rather, the discourse of Practical Theology in South Africa must be based on a reflection on the theory, method and the theology of *doing* theology in the present South African context

Mpumlwana (1993:5) defines contextual theology in the simplest way as 'the conscious attempt to do theology from within the context of real life in the world' and states that the context refers to the social reality rather than a geographical location. Social reality carries the common experience of the people rather than individual experiences. Mpumlwana (1993) further states that contextual theology is concerned about how people live in practice and how to be a Christian in practice:

Contextual theology is done on the basis of life experiences and a living faith, rather than on the basis of predominant academic knowledge ... Contextual theology is practical. What is being done, what should be done, and what will be done are the standard questions in doing contextual theology, for it is ultimately concerned with doing something practical to change the reality that is being experienced. (p. 7)

While we agree with Mpumlwana (1993:7) that contextual theology must be done on 'the basis of life experiences and a

living faith', we do not fully agree with the margination of academic knowledge. Therefore, the need to contextualise the pastoral curriculum.

## Pastoral care and contextualisation

Contextualisation refers to the educational process of relating the curriculum to a certain setting, situation or area of application to make the content relevant, meaningful and useful to learners. Click (2012:349) refers to contextual education as field education, because it helps students to shift their focus from practice to theory and back to practice again. Don Browning (1991) was the first to describe this process as central to building practical theologies. In line with this point of view, Heitink (1999:102) describes Practical Theology as an 'empirically oriented theological theory of the mediation of the Christian faith in the praxis of modern society'. Contextual education provides a type of learning that counterbalances, on the one hand, traditional theological education within an exclusive Western paradigm with, on the other hand, indigenisation of theological education within an exclusive African paradigm.

Contextual theology is the recognition of the validity of the present human experience, which includes the context of a student's personal life within a certain culture or social location that is exposed to ongoing social change (Bevans 2016:4). The goal of contextualising pastoral modules is to teach, translate, interpret, apply and reflect on subject matter in ways that are both faithful to the Word of God and sensitive to the social context (Du Plessis 2018:5). Contextualisation enables students to realise how complicated praxis can be when socio-political, economic and cultural-religious issues need to be considered. Students learn to integrate multiple sources of knowledge and to identify several layers of meaning embedded in situations (Click 2012:351) while staying true to their faith. The multiple layers of meaning can also be seen in the four-fold approach in contextual theology, namely cultural exegesis, biblical exegesis, critical reflection and new contextualised practices (Sills 2016:291). These layers of knowledge are important aspects in pastoral curriculum development if the content meets the challenge of a unique South African identity.

The current pastoral curriculum taught by us includes a pastoral conversational model that consists of five distinctive phases, namely: (1) building a relationship; (2) data gathering (discovering and understanding the problem or need); (3) *coram Deo*; (4) obedience and perseverance; and (5) support and follow-up.<sup>1</sup> The students are trained to work according to the model of Osmer (2008) with its four different tasks during the pastoral conversations.<sup>2</sup> The four tasks are the descriptive-empirical task, the interpretative task, the normative task and the pragmatic task. Although this method has proved to be effective in the pastoral caregiving process, we want to propose the inclusion of certain aspects that are inherent in

1.The theme and format of the article prevents an explanation of these five phases.

2.A model can be compiled with reference to the practice theory based on metatheory. Osmer (2008) developed such a model for research in Practical Theology.

African culture and that should be taken into account when developing a pastoral care and counselling model with a view to satisfy the needs of a unique South African identity. Beforehand, attention will be given to why contextualisation of pastoral care and counselling is necessary.

## Contextual pastoral care and counselling

The purpose of developing a contextual pastoral care and counselling model is to empower students to apply the gained knowledge to a specific context. As in so many other countries worldwide, the church in South Africa also made the mistake of linking pastoral care solely to the pastor, while the congregants remained observers. This approach has resulted in 'crisis care' instead of 'pastoral care'. When the crisis is over, so is the care. Bosman (2018:19) states that a crisis care approach makes 'ordinary' people or members of the church feel 'unattached, insecure and neglected, which often results in them falling through the cracks or slipping through the proverbial back door'. According to Bosman (2018:180), the way to prevent this undesirable situation is to cultivate a culture of care among all members of the body of Christ. This is the reason why *diakonia* with its principle that 'service is the task of every believer' is so important. One of the essential themes Luther addressed during the Reformation was the priesthood of *all* believers. Sadly, the focus on individualism of the Western cultural approach prevented *diakonia* from fully expanding to communal care.

Over the last century, fortunately, communal care or a culture of care has come to the fore in three distinct movements in pastoral care and counselling, namely:

- (1) the move away from the model of care for an individual by ordained professionals, towards the model of care for the community and its members by the community and its members;
- (2) the development of pastoral care as a public theology;
- and (3) strategic participation rather than personal insight as the goal. (McClure 2012:275)

The ministry of pastoral care and counselling needs a 'mind-transformation and heart regeneration to begin to understand *where* people find themselves' (Bosman 2018). Observing the reality of modern-day life validates the urgency for contextual pastoral care and counselling.

Bosman (2018:33) proposes two tracks in contextual ministry. The basis of the first is believers' love for God, which moves them to minister to others in life-transforming discipleship. The basis of the second is believers loving other as they love themselves and finds expression in *koinonia* through cultivating a culture of care. Important keywords that should be taken into consideration when proposing a contextual pastoral care and counselling model are, for instance, compassion, care and fellowship.

The challenge we face is to find pedagogical methods that will answer to the multicultural South African context, as well

as to the Reformed theological paradigm of our faculty. During our planning of a new pastoral curriculum, we agree that a proposed South African contextual pastoral care and counselling model should include at least four distinguishable segments:

- The first segment is the acknowledgment and integration of multiple perspectives based on several layers of meaning embedded in the context. This include the socio-political, economical and religious realities of those who must be served.
- The second segment of interpreting meaning is in line with what Sills (2016:291) refers to as cultural exegesis where rituals and metaphors inherent in the various cultures are taken into consideration. Rituals as behavioural building blocks of a community are increasingly recognised as important fields for academic understanding. Foley (2012) refers to communal rituals as a 'universal human activity', and Bellah (2006) refers to it as 'the most fundamental category of the understanding of social action'.
- The third segment of acting faithfully relates to sound biblical exegesis. The basis of the Reformed paradigm is that God is transcendent and immanent and that he reveals himself through creation, the Bible and Jesus Christ.
- The fourth segment is to correlate actions or behaviours with theoretical principles that require critical reflection and new contextual practices. This implies a constant movement from practice to theory to practice to theory, et cetera.

Higher education courses in pastoral care and counselling necessitate both theologically sound perspectives and therapeutic techniques. To bring change or healing in a community, the pastoral caregiver (or pastoral student) must have a solid foundation of subject knowledge as a basis of reference in their spirituality of presence in a certain context. As lecturers, we realise the important role of the personal development of pastoral students for ministry, while we bear in mind that basic abilities such as empathy, self-control and sensitivity towards others are difficult or even impossible to teach through theory alone. Practical pedagogies must be incorporated in the curriculum for a holistic experience in training. One example of such pedagogies is expressive therapy.

## Expressive therapy in contextual pastoral care and counselling

In studying African culture, the use of expressive therapies as channels to find closure and healing for inner pain are evident. Africans are emotionally much more expressive than their more reserved Western counterparts are. Du Plessis and De Beer (2014:7) name some important principles when expressive therapies are used. First, pastoral caregivers must be at ease with the medium chosen by counselees to express their experience(s). In a certain sense, the chosen medium (e.g. art) becomes a 'co-caregiver', because it is a channel to spiritual and emotional healing and growth. Second, it is



important that pastoral caregivers must not try to interpret the art, but facilitate the process by asking open and inquiring questions to pave the way to insight, healing and growth for the counselee and community – intra-personally, inter-personally and cross-communally. Third, through expressive therapies, pastoral caregivers engage with counselees at behavioural, emotional, cognitive and authentic levels.

Brown (1990) quotes the Peru leader, Gustav Gutierrez's words to emphasise the importance of experiences and expressions in healing of inner pain:

We will not have an authentic theology of liberation until the oppressed themselves are able to freely and creatively express themselves in society and among the people of God. We shall not have our great leap forward, into a whole new theological perspective, until the marginalized and exploited have begun to become the artisans of their own liberation – until their voices makes itself heard directly, without mediations, without interpreters – until they themselves take account, in the light of their own values, of their own experience of the Lord in their efforts to liberate themselves. We shall not have our quantum theological leap until the oppressed themselves theologize. (p. 70)

Although this was written with reference to the liberation theology, Mpumlwana (1993:6) reminds us that the liberation theology is an example of contextual theology. The point here is that, in order to develop a contextual pastoral care and counselling model channels through which all people of South Africa can experience and express the path to inner healing, must be included.

Expressive therapy is thus a practical pedagogy that can be included in the curriculum of pastoral modules. The goal of expressive therapy is to facilitate spiritual and emotional healing and growth. The therapy starts with an intra-personal awareness, moves to an inter-personal awareness and ultimately to cross-community awareness. In contextual pastoral care and counselling, this gradual movement develops through different phases of improvisational forms in all the various mediums. The very act of creating together, involves a shared experience at a measurable neurological level.<sup>3</sup> As a starting point, we want to focus on the inclusion of *diakonia*, storytelling, art and music therapies as expressive therapies in pastoral care.

## **Diakonia in contextual pastoral care and counselling**

After discussing what a contextual pastoral care and counselling model entails, attention will now shift to the importance of *diakonia* as basis for communal care. *Diakonia* to the counselee and by the counselee is in this part of the article seen as a way of doing expressive therapy.

To understand the concept of *diakonia* in a contextual pastoral care and counselling model, it is important to first perceive

<sup>3</sup>Overly and Molnar-Szakacs (2009) state that music or any other form of art 'activates mirror neurons, those brain cells that fire not only when a person performs an action, but also when the person sees someone else do the same action'.

the New Testament meaning of *diakonia*. Breed (2018) has done in-depth exegetical research on the *diakon* – words found in different passages in the New Testament, together with critical comparative studies from different viewpoints about the way the concept is used. From these research results, the following meanings or understanding of *diakonia* is important for this article:

The *diakonia* of a Christian is closely related to the *diakonia* of Jesus Christ (Mk 10:45; Breed 2018:123–182). Jesus became flesh and lived among human beings on earth (Jn 1:1, 14). He did his earthly *diakonia* as the representative of and in honour of his Father by doing the deeds and speaking the words directed by the Father (Breed 2018:55–57; Koester 2008:31). Jesus' *diakonia* was based on the coming of God's kingdom where the relationship between God and human beings would be restored. Ultimately, the *diakonia* of Jesus entailed that he gave his life as ransom to save those who believe in him (Mk 10:45; cf. Breytenbach 2014:166). When Jesus said he 'did not come to be served but to serve and give his life as a ransom for many', he referred to his ministry throughout his life on earth and to his crucifixion (Mk 10:45; Mt 20:28; Purves 2004:214–222). Even after ascending to heaven, he continued his *diakonia* as intercessor (or High Priest) for believers.

Believers are considered to be Jesus' *diakonoi*; therefore, they should follow him in his *diakonia* (Jn 12:24–26; Breed 2018:78–86). They should be willing to be representatives of God, to die in themselves (Van der Watt 2008:92) and live a life of serving others with the multi-coloured grace of God through the gifts they receive from Christ (1 Pt 4:10; Eph 4:1–16). God, through Christ, spiritually revives believers for the good works God prepared for them (Eph 2:10; Barth 1984:250–251, 345). By this way of live, they proclaim the immeasurable riches of God's grace in kindness toward them in Christ Jesus (Eph 2:7; Mbennah 2009:63). When God resurrected them from the dead with Christ, he also made them part of the body of Christ (the church). They now share in the covenant promises of God, they are one with the other members of the family of God (Eph 2:11–22; Talbert 2007:107) and use their gifts to build the body of Christ towards maturity through their *diakonia* (Eph 4:12–16). Believers' knowledge of Christ determines their whole way of life (Eph 4:20). It entails they should break with the 'old man' in them by renewing their minds and putting on the 'new man' (Eph 4:22–24) as imitators and beloved children of God (5:1; Hoehner 2002:62, 66–69; Petrenko 2011:147–148).

Furthermore, 1 Corinthians 12 describes an important part of the *diakonia* of believers. In 1 Corinthians 12:4–6, three concepts are connected with each other, namely the gifts (*χάρισμα*), the services (*διακονία*) and effective working (*ἐνέργημα*). The Holy Spirit gives the gifts, the *diakonia* is that of the Lord Jesus Christ, and when believers use the gifts for *diakonia*, God (the Father) works all things in everyone. The purpose of the *χάρισμα* is to make the *διακονία* flow into *ἐνέργημα*, which is the exhibition (*φανερωσις* – 1 Cor 12: 7) of the Spirit for profit of the whole body of Christ within the

unity of the members (12:12–26). No believer can say that they are unnecessary in the body of Christ (or the church), and no one can say that they do not belong to the body, because they are not like somebody else. Every believer has a unique *χάρισμα* (Thiselton 2000:900). According to the new knowledge they have about Christ and as imitators and beloved children of God, the lives of believers have practical consequences for their attitude towards the community and their conduct in every part of their lives. Their lives are their *diakonia*. *Diakonia* is not something that believers can occasionally do; it is who they *are*. Their whole existence, like that of Jesus, is their *diakonia*.

The realisation of their *diakonos* identity is the elementary mind transformation and heart regeneration action that every believer as pastoral caregivers should undergo. One cannot train students as pastoral caregivers without making certain they are in the right relationship with Jesus Christ, as explained above. Pastoral caregivers should also be led to live a life filled with the Spirit to be able to discern their gifts and use them to do (or rather *be*) the *diakonia* that God prepared for them. As a *diakonos* of God, everyone can work mightily through their *diakonia* in the lives of other people in the church and the community. Every pastoral caregiver or pastoral student should also be part of a congregation (the body of Christ) to serve other members and to be cared for by them towards their own growth in holiness and dedication to God.

Pastoral caregivers should do pastoral work as a follower (*diakonos*) of Christ in the first place, representing God and be accountable to God, doing the work of God and speaking the words from God's Word. Pastoral care and counselling leads counselees towards ongoing encounters with God in his love, mercy and compassion towards them, but also towards God's demands (e.g. 'follow me', 'go and sin no more' and 'grow towards maturity in Christ').

The training of pastoral students should therefore also include mentorship and practical apprenticeship. They should be in the presence of their mentor while the mentor is doing pastoral counselling as a representative of God and they should encounter the difficulties of a pastoral caregiver. Jesus himself illustrated this way of training by taking his disciples with him and teaching them not just certain skills or just giving them some information, but integrating them into a certain lifestyle (the way of the kingdom of God) and attitude. He illustrated to them what it means to be one with the Father and thereby training them to live as a *diakonos* of God.

In the multicultural South African community where the past inflicted pain, created distrust, animosity and even hatred, the *diakonia* attitude of serving others and not demanding to be served is an important and non-negotiable prerequisite for any pastoral caregiver and counselee.

When pastoral caregivers do not depend on the re-creative work of the Holy Spirit to bring healing in the life of

counselees, they will encounter severe resistance and even failure in relationships, and they might give up because of exhaustion and desolation. However, doing pastoral care and counselling as a *diakonos* of Jesus Christ waiting for the Father to give the harvest at his time will bring peace and diligence to them. Thus, training pastoral caregivers to do contextual pastoral care and counselling implies training them first as *diakonoi*.

As Jesus went out into the community during his earthly ministry, the presence of pastoral caregivers in the community is very important. Contextualised pastoral care and counselling means pastoral caregivers have to *be with* the counselees there where they are, whether in the church or in the community. The *diakonos* of Jesus Christ seeks the lost sheep and meet with them where they are. This is where the different cultures come into consideration. In order to work from a multicultural viewpoint, pastoral caregivers must have knowledge of the different cultures and rituals common to the cultures.

It is necessary to lead counselees to understand the mind (attitude) of Christ (Ph 2). The counselee should also learn to act as *diakonos* of Christ, not demanding to be served, but becoming servant of all. That does not mean that the injustices should be overlooked, but the way it should be addressed, should be determined by the attitude of Christ. The counselee should be equipped to speak the truth in love (Eph 4) doing *diakonia*. Doing *diakonia* by living a life not focused on yourself and your own problems, can heal the wounds of the past and bring growing perspective on the need of others and the gifts you have to address the need.

## Storytelling in contextual pastoral care and counselling

Humans think in stories rather than in facts, numbers or equations (Harari 2018:1). Every culture has its own stories within its own frame of reference. An investigation into the use of storytelling or narrative has been part of the research of theological disciplines over the past few decades (Baloyi 2012:2–3; Brueggemann 1997; Ganzevoort et al. 2014:1–3; Gerkin 1984:26; Stroup 1991:424; Wisse 2009:1). It is important to clarify what is regarded as a *story* in this part of the article. It can just be the history of a group or a nation, that is, of things they did or what others did to them. However, a story can also include tales about their origin, culture, beliefs and language. A story can furthermore be an individual's way of processing life experiences, how someone views their situation, how they value what happens to them, how they regard their successes or failures, or even their self-perceived identity (cf. Ganzevoort et al. 2014:3; Klaasen 2017:457).

Storytelling in South Africa is complicated, as the people of South Africa come from diverse backgrounds. The Khoisan people are the oldest inhabitants of South Africa. Some black nations migrated to South Africa from West Africa (Herrera & Bertrand 2018:422). Some people migrated from Europe and

others from Indonesia, Madagascar and India. Everyone brought his or her own worldview, beliefs, culture and language to South Africa. The history of South Africa includes enslavement, conflict and war, but also living and working together and influencing each other. Because of the policy of segregation in the apartheid years, the different groups did not hear each other's stories as they should have. Each group now still has its own story, but there is also a story that is common to everyone in South Africa. The different stories have influenced each other and everyone has developed a new story of their own, but everyone also contributed to a new common story. This new story was formed by navigating your own story through other stories by means of negotiation (Beck 2000; Ganzevoort et al. 2014:3).

Since the boundaries between groups fell away in 1994, people of different backgrounds have had much more contact with each other at all levels of life. As the neighbourhoods integrate, more and more multicultural communities and congregations develop. Contextualised pastoral care and counselling in South Africa means pastoral counsellors can listen to everyone's own story and to try to understand the hermeneutic process in people that try to interpret the events in their cultural group in history, try to interpret their current situation and assemble their views on the future. Despite the fact that differences in language and culture aggravate the hermeneutic problem in storytelling as a form of expressive art therapy, these differences can become a channel to facilitate healing. This is possible when pastoral caregivers are trained to be good listeners who not only hear the words, but also sense the emotion behind the words. The value of storytelling eventually rests on the ability to engage in the hermeneutic action of understanding both a counselee's story and God's story, and to lead the counselee to integrate his or her story into God's story or his will (Baloyi 2012:3; Ganzevoort et al. 2014:4).

Because it is not *his* or *her* experience, pastoral caregivers cannot fully understand the story of a counselee. It is somebody else's story. Although the words open the flow of painful emotions, the story still just consists of words. It is even possible that counselees *themselves* will be unable to grasp the full impact of their stories, or to give full expression of their stories in words. The pastoral caregiver can address this problem, firstly, by creating a safe space in the community for counselees to tell their stories; and secondly, by taking a stance of not knowing (Morgan 2000:1). Thus, counselees are free to voice *their* stories and the pastoral caregiver facilitates the healing and support by asking questions in the course of a story. This hermeneutic process should also be taught to counselees, especially to those who are from different cultural backgrounds, for example in interracial marriage counselling. Sometimes, it is necessary to facilitate the storytelling process between people during counselling.

Referring to pastoral care brings a whole congregation to mind. Pastoral care entails that members of the congregation

care for each other and speak the truth in love to each other (Eph 4:15). For pastoral care to be effective in a multiracial multicultural congregation, opportunities should be created where different groups can listen to each other's stories. Priestly listening should be taught to the congregation.

Furthermore, the uniqueness of pastoral care lies in the authoritative role of the Bible. The Bible tells stories about or the history of the interaction of people with God and God's interaction with people. From a Reformation perspective, the Bible can be seen as God's story (his story as history), as it – inspired by the Holy Spirit – relates God's revelation in history. God reveals himself in the Bible in his love for people and the whole of creation, but also in his wrath over sin, which has a devastating influence on human beings and relationships (Serwalo 2018:138–145).

The Bible records and explains God's plan for his creation by using the themes of the covenant and the kingdom. The covenant speaks about God's promises that he gives to his children and their children – promises that they must claim by faith. The kingdom of God describes the reign of God through his Word and Spirit. The book Ephesians tells about the *oikonomia* [economy] of God, which refers to how God makes people new and equip them to grow to become more and more like Christ. In this way, the greatness of God's grace is shown (O'Brien 1999:296–297; Van Aarde 2014:99).

Storytelling in contextual pastoral care and counselling is an instrument to discover the need of people within their current environment and worldview. Storytelling helps people to verbalise what they have experienced and felt, their viewpoints on certain things, their hopes and dreams (cf. Stroup 1981:70–89). Storytelling helps a counsellor to understand and determine as closely as possible what part of God's plan would be applicable to the need of a person (Klaasen 2017:458–459). Pastoral care and counselling can then be described as leading people to see their own story in light of God's story (Cone 1975:116–119). God's revelation of himself is in this way applied to the context of the counselee (cf. Gerkin 1997:112).

In African culture, children are integrated into the story of their tribe through storytelling. Children hear the stories and integrate them into their own stories. Contextualised pastoral care is leading a person to integrate his or her own stories into God's story. The letter to the Ephesians is an example of this type of counselling. The letter starts in chapter 1 with the description of God's plan or his will, which started in eternity. Then the author prays for the readers to understand their place in the plan of the triune God. In chapters 2 and 3, the readers' old identity and way of life are contrasted with their new identity in Christ and their new way of life. Their new identity lies in their being one with Christ and being one with God's people, and having part in the grace of God. At the end of chapter 3, the author again prays that they should understand what it means that they have part in the love of



Christ by being part of God's story. In chapters 4–6, the author describes the new way they should live ('walk'), because they have become part of God's redemption plan (Serwalo 2018:138–145).

Contextualised pastoral care and counselling through the expressive art of storytelling, creates a safe space where people can tell their stories to each other. In this space, they can ask each other questions until they can retell each other's stories to the point where they are satisfied that they understand each other's stories. Together they can then turn to God's story of grace and seek to understand everyone's place in that story. Healing begins when humans understand their part in God's story and this understanding leads them to changed behaviour based on their new identity within God's story. In this process, humans create a new story together. In this way, storytelling takes its place within expressive therapy.

## Art and music therapy in contextual pastoral care and counselling

Art and music are often used as expressive therapy to facilitate spiritual and emotional healing and growth for the individual and communities (Gombert et al. 2018:20). Expressive therapy is a non-verbal and non-linear way of knowing that can include art therapy, music therapy, dance or movement therapy and drama therapy. Through expressive art therapy, counselees or students are helped to access a deeper understanding of themselves and their inner turmoil, coupled with an increased capability of personal growth. Knill (2005) suggests that since:

[C]reativity is linked to the development of the imagination, creativity can be a tool to liberate one from the limitations of analytic thought and functional logic, encouraging and allowing an expanded understanding of what is possible. (p. 75)

An example of the value of music is evident in the biblical pericope that relates how David needed to play the harp whenever Saul was troubled (1 Sm 6:14–23). The effect that music has on someone's mind is often referred to as the 'intra-personal awakening' of counselees (Gombert et al. 2018:22). Through music, a doorway into the inner world of counselees opens and they can create an artistic expression of their spiritual and emotional confusion. Such expressions can either be in verbal or non-verbal forms. An example of the use of music as a medium of expression is that counselees can improvise their own songs (verbal) or play drums as a form of anger management (non-verbal). Boxill and Chase (2007:97) describe the effect of music therapy as 'a continuum of awareness'. At the one end, counselees only become aware of the music, but then they continue in a greater intra-personal awareness of some aspects of their experience. At the other end of the continuum, they end with acting out behaviour. Anastasi (2005) describes the influence of music on humans as follows:

Music moves people. Anyone who has ever listened to good music understands that music has a way of bypassing the walls

of the intellect and targeting the emotions, often demanding some type of response. Combined with poignant lyrics, music can manipulate emotions and evoke tears, regret, anger, happiness, a sense of social responsibility, et cetera. (p. 311)

While music can be a trigger to facilitate awareness of deep inner spiritual and emotional pain in people, art therapy for counselees is described by McNiff (2014:41) as a 'way ... to become more aware of their own experience in the present moment'. Art therapy helps counselees to understand, accept and transform a painful experience when they gain insight into what the (present) effect of the (past) painful experience is. The process of intra-personal awareness is again noticeable when using art in therapy. Various types of art, for instance drawing pictures, making a timeline of life experiences, making a collage of life experiences – any form of creativity – can be incorporated into therapy.

With reference to the view of the *oikonomia* of God in the Book of Ephesians, the creational and re-creational work of God is embedded in the larger story or narrative of his Word. God's story or his will is thus not only made known to humans by the spoken and written Word of God, but also through his creation and re-creation. Calvin stresses the all-encompassing unity of God's work, which extends from creation to eschatological re-creation (Conradie 2001:357). Calvin refers to creation as the 'theatre of His glory' and it is within this theatre that the new human is re-created (Eph 2 and 3). The creational and re-creational work of God forms the basis for the inclusion of expressive art therapy in pastoral care and counselling.

Through art, counselees create something tangible as a symbol of their inner turmoil and pain, and through the process of creating, distance is created between themselves and their inner pain. As the pastoral care and counselling process continues, they can continuously re-create the original creation until they experience salvation and healing. The art creation becomes the symbol of the past to them, while they enter the new life in Jesus Christ. They do not believe in the fact (created art) or even the act (creation), but in God, the original Creator and Re-creator.

In the Reformed tradition, the covenant between God and his people is separated from its historical boundaries; thus, the covenant is a timeless abstraction (Helberg 1996:223). This abstract concept of the covenant, as a theme that the Bible uses to describe God's work with human beings, is used as a key concept to describe the nature of the relationship between God and humans. It is therefore also concerned with the reconciliation of God with humanity in Jesus Christ. Accordingly, it includes God's creative and re-creative work towards salvation and healing. In understanding the meaning of the covenant, counselees' perspective on it is one of living comfort and hope in God that he will re-create the inner chaos and pain into an assurance that they are new humans in Christ. As the re-creation of the new identity in God takes form in their hearts, they can symbolise it through expressive art.

Gombert et al. (2018:24) describe community-based experience art groups that 'address social issues, such as homelessness, violence, and trauma'. Through art, the participants explore the effect of social issues on individuals and communities. The message conveyed by art starts a ripple effect of awareness that spreads to other human beings and confronts them with the responsibility of caring. In a contextual pastoral care and counselling process, individual healing is inherently linked with communal healing.

## Conclusion

The different cultures in South Africa are rich in expressive forms of art. In fact, different cultures can be distinguished through their arts. There is even a Ministry of Arts and Culture in South Africa that aims 'to contribute ... by preserving, protecting and developing South African arts, culture, and heritage to sustain a socially cohesive and democratic nation' (Anon. 2019). There is an ontological and epistemological link between expressive art and human beings, as art communicates with the affective, cognitive and normative dimensions simultaneously (Maritz & Dreyer 2002:1218). As the value of expressive art is recognised at all levels of society, its incorporation is of great importance in contextual pastoral care and counselling. A South African contextual pastoral care and counselling model that is taught in the pastoral modules at South African universities should include training to facilitate the use of *diakonia*, storytelling, art and music therapy in the pastoral care of a congregation.

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